Report to HRC on Reducing Inequalities: Analysing the Effect of Government Policy on Whānau Ora

FINAL REPORT FOR CONTRACT 09/035

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CONTENT

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List of initialisms

DPB	Domestic Purposes Benefit
ELSI	Economic Living Standard Index
FoRST	Foundation for Research, Science and Technology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HES	Household Economic Survey
HLFS	Household Labour Force Survey
HRC	Health Research Council
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
IWTC	In Work Tax Credit
MASS	Māori Association of Social Scientists
NZHS	New Zealand Health Survey
RFP	Request for Proposals
SoFIE	Survey of Family, Income and Employment
THNR	Te Hoe Nuku Roa
WFF	Working for Families
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand
WRMHD	Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development

Executive summary

The research discussed in this report to the Health Research Council (HRC) was commenced in February 2009 and completed in February 2012. The research was undertaken subsequent to a successful response to a request for proposals (RFP) released by the HRC and the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FoRST) in 2008. Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development (WRMHD) undertook the research in collaboration with the Research Centre for Māori Health and Development (Massey University).

Research report content is presented under five key section headings:

- Section 1: Introduction and background to the research. This section outlines the key research objectives and introduces the research rationale. An overview of the research methodology is provided with more detailed discussion presented in Sections Three and Four as well as in the appended technical report.
- Section 2: Literature Review describes the literature referenced and explains how this informed the researcher' understanding of the policy environment.
- Section 3: Policy makers' views on Working for Families (WFF) presents the results from key informant interviews with policy makers, advocates and academics.
- Section 4: Using Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) data to review the impact of WFF on whānau presents the results from the qualitative and quantitative components of the research.
- Section 5 Conclusions summarises the overall research project results.

The report is a compilation of the incremental outputs of the research over the past three years. Data analysis, carried out at a number of chronological stages in research development, is reported in its original form. For example, papers accepted for publication in 2010 are included unchanged rather than being updated to accommodate new and emerging data. There may therefore be some variance in the results presented in the report as a consequence of this. It is emphasised that results, in each instance, represent a robust analysis of data available at the corresponding time of writing. Section 5 draws together all existing data and represents the most recent research project results available.

Overview of the research

The research project sought to identify whether a key government policy Working for Families (WFF), developed under the reducing inequalities policy framework, has contributed towards achieving the government's stated goal in Māori health: whānau ora. Researchers undertook three distinct phases of research: the identification of households with characteristics qualifying them to receive the government assistance available through the Working for Families policy; further descriptive analysis of an existing longitudinal dataset of Māori households; and the collection of new and original qualitative data on whānau wellbeing. This study has facilitated the description, analysis and discussion of "whānau

wellbeing", or whānau ora, *as it pertains to and is affected by* a specific government policy introduced to improve the economic and social wellbeing of low and middle income families with dependent children.

The research capitalised on the opportunity to undertake new analysis of an existing and on-going Māori dataset, Best Outcomes for Māori: Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR). THNR is a stratified, random, longitudinal survey of Māori households[1] initiated in a series of waves beginning in 1994. This unique dataset gives insight into the structures, outcomes and changes within and across Māori households over time. The THNR dataset provided a basis for initial analysis and was used to identify Māori households impacted by the policy. The synthesis of the quantitative data available from the THNR survey with in-depth qualitative interviews with selected Māori households, which have participated in the survey since its inception, has provided evidence of the reach of the policy, its impact and, to an extent, its effectiveness.

Key findings

Comparisons between the households interviewed before and after WFF (between 2004 and 2007) indicated that WFF positively impacted income adequacy for WFF-eligible families. In particular, there was a decline in the proportion of families whose income was 'not enough' to meet their everyday needs and an equivalent increase in the 'just enough' category. Levels of hardship may have decreased slightly, but there was no overall increase in the average standard of living score. Nor was there any evidence that the increased income had led to less economising on either basic or discretionary items.

These findings were reflected in data gathered through in-depth interviews with 30 whānau. Boulton and Gifford (2011) report that: 'The families we interviewed spoke of the additional income as enabling them to "survive", to not have to "struggle" quite so much to make ends meet.' Financial security was seen as one of a range of factors that contribute to whānau ora, with basic income adequacy being a necessary, but not sufficient, step on the various paths to achieve whānau ora. Health, happiness, future prospects for children, family and whānau connectedness, community participation and cultural or spiritual factors were among many factors contributing to whānau ora.

The results of this study support the contention that Working for Families payments have made a contribution towards improving income adequacy. However, it is noted that this improvement – a tipping of the balance for many families towards having 'just enough' income – was realised alongside implementation of other policies for low-income families, such as an increase in the minimum wage and a decrease in the unemployment rate. Thus the gain may be a fragile one particularly as the economic situation of low-income families was still one of considerable hardship in many cases, with families still having to economise on basic necessities such as fruit and vegetables and visits to the doctor.

In the period following the collection of THNR Wave 4 data, the economy experienced substantial downturn with an increase in the unemployment rate and in the number of those receiving the domestic purposes benefit (DPB). At the same time, the cost of housing increased, potentially eroding

[1] For the purposes of the research we have used the terms Māori household and whānau interchangeably. We recognise however, that definitions of whānau encompass wider collectives than just households.

gains in housing affordability and the cost of food increased at a faster rate than wages and general inflation.

Changes in whānau living standards during this more recent recessionary period were examined using data from Wave 5 of THNR, collected in 2011. The attached technical report presents findings based on 267 households interviewed in both Wave 4 and Wave 5. The results confirmed the findings from Wave 4. WFF-eligible families were still worse-off economically than other households, but with a slight improvement in living standards and a significant improvement in income adequacy between Waves 4 and 5. Housing satisfaction also improved. One area of concern was the much higher proportion of families having to economise on the purchase of fruit and vegetables in 2011 compared to 2004.

Many individual households showed substantial changes in living standards. This was often associated with changes in household circumstances such as family formation and splitting, movement into and out of the labour force and income change. With the exception of the stable group of retirees, the majority of households had some change in their circumstances over the seven year study period. The rate of change was especially high for WFF-eligible families of whom 29% changed their family type, two-thirds had a change in number of dependent children, half had a change in income and over two-thirds of principal adults changed their labour force status. One feature of the data was the fluctuation in labour force status around the margins of employment – between full-time and part-time work and between work, parenting, study and looking for work.

WFF eligible Māori households in the study were still worse-off economically than other households. For example, beneficiary families with dependent children were the worst-off economically followed by other beneficiary households (excluding superannuitants) and low-income families with dependent children. The results reflect concerns expressed by others about the exclusion of beneficiaries from full entitlements to WFF. We know from other research that the exclusion of significant numbers of whānau from WFF support will continue to contribute to child poverty and increase inequalities across a range of indicators[2].

In summary WFF did target whānau who were financially limited but excluded from full entitlements those that were the most disadvantaged economically; beneficiaries. There was a discernible improvement in income adequacy for those in receipt of WFF during the period 2004-2011 however, the impact was modest being described as a “tipping point” from having not enough to having just enough.

The findings also point to a policy setting with significant complexity. There were three layers of complexity identified; the policy itself, the wider social environment and the families who were the intended recipients of the policy. The WFF policy includes a number of interrelated components and there were also changes to these components during the period under examination. In addition there was significant wider social change that impacted on the results. During the study period unemployment

[2] Johnson, A. (2012). *The Growing Divide; a State of the Nation Report from the Salvation Army*. The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. February 2012. www.salvationarmy.org.nz/social policy. Dale, C., O'Brien M. & St John, S. (2011). *Left Further Behind; how policies fail the poorest children in New Zealand*. A Child Poverty Action Group Monograph.

rates, for example, declined between 2004 and 2007 then increased in the later period due to a worldwide economic recession. There was also other economic policy impacting on the study results such as an increase in the minimum wage during the period 2004-2007. Finally whānau themselves experienced significant degrees of change within the study period; shifting in and out of employment and changing family structures. These shifts in turn impacted on WFF eligibility.

In conclusion WFF has tipped the economic wellbeing balance for a number of whānau and is necessary as a contribution towards whānau ora. The question remains however, is it a sufficient contribution in its current form? It is argued that the focus needs to remain on tamariki within whānau and on the impact poverty will have on their lifetime trajectory and potential life outcomes.

A number of questions are posed that need to be addressed in ongoing research. In particular should the WFF base be increased or should the value per family be increased? Should beneficiaries be included more fully in the policy? How do we describe sufficiency in relationship to policy designed to alleviate poverty? Is bringing people just above relative poverty levels sufficient?

Any review of New Zealand's welfare policy must take into account the reliance many working whānau now have on their WFF support. This support provides more than a means of getting by between pay cheques for some of our most vulnerable families. It is also a means, for some, of facilitating whānau ora, of achieving a sense of whānau wellbeing. For others it is crucial to their very survival.

Research Outcomes

The HRC FoRST RFP document called for "whānau ora" research that would focus on the distinct needs or disparities related to the health and social wellbeing of Māori. Specifically the funders sought research which would A) address multiple indicators of Māori social and health inequality B) contribute to an improved understanding of the interrelated causes and C) identify potential approaches to addressing these inequalities.

In response to this, the research reported on here addressed multiple indicators of Māori wellbeing including but not limited to economic wellbeing, housing, employment and health. The study attempted to unravel the link between economic wellbeing and whānau ora through examination of the impact of WFF on Māori whānau; a policy developed by Government under the reducing inequalities programme.

The research has raised a number of ongoing issues and questions for Māori health research. There is an obvious need to continue to monitor the impact of social policy on Māori. While social policy evaluation is typically carried out on a population wide basis specific analysis is not always focused on Māori utilising kaupapa Māori research approaches. This project demonstrates the opportunities available for making use of the THNR data base to inform policy analysis. It is recommended that THNR be used as a platform for other enquiry particularly that utilising mixed method approaches. Further research is needed around defining what we mean by whānau as a target group in policy settings and monitoring the impact of dynamic change in whānau composition on policy outcomes.

1. Background to the research

Context

There is considerable evidence that inequalities exist between socio-economic and ethnic groups both in New Zealand and in other OECD countries. In New Zealand ethnic identity is an important dimension of health inequalities with Māori health status being demonstrably poorer than that of other New Zealanders[3]. Māori share the experience of poorer health and social outcomes with other indigenous peoples around the world[4], outcomes which result from a complex interplay of social, economic, cultural and historical factors. Over the past decade, the New Zealand government has identified that a coordinated and collaborative effort on its part is required to reduce persistent social and economic inequalities between Māori and non-Māori[5]. One policy approach to coordinating and collaborating across government has been the "Reducing Inequalities" framework; a policy comprising a broad range of initiatives across the whole of government aimed at improving the social and economic wellbeing not only of Māori, but of Pacific Island and other disadvantaged populations[6] .

The Working for Families (WFF) policy was introduced in 2004 as a means of addressing a number of social policy goals. The policy's objectives were to reduce child poverty; to improve the incomes of working families; to strengthen work incentives for unemployed parents; and to make it easier for families to access financial assistance[7]. Working for Families represents one of a range of government policies aimed at reducing inequalities and given its objectives, is considered to be a useful policy against which to assess whether the government's stated goals of whānau ora are being achieved. Components of the WFF policy include increasing family incomes, making work pay, assisting with childcare costs and more affordable housing for families[8].

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[3] Blakely, T., Tobias, M., Atkinson, J., Yeh, L-C., Huang, K. (2007). *Tracking Disparity: Trends in ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities in mortality 1981-2004.* Wellington: Ministry of Health.
Ministry of Health. (2002a). *Reducing Inequalities in Health*. Wellington: The Ministry of Health.

[4] Nettleton. C., Napolitano, D.A., Stephens, C. (2007). *An Overview of Current Knowledge of the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health.* Working paper commissioned by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health International Symposium on Indigenous health Australia 2007.

[5] Ministry of Health. (2002b). *New Zealand Health Strategy*. Wellington: The Ministry of Health.

[6] Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, (2003). *Reducing Inequalities: Next Steps*. http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy -development/reducing -inequalities/index.html. Accessed 26 August 2008

[7] Johnson, N (2005). *'Working for Families' in New Zealand: Some Early Lessons*. http://www.fulbright.org.nz/voices/axford/johnson.html accessed 26 august 2008

[8] Ministry of Social Development, (2008) http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy-development/working-for-families/index.html. Accessed 28 August 2008

It was hypothesised that if the intended aims of the policy were being met, we would expect to see an increase in whānau wellbeing/whānau ora and material wellbeing amongst a specific group of Māori whānau (primarily low and middle income families in paid work with dependents). For instance, we would assume that the Māori whānau who met the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy would, over time, experience higher levels of household income, better housing conditions and fewer costs associated with childcare.

Several studies have identified the need for more systematic monitoring of the impact of social policy[9]. While we recognised that evaluation of the WFF policy had previously been undertaken[10], we considered that evaluation was needed which specifically investigated the link between WFF and whānau ora outcomes. The WFF research provided a unique opportunity for Māori driven research to review the impact of social policy likely to impact on Maori whānau, and to potentially create a mechanism for ongoing evaluation using an existing longitudinal Māori household data base for secondary data analysis.

Whānau Ora

The term "whānau ora" has a number of meanings. It is the stated goal of the government's Māori Health Strategy, He Korowai Oranga which seeks to achieve whānau ora or *Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing*[11]. Whānau ora has also been adopted as the goal for District Health Boards and community-based health providers. In terms of Crown-funded health policy development and implementation, the achievement of whānau ora is regarded as requiring concerted collaboration, rational policy-making and considered investment. Whānau ora is also a major vision for Māori, capturing both the sense of the collective and the relevant Māori view of health: hauora. However, measuring whānau ora and whānau ora outcomes has proven both an analytical and practical problem, one which has vexed researchers and funders alike.

This research project has created a unique opportunity to measure whānau ora in two distinct ways. One of these is through Māori household economic and other social indicators measured over time and referenced back to points when there has been significant social policy implementation. The other is

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[9] Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave M., Low, W., Davenport, E., and Hassall, I. (2002) *When the Invisible Hand Rocks the Cradle: New Zealand Children in a Time of Change***;** Innocenti Working Papers No.9.

Devlin N, Maynard A, Mays N. 2001. New Zealand's new health sector reforms: back to the future? *BMJ* 322: 1171_1174. doi:10.1136/ bmj.322.7295.1171

[10] Bryson, A., Evans, M., Knight, G., La Valle, I., and Vegeris, S. (2007). *New Zealand Working for Families programme: Methodological considerations for evaluating MSD programmes*. PSI Research Discussion Paper 26, London: Policy Studies Institute.

Evans, M., Knight, G., La Valle, I. (2007). *New Zealand Working For Families programme: Literature review of evaluation evidence*, PSI Research Discussion Paper 25, London: Policy Studies Institute.

[11] Ministry of Health. (2002c). *He Korowai Oranga: The Māori Health Strategy*. Wellington: The Ministry of Health.

validating results using in-depth interview data to define self-identified indicators of whānau ora with specific reference to links with government social policy.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the research was to undertake a detailed analysis of the effects on whānau of a key government policy specifically aimed at reducing inequalities with a view to ascertaining how the policy contributed to an achievement of, or improvement in, whānau ora (wellbeing) for these families. Our emphasis is on change within the whānau (intra-whānau) over time.

The analysis was achieved by identifying a specific group of Māori households who participate in the longitudinal THNR survey ascertaining the degree of change in their wellbeing over time. This was followed up with face-to face interviews to assess whether changes could be attributed to the Working for Families policy. The research question was: **Has the key government policy, "Working for Families" aimed at reducing inequalities between Māori and non-Māori whānau/families, contributed towards achieving the government's stated goal in Māori health: whānau ora?**

To answer the research question, we interviewed families participating in the longest-running longitudinal survey of Māori households: Te Hoe Nuku Roa – Best Outcomes for Māori. THNR was originally designed to provide an on-going socio-cultural demographic profile of Māori households, whānau and individuals. The study design is well described[12] comprising a survey using a random sample of 700 Māori households/2000 individuals across 7 geographic areas. The survey is administered face-to-face by trained research staff.

The tool used for the first four sampling waves (1995 – 2004) was an omnibus survey which asked a broad range of questions about lifestyle, culture, te reo Māori, education, health, income, employment and household composition assessing both current status and aspirations. The Wave 4 questionnaire (2005) included additional detailed questions about whānau membership and interaction dynamics, as well as an Economic Living Standards Indicator (ELSI)[13] which had been developed through collaboration with the Ministry for Social Development[14] .

[12] Durie, M. H. (1995). Te Hoe Nuku Roa Framework: A Māori Identity Measure. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 104(4), 461-470.

[13] Jensen, J, Spittal, M., Crichton, S., Sathiyandra, S., Krishnan, V. (2002) Direct Measurement of Living Standards: *The New Zealand ELSI scale. Ngā Whakaāturanga Ahuatanga Noho.* Wellington: The Ministry of Social Development.

[14] Cunningham, C.W., et al., (2002). *Living Standards of Older Māori*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

THNR is now able to collect the following information from Māori households.

Theme	Items
Demographics	Age, sex, ethnic identity, family status
Lifestyles	Religious practices, sports participation, gambling, voting, cultural practice/knowledge
Household	Membership, dynamics, Māori economic interests, Māori media, living standards
Education	Status, aspirations
Employment	Income, housing
Health	Status anthropometry, alcohol, smoking, nutrition, physical activity, hospitalisations (NHI)
Whānau	Membership, dynamics

The research project provided an opportunity to analyse the existing THNR data in an innovative way – at the level of the small collective: whānau. The project identified a number of Māori households with characteristics (number of dependents, income, employment status, and housing status) which would qualify them to receive assistance through the Working For families (WFF) policy. Using a combination of analysis of survey data collected over time and face-to-face interviews, we assessed whether an increase in whānau wellbeing/whānau ora and material wellbeing amongst this group of Māori whānau occurred between Wave 4 and Wave 5 data collection periods. This enabled comparisons between before (Wave 4 data) and after (Wave 5 data) the introduction of WFF.

Research Design and Methodology

The research design adopted a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection[15]and analysis. The project included four distinct phases of research activity which paralleled the objectives of the project:

Phase 1) identification of households within the THNR dataset with characteristics qualifying them to receive assistance through the WFF policy;

Phase 2) analysis of these households over time, using survey data which has already been collected, to assess how whānau wellbeing has changed since the introduction of the policy;

[15] Cresswell JW 2009. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Phase 3) conducting of face-to-face qualitative interviews with 30 of these whānau to gather in-depth data on their knowledge and understanding of the policy and the effects of this policy on their whānau wellbeing; and

Phase 4) synthesis of the data, analyse, write-up and feedback to key stakeholders.

2. Phase One - Literature review

The literature reviewed to inform this study included a mix of official government documentation and policy material as well as Working for Families policy evaluation commissioned by Inland Revenue and the Ministry of Social Development. Academic publications critiquing social policy designed to alleviate poverty as well as foster family wellbeing and whānau ora were also reviewed. The purpose of the literature review was to set the context for WFF policy development and implementation, update the policy evaluation literature as it applies to Māori and inform understanding of factors which contribute to whānau wellbeing.

A number of criteria were used to guide the literature search. In particular we sought to:

- clarify the breadth and scope of the Working for Families policy. This information would then be used to inform the development of key informant interviews with policy makers;
- define, for the purposes of the research project, what is meant by whānau ora in order to make an assessment of whether a family's "whānau ora" has been impacted positively or negatively by the policy; and to,
- assess what indicators we wanted to measure and identify which of these may contribute towards whānau ora.

The criteria were used as a literature review search strategy and serveded to focus that search. Literature identified was sorted under three key themes. These were economic and social indicators (including whānau ora), literature related directly to WFF and literature related to the wider policy environment. A full annotated bibliography is attached as Appendix One.

Search terms were linked in the following manner;

- whānau ora and indicators and outcomes
- wellbeing indicators and New Zealand and Māori
- economic indicators and New Zealand
- families and poverty and New Zealand
- whānau ora and definitions
- WFF and evaluation
- WFF and policy
- Policy research and methodology

A large component of the literature was of a grey nature. This included, for example, policy documents, internal departmental reports, government media releases and research reports prepared by agencies such as the Families Commission, Child Poverty Action Group and the Salvation Army. A number of search mechanisms were used primarily Google Scholar Search, searches by Government Departments and searches of advocacy group websites. We were also able to access reports and documents via our

policy level key informants and through our own networks with agencies such as the Families Commission and the Family Centre in Wellington.

Understanding WFF

Relevant information gathered and synthesised by WRMHD at the beginning of the research project in 2009 is overviewed below. This material was used both to inform discussion with researchers from the THNR project and to assist with identifying the whānau sample for inclusion in the research study. The material was also used to inform development of interview schedules later used when collecting both policy maker and whānau qualitative data.

Intent and background

The Working for Families welfare package, introduced in the 2004 budget, signalled a significant change in welfare policy in New Zealand. It was also seen by the Labour-led coalition government as a key plank in its reducing inequalities policy and programmes. The latter is best described as a whole of government approach inclusive of both social and economic initiatives.

It was also conceptualised however, as a tool to target those sectors of the population experiencing social disadvantage and unequal opportunity with a view to increasing overall living standards and reducing poverty across the community. Rather than being specifically tailored to addressing the needs of Māori, its development was informed by the wider reducing inequalities framework with its emphasis on ethnic disparity primarily conditioned by socio-economic factors.

Over the decade prior to the introduction of WFF, there is evidence that in broad terms the overall level of disadvantage across the population had declined. For Māori, as a subset of this, many indicators of disadvantage also showed improvement in overall terms. Whether greater equality of opportunity has resulted is less certain with evidence suggesting disparities remain[16].

Working for Families (WFF) was designed to make it easier to work and to raise a family. Targeting low-to-middle income families with dependent children[17] the WFF package sought to improve the incomes of working families going outside the benefit system to meet welfare goals[18]. This would contribute to reducing child poverty as well as providing incentives to participate in the paid workforce[19] . Rather than

[16] Cabinet Minute, 26 April 2004, Reform of Social Assistance: Working for Families Package: Revised Recommendations, CAB Min (04) 13/4

[17] Perry B (2004). Working for families: the impact on child poverty. Social Policy Journal of New Zealand 22: 19_54.

