Chair
Cabinet Social Development Committee

SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON REDUCING INEQUALITIES: JULY TO DECEMBER 2003

Proposal

1   This paper provides the July 2003 to December 2003 six-monthly report on the specifically funded reducing inequalities initiatives.   These initiatives form a subset of the wider programme of reducing inequalities policies.

Executive Summary

2   Reducing inequalities is a whole of government policy encompassing both social and economic initiatives. This paper reports departmental activity on reducing inequalities initiatives that were allocated specific funding over the July to December 2003 period. Twelve government agencies reported back on 109 initiatives. Agencies report that the majority of initiatives continue to progress well, with some showing significant achievements. Problems have been resolved for 11 of the initiatives, whilst 15 initiatives are reported as having experienced implementation issues that range from being minor to more difficult to resolve.

3   The next report back due in November 2004 will provide you with a full account of the four years of specially funded initiatives including expenditure and effectiveness information where possible.

Background

4   In April 2002 Cabinet requested six monthly reports on the implementation of reducing inequalities initiatives *[SEQ (02) 18 & 19 refer]*. In August 2003 Cabinet Social Development Committee (SDC) agreed to transfer six-monthly reporting and oversight of the wider reducing inequalities initiatives from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Ministry of Social Development.

5   Cabinet received the last update report in December 2003. [CAB (03)41/6a refers]. It was agreed that this report would provide a high level summary with a comprehensive report to be submitted to SDC in November 2004, covering the period from 2000–2004.

Overview of the reducing inequalities strategy

6   The Government's key goal for the reducing inequalities policy is to *"reduce the inequalities that currently divide our society and offer a good future for all, by better coordination of strategies across sectors and by supporting and strengthening the capacity of Māori and Pacific communities. It aims to ensure that all groups in society are able to participate fully and enjoy the benefits of improved productivity."*[1]

7   Reducing inequalities is a whole of government policy encompassing both social and economic initiatives. Broadly the strategy consists of:

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[1] Government key goal.

- major initiatives across a wide range of sectors that are encapsulated in such documents as the Māori Education Strategy, the Pasifika Education Plan, Reducing Inequalities in Health (2002) and outlined annually by thirteen of the larger agencies in their Annual Reports

- departmental responsiveness strategies aimed at ensuring public sector agencies have both workforces and processes that are responsive to different groups in society including iwi, hapū and a variety of other communities

- a range of initiatives funded in the 2000-2003 budgets.

8   Key elements of the reducing inequalities strategy are to support and strengthen the capacity of communities, especially Māori and Pacific, ensure that public services are of high quality and responsive to the needs of different groups, and most importantly focus on policy priorities that will make the greatest difference.

Update on specifically funded initiatives

9   Attachment 1 provides an account of the implementation of specifically funded initiatives for the period July to December 2003. The initiatives reported are divided into two groups. The first are those that were funded from the reducing inequalities contingency in the 2000/01 budget. The second group are baseline funded initiatives that fall directly into the reducing inequalities programme of work.

10   For this report agencies were asked to indicate the general progress of the initiatives and highlight those that had shown significant achievements, resolved past problems, or those that had experienced or continued to experience problems. The vast majority of initiatives are reported as continuing to progress well, meeting contract and service expectations. The table below summarises the responses from agencies. It should be noted that for some initiatives two or more categories were selected.

Table 1: Summary of responses from agencies

Agency	Total number of initiatives	Continues to progress well and/or shown significant achievements	Resolved past problems	Continued to, or experienced problems
Corrections	1	1		
Housing	10	8		2
Health	14	14	3	3
Justice	4	4	1	
National Library	1	1		
Culture and Heritage	1	1		
Social Development	5	5	1	1
Sport and Recreation	1	1		
Labour	7	7		
Te Puni Kōkiri	9	9		
Child Youth and Family	7	6	1	1
Education	49	43	5	8
Total[2]	**109**	**100**	**11**	**15**

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[2] Agencies selected two or more categories for some initiatives

Initiatives progressing well and/or showing significant achievements.

11   Agencies reported that 100 of the 109 initiatives were progressing well and/or had shown significant achievements. There has been a wide range of activity with good participation and engagement.

12   For example one of the Ministry of Health's intersectoral community action for health (ICAH) initiatives in the far north aimed to increase the number of Māori students that go onto year 13, to increase whānau support and involvement at home and at school, to reduce suspensions and truancy, to reduce drug use, and to increase the number of students achieving an educational plan appropriate to their needs. This initiative has resulted in measurable improvements being noted in student attendance and effectiveness learning.

