

Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga

A New Zealand community alliance



**Te Ohu
Whakawhanaunga**

“We want a whole new public consensus on what we are prepared to accept as the quality of life for our children and those who are currently impoverished.”

Rev. Dr. Susan Adams

A new alliance is forming in Aotearoa. It is called Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga and comprised of community, union, faith and other relevant groupings from across civil society in Auckland. The purpose of this alliance is to reduce child poverty by addressing the causes of poverty in families and communities, so Auckland flourishes.

Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga is a broad-based community organisation that fosters active citizenship and civil

society leaders with the ability to negotiate with decision-makers toward systemic and structural change.

Communities know what is wrong, they know what has to change but to fix the way things currently work in Aotearoa requires a breadth of leadership from many organisations that gives voice to these issues, and disciplined organisation that ensures these voices are heeded.

The vision of Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga is to build a broad-based alliance that will bring a new community organising model to the challenge of growing community voice and power. This is a vision that gives hope that after 30 years of failure through deficit models of social change, something new can emerge.

The methodology is grounded in a 75-year-old tradition of the Industrial Areas Foundation that delivers results across the United States, the UK, Canada and Australia, along with many other emerging city-based alliances.

This is a methodology that has been the basis

of organising for a Living Wage in Aotearoa where private sector businesses are adopting a new standard for decent incomes and the public service is moving all workers, contracted and directly employed, to wages that are no less than the independently determined Living Wage.

Diverse groups come together and through a process of listening and collectively defining and shaping the issues, develop a programme of work that represents the interests of local people committed to growing the power and effectiveness of their own communities.

A broad-based community alliance

“The idea is huge but really exciting - and possible, if enough people are involved. Everyone knows something is wrong, but they don’t have the language to describe it. This is putting language to the problem.”

– Dave Tims

Broad-based organising closes the gap between our communities and society’s decision-makers enabling people to influence their own future and the systems and structures that define their world.

Through building relationships with people who are part of civil society organisations we understand what matters to them.

Through education of leaders within those civil society organisations we build the capacity of leaders to work together, describe the challenges, articulate the solutions and act together to influence structural change. People



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together become circuit breakers that transform whole communities.

Through public events, the powerful stand alongside citizens, hear their stories and respond to the collective “asks” of diverse communities. When accountability is lived, our communities benefit.

This is a Peter McKenzie Project.

Current sponsoring organisations are: Sisters of Mercy, Wiri, E tū, Anglican Diocese, St Matthew-in-the-City, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Methodist Mission Northern, Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ, Salvation Army, Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope, Pacific Women’s Watch, Maori Women’s Welfare League

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