[18] Johnson, N (2005). *'Working for Families' in New Zealand: Some Early Lessons*. http://www.fulbright.org.nz/voices/axford/johnson.html accessed 26 august 2008

[19] True, J. 2005. *Methodologies for analysing the impact of public policy on families: a conceptual review*. Wellington, Families Commission.

increasing welfare benefits, and possibly making benefits more attractive than paid work, WFF has a focus on tax based assistance through a system of tax credits[20]. A further WFF objective is '…. to improve take-up rates of social assistance'[21].

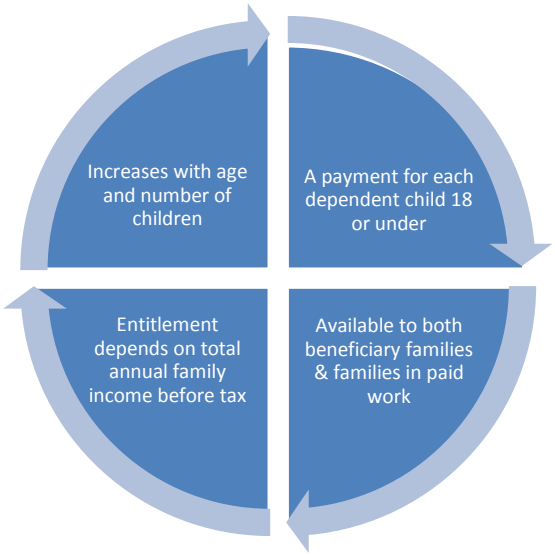
Components of the WFF package include increases in tax based assistance - the principal focus of the government spending- a more affordable housing supplement and childcare cost assistance to support labour force participation. These WFF package objectives and components are summarised in diagrams (a) – (d) below.

Summary of WFF components

Working for Families Tax Credits (formerly known as Family Assistance Tax Credits).

Families may be eligible for more than one of these. They are jointly delivered by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) and the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) depending on income source of recipients (ie welfare benefit, paid work, ACC, Student Allowance, NZ Super). WFF Tax Credits can be received from only one source (IRD or WINZ). Available weekly / fortnightly or as a lump sum payment at the end of the tax year, WFF Tax Credits comprise:

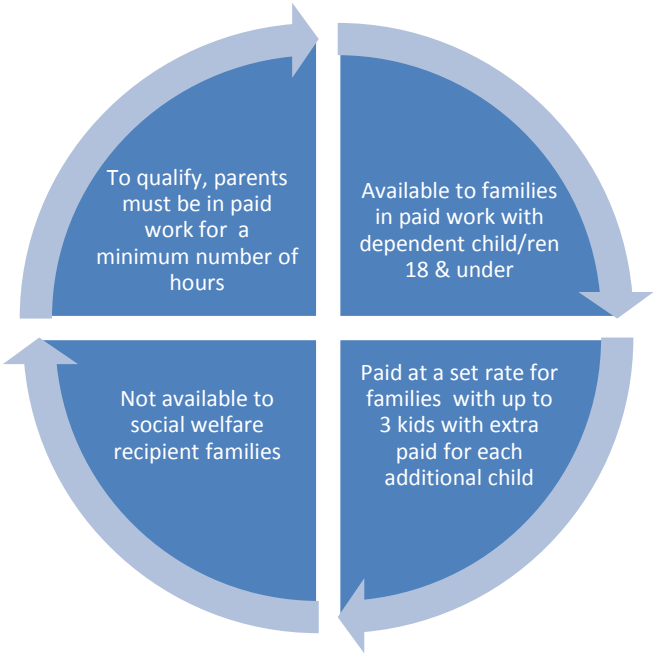
(a) Family Tax Credit (previously called Family Support)



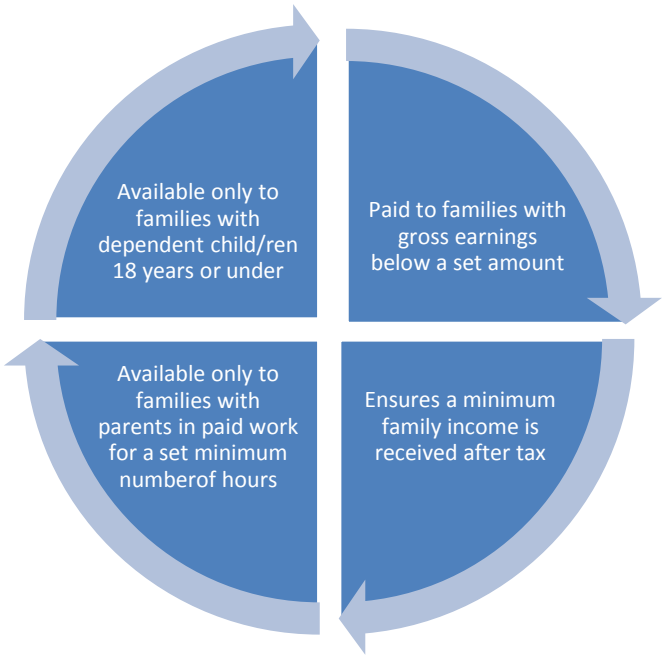
[20] Johnson, N (2005). *'Working for Families' in New Zealand: Some Early Lessons*. http://www.fulbright.org.nz/voices/axford/johnson.html accessed 26 august 2008

[21] Perry B (2004). Working for families: the impact on child poverty. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 22: 19_54.

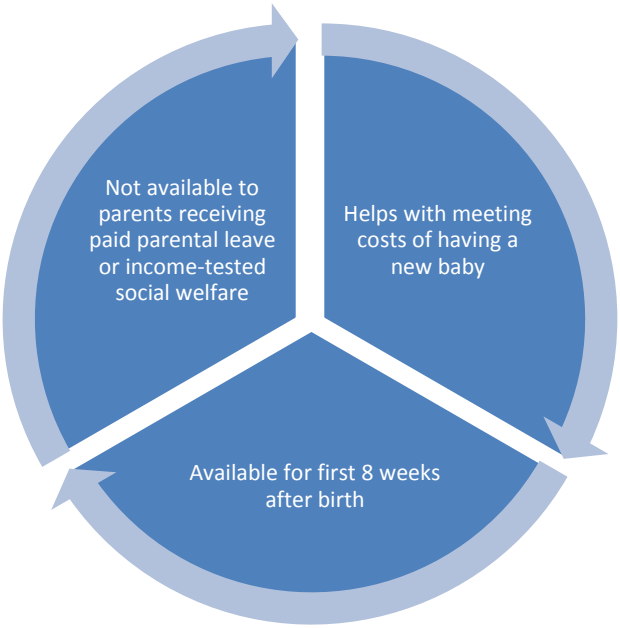
(b) In-work Tax Credit (replaced the Child Tax Credit – the In Work Payment - in April 2006)



(c) Minimum Family Tax Credit (formerly known as Family Tax Credit and as Guaranteed Minimum Family Income prior to this)



(d) Parental Tax Credit



Accommodation supplement

This is implemented by the Ministry of Social Development. The Supplement is targeted to families with relatively low incomes and high housing costs. It is payable as a contribution to rent, board or mortgage payments and may be available to both those in paid work and to beneficiaries. It is not available to State house tenants (who already pay income-related rates effectively receiving an accommodation subsidy via this mechanism). There is also provision for a rates rebate to help pay local body rates.

Childcare cost assistance

A childcare subsidy which may be available for pre-school and / or out-of-school care (ie during school holidays, before and / or after school).

System simplification

A timeline listing chronologically introduced changes to WFF entitlement criteria, to rates and so on is attached as Appendix Two.

Table 1 Comparison: pre WFF and changes introduced by WFF.

Key shifts in support availability and mechanisms pre and post WFF are outlined in the Table 1, below.

	Pre WFF	**Post WFF**
Tax credits	4 types of Family Assistance tax credits available to families with children and on low incomes.	Maximum amounts of 3 out of the 4 tax credits (previously known as Family Assistance Tax Credits and now known as WFF Tax Credits) rise: Family Support, Family Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit / In - Work Payment). Improved targeting of one of the existing tax credits to working families. Expansion of eligibility criteria (income level for eligibility) **Spending on family assistance almost doubles to significantly increase the share of support for low income families with children from tax based source.**
Housing supplement	Available to some low income families.	Expanded (now available to more working families as well as people without children: maximum level of assistance increased, income thresholds raised, minimum level of housing costs required to be eligible raised).
Childcare subsidy	Available to some low income families.	Expanded (increased subsidies for both pre-school and out-of-school care. Available to more parents earning higher incomes than was previously the case)
Welfare benefits	Source of most assistance to families with children	Small cut in core benefits for families with children. Changes in some benefit rules. **Reduction in share of support for low income families with children from welfare source.**

WFF: other characteristics

Three of the four WFF Tax Credits (Parental Tax Credit, In – Work Tax Credit and Minimum Family Tax Credit) are available only to working families (i.e. those which receive most of their income from paid work). Family Tax Credits are available to both working families and those receiving benefits.

Dwyer[22] notes that approximately two thirds of the additional assistance provided under WFF goes to families engaged in paid work. These families make up around one half of the WFF recipient group. The balance of the additional assistance (one third) goes to families on a welfare benefit and those in receipt of income from a mix of paid work and welfare benefits which make up the other half of WFF recipients. In other words, the new assistance is targeted to families in paid work with a view to 'making work pay' and therefore a more attractive option than welfare.

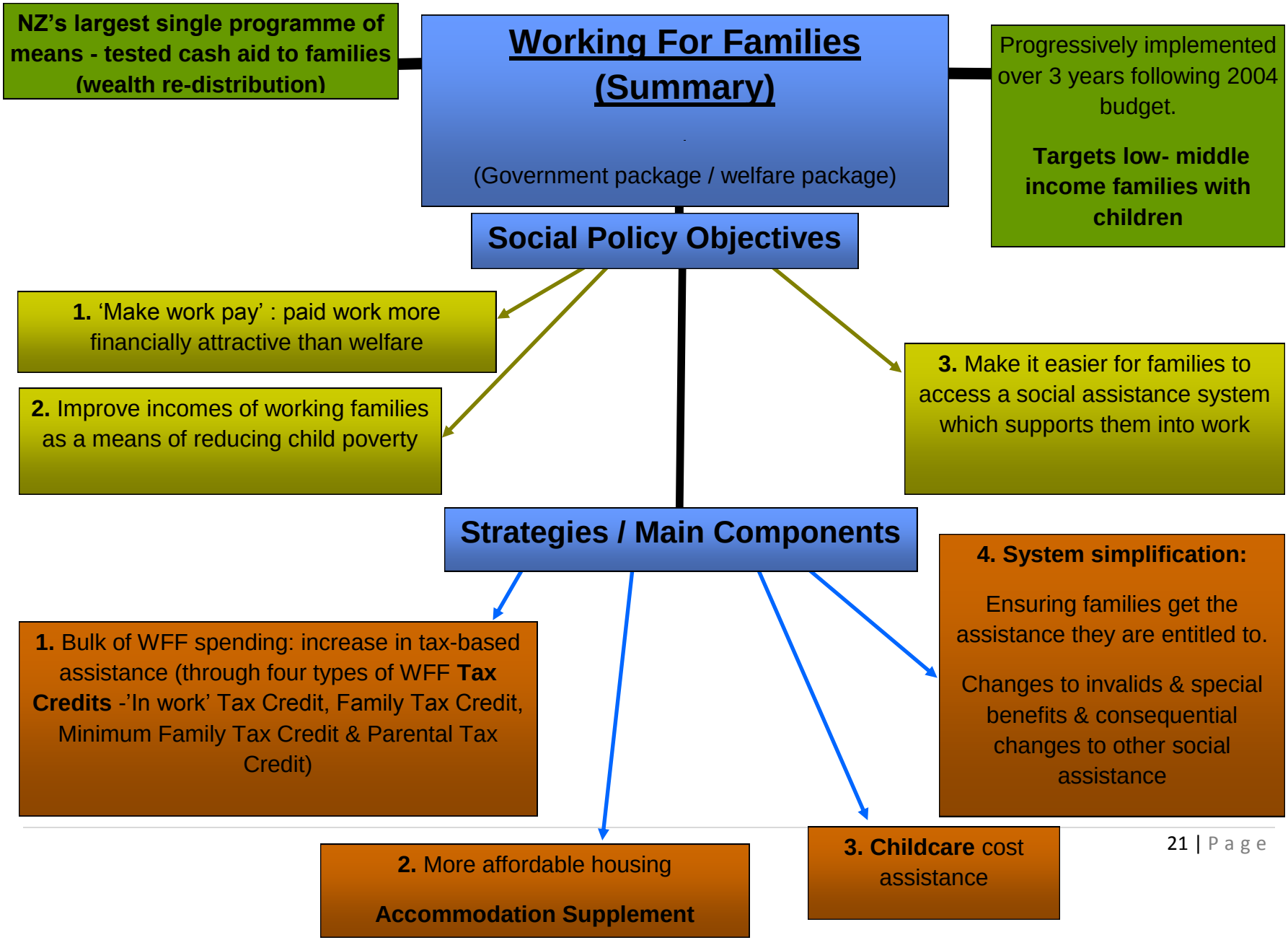
About 75% of beneficiary families (including mixed income source from benefits and paid work) eligible for WFF will be DPB beneficiaries[23] . Around 90% of these beneficiaries are female and 40% identify as Māori.

Diagram (e) below represents key features of WFF.

[22] Dwyer, G. E. (2005). *Dissecting the Working for Families Package*. Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable. www.nzbr.org.nz/documents/publicaiotns/publications-2005/dissecting-wff.pdf. Accessed 28 August 2008.

[23] As above.

Diagram (e) Key Features of WFF



What households do we want to target from the THNR database?

Based on our analysis of the literature we were able to inform THNR researchers about the sample we were interested in identifying for inclusion in the research study. Possible inclusion criteria were:

- those with a dependent child or children aged 18 or under both pre and post introduction (2004) of WFF;
- those with low – middle incomes which would qualify them for assistance under WFF; and,
- (a) Families in paid work- these families may be eligible for three of the four WFF Tax Credits as well as candidates for other components of WFF – childcare subsidy, accommodation supplement and assistance to access WFF support. (b) versus beneficiary and mixed income families (who may be eligible for fewer of the above). A detailed description of WFF eligible whānau included in the study is outlined in the attached technical report, Economic Living Standards for Māori Whānau.

Questions (Q) to be considered in the research

As a result of the literature review, the researchers began to ask a number of questions about WFF. These questions were used both to inform development of interview schedules and thinking about the analysis of data.

Q- What proportion of Māori whānau based households fit into each of the two above categories (a) income from paid work only (b) income from benefits / income from benefits and paid work?

Q-Who is included or excluded under the policy?

Q- How does this distribution of Māori whānau based households across income sources compare with the distribution of the non- Māori population or the population as a whole?

WFF is not ***primarily*** an anti-poverty package: 'The biggest increases in cash assistance under WFF are not accruing to families with incomes below the poverty line (using the 60% of median standard). Rather, families with incomes somewhat above the poverty line receive most of the money out of the package'[24]. Despite this estimates suggest 70% reduction in child poverty since the introduction of WFF.

Q- How do we think about this issue of poverty and income distribution? **How** do we frame it thinking about social exclusion?

[24] Johnson, N (2005). *'Working for Families' in New Zealand: Some Early Lessons*. http://www.fulbright.org.nz/voices/axford/johnson.html accessed 26 august 2008

The Māori Party have clearly identified intergenerational welfare dependency as an issue for Māori[25]: WFF objectives fit with shifting people off welfare.

Q- Is WFF potentially 'good' for Māori, who does it include/exclude?

A conservative or right of centre, perspective on these types of issues is reflected in Business Roundtable material[26] . Welfare is viewed in rather negative terms and is seen as creating dependency taking the onus off the individual to provide for their own family. Welfare dependency is also a constraint on economic growth and development.

Q- How does the WFF policy create greater autonomy for Māori whānau?

While on the one hand there has been a marked drop in the proportion of families with dependents living in poverty, benefits may have accrued to those who don't 'need' them necessarily[27].

Q-Who benefits from WFF?

WFF has been seen by some as discriminatory[28] because it works against people on the basis of their employment status (specifically in relation to the In Work Tax Credit which is denied to beneficiaries. In effect, this means the children of those people – among the poorest – are penalised vis a vis the children of paid workers). However, the Human Rights Review Tribunal has ruled that this is 'justified in a free and democratic society'

Q-Do whānau see this policy as being discriminatory?

The Human Rights Review Tribunal[29] questions however, whether the In Work Tax Credit (IWTC), which directs so much of the pie to better off families, is consistent with WFF objectives.

Q- Is WFF based on flawed logic? The premise underlying WFF is that to exit the poverty trap all we need to do is incentivise people to get off the benefit. This view does not necessarily take a structural approach to understanding barriers to work (i.e. economic systems, cycles of recession, global influences, availability of work etc). The policy largely assumes that people are independent masters of their own economic destinies.

Questions we might want to ask of whānau with respect to the impact of WFF:

We also used the literature review to inform development of our questions to whānau about WFF. Diagram (f) below summarises this.

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[25] http://www.maoriparty.org/index.php?pag=cms&id=180&p=welfare-reform---january-2011.html

[26] Dwyer, G. E. (2005). *Dissecting the Working for Families Package*. Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable. www.nzbr.org.nz/documents/publicaiotns/publications-2005/dissecting-wff.pdf. Accessed 28 August 2008.

[27] http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/fact-sheet-working-families-changes

[28] http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/LEANZ.pdf

[29] http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/LEANZ.pdf

Diagram (f) Developing WFF questions for whānau

Concepts of Wellbeing

Indicators of Wellbeing

The following is a summary of a selection of wellbeing indicators referenced in the literature.

The Social Report 2008[30] defines wellbeing as "those aspects of life that society collectively agrees are important for a person's happiness, quality of life and welfare". In this document, the Ministry of Social Development identifies ten discrete components of wellbeing, namely; health, knowledge and skills, paid work, economic standard of living, civil and political rights, cultural identity, leisure and recreation,

[30] http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Social%20Report%202008_0.pdf

physical environment, safety and social connectedness. These domains together provide a picture of the wellbeing and quality of life in New Zealand as a whole. The MSD monitors trends across each of these domains using a series of statistical indicators.

Mason Durie[31] notes that Māori wellbeing can be considered and assessed from a number of perspectives – from universal measures which are relevant to all people (eg: life expectancy) to Māori specific measures which take into account the unique characteristics of Māori.. In addition it may be necessary to consider wellbeing at the level of the individual, the group or collective and across whole populations.

Henare et al [32] challenge the idea of comparing Māori with others and call for a distinctive set of indicators for measuring Maori wellbeing arguing that:

> *Assessing Māori and Pasifika well-being requires measures based on Māori and Pasifika notions of what constitutes a good life. The Māori world view, for example, locates humans within a matrix of spiritual, cosmic, environmental, kinship and economic spheres of existence. Mauri is the binding force between the spiritual and the physical. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as a measure of standards of living fails to measure outcomes in all of these spheres. The gap that should be measured is the gap between Māori and Pasifika aspirations and the realities for their children.*

Kiro et al [33] ,in their report *Trends in wellbeing for Maori whānau,* use a range of wellbeing indicators including information on housing, income, and occupation from Census data. In addition they have utilised other sources of information including the New Zealand Health Survey, the Child and Youth Epidemiology Service, the Youth Health Survey, the Ministry of Social Development's Social Reports, Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE), the Household Economic Survey (HES), the New Zealand Health Survey (NZHS) and the Household Labour Force Survey(HLFS) to assess wellbeing.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa[34] (Best Outcomes for Māori) aims to measure a range of geographic, economic, cultural and social circumstances representing the diverse realities of contemporary Māori in

[31] New Zealand Treasury Guest Lecture Series. *Measuring Māori Wellbeing,* Mason Durie, Massey University, 1 August 2006 Wellington

[32] Henare, M., Puckey, A. Nicholson, A. (2011) *He Ara Hou: The Pathway Forward. Getting it right for Aotearoa New Zealand's Māori and Pasifika children*. Mira Szászy Research Centre, University of Auckland, New Zealand, commissioned by Every Child Counts.

[33] Kiro, C., von Randow, M., Sporle, A. (2010) *Trends in well-being for Māori households/families, 1981-2006.* Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, www.maramatanga.ac.nz.

[34] Cunningham, C., Stevenson, B., Fitzgerald, E., Rolls, R., (2006), *Māori women in Aotearoa*, A report prepared for Ministry of Women's Affairs. Research Centre for Māori Health and Development, Massey University.

Aotearoa/New Zealand (Cunningham et al., 2006). Data collected by THNR is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this report.

Whānau Ora

Whānau ora was initially understood to mean "Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing" [35]. Whānau ora was the ultimate aim of the government's Māori health policy, He Korowai Oranga. The concept has, since its introduction, evolved and become even further entrenched not only in health service delivery for Māori, but in the social services sector through the introduction in 2010 of the Whānau Ora Approach to Social Service Delivery[36] . Whānau ora may now be regarded as a key strategy of New Zealand health and social policy for Māori. It ostensibly charts the path towards reducing inequalities between Māori and non-Māori as well as towards improving Māori health and social wellbeing outcomes at individual, community and population levels.

The concept of whānau ora emerged from a body of work driven by Māori health providers, community leaders, policy makers and Māori academics. Practical examples of whānau ora approaches may be found within the range of Māori health promotion/community development and primary health contracts currently in use. Some of these models have gained general acceptance amongst mainstream service providers and are clearly described in the academic literature[37] . Others are specific to individual providers and may have emerged from the unique tikanga of the organisation or from its associated iwi [38]/[39].

Whereas the concept of whānau ora, whether as a goal or a model of service delivery, has been extensively promoted and articulated by central government, in the community setting a common understanding or definition of whānau ora remains elusive. The term "whānau ora" is often loosely interpreted and while an agreed appreciation and understanding is often assumed, anecdotal evidence from the community suggests that, on the contrary, understandings of whānau ora are diverse and often context-specific.

The whānau-centred framework outlined in the Taskforce Report [12]contains five domains of whānau impact namely: a whānau aspirational aim; principles; whānau outcome goals; whānau-centred services; and a Whānau Ora Trust. In reviewing whānau ora outcome indicators we have focussed on the third of

[35] Ministry of Health, (2002). *He Korowai Oranga: The Māori Health Strategy*. Wellington: The Ministry of Health.

[36] Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010). *Whānau Ora: Report of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives*. Report produced for Hon Tariana Turia, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

[37] Durie, M. (2004). An indigenous model of health promotion. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*. Vol 15; 3

[38] Gifford H. (1999). *A Case Study of Whānau Ora: A Māori Health Promotion Model*. Unpublished Master of Public Health Thesis, Otago University, Dunedin.

[39] Boulton, A. (2007). Taking Account of Culture: The Contracting Experience of Māori Mental Health Providers, *AlterNative*, Issue 3, 2007: 124-141.

these five domains: the whānau outcome goals. According to the Taskforce Framework[40] the whānau outcomes goals will be met, and therefore whānau will be regarded as having achieved a state of whānau ora, when they are able to demonstrate that they are self-managing, living healthy lifestyles, participating fully in society, confidently participating in te ao Māori, economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation and cohesive, resilient and nurturing.

Informing the framework used for analysis of WFF

After reviewing the literature, we decided to use both the MSD social report indicators and the Whānau Ora Taskforce outcomes as measures of wellbeing. These measures were selected because the key research question in the research study was focussed on understanding how Government policy impacted on a key Government goal; the achievement of whānau ora. Using tools or indicators developed by Government, and in the case of the whānau ora indicators informed by Māori leaders, were deemed the most appropriate measures for two key reasons. Firstly the analytical framework uses tools already accepted by Government as valid measures and secondly reviewing comparisons across indicator sets there appeared to be a good alignment across the MSD social report indicators, Whānau Ora Taskforce outcomes, THNR and potential WFF outcomes (refer Table 2 below).

The analytical framework served three key purposes. Firstly it allowed the researchers to see the linkages between the Whānau Ora taskforce outcomes and the Social Report Indicators (both key indicator sets used to measure Māori wellbeing outcomes). Secondly we could map across to THNR and see if we could retrieve data from THNR to enable measurement across time for whānau and then compare the results with other Government indicators. Thirdly the framework provided a useful tool to potentially indicate where we thought WFF could make a difference to wellbeing.

[40] Turia T (2010). Whānau Ora: report of the taskforce on Whānau-centred initiatives. Report produced for Hon Tariana Turia, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Table 2 WFF analytical framework for whānau wellbeing indicators

MSD Social Report Indicators	**WO Taskforce outcomes**	**THNR** **Māori Wellbeing Indicators**[41]	**Indicators impacted on by access to WFF**[42]
Health	living healthy lifestyles	√	Potentially
Paid Work	participating fully in society	√	Potentially
Education	participating fully in society	√	potentially
Standard of Living; Food, Transport Housing Heating	economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation	√	potentially
Cultural Identity	confidently participating in te ao Maori	√	potentially
Leisure and Recreation	participating fully in society	Some	Potentially
Physical Environment			
Safety			
Social Connectedness	cohesive, resilient and nurturing.	√	Potentially
Human Rights	self-managing		

[41] The tick in the box for THNR under various indicator headings means that THNR surveys collect data on the indicator and changes can be assessed over time

[42] The researchers hypothesised that WFF could potentially impact on a number of wellbeing indicators

Constructs for reviewing policy

Social policy is one mechanism that the state can use to pursue equity and social justice for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. Social policy needs to be viewed in the context of history, politics and ongoing trends and issues both within the country of interest and globally. The policy evaluation literature is extensive and includes a range of perspectives from many disciplines. It is outside the scope of this study to summarise this vast literature. We have therefore chosen to focus only on constructs and frameworks that we consider relevant to the WFF policy or which have been used to review the WFF policy.

Six key frameworks have been used, or could usefully be used, to review the WFF policy:

- a reducing inequalities policy framework[43] ;
- various evaluation models including process and outcome evaluation[44] ;
- a human rights framework[45] ;
- Social Inclusion Theory[46];
- economic analysis[47]; and,
- a Treaty of Waitangi analysis[48].

[43] Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, (2003). *Reducing Inequalities: Next Steps*. http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy -development/reducing -inequalities/index.html. Accessed 26 August 2008;
Children's Commissioner (2008) Briefing for Incoming Minister. Office of the Children's Commissioner. Wellington.

[44]Duignan, P. (2002). Building Social Policy Evaluation Capacity. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro.* Issue 19.

St John, S. (1997) The Measure of Success for Beyond Dependency: Aims, Methods and Evaluation. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro.* Issue 8.

Wehipeihana N, Pipi K (2008). Working for families tax credits: barriers to take up from potentially eligible families. Wellington, Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited.

[45] Mardini, J (2007) Does Every Child Count; A child rights-based evaluation of Working For Families policy development. Masters of Public Health Dissertation. (Unpublished) Otago University.

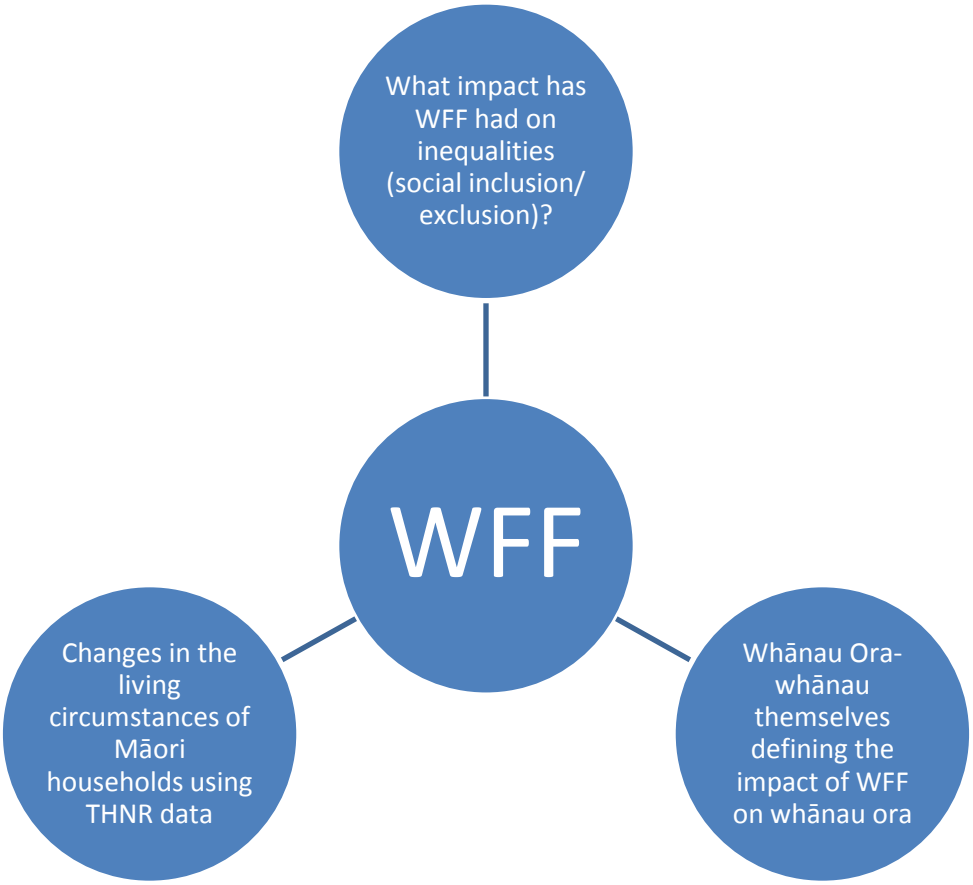
[46] Peace, R. (2001) Social Exclusion: a concept in need of definition? *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro.* Issue 16.

[47] Dale, C. Wynd, D. St John, S. O'Brien M. (2010) What Work Counts; Work incentives and sole parent families. A Child Poverty Action Group Monograph;

Centre for Social Research and Evaluation and Inland Revenue (2010) *Changing Families' Financial Support and Incentives for Working: The summary report of the evaluation of the Working for Families package.* Ministry of Social Development and Inland Revenue, Wellington, New Zealand.

After consideration of the wider literature, we opted to develop and utilise an overarching analytical framework in our review of the impact of WFF policy. This framework complements the wellbeing indicators framework also developed and described above. The former includes a focus on inequalities, self-defined whānau ora and changes in living circumstances in Māori households. This overarching analytical framework, diagrammatically represented in (g) below, was used to guide our analysis of the data. It was used in combination with the Table 2 Whānau wellbeing indicators to review impact of the WFF policy on whānau.

Diagram (g) Overarching analytical framework for WFF policy review



[48] *Barrett, M. Connolly-Stone, K. (1998)* The Treaty of Waitangi and Social Policy. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro.* Issue 11.

Key outputs from the literature review

1. An annotated bibliography of material reviewed to inform the study was produced (Appendix One).
2. An increased understanding of the WFF policy; this then enabled development of the research questions.
3. A review of a range of wellbeing indicators; this then informed development of the analytical framework for whānau wellbeing indicators for WFF.
4. An understanding of key concepts and frameworks for reviewing policy; this then informed the broader analytical framework for the research.

3. Phase Two - Policy makers views of the WFF policy

Face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants focusing on the intent and expected target audience for the WFF policy. Interview data played an important role in clarifying the expectations and intended outcomes of the WFF policy from a range of perspectives. It was expected that more detailed information could be gleaned from these interviews than from review of policy documents alone enabling a broader understanding of WFF policy.

During the period October 2009 - March 2010,ten key informants were interviewed from a range of sector groups including politicians closely involved with the development of the policy, policy analysts from the two Government Departments largely involved in implementing the policy, key advocacy groups and academics. The latter were those who had previously commented on the policy and had been involved in Government working parties on WFF. Four of the ten informants were Māori.

Face to face interviews were conducted for a number of reasons including that interviewers would be able to probe more fully for responses and that more information of greater depth than that able to be generated through a survey or telephone interview was likely to be gathered. In some instances repeated follow up calls and utilisation of personal networks was required to secure interviews with the ten participants.

An interview schedule (attached as Appendix Three) was developed based on questions raised by the literature review. Interviews were audio recorded (with permission) and transcribed after the interview. Analysis was carried out by the WRMHD team of researchers using a mahi a roopu approach developed by Whakauae; a researcher from the team carried out initial analysis of the data and then presented this to the wider research team to carry out additional collective analysis. The team as a whole undertook inductive, thematic analysis of the primary data as it was being gathered to distill meaning from this and to inform ongoing interviews. Interview data, once transcribed, was subject to content analysis allowing for the development of categories in which to place processes and behaviours. Data was organised around key themes (based on the research questions) and further examined to see how well it failed or fitted the categories developed.

The following article was produced as a result of data analysis undertaken during 2010 and was published as a Full Paper in Conference Proceedings, Research with Māori Policy Makers; Key Learnings, Oral Presentation at Māori Association of Social Scientists Conference, 1-3rd December, 2010 AUT, Auckland. In addition a summary of the results was presented to other Māori academics at the Indigenous Research Wānanga, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga in November 2010.

Making Work Pay: Policymakers Perspectives on 'Working for Families'

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keywords: social policy, whanau ora, poverty

Introduction

Critical analysis of the effects of public policy, in particular, policy that will directly impact on Māori whānau and communities, is a fundamental contribution Māori social science researchers make to the academy. In this paper we present early findings from a three year research project, "Reducing inequalities: analysing the effect of Government policy on whānau ora". The paper focuses on preliminary analysis of the first set of data collected, namely key informant interviews conducted with policy makers involved in the development of the Working for Families (WFF) policy, exploring their understandings of the policy and its implementation. Four key themes, emerging from the key informant interview data, are presented for discussion: the context for, and background to, the policy; perceptions of policy intent; views of the philosophical underpinnings; and policy implementation. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications for Māori communities of this complex and multi-faceted policy, noting that increasing whānau knowledge about the policy, and its benefits, is crucial to the improvement of whānau wellbeing within our communities.

Background

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the New Zealand government identified that a coordinated and collaborative effort on its part was required to reduce persistent social and economic inequalities between Māori and non-Māori (Ministry of Health, 2002a). These efforts were, until recently, conducted under the Reducing Inequalities Framework; a policy platform comprising a broad range of initiatives across the whole of government aimed at improving the social and economic wellbeing not only of Māori, but of Pacific Island and other disadvantaged populations (Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, 2003). The purpose of this research project is to determine whether the Working for Families policy, a key element of the broader Reducing Inequalities Framework, has contributed towards achieving the government's stated goal in Māori health: whānau ora.

The government's overall goal for Māori health, as outlined in the Māori Health Strategy He Korowai Oranga, is the achievement of whānau ora or Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing (Ministry of Health, 2002b). Whānau ora is also a major vision for Māori, capturing both the sense of the collective and the relevant Māori view of health. However, measuring whānau ora and whānau ora outcomes, particularly in health, has proved both an analytical and practical problem, for researchers, policymakers and funders alike. Whānau ora as a concept, is now firmly entrenched in health. However, the establishment by

Cabinet in June 2009 of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (Turia, 2010), along with a budget appropriation in 2010 to support this initiative has consequently led to the adoption and use of the concept in the human and social service fields more widely.

This study pre-dates the creation of 2010 Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives and does not seek to examine or evaluate that policy. The origins of the study presented here derive from a Request for Research Proposals (RFP) released by the Health Research Council of New Zealand and the Foundation for Research Science and Technology. These two research funders specifically sought "whānau ora" research that would address multiple indicators of Māori social and health inequality; contribute to an improved understanding of the interrelated causes; and identify potential approaches to addressing these inequalities. In response, this study intends to contribute to our understanding of the impact of government policy on whānau ora by tracking Māori household economic and other social indicators over time and in relation to the introduction of the Working for Families (WFF) policy.

Working for Families was introduced in 2004 as a means of addressing a number of social policy goals. The policy's objectives were to reduce child poverty; to improve the incomes of working families; to strengthen work incentives for unemployed parents; and to make it easier for families to access financial assistance (Johnson, 2005). Components of the policy include increasing family incomes, making work pay, assisting with childcare costs and more affordable housing for families (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). While the research team recognise evaluation of the WFF policy has been given consideration (Wehipeihana & Pipi, 2008; Bryson et al, 2007; Evans et al, 2007) to our knowledge this is the first time research is being undertaken which specifically investigates the links between WFF and whānau ora outcomes.

Methods

The research design for the full, three-year study adopts a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Cresswell, 2003). The study comprises four discrete data collection activities: interviews with key informants regarding the intent and expected target audience for the policy; identifying households in the longitudinal survey Te Hoe Nuku Roa (Te Hoe Nuku Roa Research Team, 1999) who qualify for the WFF; analysis of these households over time to assess how their whānau wellbeing has changed since the introduction of the policy; and interviews with a subset of these households to gather in-depth data on their understanding of the policy and its perceived effects on their whānau wellbeing.

The findings presented here are derived from the key informant interviews conducted between October 2009 and April 2010. The interviews were conducted following an in-depth literature review and analysis of the WFF policy and played an important role in clarifying and further elucidating expectations and intended outcomes. Key informants included policymakers, (Ministers and policy officials), advocates and academics; participants who were either involved in the development and implementation of the WFF policy, or worked with those affected by the policy. In total ten face-to-face interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule (Bowling, 1997; Polit & Hungler, 1995, Crabtree & Miller, 1992) and of these ten participants, four identified as Māori.

Key informants were purposively selected after our initial review of the literature (including "grey literature" such as Cabinet papers and policy working papers). In determining who to interview, we targeted three "types" of informants: those who either had been, or were at the time of the interviews, involved in the development and implementation of the policy; those who had acted as advisers to the government as the policy was being formulated; and those who had acted in

an advocacy role for the very people the policy sought to effect. Key informants therefore came from across the country, although, given our parameters, policy officials tended to be located in Wellington, and included both males and females.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed and a thematic analysis completed individually by the interviewers who conducted each interview. In a process termed “mahi a roopu” a team of four senior researchers then undertook a further stage of analysis and synthesis. In accordance with the mahi a roopu approach the team, as a group, reviewed all the transcripts and draft themes identified by the interviewers; analysed transcripts thematically against the interview schedules to draw out the key messages and analysed transcripts for new, emergent themes.

The mahi a roopu approach to qualitative data analysis and synthesis has a number of benefits: analysis is strengthened through the critical input of experienced Māori researchers as opposed to being produced by a sole research practitioner in isolation; authenticity, reliability and rigour are maintained by a number of researchers reviewing transcripts; and the merits of “outlying” themes can be discussed and considered. However there are also limitations to this method of analysis; the primary one being it is a particularly resource- and time- intensive method of analysis. In addition, the method requires a research environment where all views are treated with respect, where rigorous debate can occur, and where consensus can ultimately be achieved. In our research centre the perceived limitations of this method of analysis are mitigated by fully costing our time for this data analysis approach into project budgets and the existence of a “flat”, non-hierarchical working environment.

Limitations

The findings reported here must be considered in light of the study’s more general limitations. The data is derived from a small group of highly educated key informants who each have intimate knowledge of the policy. Chosen specifically for this detailed and expert knowledge, the informants therefore represent a distinct sub-group of the population. It must also be noted that at this early stage of the project we have adopted the He Korowai Oranga definition of “whānau ora”. In the next phase of the research, the whānau interviews, a more sophisticated definition may be developed.

Findings

Background to the policy

In late 1999, the governing National Party was defeated. The Labour Party, then led by Helen Clark in coalition with Alliance led by Jim Anderton, formed the new government. There were significant expectations on the part of the electorate that the new government address increasing levels of child poverty and increase support for working families.

> With the levels of poverty that have been left over from the 80’s and 90’s ... the argument was that a good number of families were in a situation where there simply wasn’t enough money in the house and that they were somewhat trapped into a benefit because there was no incentive to move into work because you lost money, housing costs were too high, so there was a concern with that. And as people will know really for quite some time the New Zealand state had moved away from redistribution of wealth and compensation for having children. In other words, there was nothing in it to have children and ... so there was nothing in it for families really. So families, poverty, lack of income, lack of incentive, housing costs, it was that kind

> of back drop that lead us to say that we should try and do something about that situation. Key Informant 2

There was also a sense that the new Labour Government had to win back the support of the country, overcome a great deal of voter mistrust and essentially "do something to restore a sense that Government could make a difference in your life ... positively" Key Informant 2.

The WFF policy was introduced against a backdrop of previous welfare reform that had been led out by a socially conservative government throughout much of the 1990s. These reforms included a strong emphasis on means testing and a limited role for the state. These earlier policies were regarded by some commentators as being discriminatory against the disadvantaged and vulnerable in society (McTaggart, 2005); a view that was echoed by at least one informant.

> If you think of all the things that went the other way through the 1980s and 1990s, there was GST which is regressive against poor people, there was two tax cuts during the National's period in the 1990's, both of which favoured higher income groups. This package reversed that trend and for a one-off intervention, is quite historic. Key Informant 6

Informants noted the policy had been introduced during a period of economic upturn, low unemployment and a workforce shortage. Further, the policy's introduction benefited from a Minister with an understanding of the issues and a willingness to lead the policy.

> We had a Minister that really understood ... he was a social scientist ... and that is fairly rare in Government because Ministers aren't necessarily trained for what they become Ministers of... and we had a Minister of Finance who had been a Minister of Social Development or Social Welfare as it was then. Key Informant 6

Philosophical underpinnings

Underpinning the WFF policy was a range of values including: work is good for society, people should work when they can, "everyone should be in work" (Key Informant 4) and "a dollar earned was actually a better dollar than a dollar of benefit income" (Key Informant 9). Other assumptions contributed to the approach adopted to address the social problems identified; assumptions such as the poor not knowing how to use money wisely "you give the poor money and it won't make any difference because they don't know how to use" (Key Informant 4) and dependency on the state being a "bad" thing as opposed to independence from state support, which was to be encouraged. This discourse was consistent in all of the key informant interviews.

> I think there's a stereotype view that says you give the poor money and it won't make any difference because they don't know how to use it and all that sort of stuff. It's just this incredible fear of giving poor people enough money because then they might continue to enjoy their lifestyle. Key Informant 4

> Well it creates dependence because where does this money come from? This money comes from tax payers and its tax payer money that's gone to the state. So when you start then returning money in whatever form, to groups of people, you are creating welfare dependence. Key Informant 1

Children were considered a priority group and there was a belief, held by the architects of the policy that society had an overall responsibility to care for them. The idea of children being a collective responsibility may have supported the goal to get mothers returning to the workforce, including mothers caring for dependent children.

> It's a collective issue that people have kids and we want them all fed properly and clothed properly and housed properly and that's what countries do. Key Informant 2

> The child care stuff was done for two reasons ... to free women up to go back into the work force and there's lots of accusations and finger pointing about that, and secondly it was done because of the evidence emerging about the power of early childhood education for quality education to actually equalise outcomes for children in terms of education and income. Key Informant 8

Policy intent

The policy intent clearly spelt out in the Cabinet papers and confirmed by officials themselves was threefold "to ensure people got the assistance they were entitled to, improving income adequacy ... and making work pay." (Key Informant 7).

> So to be realistic it [the policy] set out to substantially reduce child poverty and it did that big time, it delivered and there's just a heap of evidence ... it was, as I was saying before, the largest redistribution of income downwards in three decades. Key Informant 6

Wealth re-distribution however, was directed at those trying to work or in employment and consisted of incentives to enter the workforce and adequate supports to enable people to take on work. A deliberate and stepped approach was envisaged.

> So step one, get their income up, and do it decisively, step two, create a bridge to work, step three, you know, try to provide a model of support which would ensure that people felt like they were been properly supported to go to work which meant things like childcare and good career advice and so on. Key Informant 2

Implementing the policy

The development and implementation of the policy was strongly influenced by the socio-political context of the time. While initially crafted to include both beneficiaries and working families, the political risks inherent in including beneficiaries in the policy were deemed too great and resulted in this group eventually being excluded.

> There was a lot of concern about whether Working for Families was a good idea because it had quite a large price tag, it applied to people that were beneficiaries. It applied to people in other words, who a lot of the population had built up a lot of hostility to. Key Informant 2

Only families with children were eligible for the benefits of the WFF policy. In talking about single people and couples without children one informant noted that these people "missed out badly" and that certain groups such as widows "have fallen through" what may be regarded as a "safety net." Key Informant 10

The language used in conveying the concepts of the policy were also highly reflective of the socio-political context. The use of certain phrases as the policy was being developed ensured support for the policy from other politicians and government departments and made the policy more palatable to the wider voting public. However, as the policy was being implemented, so too, the language used to describe the policy evolved and changed.

> It was called “family support”, “bridge to work”, all these kinds of things, so we had all our core messages were around these kinds of positive things that this would do ... but at one sweeping media conference it was changed to “tax credit” when it was expanded and that was because the Prime Minister felt that tax credit sounded, tax cut in fact ... sounded a whole lot better than talking about family support and return to work. Key Informant 2

Conclusion

The key informant interviews were undertaken to explore and understand the intent of the policy, the target audience, the policy development context and barriers to implementation. The key informants all clearly agreed that the expectations held by the electorate to address child poverty required the then, newly formed Labour government, to be seen to be addressing the issue of child poverty. The mechanisms the new government chose to employ for decreasing poverty levels included family support targeted at low and middle income families; and developing a work environment enabling of change. The government was perceived as committed to demonstrating that they could improve on previous government policies, and as having the strength of leadership and political will necessary for policy change. Our early findings indicate that the new government believed there was solid evidence within the electorate, and from officials and advisors, to support the interventions proposed.

Undertaking this first phase of data collection, has not only enabled the research team to gain a much greater understanding of the expectations and intended outcomes of the WFF policy, but also highlighted the need for additional Māori-focused research in the area. For example it is outside the scope of the current research to explore the impact on whānau of exclusion from the policy, as only those in receipt of the policy are being interviewed. The knowledge we have gained from this first phase of the study will now be used to inform the qualitative interviews with whānau to be undertaken by December 2010. The preliminary findings from the key informant already indicate that the policy’s complexity could negatively impact its uptake by Māori whānau. It is therefore crucial that, in the course of undertaking this research, Māori whānau are made aware of the policy and the benefits it provides so that we maximise the policy’s contribution to whānau, and indeed community, wellbeing more broadly.

Acknowledgements

This project is funded by the Health Research Council and the Foundation for Research Science and Technology.

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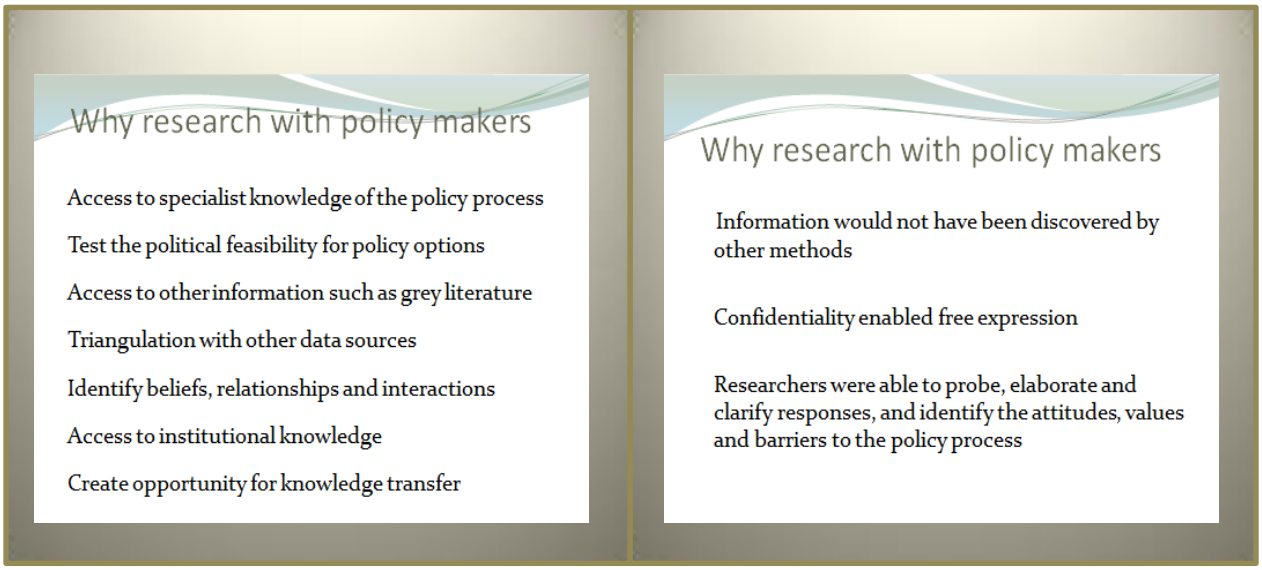
Reviewing the method: interviewing policy makers.

In addition to writing up the results of this data analysis, we reviewed use of the method; interviewing policy makers. Results of this methods review were presented at the Māori Association of Social Scientists (MASS) Conference held on 01 - 03 December 2010 at AUT, Auckland. Oral presentation at this Conference was complemented by written summary material. This is reproduced below.



Who do we include as policy-makers

Policy makers includes bureaucracy, elected politicians, academics, and those focused on both implementation and formal policy decision making

What research projects have used policy- maker interviews?

WRMHD has been conducting research with Māori policy makers over the past four years focusing on three distinctive research areas; Healthy Eating Healthy Action, Working for Families Policy and Smoke free Environments

Research Design: Recruitment Purposive and Snowball

Initial list:

- Personal networks
- Identifying organisations through documentation
- Advice from key players

Research Design: Recruitment Purposive and Snowball

Final list:

- Ethnicity of interviewee
- Knowledge, closeness to policy process
- Potential ability to affect policy
- Balance between positive and negative attitudes
- Ability to fill gaps in information
- Ability to speak freely on the issue

Research Design: Recruitment and initial approaches

Cold calling.

Calling within the researchers personal network

letter s posted and/or emailed

Follow up phone calls and/or emails

Research Design: Qualitative In-Depth Interviews

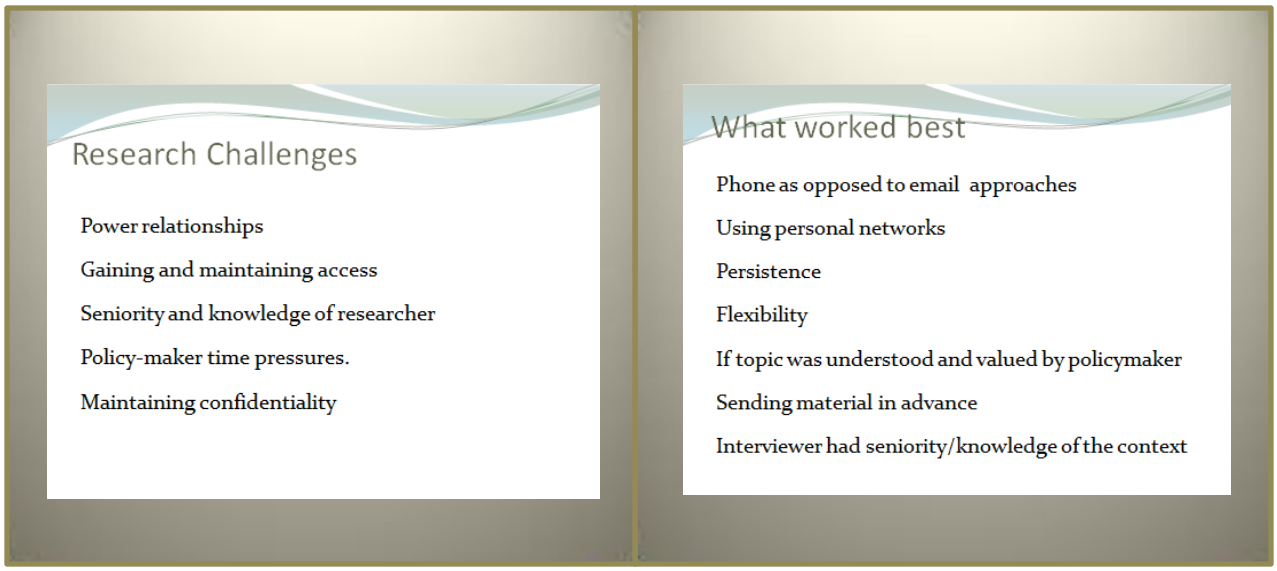
Open ended interview schedule

Mix of face to face and telephone interviews

Average length of interview 45mins

Audio recorded

Transcribed



As a result of this work, researchers from Whakauae are also co-authoring a related paper with Louise Signal, Sharron Bowers, Richard Edwards, Sheena Hudson, Gabrielle Jenkin, Tolotea Lanumata, Marie Russell, George Thompson, and Mathew Walton. The paper entitled *Process, Pitfalls and Profits: lessons from interviewing New Zealand policy-makers* will be submitted for publication during 2012. The abstract below outlines the paper's intent and conclusions:

> *Little has been written about interviewing policy-makers in public health research. This paper explores the process, pitfalls and profits of semi-structured interviews with policy-makers in ten policy research projects conducted in New Zealand. Key members of each research team were surveyed about their research and findings verified against research publications. Key aspects of the process of policy-maker interviews include navigating gatekeepers, utilising personal contacts to gain access and multiple research dissemination methods. Pitfalls of interviewing policy-makers included interviewers not having enough knowledge of the topic under investigation so efforts were made to use knowledgeable researchers or up-skill others. Interviews provide access to specialist knowledge of the policy process which cannot be obtained by other methods. While this study was conducted in one jurisdiction, it has implications for other countries. Effective policy-maker interviews in public health policy research could contribute to improvements in the quality of data collected and uptake of research by policy-makers.*

Key outputs from policy maker interviews

1. A paper was produced that enabled the research team to gain a much greater understanding of the expectations and intended outcomes of the WFF policy. This highlighted the need for additional Māori-focussed research in the area.

2. A summary of the paper was discussed with Māori academics at the Indigenous Research Wānanga, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, in Nov 2010.

3. Previously unavailable literature was successfully accessed as a result of the face-to-face contact made through key informant interviews. Interviews provided a useful opportunity to identify relevant material and request copies of this.

4. An opportunity to review the methods involved in interviewing policy makers; in particular from a Māori perspective. This analysis was presented at the Māori Association of Social Scientists Conference in 2010.

5. Through shared research interests a number of public health researchers have since collaborated on a developing a paper entitled Process*, Pitfalls, and Profits: lessons from interviewing New Zealand policy-makers*. It is intended that this paper will be published in 2012.

4. Phase Three - Using THNR to review the impact of WFF on Māori whānau

Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) is the longest-running longitudinal survey of Māori households undertaken. The study design is described elsewhere[49] and in 2010 comprised a survey of a random sample of 850 Maori households (including approximately 2500 individuals) across seven Regional Council areas: Northland, Auckland, Gisborne, Manawatu/Whanganui, Wellington, Nelson/Marlborough and Southland. The survey is administered to the same people/households at 3-5 year intervals. The 3-5 year interval interviews or 'waves' cluster all the first interviews with each household together as Wave 1, the second as Wave 2 and so on. The initial survey (Wave 1) began late in 1995.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa adds new people to the sample if they join a household already participating in the longitudinal survey and may add extra (totally new) households and regions over time. For example, the Northland and Southland regions were added in Wave 4 and Nelson/Marlborough in Wave 5. The tool used for the first four sampling waves was an omnibus survey which asked a broad range of questions on lifestyle, culture, te reo Maori, education, health, income, employment and household composition. The Wave 4 questionnaire added detailed questions on whānau membership and interaction dynamics, as well as the addition of an Economic Living Standards Indicator[50] which had been developed through collaboration with the Ministry for Social Development[51]. The dataset is held at the Research Centre for Maori Health and Development, Massey University.

This phase of our research, using THNR to review the impact of WFF on whānau , consisted of three key stages:

- households in the THNR dataset with characteristics qualifying them for assistance under the WFF policy were identified;
- quantitative analysis of these households was carried out over time to assess how whānau wellbeing had changed since the introduction of the policy; and,
- Indepth interviews were carried out with a subset of those households to gather information about their understanding of the policy and its perceived impacts on whānau wellbeing.

Four major outputs were produced during this phase of the research:

[49] Durie, M. H. (1995). Te Hoe Nuku Roa Framework: A Māori Identity Measure. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 104(4), 461-470.

[50] Jensen, J., Spittal, M., and Krishnan, V. (2005) *ELSI Short Form: User Manual for a Direct Measure of Living Standards*. Ministry of Social Development, Wellington, New Zealand.

[51] Cunningham, C.W., et al., (2002). *Living Standards of Older Māori*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

- publication of a paper in the *Kotuitui Journal* (2011) analysing the qualitative data from whānau interviews;
- production of a technical report examining aspects of the quantitative analysis undertaken;
- production of a paper highlighting key learnings from the technical report. This has been accepted for presentation at the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference to be held in June 2012; and,
- preparation of a paper, Whānau Ora; He Whakaaro ā Whānau: Māori family views of whānau ora currently in draft, which links whānau concepts of wellbeing with the broader whānau ora outcomes framework derived from the Taskforce[52].

Included below, corresponding with the above list of research outputs, are (1) the *Kotuitui Journal* paper (2) the executive summary from the technical report (3) the abstract for the paper that has been accepted for delivery at the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference and (4) the draft paper to be submitted to the *Journal of Qualitative Social Work* in 2012 for peer review and potential publication.

Phase Three Research Output (1) *Article published in Kotuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences (November 2011).*

Title: Implementing Working for Families: the impact of the policy on selected Māori whānau

Authors: Amohia Boulton, Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development
Heather Gifford, Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development

Abstract This paper presents analysis of qualitative data collected for a study investigating the effect of the Working for Families policy on Māori families' self-reported whānau ora (family wellbeing). Data is drawn from a discrete set of thirty qualitative interviews undertaken with Māori whānau involved in the Te Hoe Nuku Roa Longitudinal Study. Whānau perceptions about how the Working for Families policy has impacted their lives and the contribution the policy has made towards their family's wellbeing is presented. The paper discusses how the Working for Families policy appears to have become an integral component of household income for many low- to middle-income whānau and reflects on how this policy, conceived and designed, among other things, to alleviate and redress child poverty, is contributing towards supporting family wellbeing or "whānau ora".

Keywords: Maori, whānau, family, Social Policy, wellbeing

[52] Turia T (2010). Whanau Ora: report of the taskforce on Whanau-centred initiatives. Report produced for Hon Tariana Turia, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Acknowledgements: This study was funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and the Foundation of Research Science and Technology (FRST) through the HRC Partnership Programme. The Research Centre for Māori Health and Development, Massey University provided the sample and Sue Triggs provides statistical advice to the project. We would also like to thank the many whānau members who willingly gave of their time to participate in this research.

INTRODUCTION

The Working for Families (WFF) policy introduced in the 2004 Budget, signalled a significant change in how, and to whom, welfare distribution would occur in New Zealand. At the time, WFF formed part of the then-Labour government's broader Reducing Inequalities Framework; a policy platform comprising a broad range of initiatives across the whole of government aimed at improving the social and economic wellbeing of disadvantaged populations including Māori (Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment 2003). Working for Families, as it was originally conceived, sought to address a number of social policy goals namely: to reduce child poverty; to improve the incomes of working families; to strengthen work incentives for unemployed parents; and to make it easier for families to access financial assistance (Johnson 2005). Elements of the policy include a range of tax credits for low to middle income families, assistance with childcare costs and housing subsidies (Ministry of Social Development 2008).

In 2009, Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development Research embarked on a three-year study (*Reducing inequalities: Analysing the Effect of Government Policy on Whānau Ora*) to explore the impact of the Working for Families policy on Māori whānau ora, or family wellbeing. This paper presents preliminary findings from qualitative interview data with Māori whānau who have been in receipt of Working for Families tax credits and/or other components of the policy. Three key themes are reported and discussed: how Working for Families support was received and used by the whānau; the impact that receiving Working for Families support had on these whānau; and the link, if any, between the financial assistance they received from Working for Families and "whānau ora", where the concept of whānau ora was defined by each family.

BACKGROUND

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the New Zealand government identified that a coordinated and collaborative effort on its part was required to reduce persistent social and economic inequalities between Māori and non-Māori (Ministry of Health 2002a). These efforts were, until recently, conducted under the Reducing Inequalities Framework; a policy platform which sought to improve the social and economic wellbeing of Maori, Pacific Island and other disadvantaged populations (Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment 2003). Working for Families comprises a package or "suite" of social welfare benefits. It targets low-to-middle income families with dependent children (Perry 2004) with the aim of providing

incentives to those families to participate in the paid workforce and, by extension, contribute to a reduction in child poverty (True 2005). An important feature of the policy is its focus on tax-based assistance through a system of tax credits (Johnson 2005). Components of the policy include increasing family incomes, making work pay, assisting with childcare costs and more affordable housing for families (Ministry of Social Development 2008).

In addition to employing social welfare policies such as WFF to address inequalities, the government's objectives in this regard have been clearly articulated through a range of health strategy documents, including the New Zealand Health Strategy (Ministry of Health 2002a), the Primary Health Care Strategy (Ministry of Health 2001), the Māori Health Strategy: He Korowai Oranga (Ministry of Health 2002b). The government's overall goal for Māori health, as outlined in the Māori Health Strategy He Korowai Oranga, is the achievement of whānau ora or Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing (Ministry of Health 2002b). Whānau ora is also an important vision for Māori themselves, capturing both the sense that collective effort is required to improve health and social wellbeing and that understandings of wellbeing must be grounded within a Māori worldview.

Some nine years on since its introduction, the concept of whānau ora is now firmly entrenched in the health sector. With the establishment by Cabinet in June 2009 of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (Turia 2010); a budget appropriation in 2010 to support this initiative; and the selection of an initial group of Whānau Ora Providers who must be ready to deliver a programme of action in 2011 (Te Puni Kōkiri 2010), the application of the concept is spreading into the human and social service fields more broadly. However, measuring whānau ora and whānau ora outcomes, particularly in health, has proved both an analytical and practical problem, for researchers, policymakers and funders alike. In part, this is due to the lack of a single, consistent and globally understood definition of whānau ora, not just amongst those who make policy and those charged with implementing policy, but also amongst health and social service providers themselves. The ultimate objective of this research project is to make a determination as to whether the Working for Families policy, a key element of the broader Reducing Inequalities Framework, has contributed towards achieving the government's stated goal in Māori health: whānau ora.

Researchers and those who fund research have both identified the need for more systematic monitoring of the impact of social policy (Blaiklock et al 2002; Devlin et al 2001). This study derives from an RFP released by two research funders: the Health Research Council of New Zealand and the Foundation for Research Science and Technology. The funders specifically sought "whānau ora" research that would address multiple indicators of Māori social and health inequality; contribute to an improved understanding of the interrelated causes; and identify potential approaches to addressing these inequalities. In response, this study intends to contribute to our understanding of the impact of government policy on whānau ora by tracking Māori household economic and other social indicators over time and in relation to the introduction of the Working for Families policy. While the research team recognise

evaluation of the WFF policy has been given consideration (Wehipeihana & Pipi 2008; Bryson et al 2007; Evans et al 2007) to our knowledge this is the first time research is being undertaken which specifically investigates the links between WFF and whānau ora outcomes.

METHODS

The research design for the full three-year study adopts a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Cresswell 2009). The study comprises four discrete phases of data collection activities: interviews with key informants regarding the intent and expected target audience for the policy (Boulton & Gifford 2010); identifying all households in the longitudinal survey, Te Hoe Nuku Roa, who qualify for the WFF; analysis of these households over time to assess how their whānau wellbeing has changed since the introduction of the policy; and interviews with a subset of these households to gather in-depth data on their understanding of the policy and its perceived effects on their whānau wellbeing. The findings presented here derive from this fourth phase of data collection: the whānau interviews conducted with the subset of Te Hoe Nuku Roa households who were identified as being eligible to receive Working for Families.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) is the longest-running longitudinal survey of Māori households, originally designed to provide an on-going socio-cultural-demographic profile of Māori households, whānau and individuals. The study design is well described (Durie 1995; Te Hoe Nuku Roa Research Team 1997, 1999, 2000), comprising a survey using a random sample of 850 Māori households (roughly 2500 individuals) across seven Regional Council areas currently: Northland, Auckland, Gisborne, Manawatu/Whanganui, Wellington, Nelson/Marlborough and Southland.

The survey follows the same people/households over time, returning to interview them at 3-5 year intervals for as long as they're willing to participate. The 'wave' concept clusters all the first interviews together as Wave 1, the second as Wave 2 and so on, even if the total wave is completed over an extended period of time. The initial survey (Wave 1) began late in 1995. Te Hoe Nuku Roa adds new people to the sample if they join a household already in the survey and may add extra (totally new) households and regions over time as well. For example, the Northland and Southland regions were added in Wave 4 and Nelson/Marlborough in Wave 5.

The tool used for the first four sampling waves was an omnibus survey which asked a broad range of questions on lifestyle, culture, te reo Māori, education, health, income, employment, and household composition. The Wave 4 questionnaire also added detailed questions on whānau membership and interaction dynamics, as well as the addition of an Economic Living Standards Indicator (ELSI) (Jensen et al 2002) which had been developed through collaboration with the Ministry for Social Development (Cunningham et al 2002). The survey itself is undertaken through face-to-face interviews. The dataset is located at the Research Centre for Māori Health and Development, Massey University.

To find a sample of families to interview for the WFF study, the research team identified all the households in the THNR dataset whose characteristics qualified them to receive WFF. The literature review and key informant interviews conducted prior to this phase informed the team's understanding of the types of whānau targeted by the Working for Families policy. Using this knowledge, the research team worked with a statistician from the Research Centre for Maori Health and Development (RCMHD) to interrogate the dataset to determine the households likely to be in receipt of Working for Families.

Households were therefore selected on the following basis:

- At least one child born after mid-1993 (i.e. still under 18 years of age during 2010-2011 Wave 5 sample period);
- At least one adult from the household interviewed prior to the introduction of WFF, as only the adults answer the household and other relevant questions (e.g. income) that provide the background on the household for the survey; and
- All household interviews were completed prior to 1 April 2005, the implementation date of WFF.

Of the 615 households in Wave 4 where at least one adult responded to the economic questions, approximately half the households were excluded as the THNR interviews had been administered *after* the main WFF introduction date (1 April 2005). To ensure there was child of eligible age in the household (i.e. a child who would still be under 18 during the 2010-2011, Wave 5 sample period), we selected only those households where an eligible-age child questionnaire had been completed. This further reduced our potential sample to some 72 households. Of these households, 62 were selected as being most likely to meet WFF criteria. Once eligible households were identified, the research team contacted each household to confirm whether they did in fact receive Working for Families support and were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. The final sample for the qualitative component of the study therefore comprises some 42 households[53].

The thirty whānau interviews reported here were conducted by five interviewers using a semi-structured interview schedule developed by the research team. Interviews could include as many whānau members as the whānau determined necessary, although the majority of interviews were only conducted with the mother of the family. Interviews occurred between October 2010 and December 2010 and ranged between ten minutes and forty minutes in length. A further twelve interviews are planned for February 2011, which will conclude the qualitative interviewing component of the study. Each interview was recorded and transcribed and an inductive thematic analysis completed by the members of the research team (Cresswell 2009). Ethical approval for the entire project was granted by the Multi-region Ethics Committee.

[53]Nelson/Marlborough are not represented in this data as we sought to include only those households who were part of the THNR survey prior to the introduction of WFF and this region joined the survey after the policy was introduced.

Limitations

The findings reported here must be considered in light of the study's more general limitations. The whānau had to meet a range of criteria including still being in receipt of Working for Families support, and having at least one child who would be aged 18 years or younger during the 2010-2011 (Wave 5) data collection period. This requirement meant a number of families from the THNR study were ineligible for the study, as the youngest child has to be under the age of 13 in Wave 4 to be still eligible in Wave 5. Consequently, our interview sample could be biased towards those families with only older children. The final sample of 42 whānau represents approximately 13% of the total Wave 4 households with children aged 18 years or younger.

The households themselves are likely to be more aware of their socio-economic and cultural wellbeing, by virtue of the fact that they have been involved with the longitudinal study for some years. A further limitation is the use of households in the THNR study as proxies for whānau. While researchers are currently exploring the utility of using the terms household and whānau interchangeably (Tomlins-Jahnke & Durie 2008), for the purposes of this study, we have deliberately chosen to consider the households as whānau in our analysis. Typically a THNR household comprises one family or group of people related to each other through marriage (conventional and common-law) and whakapapa. The whānau we interviewed therefore, may comprise examples of single-parent, blended, nuclear and non-nuclear family reflecting the great diversity apparent in contemporary Māori society (Durie, 1998). It must also be noted that in these interviews, "whānau ora" was defined by each individual whānau, thus the concept of whānau ora may differ between the whānau who participated in this part of the project and indeed differ from whānau who are not part of this study or the THNR longitudinal survey.

FINDINGS

Preliminary findings from a thematic analysis of our interview data with whānau are presented below. Three themes in particular are explored: how additional income was received and used by the whānau; the impact, if any, that receiving Working for Families support had on these whānau; and whether the participants considered there was a link between the financial assistance they received from WFF and "whānau ora" – a term which was defined by the whānau themselves. Findings are illustrated by quotes from the participants who are represented by codes. For example the code WM1A refers to a whānau member (WM) in the first (1) household, with the letters A, B, C etc distinguishing them from other whānau members who participated in the interview.

How the additional income was received and used

According to the policy, and depending on what components of Working for Families whānau are eligible to receive, WFF payments can be made on a weekly or fortnightly basis or families can opt to receive one lump sum payment at the end of the financial year. Whānau that we interviewed, therefore, received their WFF payments in a range of ways, as best fitted the circumstances of their particular family. Most of the whānau we spoke to opted to receive payments weekly or fortnightly. The families that chose this option tended to use the additional income in one of two ways. Either the money was "pooled" and used to pay bills or expenses the family incurred during the week, or

the money was kept separate from the household accounts and used specifically for the children in that whānau. Those that combined their support payments with other weekly family income spoke of using the money to pay for everyday "core" items, such as food and other groceries, rent/mortgage payments and power.

> *Interviewer:* And what kind of thing does that usually go towards helping?
> *WM3A:* Oh, just everything really. It just goes in to the bank account and just gets pooled together with everything else. Probably it's more bills, you know, the rent, and food at the moment, I suppose. 'Cos everything else comes out of my wages.

A small number of families spoke of using the additional money for "luxuries", which may have included takeaway meals, a family trip or excursion or "splashing out" on a birthday party or gifts for whānau.

> *Interviewer:* And how is any additional income being used? You said it's mostly for food?
> *WM7A:* Well, yeah. Yep, it does, yep. Or it will give us luxuries or something, but mainly, yeah.
> *Interviewer:* What would a luxury be*?*
> *WM7A:* Um, takeaways.
> *Interviewer:* Okay. Like McDonalds or something?
> *WM7A:* Yep, yep*.*

> *WM22A*: We don't smoke or drink or nothing like that so we, you know, it doesn't get used for a party on Saturday night, on Friday night. Not that I'm hassling any of my whānau out there, but, yeah. Basically we don't live extravagantly unless it's the kid's birthdays and then you sort of spend more money than you'd planned, but yeah.

The whānau that kept the support payments separate from the household income, earmarking it specifically for expenses related to their children, used their WFF payments primarily to pay for a range of school and education-related activities such as school uniforms, fees, sports and field trips, extra tuition and even school lunches.

> *Interviewer:* The kinds of things that it goes towards every week? Does it go towards anything in particular?
> *WM6A:* That money that comes straight to me, I use for the kids at school. So it goes in to things like school fees and everything surrounding school fees.

> *Interviewer:* Does it ever go towards housing or like, mortgage or keeping the house warm or maintenance on the house or anything like that?
> *WM4A:* No. I have a payment which goes in to the children's bank accounts... each fortnight*...* So that goes into there and basically at the beginning of the year when they need to get all their books and their school uniforms, and...yeah.

Some whānau chose to receive their WFF entitlement as a lump sum at the end of the tax year. Often the families that chose this option did so to ensure that the money they received was what they were entitled to, rather than facing a situation of being overpaid, and therefore having to pay money back to the IRD. These families used the lump sum payments in a variety of ways: to pay off debt (including credit card debt) that had accrued through the year; to pay the following year's council rates; and in some instances to pay for family holidays.

> *Interviewer:* Do you know around about how much you get at the end of the year?
> *WM27A:* Yep. Well what I got this year was four thousand, nine hundred. Yeah. For the year.
> *Interviewer:* And what kind of things does it go ... towards helping out with?
> *WM27A:* Oh, well it goes on a trip for her [daughter] and I. Helps pay bills. Certainly around Christmas time. Rates and every household thing, shopping, food. So that helps me out, because I also get a job which helps pay my mortgage. So, mmmm, it came in quite handy.

Impact

For the majority of participants, receiving WFF assistance made a significant, and positive, impact on their family. Most of the families we interviewed received an additional $60-300 dollars per week in their household budget as a consequence of receiving WFF support. Lump sum payments were in the order of between $4,000 and $6,000 per year. The families we interviewed spoke of the additional income as enabling them to "survive", to not have to "struggle" quite so much to make ends meet. One whānau member noted "I don't know where we would be today if we didn't get it" (WM24A). Another participant noted that, in their view "Working for Families income, yeah, I think it has saved a lot of people" (WM30A).

> *Interviewer:* How do you reckon you guys would cope without that top up money?
> *WM10A:* Probably wouldn't. Yeah.
> *Interviewer:* What things would you have to sacrifice if you didn't have it, do you reckon?
> *WM10A:* Uh, food. Cos that's all we spend our money on, is food. I have no bills. I only have one loan with the bank. I have no plastic cards or anything and most of our money is groceries. We've got three teenage daughters.
> Interviewer: Who eat a lot.
> *WM10A:* Who eat a lot. And a son and a little five month old baby.

> WM11A: The difference it has made is like with being, well a big huge change for me this year is going down to one wage, it's like, I probably wouldn't survive and I'd probably lose my home if I wasn't get that bit of extra.

Others spoke about the opportunities the additional money afforded the children of low-income families. For instance, some talked about using WFF money to pay for extra

tuition, sports and music lessons, thus ensuring their children received all the advantages of a well-rounded education. Still others spoke about the WFF support allowing one parent to stay at home and raise their children, without having financial worry or stress.

For at least two whānau however, the impact of receiving Working for Families payments had made a negative impact overall as they had been, or were currently, in the position of having been "overpaid" their entitlement and consequently had to pay back this debt to the IRD.

> *Interviewer:* I'm just interested about when you had the accident and couldn't work anymore, did you go on to the IRD site and let them know or anything like that? Did you realise, did you do anything like that?
> *WM2A:* No I didn't realise that was what you were supposed to do. You just, cos they, cos they would have known, would have seen it from my work when it would have stopped cos that's how they calculate a lot of the stuff anyway, regardless of you telling them or not.
> *Interviewer*: Okay. So like that year... you couldn't work, did you get extra at the end of that tax year to make up for that shortfall when you weren't working?
> *WM2A*: No, no I didn't. No, what happened was they ... calculated wrongly ... and ... we're in arrears for a grand... two grand this year I owe them now.

Only three whānau indicated that the Working for Families policy had not made an impact on their family circumstances, either because the additional income they received was negligible as they had relatively high incomes, or because they had a great deal of personal debt and therefore still struggled financially.

Links between receiving WFF payments and whānau ora

To determine whether whānau considered that there was a link between the extra income they received from WFF and an improvement in their family's wellbeing, or whānau ora, we first outlined a definition of whānau ora derived from the literature and then asked whānau to describe what whānau ora meant for them. Our initial interviews indicated that, even when a definition was provided, families found it difficult to articulate what whānau ora meant for them. Consequently, we added a prompt question to our subsequent interviews, which was "If everything was going well in your whānau what would that look like and what would be happening?" For those who were able to define whānau ora for their family, many noted that whānau ora was about having a happy, healthy family and being financially secure.

> *Interviewer*: What would your idea of Whānau Ora be? If everything was going really well in the whānau, what would it look like for you?
> *WM9A:* Oh, I guess I think of Mason's [Whare] Tapa Whā, you know? All those aspects being taken care of. Yeah, kids happy, kids clothed, fed, sheltered, warm, all that stuff. All those things being taken care of without it being ah... worrying about paying for the heating bill and all that stuff.

For other families, while financial security was important, they also emphasised the need for the parents to remain physically well, to not have to see a General Practitioner as often and for the household to be free of violence and abuse. For others whānau ora was less concerned with physical or financial security and more about the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the whānau. Yet other families emphasised the ability to live as a collective, to share good fortune and the ability to actively participate in the wider community.

While the responses to the question "what constitutes whānau ora for your family" were very diverse, we found that most of the whānau were in agreement that the WFF support they received did in fact contribute to their family's whānau ora.

> *Interviewer:* And so when you think about Whānau Ora do you think that Working For Families contributes to Whānau Ora for you guys?
> *WM26B:* For us, yes. It's kept us afloat.

> *Interviewer:* How has Working For Families helped your whānau towards your definition of Whānau Ora?
> *WM22A:* I guess, you know, if I wasn't able to pay my bills, if I wasn't able to, put food on the table, put clothes on their back and things like that then we, you know, wouldn't be able to have the other things. Being able to, to get by. Like if I wasn't able to put shoes on my feet so they can go off to school, they wouldn't be going to school so then I'd have them being truant and you know? You do have to meet your basic needs so that other things can happen... you know, is there gas in the car so when it's raining you can drop the kids off instead of them walking in the rain and getting a cold. You know, [that] one that said, in there about having, getting, being in a warmer home?
> *Interviewer:* Yes, yes.
> *WM22A:* Well, you know, if you don't have the money to pay the power bill, you know, to pay for your heating or whatever, you end up with sick kids. So, sick kids are hungry 'cos there is no food to eat for lunch or breakfast. It's all, yeah, it's all connected. If you can't meet your basic needs, then you can't, can't get by.

Only three families noted that the WFF support they received did not contribute to whānau ora for their whānau. One noted that, while the extra support they received from WFF payments had not been "detrimental", when considering the contribution this support had made to their whānau ora they were clear that "it hasn't impacted on us in any way" (WM1A). The second whānau indicated that there was no connection between "making ends meet" and their personal definition of whānau ora (WM19A). A third noted that for them, whānau ora was not achieved through having a better income, explaining

> *WM12A:* I don't think money should make a huge difference, I mean make a huge impact on Whānau Ora anyway, you know? It's a spiritual thing, not a money thing. Depends how you look at it I suppose. You know, they could be

happy outside playing with a ball or if you want to spend so much money and take them to the A&P show, depends what you think happy is.
Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So for you it's not to do with money?
WM12A: No, not hugely. They don't have a lot of money and they're happy the way they are.

DISCUSSION

New Zealand has a long history of social welfare assistance and of providing a "safety net" for the poorest and most vulnerable within our society. Furthermore, as a so-called developed country, we take great pride in our position as one of the more socially advanced and economically wealthy of the nation states.

The conviction we possess regarding our level of prosperity as a nation belies the evidence that economic inequalities exist between groups within our society, and that these same groups face economic hardship and indeed poverty on a day to day basis. A desire for more sophisticated understandings of the term "poverty" has paved the way for the development of indicators to better measure the material circumstances of populations, including our own. In New Zealand, material hardship or deprivation is a measure of relative disadvantage. A person is understood to be experiencing material hardship or deprivation when they are 'excluded from the minimum acceptable way of life in their own society because of inadequate resources' (Perry 2009:11).

Material hardship rates vary between sub-populations. Preliminary analysis from 2009 New Zealand Living Standards Survey indicates that Maori and Pacific people have material hardship rates some 2 to 3 times that of those in the European or 'Other' groups and that beneficiary families with dependent children have a hardship rate of around 5 times that for working families with children (50% and 11% respectively) (Perry 2009). Results from the 2008 survey show that while material hardship rates have improved for all children between the 2004 and 2008 survey periods, as a consequence of the extra WFF support received by working families with dependent children and the increased employment, overall children are still significantly over-represented in the hardship group. Furthermore, of all children identified as being in a state of material hardship, approximately half come from working families (Perry 2009).

The Working for Families package was welcomed as the first major redistribution of income in favour of poorer New Zealanders in 30 years and for the majority of families in our sample, was regarded as essential to meeting the shortfall between salary or wages and household expenses. The additional income families receive from Working for Families forms a vital part of their core income. Families who participated in this study indicated that without the additional support, they would find it difficult to manage household expenses on a week-to-week basis. We found a difference between those who chose to receive their WFF payments on a weekly or fortnightly basis, compared with those who opted for a lump sum at the end of the tax year. Those who chose the latter form of payment spoke about wanting to be sure the money they received was what they were entitled to, and of the real pressure it would put on their family if they had to reimburse the government for any overpayment. A clear impression from the

research undertaken so far is that there is a distinct group of whānau with little or no discretionary income and who, as a whānau, would experience huge stress and anxiety were they to receive an additional, unplanned or unexpected bill.

Only a few whānau, used the support payments to pay for so-called “luxuries” and it is important to note the scale of these luxuries which, for most, was simply a take-away meal for the whānau or the ability to buy birthday presents, whether for their children, or their children’s friends. Only a small number of families were able to save a proportion of their support payments, and those who did so used these savings to pay for a family holiday, family excursion or similar family-based event.

Most whānau indicated that receiving WFF had made a very positive impact on the family and on the parent or parents’ ability, to provide the necessities that would contribute towards their family’s overall health and wellbeing e.g. stable and “healthy” housing; healthy food such as fresh meat and vegetables; and educational opportunities, including additional money for school fees, but also for field trips, sports and extra-curricular activities. For these whānau, it was important that their children were given as many opportunities as any of their peers, that they were well fed and clothed and that they were able to participate in a range of school-based and sporting activities.

Many families noted that the opportunities to participate in family, and community-based activities was a direct consequence of receiving WFF support, and that these opportunities in turn, contributed to the families overall wellbeing. The term, whānau ora, was described and understood in a variety of ways, reflecting wider societal and indeed, political understandings of the term. In general, families agreed that whānau ora was achieved when the family was happy, healthy and financially secure. Financial security did not necessarily mean that a family had to be wealthy, but rather that existing bills could be paid on time and unplanned expenses could be met. Almost all of the participants stated that the additional income received as a consequence of the WFF policy had made a contribution to their family’s whānau ora. For some whānau this was because the extra income alleviated the financial stress of trying to pay bills from week to week. For others however, the additional income gave many whānau choices, providing them with opportunities to participate in a range of activities that contributed to their whānau “connectedness”.

Whānau connectedness, the ability to do things together as a whānau and support wider whānau functions (such as tangihanga and hui) was facilitated through families having access to additional household income. Taiapa (1998) has noted that whānau values, whānau obligations and the responsibilities associated with whānaungatanga may place a heavy financial burden on whānau, yet this connectedness is crucial for the achievement of whānau ora for many of the whānau we interviewed.

Working for Families support has clearly become a key factor in low- to middle-income Maori whānau wellbeing. WFF contributes significantly to these families surviving on both a day-to-day and longer term basis. The reliance by Māori whānau on WFF

support, and the reasons for that reliance, must be afforded immediate consideration by policy-makers and politicians as the economic recession, first noted in June 2008 (Kiro et al 2010), continues to linger. On the basis of previous evidence (Blakely & McLeod 2009) we know that the effects of this recession are likely to be felt most profoundly, and experienced more acutely, by Māori than by any other population group in NZ. And yet at the same time, the government is having to consider the purpose of welfare policy, the future sustainability of our welfare system and options for reducing welfare spending (Welfare Working Group 2010). Any review of New Zealand's welfare policy must take into account the reliance many working whānau now have on their WFF support. This support provides more than a means of getting by between pay cheques for some of our most vulnerable families; it is also a means, for some, of facilitating whānau ora, of achieving a sense of whānau wellbeing, and for others, is a crucial element in their very survival.

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Phase Three Research Output (2):

Economic Living Standards for Māori Whānau Before and After 'Working for Families'- Technical Report Summary- Draft Two

Following is the Executive Summary from the technical report produced from analysis of Phase Three quantitative data. The report is entitled *Economic Living Standards for Māori Whānau Before and After 'Working for Families'*. The full report is extensive and has been attached separately for reference rather than being included in the body of this report; full details on the methods are contained in *Economic Living Standards for Māori Whānau Before and After 'Working for Families'*. This document will be available on the Whakauae Website www.whakauae.co.nz after May 31st 2012 and will also be made available on the HRC website.

Executive Summary

The aim of this project was to assess the impact of the government's Working for Families (WFF) policy on the economic living standards of Māori whānau. The study also compared the living standards of Māori families with other types of Māori household and examined the factors associated with economic hardship across all household types.

The sample was 579 whānau from *Te Hoe Nuku Roa* (THNR), a longitudinal survey of Māori households from six regions of New Zealand. While THNR was not specifically designed to evaluate WFF, it provided a useful platform to do so, as around half the Wave 4 sample was collected before WFF and half after, with a fairly equal split between WFF-eligible families and ineligible households.

Statistical limitations meant that levels of hardship and differences between groups may have been underestimated. Lack of strong differentiation in perceived living standards, as measured by $ELSI_{SF}$, may also lead to an underestimation of differences between groups. By far the majority of all types of household reported that their standard of living was medium or high and that they were satisfied with their standard of living, despite marked differences in income adequacy and economising behaviour.

Nonetheless, prior to the implementation of the WFF policy, the living standards of WFF-eligible Māori families were markedly and significantly lower than ineligible Māori households, as has been found in other studies. Twice as many WFF-eligible families scored in the hardship category and three-quarters of WFF-eligible families reported that their income was not enough or only just enough to meet their needs compared to less than half of ineligible households.

Beneficiary families with dependent children were the worst-off economically, followed by other beneficiary households (excluding superannuitants) and low-income families with dependent children. High-income families with dependent children scored towards the top end of the living standards scale (as measured by $ELSI_{SF}$). Households without dependent children had above-average living standards if the principal adult was employed or retired.

Low living standards, high levels of hardship, low income adequacy and the need to economise on even the most basic of items (such as fruit and vegetables) underpinned the need for an improvement in income adequacy for low-income families with dependent children, which was one of the aims of the WFF policy. However, the particularly low living standards faced by beneficiary families was at odds with their lower level of WFF entitlements. This inconsistency arises from the divergence between the 'making work pay' and the 'income adequacy' aims of the WFF policy.

Living standards were associated with a range of factors, but particularly income, housing tenure and life-stage. Groups with high levels of hardship included low-income renters, young people and students, young parents, sole parents and people who had poor health status or a relationship break-up. Low levels of hardship were associated with high income, freehold tenure, long-term residential stability, middle-aged to older people, and those in fulltime employment, with high educational qualifications and good health status.

Cultural factors were not related to economic living standards as measured here. Thus, whānau with very strong connections to their culture – through identity, knowledge of whakapapa, tikanga and te reo, and cultural participation – were equally likely come from households with low or high economic living standards, while the same could be said for whānau with a weaker connection to their culture. Thus, the development of strong cultural and whānau connections occurs despite the economic hardships facing many households, presumably due to being an integral and highly-valued part of the lifestyle of many whānau.

The role of whānau in helping to care for each other, and especially for children, the unwell or the elderly, is a benefit to both whānau and society. However, it is also important to recognise the pressure this places on some whānau. A third of all families (and half of all sole-parent families) had at least one other person living with them who was not part of the nuclear family, but who was most often a relative. More than one in eight of the extended households included an older relative or a whangai or young relative, while several other households comprised a sole parent living with her parent(s) and siblings. Two-thirds of Māori gave money to help their whānau over the previous month; a figure which was no different in households whose income did not meet their own everyday needs compared to other households.

Comparisons between the households interviewed before and after WFF (between 2004 and 2007) indicated that WFF positively impacted income adequacy for WFF-eligible families. In particular, there was a decline in the proportion of families whose income was 'not enough' to meet their everyday needs and an equivalent increase in the 'just enough' category. Levels of hardship may have decreased slightly, but there was no overall increase in the average standard of living score. Nor was there any evidence that the increased income had led to less economising on either basic or discretionary items.

These findings were also reflected in the in-depth interviews with thirty whānau (Boulton and Gifford, 2011): 'The families we interviewed spoke of the additional income as enabling them to "survive", to not have to "struggle" quite so much to make ends meet.' Financial security was seen as one of a range

of factors that contribute to whānau ora, with basic income adequacy being a necessary, but not sufficient, step on the various paths to achieve whānau ora.

While the results of this study support the contribution that Working for Families payments make towards improving income adequacy, we note that this improvement – a tipping of the balance for many families towards having 'just enough' income – was realised within a time period of other supportive policies for low-income families, such as an increase in the minimum wage and a decrease in the unemployment rate. Thus, the gain may be a fragile one, particularly as the economic situation of low-income families was still one of considerable hardship in many cases, with families still having to economise on basic necessities such as fruit and vegetables and visits to the doctor.

In the period following the collection the Wave 4 data, the economy has gone through a substantial downturn, with an increase in the unemployment rate and the number of DPB beneficiaries. At the same time, the cost of housing has increased, potentially eroding gains in housing affordability, and the cost of food has increased at a faster rate than wages and general inflation.

Change in living standards of whānau over this more recent recessionary period were examined using data from Wave 5 of THNR, collected in 2011. This report presents findings based on 267 households interviewed in both Wave 4 and Wave 5. The results confirmed the findings from Wave 4. That is, WFF-eligible families were still worse-off economically than other households, but with a slight improvement in living standards and a significant improvement in income adequacy between Waves 4 and 5. Housing satisfaction also improved. One area of concern was the much higher proportion of families having to economise on fruit and vegetables in 2011 compared to 2004.

Many individual households showed substantial changes in living standards, often associated with changes in household circumstances such as family formation and splitting, movement into and out of the labour force and income change. With the exception of the stable group of retirees, the majority of households had some change in their circumstances over the study period. The rate of change was especially high for WFF-eligible families, of whom 29% changed their family type, two-thirds had a change in number of dependent children, half had a change in income and over two-thirds of principal adults changed their labour force status. One feature of the data was the fluctuation in labour force status around the margins of employment – between full-time and part-time work and between work, parenting, study and looking for work.

Phase Three Research Output (3)*:*

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference Paper

In February 2012, Whakauae had notice of acceptance of an abstract submitted for the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference in June 2012. We will be developing a full paper for inclusion in the conference proceedings report. The paper will utilise data from THNR Wave Four outlined in the technical report to discuss early impacts of WFF. The conference abstract is reproduced below.

Title of Presentation: Tipping the balance: A quantitative analysis of the impact of the Working for Families (WFF) policy on Māori whānau.

Presenter's name: Dr Amohia Boulton*, Dr Heather Gifford*, Dr Sue Triggs†, Professor Chris Cunningham†

Research institution/place of employment:

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Abstract:

NZ's Working for Families (WFF) policy introduced in 2004 aimed to address, amongst other things, the poverty faced by low-income working families. While WFF has been evaluated[54], little evidence exists on its impact on Māori. Using data from the *Best Outcomes for Māori: Te Hoe Nuku Roa* Longitudinal Survey, we have addressed this gap. Findings indicate that WFF has positively impacted income adequacy for WFF-eligible families. There was a large decline in the proportion of families whose income was 'not enough' to meet their everyday needs, and an equivalent increase in the 'just enough' category in the periods before and after WFF was introduced. Our results show the positive contribution WFF payments make towards improving income adequacy. However, we note that this improvement – a tipping of the balance for families towards having 'just enough' income – occurred within a time period of other macro-environment changes for low-income families (increased minimum wage, decreased unemployment rate) and did not impact as significantly on poverty for those not entitled to all components of the policy e.g. beneficiaries. Gains made at the individual whānau level may well be fragile, as the economic situation of low-income families is still one of considerable hardship. Consequently, support for vulnerable families remains of critical importance.

[54] Centre for Social Research and Evaluation and Inland Revenue (2010). *Changing Families' Financial Support and Incentives for Working: The summary report of the evaluation of the Working for Families package.* Ministry of Social Development and Inland Revenue: Wellington, New Zealand.

Phase Three Research Output (4):

Whānau Ora; He Whakaaro ā Whānau: Māori family views of whānau ora

Finally in this section, we present a draft paper developed following analysis of the qualitative data; in particular the measurement of whānau ora concepts. The paper, *Whānau Ora; He Whakaaro ā Whānau: Māori family views of whānau ora*, was submitted in late 2011 to *Policy Quarterly* published by the Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University. However, the paper was declined as it was deemed to be out of the Journal's scope. We have since reviewed other options for publication and are currently working on a submission to the *Journal of Qualitative Social Work*.We intend to submit by 30 June 2012.

WHĀNAU ORA; HE WHAKAARO Ā WHĀNAU: MĀORI FAMILY VIEWS OF WHĀNAU ORA

INTRODUCTION

Whānau ora, while well understood in the health sector, is a relatively new concept in the social service provision field in Aotearoa. In health, whānau ora was initially interpreted to mean "Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing" (Ministry of Health 2002a). Whānau ora was the ultimate aim of the government's Māori health policy, He Korowai Oranga. The concept has, since its introduction, evolved and become even further entrenched not only in health service delivery for Māori, but in the social services sector through the introduction in 2010 of the Whānau Ora Approach to Social Service Delivery (Taskforce on Whānau Centred Initiatives 2010). Whānau ora may now be regarded as a key strategy of New Zealand health and social policy for Māori, and as such, ostensibly charts the path towards reducing inequalities between Māori and non-Māori and improving Māori health and social wellbeing outcomes at an individual, community and population level.

The concept of whānau ora emerged from a body of work driven by Māori health providers, community leaders, policy makers and Māori academics. Examples of whānau ora approaches may be found within the range of Māori health promotion/community development and primary health contracts currently in use today. Some of these models have gained general acceptance amongst mainstream service providers and are clearly described in the academic literature (Durie 2004). Others are specific to individual providers and may have emerged from the unique tikanga of the organisation or from its associated iwi (Gifford 1999; Boulton 2007).

Whereas the concept of whānau ora, whether as a goal or a model of service delivery, has been extensively promoted and articulated by central government, in the community setting, a common understanding or definition of whānau ora remains elusive. The term "whānau ora" is often loosely interpreted and while an agreed appreciation and understanding is often assumed, evidence from community suggests that, on the contrary, understandings of whānau ora are diverse and often context-specific.

In this paper we explore the definition of whānau ora drawing on qualitative data from two separate studies, comparing this definition with that outlined in the government's latest whānau ora policy document; the Report of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives (2010). An analysis of the degree of concordance between whānau views of whānau ora and those of the central government policy makers is undertaken. The paper concludes by noting that evaluation activity to determine the achievement of whānau ora outcomes at a whānau level would find the Framework to be a useful theoretical starting point.

METHODS

This paper draws upon qualitative data collected in the course of two separate but related studies undertaken by Whakauae Research for Māori Health and Development (WRMHD). The first examined the nature of resilience for Māori whānau and how resilience relates to whānau ora; while the second investigated the impact of the Working for Families policy on Māori families' perceptions of whānau ora. The methods used to collect the qualitative data presented in this paper are described briefly below. A more detailed description of the full range of methods used in the two studies may be found in other publications (Boulton & Gifford 2010; Boulton, Gifford & Tamehana 2010; Boulton & Gifford 2011; Boulton & Gifford, forthcoming).

The Working For Families study

Working for Families comprises a package of social welfare benefits targeting low-to-middle income families with dependent children (Perry 2004) with the aim of providing incentives to those families to participate in the paid workforce and, by extension, contribute to a reduction in child poverty (True 2005). Components of the policy include increasing family incomes, making work pay, assisting with childcare costs and more affordable housing for families (Ministry of Social Development 2008).

The Working for Families (WFF) study comprises four phases of data collection activities: interviews with key informants regarding the intent and expected target audience for the policy; identifying all households in the longitudinal survey, Te Hoe Nuku Roa, who qualify for Working for Families assistance; analysis of these households over time to assess how their whānau wellbeing has changed since the introduction of the policy; and interviews with a subset of these households to gather in-

depth data on their understanding of the policy and its perceived effects on their whānau wellbeing (Boulton & Gifford 2010; 2011).

The findings presented here derive from this fourth phase of data collection: qualitative interviews with 30 households from the Te Hoe Nuku Roa study[55] who were in receipt of Working for Families assistance. The interviews used a semi-structured interview schedule developed by the research team and explored among other things the meaning of whānau ora for participants. Interviews included as many whānau members as the whānau thought necessary, although the majority of interviews were only conducted with one family member. Interviews averaged thirty minutes in length. Each interview was recorded and transcribed and an inductive thematic analysis completed by the members of the research team (Cresswell 2009).

The Resilience study

The term "resilience", used to describe indigenous populations in North America (Walters & Simoni 2002; Lavallee & Clearsky 2006) has recently begun to be used in New Zealand to describe the Māori population. In the Resilience Study we explored the concept of resilience; its applicability to Māori, whānau and communities; and the extent to which the concept of resilience contributes towards the goal of whānau ora. Specifically the project explored the relationship between whānau resilience and Māori primary health concepts; how primary health approaches may mitigate risks to the individual through enhancing their personal capacities and abilities; and how engagement in Māori primary health services can strengthen whānau resilience through improved access to culturally health resources (Boulton Gifford & Tamehana 2010; Boulton & Gifford; forthcoming).

Using exploratory qualitative research methods in a single case study site (a Māori primary health provider), two phases of enquiry were conducted. Phase 1 comprised a comprehensive literature review, a review of case study documents and key informant interviews with case study employees and board members to identify how concepts of resilience are incorporated into a primary health care providers' whānau ora approach. In phase 2, a series of sequential focus group[56] (SFG) interviews with case study consumers were conducted to gather evidence of implementation of these concepts and how participation in Māori primary health services had impacted on whānau resilience. The sequential focus group method is a novel approach to qualitative data collection with indigenous populations developed by the authors in collaboration with indigenous researchers from Canada. It relies on the same group of participants meeting over the

[55] Te Hoe Nuku Roa (THNR) is the longest-running longitudinal survey of Māori households, comprising a survey using a random sample of 850 Māori households (roughly 2500 individuals) across seven Regional Council areas (Durie 1995; Te Hoe Nuku Roa Research Team 1999, 2000).
[56] A methodological paper is being developed by the authors for submission in late 2011.

course of a number of weeks to explore issues in depth. It is the data collected in the course of undertaking the SFGs that is drawn upon for this paper.

The qualitative data from each project were reviewed and analysed thematically and grouped according to a series of high-level themes. The results are presented under these six themes: wellbeing; happiness; sense of belonging, identity and active participation; support; financial security; looking forward and supporting potential.

RESULTS

Wellbeing

For many whānau, the wellbeing of their children and future generations was a prime motivator behind their striving to achieve a state of whānau ora. Participants talked about wanting their children to experience a better life than theirs, of the importance of establishing a "foundation" for their children, providing their children with stability and security and providing them with a "decent" environment in which to grow up. Many spoke about the need for parents' to instill values, including cultural values, such as "holding true to ...our tikanga", and of holding people accountable for their actions. Parents spoke about the need for good role models, having a healthy attitude and demonstrating this healthy attitude through their actions and the way they live.

While the future wellbeing of their children was an important aspect of whānau ora, for some parents maintaining their own personal levels of good health were also seen as an important part of facilitating whānau ora. Parents noted that if they were not well, then they would be of little use to their family. Most participants regarded whānau ora as a set of attributes that were in balance with each other. Having a balance between mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing were all observed as contributors towards a state of whānau ora.

Happiness

In a similar manner some participants spoke about whānau ora being synonymous with health and happiness. Whānau ora was achieved when "everyone's healthy, everyone's happy.... everything's happy". In many respects those who demonstrated whānau ora had the capacity to simply live an everyday life, to participate in "normal activities" Normal everyday activities that contributed to whānau ora included keeping the "*kids happy, kids clothed, fed, sheltered, warm".* Having "enough", being well and together as a family, having sufficient money, a job, "good" housing and healthy kids was all seen to contribute towards happiness and therefore to whānau ora. Overcoming barriers to happiness, barriers that inhibited a family's ability to participate in a range of "normal" family activities, was regarded as an important step towards achieving whānau ora.

Sense of belonging/identity and active participation

Participants spoke about the importance of participation as members of society; being active in their community, participating in sports groups, or at the local school or on marae. Having a sense of "place" and of "purpose" was regarded by some participants as crucial to achieving whānau ora. One participant spoke about the "strong hold to home" and that their identity was forged through their ability to participate fully as a member of their community. Another participant viewed participation as broader than just family-based activity; noting that their family participates "in a lot of society stuff, with the community". A sense of achievement, or having contributed something tangible in some area of life was also considered by participants to be important to whānau ora, with one participant noting that a family that exhibited or had achieved a state of whānau ora was one which was "peopled by those who make contributions".

Support

Many spoke about whānau ora as families that can enjoy being together "a family that can talk, laugh, play together". Family unity, inter-generational connectedness and a duty of care were all mentioned as critical to whānau ora. When a whānau has achieved a state of whānau ora, everyone looks after one another, shares responsibility for each other, and in turn can expect to be supported themselves. One participant spoke about how in their family "everyone frets for one another when we all separate" and that separation from the whānau is less than ideal. Support networks were an essential attribute of whānau ora. Family connections aside, having a wider network of friends and community members who can be called upon when required was regarded by participants as important.

Financial security

Financial independence or security was a key aspect mentioned by many whānau in the pursuit of whānau ora. Participants agreed that having money "just takes that big load off your shoulder". Being financially secure meant there were fewer stresses or strains on the household. Other participants noted that being financially organised in your whānau, of having sorted your finances and ensured a regular income was coming in to the family gave great "peace of mind". Some participants were quick to maintain that financial security alone was not the key to whānau ora. One participant noted that while financial security may have been the crux of whānau ora for a lot of people "it's not the absolute be all and end all; it's not all about money, you know; It's a spiritual thing, not a money thing".

Looking forward and supporting potential

For some participants whānau ora encompassed a sense of future success, of unrealised potential and therefore required a forward-looking attitude and approach. One person, for example, spoke of whānau ora as being an aspirational goal; that whānau ora embraced the ability "to meet whānau potential". Whānau ora for these participants might not be achieved by this current generation, but could be a goal that future generations strive to meet. To that end, these participants noted that opportunities must be seized when they appear.

In summary, whānau ora is inclusive of nuclear and extended whānau perspectives. The wellbeing of children and wider whānau members is a key driver for the achievement and maintenance of whānau ora. Being healthy, happy and living by a set of values, either Christian in origin, and/or culturally-based, were all necessary to achieve whānau ora. A sense of connectedness as whānau, and a sense of duty to care for, and support, whānau members is essential. In many ways whānau ora was seen as whānau being able to participate in every day whānau maintenance tasks; what we have come to expect in a developed country as routine entitlements, e.g. healthy food, adequate housing, warmth, access to health care and education. While financial security was seen as being integral to the achievement of whānau ora it was not seen in isolation of other attributes of whānau ora such as spiritual wellbeing. Finally whānau and community potential should not be underestimated.

DISCUSSION

The whānau-centred framework outlined in the Taskforce Report (2010) contains five domains of whānau impact namely: a whānau aspirational aim; principles; whānau outcome goals; whānau-centred services; and a Whānau Ora Trust. This paper is concerned with the third of these five domains: the whānau outcome goals. According to the Taskforce Framework (2010) the whānau outcomes goals will be met, and therefore whānau will be regarded as having achieved a state of whānau ora, when they are able to demonstrate that they are self-managing; living healthy lifestyles; participating fully in society; confidently participating in te ao Māori; economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation; and cohesive, resilient and nurturing.

The table below provides a summary of the degree of concordance between whānau perceptions of whānau ora (as identified in our two studies) and the outcome descriptors from the Taskforce Report. Our analysis of our data in relation to the Taskforce's goals indicates a strong degree of concordance in four of the six indicators, namely healthy whānau lifestyles; full participation in society; economic security; and whānau cohesion. Whānau did not identify as strongly with the remaining two indicators, participation in te ao Māori and whānau self-management. "Strong concordance" was

judged by repetition of the theme throughout all or the majority of interviews we undertook. Similarly "limited concordance" was judged when the theme was only reflected in one or two of the interviews.

Table 1: Degree of Concordance between Whānau Ora Outcome Goals and Whānau Korero

Whānau outcome goals[57]	**Summarised descriptor of goal**[58]	**Degree of Concordance**
Whānau self-management	Capacity of whānau to determine their own pathways/manage their own affairs. Knowledgeable about and participating in their own communities Can access a range of goods and services. Able to draw on the skills of their own members to advance their collective interests. Activity is value based defined by culture and traditions.	**Some concordance** Whānau described being able to manage, without stress, everyday whānau responsibilities. Whānau (including extended whānau) responsibilities were emphasised and carried out from a set of defined values.
Healthy whānau lifestyles	Whānau are the agents of change and promote lifestyles that can lead to optimal health and wellbeing. Whānau establish codes of conduct that will endorse healthy behaviours. Setting an example, applying a consistent set of values, disseminating information to whānau members and observing safe practices in homes will all contribute to positive lifestyle choices.	**Very strong concordance** Parents seeing themselves as significant role models for their children and wider whānau.
Full whānau participation in society	Whānau able to readily access community facilities and benefit from community goods and services. Access to health services, quality schooling, recreational facilities, housing, commercial ventures, meaningful employment and levels of income adequate for whānau needs are necessary for whānau wellbeing. Successful participation in education is	**Very strong concordance** Whānau described being able to access the full range of goods and services as essential elements of whānau ora. They clearly described the importance of meaningful employment and levels of income adequate to meet whānau needs.

[57] Turia, T (2010), page 7

[58] Derived from Turia, T. (2010). Whānau Ora: Report of the Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives. Report produced for Hon Tariana Turia, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

	a critical determinant and positively associated with better health, higher incomes, adequate housing and healthier lifestyles.	
Confident whānau participation in Te Ao Māori	Te ao Māori spans tribal, community and cultural endeavours. Includes Māori cultural events, iwi affairs, marae hui, waka ama and kapa haka, and the ongoing transmission of Māori knowledge, culture and te reo Māori. Whānau will be able to enjoy active participation in Māori society and that Māori society will be sufficiently aligned to the needs of whānau to be able to meet their needs.	**Limited concordance** A small minority of whānau indicated through their korero that participation in the marae and kohanga reo was important and Māori values such as wairua were important, however overall, participation in te ao Māori was not identified strongly with Whānau ora.
Economic security and successful involvement in wealth creation	Whānau can aspire to levels of economic certainty that do not depend on minimal household incomes or beneficiary payments. Innovative approaches to business, enterprise and asset management will assist with wealth creation.	**Very strong concordance** All whānau agreed that economic security was a critical element of whānau ora, however many also stated that wealth creation was not to be seen as the paramount goal for whānau. Whānau often described just needing enough to cover basic needs without financial stress.
Whānau cohesion	Able to communicate regularly and have ongoing participation in whānau affairs. Households are able to participate with the wider whānau and derive benefits from consistent patterns of caring, and experience safe and nurturing environments.	**Very strong concordance** All whānau discussed the importance of participation in whānau affairs, in particular the responsibilities for guiding, caring and support.

Limited concordance was evident for two goals: participation in te ao Māori and whānau self-management. With regard to the former goal, limited concordance may be due to the sources of data that were used in the analysis; whānau ora, while an important embedded aspect of both studies, was not the sole focus of the interviews. The interview schedule for participants in the WFF study was largely focused around the impact of economic wellbeing on whānau wellbeing. The question relating to the

meaning of whānau ora was part of the wider interview guide and participants may not have been focused on thinking around te ao Māori.

SFG participants meanwhile were focused on defining resilience and its meaning within Māori health services. While many spoke of why they identified closely with a Māori service and their sense of belonging to iwi and a commitment to the kaupapa of the service, this same perception of the importance of cultural identity and belonging was not evident when they were asked the question "what is whānau ora"? Finally it is possible that those that are already immersed in te ao Māori, and therefore "being Māori" is already an integral part of identity, may not consider it a whānau ora outcome in the same way that someone who is more consciously striving towards confidently participating in te ao Māori.

The weak to the whānau self-management goal may be attributable to the fact that participants, particularly in the WFF study, were largely focused on day to day existence and may not be have been in a position at that point time to be the masters of their own destiny. While participants described attributes or behaviours that could be aligned with this outcome there was not a strong emphasis on the concepts of self-determination, self-management, self-efficacy or leadership.

In conclusion we note that whānau views and Taskforce views on the definition of whānau ora largely align. Some elements of the framework could be simplified; the whānau self-management and whānau participation outcomes for example, exhibit elements in common. Currently the government is investing significantly in efforts to determine the extent to which the whānau ora policy can improve outcomes for Māori. The Taskforce Framework provides a good foundation for evaluative activity and a useful theoretical starting point. With further refinement the Framework be could be utilised in an evaluative capacity as an effective evaluation tool.

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Phase Three produced four major outputs:

- Publication of a paper in the *Kotuitui Journal* in 2011 analysing the qualitative data from whānau interviews;

- Production of a technical report regarding the quantitative analysis from Phase Three (In draft until April 2012);

- Preparation of a paper highlighting key learnings from the technical report which has been accepted for presentation at the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Research Conference in June 2012; and,

- Preparation of a paper, *Whānau Ora; He Whakaaro ā Whānau: Māori family views of whānau ora ,*currently in draft, which links whānau concepts of wellbeing with the broader whānau ora outcomes framework derived from the Taskforce.

5. Findings and Conclusions

The Working for Families welfare package, introduced in the 2004 budget, signalled a significant change in welfare policy in New Zealand. It was also seen by the Labour-led coalition government of the time as being a key plank in its reducing inequalities policy and programmes. It was conceptualised as a tool to target those sectors of the population experiencing social disadvantage and unequal opportunity with a view to increasing overall living standards and reducing poverty across the community. Rather than being specifically tailored to addressing the needs of Māori, its development was informed by the wider reducing inequalities framework with its emphasis on ethnic disparity primarily conditioned by socio-economic factors.

WFF was designed to make it easier to work and to raise a family. Targeting low-to-middle income families with dependent children, the WFF package sought to improve the incomes of working families going outside the benefit system to meet welfare goals. It was argued that this would contribute to reducing child poverty as well as provide incentives to participate in the paid workforce. Components of the WFF package include increases in tax based assistance, the principal focus of the government spending, a more affordable housing supplement and childcare cost assistance to support labour force participation.

While the researchers recognise evaluation of the WFF policy has been given extensive consideration[59] we are not aware of any evaluation which specifically investigates the link between WFF and whānau ora outcomes.

[59] Bryson, A., Evans, M., Knight, G., La Valle, I., and Vegeris, S. (2007), *New Zealand's Working For Families programme: Methodological considerations for evaluating MSD programmes*. PSI Research Discussion Paper 26, London: Policy Studies Institute.

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The purpose of the research was therefore to undertake a detailed analysis of the effects on Māori whānau of a key government policy, specifically aimed at reducing inequalities, with a view to ascertaining how the policy contributed to an achievement of, or improvement in, whānau ora (wellbeing) for these families. Emphasis was placed on change within the whānau (intra-whānau) over time.

The analysis was achieved by identifying a specific group of Māori households which participate in the longitudinal THNR survey, ascertaining the degree of change in their wellbeing over time, and was followed up with face-to face interviews to assess whether changes could be attributed to the WFF policy. The research question was 'has the key government policy Working for Families, aimed at reducing inequalities between Māori and non-Māori whānau/families, contributed towards achieving the government's stated goal in Māori health: whānau ora?

Findings

Prior to the implementation of the WFF policy, the living standards of WFF-eligible Māori families in the THNR study were markedly and significantly lower than ineligible Māori households, as has been found in other studies. Twice as many WFF-eligible families scored in the hardship category and three-quarters of WFF-eligible families reported that their income was not enough or only just enough to meet their needs compared to less than half of ineligible households.

Cultural factors were not related to economic living standards as measured in the study. Thus whānau with very strong connections to their culture – through identity, knowledge of whakapapa, tikanga and te reo, and cultural participation – were equally likely to come from households with low or high economic living standards. The same could be said for whānau with a weaker connection to their culture. Thus the development of strong cultural and whānau connections occurs despite the economic hardships facing many households. Presumably this is due to these cultural and whānau connections being an integral and highly-valued part of the lifestyle of many whānau.

The role of whānau in helping to care for each other, and especially for children, the unwell or the elderly, is a benefit to both whānau and society. It is also important to recognise the pressures this places on some whānau. A third of all families (and half of all sole-parent families) had at least one other person living with them who was not part of the nuclear family, but who was most often a relative. More than one in eight of the extended households included an older relative or a whangai or young relative, while several other households comprised a sole parent living with her parent(s) and siblings. Two-thirds of Māori gave money to help their whānau over the previous month. This included households with income levels which did not meet the everyday needs of household members.

Impact of WFF

Changes were observed after the introduction of WFF and in particular between 2004 (Wave 4) and 2011 (Wave 5). It was concluded that WFF-eligible families were still worse-off economically than other households, but with a slight improvement in living standards and a significant improvement in income adequacy between Waves 4 and 5. Housing satisfaction also improved. One area of concern was the

much higher proportion of families having to economise on the purchase of fruit and vegetables in 2011 compared to 2004.

The qualitative interviews with a sub group of the wider sample[60] found that WFF had made a difference to households in receipt of WFF. In particular results showed that without the additional WFF support families would find it difficult to manage household expenses on a week-to-week basis. There was a difference between those who chose to receive their WFF payments on a weekly or fortnightly basis and those who opted for a lump sum at the end of the tax year. Those who chose the latter form of payment spoke about wanting to be sure the money they received was what they were in fact entitled to and of the real pressure it would put on their family if they had to reimburse any overpayment. A clear impression gained from the research undertaken is that there is a distinct group of whānau with little or no discretionary income. These whānau would experience huge stress and anxiety were they to receive an additional unexpected bill in the form of overpaid WFF allowances.

Only a few whānau used the support payments to pay for so-called "luxuries". For most whānau a luxury was simply a take-away meal or being able to buy birthday presents whether for their children or their children's friends. Only a small number of families were able to save a proportion of their support payments. Those who did so used these savings to pay for a family holiday, family excursion or similar family-based event.

Most whānau indicated that receiving WFF support had had a positive impact enabling them to secure some of those necessities which contributed towards their family's overall health and wellbeing. Examples of this included stable and healthy housing, healthy food and educational opportunities including additional money for school fees, school field trips, sports and other extra-curricular activities. For these whānau, it was important that their children were given similar opportunities to their peers, that they were well fed and clothed and that they were able to participate in a range of school-based and sporting activities.

Many families noted that being able to participate in family and community-based activities was a direct consequence of receiving WFF support. This in turn contributed to their overall wellbeing.

Changes in whānau

With the exception of the stable group of retirees, the majority of households had some change in their circumstances over the study period. The degree of change in household circumstances was especially high for WFF-eligible families. Among these one third changed their family type, two-thirds had a change in number of dependent children, half had a change in income and over two-thirds of principal adults changed their labour force status. One feature of the data was the fluctuation in labour force status around the margins of employment – between full-time and part-time work and between work, parenting, study and seeking work.

[60] The methods are described in the *Kotuitui* paper reproduced earlier in this report

The high level of labour force and income change may reflect the timing of the study. The period between the start of Wave 4 (2004) and Wave 5 (2011) was also a time of significant economic volatility, with a major recession that saw an increase in the unemployment rate for Māori from under 9% to over 13% in 2011[61].

These critical household changes affected the eligibility status of many WFF-eligible families, with almost a third no longer eligible by 2011. Many of those who were still eligible were likely to have had a change in entitlement due to changes in income and/or number of dependent children.

Implications for whānau ora

The results from the quantitative data were also reflected in the data from the in-depth interviews with thirty whānau: Families interviewed described the additional income as being a key factor in enabling them to "survive", to not have to "struggle" quite so much to make ends meet. Financial security was seen as one of a range of factors that contribute to whānau ora, with basic income adequacy being a necessary, but not sufficient, step on the various paths to achieve whānau ora.

Whānau ora was described and understood in a variety of ways by participants reflecting wider social and political understandings of the concept. In general, families agreed that whānau ora was achieved when the family was happy, healthy and financially secure. Financial security did not necessarily mean that a family had to be wealthy, but rather that existing bills could be paid on time and unplanned expenses could be met. Almost all of the participants stated that the additional income received as a consequence of the WFF policy had made a contribution to their family's whānau ora. For some whānau this was because the extra income alleviated the financial stress of trying to pay bills from week to week. For others however, the additional income gave them choices, providing them with opportunities to participate in a range of activities that contributed to their sense of whānau "connectedness".

In conclusion, for some families WFF has contributed towards survival supporting the provision of the basic necessities. The additional income received has made a contribution to whānau ora for those in receipt of the support. However, early gains made by WFF in the period 2004-2007, shown both in this study[62] and other studies[63], have been impacted by the wider economic recession resulting in continuing hardship and income insufficiency for many Māori whānau.

Those in receipt of WFF are still worse-off economically than other households. This raises questions around the situation for "non-working" families excluded from the income support provisions of the

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[61] Department of Labour 2009 and www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/quick-facts/Maori.asp

[62] See section four THNR Report on whānau living standards.

[63] Perry, B. (2011) *Household incomes in New Zealand: trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2010*. Ministry of Social Development, Wellington, New Zealand.

policy. The exclusion of significant numbers of whānau from WFF support will likely continue to contribute to child poverty and increase inequalities across a range of indicators[64].

As a nation we need to consider the implications of excluding non-working families from the WFF policy; in particular what are the impacts of this for Māori whānau who are overrepresented in unemployment statistics? The focus needs to remain on tamariki within whānau and on the impact poverty will be likely to have on their lifetime trajectory and potential life outcomes.

Any review of New Zealand's welfare policy must take into account the reliance many working whānau now have on their WFF support. This support provides more than a means of getting by between pay cheques for some of our most vulnerable families. It is also a means, for some, of facilitating whānau ora and for others, is a crucial element in their very survival.

[64] Johnson, A. (2012). *The Growing Divide; a State of the Nation Report from the Salvation Army*. The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. February 2012. www.salvationarmy.org.nz/social policy

Dale, C,. O'Brien, M. & St John, S. (2011). *Left Further Behind; how policies fail the poorest children in New Zealand*. A Child Poverty Action Group Monograph.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acheson, D. (1998). Independent inquiry and review of health inequalities and life expectancy in Great Britain. Retrieved 16/06/2008, from http:// **www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/doh/ih/contents.htm**.

The aims of this enquiry were to firstly review the latest available information on health inequalities and "*summarise the evidence of inequalities of health and the expectation of life in England and identify trends*". This review was based on data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Department of Health (DH) and elsewhere.

The second was to identify, in the light of the review, "*priority areas for future policy development . . . likely to offer opportunities for Government to develop beneficial, cost effective and affordable interventions to reduce health inequalities*". These policy proposals were to be based on "*scientific and expert evidence*" and "*within the broad framework of the Government's financial strategy*".

Barrett, M., & Connolly-Stone, K. (1998). The Treaty of Waitangi and social policy. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro* (11).

This paper discusses the Treaty of Waitangi as it has been interpreted and applied in key areas of New Zealand Government policy. Policy towards the Māori population in the 1990s has emphasised the settlement of historical grievances, largely concerning traditional property rights, rather than the Crown's obligations to Māori in the social policy area. The authors conclude that the Government's approach to Treaty issues in the social policy arena is currently unclear and inconsistent, and that Government should engage in an open dialogue with Māori about social policy objectives rather than seeking to set the terms of the debate as it does at present.

Blaiklock, A., Kiro, C., Belgrave, M., Low, W., Davenport, E., & Hassall, I. (2002). *When the invisible hand rocks the cradle: New Zealand children in a time of change*: Innocenti Working Papers No.93.

This paper outlines and investigates the impact of economic and social reforms in New Zealand, since the mid-1980s, on the well-being of the children. The authors state that there has been widening inequality between ethnic and income groups which has left many Māori and Pacific children, and children from one parent and poorer families, relatively worse off. The New Zealand experience illustrates the vulnerability of children during periods of social upheaval and change and the importance of having effective mechanisms to monitor, protect and promote the interests of children.

Blakely, T., Tobias, M., Atkinson, J., Yeh, L.C., & Huang, K. (2007). *Tracking disparity: Trends in ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities in mortality 1981-2004*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

This is the fourth report in the 'Decades of Disparity' series generated as an output of the New Zealand Census – 'Mortality Study'. It updates the earlier reports by providing estimates of ethnic inequalities and income gradients in mortality (all-cause and by-cause) for 2001- 04. The key finding of this latest report is that both ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities in mortality may no longer be widening, as they have done ever since the mid-1980s except for low income young adults where no reduction in mortality is evident over the whole period (from 1981 - 2004). Also, the recent improvement in mortality has been greater for Māori than for Pacific ethnic groups, so Pacific mortality is now closer to the Māori than the European/Other level.

Blakely, T., & McLeod, M. (2009). Will the financial crisis get under the skin and affect our health? Learning from the past to predict the future. *New Zealand Medical Journal 122-1307*, 76-83.

The authors attempt to predict the health impact of the 2008–09 global financial crisis and consequent recession on the health of New Zealanders by reflecting on the lessons from the economic and social changes of the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand. Using an epidemiological framework they discuss the determinants of health (e.g. unemployment) which are changing as a result of the financial crisis, which social groups are having the largest changes? what are the likely health outcomes ? and what contextual factors (e.g. background disease rates) might influence these? They conclude with a list of policy recommendations for the prioritisation of publicly funded services, and to monitor and reduce the impacts of the economic recession on health.

Boulton, A. (2007). Taking account of culture: The contracting experience of Māori mental health providers. *AlterNative 3*(1), 122-139

During 2001–2004, research was undertaken that sought to understand the mental health contracting experience from the point of view of Māori health providers and one of the key findings was that Māori mental health providers regularly and routinely work outside the scope of their contracts to deliver mental health services that are aligned with those values and norms enshrined in Māori culture. The types of additional burdens and responsibilities Māori face in contracting for mental health services within a mainstream health system, as well as the reasons for these 'extra-contractual' activities, are discussed. The article concludes that in the New Zealand health sector a contracting framework—one that takes account of the unique role tikanga (customs, practices) and kawa (protocols) play in Māori mental health service delivery—is required.

Boulton, A., & Gifford, H. (2010). *Making work pay. Policymaker's perspectives on 'working for families'.* Paper presented at the Māori Association of Social Science Conference, Auckland, New Zealand

Boulton, A., & Gifford, H. (2011). Implementing 'working for families': The impact of the policy on selected Māori whānau. *Kotuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online 6*(1-2, May -November), 144-154.

Bowling, A. (1997). *Research methods in health: Investigating health and health services.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bryson, A., Evans, M., Knight, G., La Valle, I., & Vegeris, S. (2007). *New Zealand 'working for families' programme: Methodological considerations for evaluating MSD programmes. PSI Research Discussion Paper 26*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

This methodological review is the second part of the evaluation research commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in 2005 to help in the preparation of the evaluation of the 'Working for Families' (WFF) programme. This review enumerates the key evaluation questions identified by MSD as central to their policy concerns and considers how the features of WFF could affect evaluation. It details the methodological and data requirements that must be addressed in order to meet the four key evaluation objectives.

Cabinet Office. (2002). *Future directions for social assistance: Paper 1 – The case for change*. Wellington: Cabinet Social Development Committee, SDC (02)75.

Cabinet Minute. (2004). *Reform of social assistance: 'Working for families' package: Revised recommendations, CAB Min (04) 13/4*.

Overview of the WFF programme; context, objectives, impacts, costs and communication strategy.

Centre for Social Research & Evaluation. (2007). *Pockets of significant hardship and poverty*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Centre for Social Research & Evaluation & Inland Revenue. (2006). *Receipt of the 'working for families' package*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development & Inland Revenue.

Centre for Social Research & Evaluation & Inland Revenue. (2007). *Receipt of the 'working for families' package – 2007 Update*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development &Inland Revenue.

Centre for Social Research & Evaluation & Inland Revenue. (2010). *Changing families' financial support and incentives for working: The summary report of the evaluation of the 'working for families' package.* Wellington: Ministry of Social Development and Inland Revenue.

This report summarises the findings from the WFF evaluation. Results include an analysis of the impact of the WFF changes on sole parents' employment, couple parents' employment and poverty. The impact analysis included controls for the economic conditions over the WFF

implementation period. The authors state that the percentage of children living in poverty, using a 60% measure relative to 2004,dropped by 8 percentage points due to WFF. Without the WFF package, New Zealand's child poverty rate would have continued to climb from 2004, most likely reaching around 30% in 2008.

Child Poverty Action Group. (2008). *CPAG vs. Attorney General: Comment on the judgement, 16th December 2008.*

Collins, S. (2006). Maori children miss out on new Government assistance. *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved from **http://www.nzherald.co.nz/child-poverty-action-**group/news/article.cfm?o_id=600551&objectid=10376951

Cotterell, G., von Randow, M., & Wheldon, M. (2008). *Measuring changes in family and whānau wellbeing using Census data, 1981-2006: A preliminary analysis.* Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

Crabtree, B. F. & Miller, W. L. (1992). *Doing qualitative research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Cresswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

This book presents these three approaches side by side within the context of the process of research from the beginning steps of philosophical assumptions to the writing and presenting of research. It provides an expanded discussion on ethical issues, emphasizes new Web-based technologies for literature searches, offers updated information about mixed-methods research procedures and contains a glossary of terms.

Cumming, J., & Gribben, B. (2007). *Evaluation of the primary health care strategy: Practice data analysis 2001-2005.* Wellington: Primary Health Care Strategy Evaluation Research Team; Health Services Research Centre and CBG Health Research Ltd.

Cunningham, C., Durie, M., Fergusson, D., Fitzgerald, E., Hong, B., Horwood, J., et al. (2002). *Living standards of older Māori*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

The objective of this study was firstly to examine the use and relevance of the Material Wellbeing Scale to describe the living standards of older Māori (542 participants), secondly to provide comprehensive information on the living standards of older Māori and the factors impacting on their material wellbeing and thirdly to relate these findings to the findings from the study of the general population of older people. Results showed that, although the great majority of older Mäori are not in dire circumstances, there is nonetheless a relatively high rate of disadvantage, poverty and material hardship levels – around three or four times those of non-Mäori.

Cunningham, C., Stevenson, B., Fitzgerald, E., & Rolls, R. (2006). *Māori women in Aotearoa: A report prepared for Ministry of Women's Affairs*. Wellington: Research Centre for Māori Health and Development, Massey University.

Dale, M.C., Wynd, D., St John, S., & O'Brien M. (2010). *What work counts? Work incentives and sole parent families*. *A Child Poverty Action Group Monograph*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

WFF aimed to provide an incentive for parents to enter paid work, and to ensure income adequacy for those who did so. This paper considers whether WFF achieved its stated aim, and asks whether work-based social assistance results in well-paid, stable employment that lifts sole parents (and their children) out of poverty, or achieves little more than 'churning' between low-end jobs and benefits. The context of this study is 2004 – 2010. In-depth interviews, mainly with sole parents who have experienced some degree of churning in New Zealand's often unstable labour market, were conducted to provide the qualitative underpinnings of this project. The lesson from this is that the prevailing labour market has a greater impact on sole parent employment than financial incentives, and tying family income to paid work puts children at risk of irregular and variable income.

Dale, M. C., O'Brien M, & St John S (Eds.). (2011). *Left further behind; How policies fail the poorest children in New Zealand. A Child Poverty Action Group Monograph*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

This publication updates Left Behind (2008) and also broadens the focus to provide new insights into the wide range of issues (incomes, health, housing, education, parental support, social hazards) that affect children. It offers critical analysis of the state of New Zealand children in 2011 and the effectiveness of family and social policy. It provides strong recommendations for the way forward.

These focus on the idea of putting children at the centre of policy decisions. None of the issues can be tackled in isolation. A concerted and coordinated approach to reducing child poverty and improving the wellbeing and opportunities for all children is required.

Department of Labour. (2010). Maori Labour Market Factsheet – December 2009. Retrieved from **http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/archive/quick-facts-dec-09/lmr-quick-facts-**maori.asp

This fact sheet reports key labour market information for Māori for the year to December 2009. All data is sourced from the Household Labour Force Survey released quarterly by Statistics New Zealand.

Devlin N, Maynard A., & Mays N. (2001). New Zealand's new health sector reforms: Back to the future? *BMJ, 322*, 1171-1174.

In 1999 the National Government was replaced by a Labour led coalition, which rapidly and significantly changed the way publicly financed health services were organised from the quasi-free market system (narrow focus, fragmented public service, commercially oriented and lacking

local democratic input) to a system promoted as allowing greater community "voice" in health sector decision making "putting the public back into the public health system."

This paper reviews New Zealand's experience with the quasi- free market model and appraises the rationale for another round of structural change. Challenges that policymakers face in achieving their goals are identified, consideration given to the general lessons provided by New Zealand's frequent U-turns in policy, and criteria are offered against which the new system could be assessed.

Duignan, P. (2002). Building social policy evaluation capacity. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro*(19), 179-194.

In this article the author observes that there has been an increased interest in evaluation in the public sector in New Zealand which could result in an adequately resourced and sophisticated approach to evaluation leading to better formed and implemented social programmes and policies. In order to achieve this, appropriate evaluation models, (including those appropriate for Maori programmes) are needed and a sector culture of evaluation through appropriate evaluation training and awareness-raising at all levels is required.

Durie, M. H. (1995). Te Hoe Nuku Roa framework: A Māori identity measure. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 104(4), 461-470.

This paper reports on the development of the multi axial framework (*paihere tangata* (human relationships), *te ao Māori* (Māori culture and identity), *ngā āhuatanga noho-ā-tangata* (socio-economic circumstances), *ngā whakanekeneketanga* (change over time). used as a basis for developing an appropriate methodology to conduct a longitudinal study of Māori households (Te Hoe Nuku Roa -Māori Profiles). It will also be used in the analysis of complex data sets.

Durie, M. (1998). *Whaiora Māori: Health Development* (2nd ed.). Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.

Durie, M. (2004).An indigenous model of health promotion. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia.15*(3).

In this article, the Indigenous Model of Health Promotion which has been developed in New Zealand is outlined. The symbolism of a constellation of stars, the Southern Cross (Te Pae Mahutonga), are incorporated into the model to increase understanding and to convey a greater sense of relevance. The four key areas for health ('ora') proposed in the model, which represent one of the central Southern Cross stars are: Waiora (natural environment and environmental protection); Mauri Ora (cultural identity and access to the Mäori world); Toiora (well-being and healthy lifestyles); and Whaiora (full participation in the wider society). The two pointer stars symbolise capacities that are needed to make progress: effective leadership (Nga Manukura) and autonomy (Mana Whakahaere).

Durie, M. (2006). *Measuring Māori wellbeing*. Wellington: Massey University.

Durie, M., Black, T., Cunningham, C., Durie, A., Palmer, F., & Hawkins, C. (2005). *The parameters of whānau wellbeing: a report prepared for Te Puni Kōkiri*. Wellington: Massey University.

Dwyer, G. E. (2005). *Dissecting the working for families package*. Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable. Retrieved 04/09/2008 from **www.nzbr.org.nz/documents/publicaiotns/publications2005/dissecting-wff.pdf**.

This paper outlines the objectives of WFF, its components and summarises the costs. An international comparison of family income assistance is presented. The implications for economic efficiency of WFF are then examined and discussed in relation to the impact on child poverty and the distribution of income of WFF. An outline of an alternative and more desirable direction for policy is provided.

Evans, M., Knight, G., & La Valle, I. (2007). *New Zealand 'working for families 'programme: Literature review of evaluation evidence. PSI Research Discussion Paper 25*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

In 2005, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) commissioned research to review international evaluation methodology and literature to help in the preparation of evaluation of the Working for Families (WFF) policy, introduced in 2004. The results of the study are in two parts: This first part, the literature review, reviews international literature, comparing the economic impact of WFF with those of welfare reforms elsewhere. It introduces the central issues within the New Zealand and WFF context using a combination of cross-national comparisons and an intensive country or programme literature review.

Families Commission. (2008). *The kiwi nest: 60 years of change in New Zealand families:Research Report No. 3/08*. Wellington: Author.

Families Commission. (2010). Impact of the recession on families: Parent panel discussion group meetings, February - March 2010: Phase 3, session 2. Retrieved from **http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/listen/family-finances/impact-of-the-recession-on-**families

Families Commission. (2012). One step at a time; supporting families and whānau in financial hardship. Research Report No 3/12. Retrieved from http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/research/culture-and-community/one-step-at-a-time

Families Commission. (2012). Whānau taketake: Māori. Recessions and Māori resilience: Research Report No 2/10. Retrieved from http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz

Friesen, M. D., Fergusson, D. M., & Chesney, A.(2008). 'Living standards and material conditions of young New Zealand families'. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, Te Puna Whakaaro* (33), 47-69.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a descriptive profile of the personal characteristics and socio-economic circumstances of a cohort of young parents (N = 155) who had full-time care of at least one dependent child at 25 years of age. Employing longitudinal data from the Christchurch Health and Development Study, the results showed that around one in five of these young families were experiencing moderate to severe material hardship. These findings are discussed in light of current social and economic policy for income maintenance, employment facilitation and welfare reduction.

Gifford, H. (1999). *A case study of Whānau Ora: A Māori health promotion model.* (Master's Thesis). Otago University, Dunedin.

Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2010). *Mind the gap: Green new deal initiatives to combat growing inequality in New Zealand*.

Health Research Council of New Zealand. (1997). *Guidelines on ethics in health research*. Auckland: Author.

Health Research Council of New Zealand. (2008). *Guidelines for researchers on health research involving Māori*: Auckland: Author.

Henare, M., Puckey, A., & Nicholson, A. (2011). *He Ara Hou The pathway forward: Getting it right for Aotearoa New Zealand's Māori and Pasifika children*. Auckland: Mira Szászy Research Centre. The University of Auckland.

This report complements the earlier one published by '*Every Child Counts'* in 2011 and considers the situation of Māori and Pasifika children in depth. Overall, these children disproportionately suffer from low living standards as measured by income and indicators of hardship. This has high social and economic costs, and is reflected in the low well-being of many Māori and Pasifika families. However, assessing Māori and Pasifika well-being requires measures based on Māori and Pasifika notions of what constitutes a good life rather than in relation to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as this measure of standards of living fails to measure outcomes in relation to the Māori world view. The authors propose new measurements and models focusing on Māori and Pasifika capabilities that examine Māori and Pasifika participation in their own worlds and within New Zealand society more broadly.

James, J. (2009). Facilitating fertility and paid work: Contemporary family-friendly policy initiatives and their social impacts in Australasia. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro* (34), 25-39.

This paper focuses on contemporary public perceptions of the challenges of combining paid work and raising a family, set against the backdrop of concerns about low fertility, structural population ageing and the composition of the future labour force. The New Zealand Working for Families package, the Australian Family Tax Benefit package, and the two countries' parental leave and women-focused policies are compared, with a focus on cross-national similarities and differences.

Jensen, J., Spittal, M., Crichton, S., Sathiyandra, S., & Krishnan, V. (2002). *Direct measurement of living standards: The New Zealand ELSI scale. Ngā Whakaāturanga Ahuatanga Noho*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Researchers recognised that the Material Wellbeing Scale needed modification if it was to be valid across the whole population. The survey of working-age people contained living standard measurement items but (unlike the survey of older people) included few potentially explanatory variables. Using the measurement items, the researchers developed the Economic Living Standard Index (ELSI), (broadly similar to the one for older people) that is applicable to the population as a whole. Using ELSI, researchers have been able to describe the living standards of New Zealanders in a new and revealing way.

Jensen, J., Spittal, M., & Krishnan, V. (2005). *ELSI short form: User manual for a direct measure of living standards*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development

The Economic Living Standard Index Short Form (ELSISF) is a shortened version of the ELSI scale and can be substituted for it in many contexts. Like the full scale, the ELSISF provides a valid and reliable survey tool for measuring people's economic standard of living. The ELSISF tool yields a score that is obtained by combining information from a set of items that require 4-6 minutes to administer.

Jensen, J., Krishnan, V., Hodgson, R., Sathiyandra, S. G., Templeton, R., Jones, D., et al. (2006). *New Zealand living standards 2004*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Johnson, A. (2012). *The growing divide. A State of the Nation report from The Salvation Army.* Manukau City: The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. Retrieved from **http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/socialpolicy**

This report focuses on five social policy areas: children's wellbeing, crime and punishment, work and incomes, social hazards and housing with each of these topics outlined separately, through the presentation and discussion of various indicators. The author states that the levels of child poverty have remained the same over the last 5 years where children living in so called 'workless' households are six times more likely to live in relative poverty . Using the percentage of children living in benefit dependent households provides a more up-to-date indicator of changes in New Zealand's overall child poverty.

Johnson, N. (2005). 'Working for families' in New Zealand: Some early lessons. Retrieved 26/08/2008, from **http://www.fulbright.org.nz/voices/axford/johnson.html**

This report begins with some comparisons between New Zealand and the United States and concludes with policy recommendations and suggestions for further research. The author proposes that the 'Working for Families' package is likely to achieve its goals of reducing poverty, making work pay, and improving utilization of family supports by extending tax-based aid. However, the expansion of Family Assistance to an increasing proportion of New Zealand's middle-income, two-parent families could have unintended and undesirable consequences for some families.

Kiro, C., von Randow, M., & Sporle, A. (2010). Trends in well-being for Māori households/families, 1981-2006. Family whānau and wellbeing project. Retrieved from **http://www.maramatanga.ac.nz**.

This report uses data from the Family Whānau Wellbeing project (COMPASS) and is the first to specifically concentrate on Maori whānau and households providing a framework for monitoring whānau wellbeing through the use and analysis of the New Zealand Census data from this period. Other sources of health information are considered to contextualize findings relevant to hauora such as the New Zealand Health Survey, MSD Social Reports during this time frame, Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) and the Household Economic Survey (HES).

Kooyela,V. (2007). *Quality of life indicators for Māori: A discussion document for the Māori Potential Forecast Report.* Retrieved from **http://www.tpk.govt.nz**.

Krishnan, V., Jensen, J., & Ballantyne, S. (2002). *Living standards in New Zealand 2000: Ngā āhuatanga noho o Aotearoa.* Wellington: Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development.

Lunt, N., O'Brien, M., & Stephens, R. (Eds.). (2008). *New Zealand, new welfare* (1st ed. 23). South Melbourne, Victoria: Cengage Learning.

Manatu Māori. (1991). *Guidelines for research proposals.* Wellington: Author.

Mardini, J. (2007). *Does every child count in Aotearoa New Zealand? A child rights-based evaluation of' working for families' policy development.* Unpublished Dissertation, Otago, Dunedin.

The aim of this dissertation was to externally evaluate the extent to which children's rights, including the right to health, were recognised in the development of the WFF programme and what factors enabled or hindered greater recognition of children's rights during policy development. Document analysis and stakeholder informant interviews were conducted and triangulated for overall results. The author believes that WFF policy development process did not explicitly recognise UNCROC, international human rights norms or standards, or children's rights to an adequate income, standard of living, and health. Barriers to greater recognition of children's rights during policy development identified in the research included societal perspectives of children as "human becomings" rather than as "human beings", and prioritisation of economic development.

McTaggart, S. (2005). *Monitoring the impact of social policy, 1980–2001: Report on significant policy events*. Wellington: SPEaR.

The purpose of this report is to identify significant events in the area of social policy relevant to family wellbeing in New Zealand over the period 1980 -2001. The report is part of the Family and Whanau Wellbeing Project (FWWP), a five-year research project In it the author focuses on five major areas of social policy relevant to family wellbeing: social security, employment, health, education, and housing.

Ministry of Social Development. (2008). The social report, 2008: Indicators of social wellbeing in New Zealand. Retrieved from **http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Social%20Report%202008_0.pdf**

This is the seventh edition of the social report which uses a set of statistical indicators to monitor trends across10 "domains", or areas of people's lives. Together these domains provide a picture of wellbeing and quality of life in New Zealand. Comparisons are made between New Zealand and other countries on measures of wellbeing to provide greater transparency in government and to contribute to better informed public debate to help identify key issues and areas where action is needed. This report also introduced a new indicator on 'potentially hazardous drinking'.

Ministry of Social Development. (2008). Working for families. Retrieved 28/08/2008, from **http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy-**development/working-for-families/index.html.

Ministry of Social Development. (2011). Household incomes report 2011: Short summary. Wellington: Author.

Mowbray, M. (2001). *Distributions and disparity: New Zealand household incomes*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Policy.

Nettleton. C, Napolitano, D. A., & Stephens, C. (2007). *An overview of current knowledge of the social determinants of indigenous health*. Adelaide, Australia: Commission on Social Determinants of Health: International Symposium on Indigenous Health.

This report was compiled by a team of international researchers to document indigenous health and inequalities in a number of countries worldwide, including Australia and New Zealand. The social determinants that underpin inequalities in relation to health and wellbeing are outlined.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. (2009). Grassroots voices research report: The voice of New Zealand families and communities. Retrieved from http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. (2009). *Vulnerability Report (1)*: Retrieved from http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. (2009). *Vulnerability Report (2)*: Retrieved from http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. (2009). *Vulnerability Report (3)*: Retrieved from **http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz**.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. (2010). *Vulnerability Report (4)*: Retrieved from **http://www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz**.

New Zealand Government. (2010). Fact sheet:' Working for families' changes. Retrieved from **http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/fact-sheet-working-families-changes**

Bill English announced that from 1 April 2011 'well-off families' will no longer be able to use investment losses, including losses from rental properties, to reduce their income and trust income will be counted as part of a family's total income therefore affecting eligibility for 'Working for Families' (WFF) payments.

O'Brien, M. (2005). *Workfare: Not fair for kids. A review of compulsory work policies and their effects on children*. Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

Office of the Children's Commissioner. (2008). *Briefing for incoming minister*. Wellington: Children's Commissioner.

This paper provides information about the Commissioners functions and status, the position of children and young people in New Zealand, key child and youth issues facing New Zealand such as the impact of poverty on children and advice to the incoming Government on how best to address these.

Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment. (2004). Reducing inequalities: Next steps. Retrieved 26/08/2008, from **http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/reducing-inequalities/reducing-inequalities-next-steps.pdf**

The reducing inequalities policy aims to reduce disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity in order to achieve a similar distribution of outcomes between groups, and a more equitable distribution of overall outcomes within society (e.g. tackling poverty, low levels of foundation education skills and victimization, greater equality of real opportunities). In 2003 Cabinet agreed to a work programme for the reducing inequalities policy aimed at improving the coordination of the policy across agencies, monitoring and review of the reducing inequalities policy. The purpose of this paper was to review and set out the next phase of the reducing inequalities policy including goals, principles and priorities for future work and also describes the population groups that the policy targets.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Peace, R. (2001). Social Exclusion: A concept in need of definition? *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro* (16), 17-36

"Social exclusion" is a contested term. Not only is it used to refer to a wide range of phenomena and processes related to poverty, deprivation and hardship, but it is also used in relation to a wide range of categories of excluded people and places of exclusion. This presentation offers some evidence for the elusive and challenging nature of the concept both in the European Union and in New Zealand.

Perry ,B. (2004). Working for families: The impact on child poverty. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro (*22), 19-54.

This paper gives an account of a modelling and analysis exercise that provides estimates of the likely impact of the WFF reforms on income poverty through to 2007, with a major focus on the impact of the Family Income Assistance (FIA). It uses two internationally recognised poverty thresholds of 50% and 60% of the median equivalised income of households. The impact analysis finds that, when the WFF reforms are fully implemented in 2007, child poverty can be expected to have been reduced by the FIA by around 70% and 30% respectively at these two thresholds. A distinctive feature of the paper is the extensive sensitivity testing regarding the possible effect on the impact estimates of different assumptions and parameter settings that go into the construction of the poverty measures.

Perry, B. (2009). *Non-income measures of material wellbeing and hardship: First results from the 2008 New Zealand Living Standards Survey, with international comparisons*: Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Perry, B. (2009). *Household incomes in New Zealand: trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2008*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Perry, B. (2010). *Household incomes in New Zealand: trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2009*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Perry, B. (2011). *Household incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2010*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development. Retrieved from **http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our** work/publicationsresources/monitoring/household-incomes/index.html

Perry reports that one in six European/Pakeha children are likely to live in relative poverty, one in four Pacific children, and one in three Maori children. Perry claims that these differences are due to different rates of benefit dependence among these ethnic groups. Perry also reports that while children living in a single parent household are far more likely to live in relative poverty than other children, the majority of children experiencing this poverty live in two-parent households.. However, because there are far more children living in two-parent households, just over half of all children living in poverty live with two adults in their household. Noticeable among the changes between the 2009 and 2010data, is the fact that proportionately more children from two-parent households have slipped into relatively poverty, perhaps on account of rising unemployment among such households.

Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (1995). *Nursing research, principles and methods*. Philadelphia: J B Lippincott Company.

Public Health Advisory Committee. (2010). *The best start in life. Achieving effective action on child health and wellbeing*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Public Health Association (Producer). (2008) Working for families breaches international law. Retrieved from http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0807/S00026.htm

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous people*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.

Statistics New Zealand. (2008). *Family net worth in New Zealand*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

St John S. (1997). The measure of success for beyond dependency: Aims, methods and evaluation. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro*(8).

This paper uses the distinction between left-wing social liberals and right-wing conservatives to look at how our inherent political philosophy influences the way we interpret the word "dependency". In essence, there are different hypotheses about the way the world works and in principle should be capable of empirical validation. The writer believes that the more the debate can centre around the empirical and less around the ideological the better. Critically, if evaluation is to be useful we must frame the question in a way that reflects our ultimate goals, and this broader vision of a better society must include the perceptions and well-being of those who are the focus of our concern.

St John S. (2008). Challenging 'working for families' in work tax credit. Retrieved from **http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/LEANZ.pdf**

Presentation by the author to 'The Law & Economics Association of New Zealand' (LEANZ) regarding the stance of the Child Action Poverty Group in the hearing of the Human Rights Review Tribunal - June/July 2008.

St John, S., & Craig, D. (2004). *Cut price kids: Does the 'working for families' budget work for children?* Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

This monograph report questions the overall impact on already marginalized groups (Maori, Pacific families, solo parents and beneficiary dependents) of the newly introduced 'Working for Families' package in 2004.This package, including the 'In Work Payment' are examined in more detail following a review of the history of family assistance in New Zealand. Recommendations include a broader approach to child poverty where child focused assistance is key as opposed to policies which aim to encourage work. Comparisons with both the UK and Australian child support policies/benefits are outlined.

St John, S., & Dale, M. C. (2012). Evidence-based evaluation of social policy: Working for families. *Policy Quarterly 8*(1), 39- 51. Retrieved from **http://ips.ac.nz/publications/files/85630ff0208.pdf**

This paper reviews the role of evidence-based input and the policy making process with two examples from recent policies designed to affect behaviour: Working for Families and Kiwi Saver.

St John, S., & Wynd, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Left behind. How social and income inequalities damage New Zealand children.* Auckland: Child Poverty Action Group.

St John, S., & Rankin, K. (2009). Escaping the welfare mess? Working paper no 267. Retrieved 22/04/2010, from **http://www.nzccss.org.nz**

Taiapa, J. (1998). *The economic costs of whanaungatanga to whānau.* Paper presented at the Te Oru Rangahau Māori Research and Development Conference, Massey University, School of Māori Studies.

Taskforce on Whānau-Centred Initiatives. (2010). *Whānau ora: Report of the taskforce on whānau-centred initiatives*. Report to: Hon Tariana Turia, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

This report, developed by the Taskforce, set out to develop an evidence-based framework for - whānau-centred service delivery which aimed to strengthen whānau capabilities through an integrated and collaborative approach, Six key recommendations are provided that will contribute to the best outcomes for whānau.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa Research Team. (1997). *Reports of the Manawatu-Whanganui and Gisborne Baseline Studies*. Palmerston North: Department of Māori Studies, Massey University.

Te Hoe Nuku Roa Research Team. (1999). *Te Hoe Nuku Roa Source Document: Baseline History*. Palmerston North: School of Māori Studies, Massey University.

Tomlins-Jahnke, H., & Durie, A. (2008). *Whānau socialization through everyday talk: A pilot study: Report No 22/08*. Wellington: Families Commission.

True, J. (2005). *Methodologies for analysing the impact of public policy on families: A conceptual review*. Wellington: Families Commission.

The report looks at ways to help policy makers anticipate what impact their proposed initiatives may have on families. The report also analyses four methods for assessing policy impact, all of which can be adapted and applied to New Zealand families in order to strengthen the positive impacts and to avoid unintended negative consequences.

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. (2007). Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, Report Card 7 Retrieved from **www.unicef.org/irc**

Victoria University of Wellington Tax Working Group. (2010). *A tax system for New Zealand's future: Report of the Victoria University of Wellington Tax Working Group*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington: Centre for Accounting, Governance and Taxation Research.

Vinson, T. (2009). *Social Inclusion. The origins, meaning, definition and economic implications of the concept social inclusion/exclusion.* Sydney: Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Walton, M., Signal, L, & Thomson, G. (2009). Household economic resources as a determinant of childhood nutrition: Policy responses for New Zealand. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Whakaaro*(36),194-207.

Improving the nutrition of children and reducing rates of childhood overweight and obesity have been high priorities for the New Zealand Government since 2000. This paper aims to identify policy options that will have an impact on the economic drivers of childhood nutrition and obesity. These include focus on cost subsidies for non-discretionary household expenditure and reducing the price of food to increase access to nutritious foods, including fruit and vegetables.

Wehipeihana N, & Pipi K. (2008). *Working for families tax credits: barriers to take up from potentially eligible families.* Wellington: Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited.

The overarching qualitative research objective of this study, commissioned by the IRD, was to examine why potentially eligible families with Māori affiliations did not receive Working for Families Tax Credits (FFTC). Reasons outlined were; lack of awareness, too vulnerable financially to risk coming off the benefit, lack of engagement with Inland Revenue (IR) in the past, complex family relationships which made claiming difficult, or a perception that WFFTC was a benefit rather than an entitlement. Barriers, including low financial literacy, sense of whakama (shame) and facilitators to improve uptake, such as communication, advocacy; were outlined and recommendations made to address these to improve uptake.

Welfare Working Group. (2010). Reducing long-term benefit dependency: The issues (Detailed paper) Retrieved 10/01/ 2011, from **http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Downloads/Issues%20Paper/Welfare-Working-Group-Long-Term-Benefit-Dependency-The%20Issues.pdf**

The Welfare Working Group was established in April 2010 to examine ways to reduce long-term benefit dependency in New Zealand for people of working age. In particular, it was asked to focus on promoting better work outcomes for sole parents, sick people, disabled people and other people at risk of long-term benefit dependency. Forty three recommendations are made, centred on eight key reform themes to improve life time outcomes for people at risk of long-term welfare dependency including improving outcomes for children.

Wilkinson, T. M. (2001). The core ideas of ethics research. In C. Davidson and M. Tolich (Eds). *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand.* 13-24. Auckland: Longman.

Yin, R, K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX TWO WFF TIMELINE

Working For Families Timeline

- Part of Budget
- Abatement of Accommodation supplement removed for beneficiaries
- Accommodation Supplement entry and abatement thresholds increased for non-beneficiaries
- Childcare and OSCAR Subsidy rates increased and aligned, and income thresholds increased

Stage One of Working for Families implementation went live (with a further implementation deliverable released in October 2005). The changes included:

- Family tax credit rates increased by $25 for the first child and $15 for additional children
- The child component of main benefits moved into family tax credit
- Foster Care Allowance, Unsupported Child's Benefit and Orphan's Benefit rates increased by $15 per week
- Accommodation Supplement maximum rates increased in some areas with high housing costs
- Family tax credit became treated as income for Special Benefit, with standard costs set at 70% of main benefit plus family tax credit for people with children
- Childcare and OSCAR Subsidy rates increased by another 10%

Stage Two of Working for Families implementation went live. The changes included:

- The in-work tax credit replaced the Child Tax Credit: it pays up to $60 per week for families with three children, and up to an extra $15 per week for each other child
- The minimum family tax credit threshold increased from $15,080 to $17,680
- A single higher abatement threshold of $35,000 replaces the two family tax credit abatement thresholds of $20,356 and $27,481
- The 18% abatement rate applying to the lower abatement threshold for family tax credit vanishes completely and the 30% rate applying to the higher abatement threshold reduces to 20%
- Introduction of the Temporary Additional Support to replace Special Benefit

Stage Three involves the final components of Working for Families implementation and went live in April 2007. The changes include:

- Family tax-credit rates increased by $10 per week per child
- The income-threshold for the minimum family tax-credit increased to $18,044
- Regular inflation-adjustment put in place to prevent the erosion of payments over time

- While the package had been completely implemented with the final stage on 1 April 2007, the Income Tax Act 2004 provided for regular adjustments to rates based on cumulative movements in the New Zealand Consumer Price Index; a minimum movement of 5% was required before rates would be amended. These increases would apply from the following 1 April of a year when a change was triggered based on actual data published by Statistics New Zealand.
- As part of the 2008 Budget, the New Zealand Government amended the Income Tax Act 2004 to increase the rates of family tax credit and the abatement free level by an anticipated movement in Consumer Price Index of 5.22%. The increases would occur from 1 October 2008. This has required the Inland Revenue department to develop composite rates and income limits for the tax year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

APPENDIX THREE

WFF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. **What is your understanding of the WFF Policy?**

   Prompts

   - what were factors / drivers leading up to the Govts decision to develop WFF
   - what are the key components of the policy
   - what was the social / political context at the time of development
   - what were the tradeoffs or changes as the policy was developed through cabinet

2. **What do you think the WFF policy set out to achieve?**

   Prompts

   - reducing inequalities
   - poverty reduction
   - raising productivity
   - lifting family incomes
   - encouraging beneficiaries into the paid workforce

3. **Do you think the WFF policy is being implemented as intended, if not why not?**

   Prompts

   - historic implementation issues
   - contemporary issues
   - future risks to policy
   - unintended consequences
   - difficulties in implementation e.g. complexity
   - what is your impression of the uptake of this policy

4. **Where do Maori fit in the design and implementation of the WFF policy?**

   Prompts

   - What has been or might have been the impact on Maori from your perspective