13   A Ministry of Education school effectiveness project to raise student achievement has shown good results. The schools involved in this initiative have a much greater appreciation of the value of data to inform lesson planning and programme design. Based on a supplementary test of achievement in reading and a NZCER reading test, children in the year 5 cohort improved by 5% to 72%.

14   The Ministry of Social Development's *"In work support for Māori and Pacific job seekers"* has resulted in 66% stable employment outcomes being achieved. Their work track extension programme for Māori and Pacific peoples has also achieved some good results with a 67% employment outcome. This is an increase of 20% from the previous year.

15   Evaluation of some initiatives has indicated good results. The Ministry of Education, for example, noted that after four years of the reducing inequalities programmes, a number of programmes are maturing and are making a substantial contribution to improving outcomes. One such area is in partnerships with iwi where a New Zealand Centre for Educational Research (NZCER) evaluation report showed significant school improvements.   In particular, the report identified improvements in school governance, planning, reporting, rolls, teaching capacity, student learning and behaviour, and in teacher professional development in Ngāti Porou/East Coast area.

16   Capacity building initiatives undertaken by Te Puni Kōkiri to grow a critical mass of Māori organisations as models of effective governance and management have shown good results. The outcomes evaluation found that the programme had a positive impact on participants, with improvements in strategic planning and confidence in dealing with funding agencies being noted.

Resolving past implementation difficulties

17   Agencies reported that 11 initiatives had resolved past problems. The Department of Child, Youth and Family noted that their initiative to provide support, advocacy and educational awareness for youth in particular, takataapui; (gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people) and youth sex workers has overcome initial problems. With a change of provider, the initiative has changed from a state of no or minimal service provision, to the service being available and visible in the targeted community. Clients are accessing the services and additional services are now being offered.

Initiatives experiencing implementation difficulties

18   Agencies noted that 15 initiatives experienced, or continued to experience difficulties. Agencies have been able to learn from these experiences, and are working towards resolving identified problems.

19 Table 2 describes 12 of 15 initiatives that were reported as experiencing the most significant implementation difficulties. It should be noted that despite experiencing problems, many of the initiatives have continued to make good progress overall.

Table 2: Initiatives experiencing significant implementation difficulties

Initiative	*Issue*
Ngāti Kahungunu low cost housing scheme	The current Ngāti Kahungunu and Special Action Housing Zone schemes have not proved attractive to borrowers. Housing New Zealand is to seek approval to change lending to match the Housing Innovation Fund.
SHAZ – bridging finance for rural developments	A review of this initiative raised questions about suitability of the programme as a means of accessing home ownership for very low income families.
Tangata Mauri Ora Trust – supports and co-ordinates multi-disciplinary intervention in relation to domestic violence	High turnover of key personnel has resulted in delays in service delivery.
Māori Early Childhood Education Promoting Participation Programme	Problems engaging and retaining non-participating families.
Pacific Early Childhood Education participation programme	The programme has had success in building a focus on early childhood education in non-participating communities. There have been problems, however, in some other communities and a delay in identifying effective contractors.
Information and Communication Technologies computers for students in low decile schools	This initiative for senior maths and science students to use notebook computers with home internet connections experienced a range of infrastructure and capability issues that worked against the full integration of the initiative. The funding for this programme has now ceased.
Improving Access to Primary Care pilot	Numerous changes in personnel managing the contract have resulted in contract and relationship management issues.
Māori teacher supply initiatives	All Māori and non-Māori scholarships were allocated. However, 55 Māori medium scholarships were not allocated because of an insufficient number of applicants applying or passing the oral/written Maori language assessments.
Māori language education support wharekura curriculum delivery – teaching students online	Good progress was made in utilising the video-conferencing network and participants now have increasing familiarity with using the medium. There were problems with the workload caused by a small number of qualified teachers and unavailability of bandwidth to geographically isolated areas.
Māori language education additional staffing and operational allowances to support kura teina	Permanent Ministry staff are now in place to manage the kura establishment workload. This will address the slow progress in establishing new kura due to the level of support available to assist with the establishment phase.
In-depth training for at risk Board of Trustees	Training has taken place by five contractors over seven regions. Availability of Māori and Pacific trainers is an ongoing problem.
Investing in Māori communities through needs assessment and whānau development	There have been problems and delays in producing an evaluation report.

Consultation

20   All agencies who have responsibility for reducing inequalities initiatives have contributed information to the attached report. The Ministry of Social Development has engaged in consultation with Treasury, Ministry of Economic Development, State Services Commission, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Department of Labour, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, Department of Corrections, Sport and Recreation New Zealand, National Library, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Department for Courts (now with the Ministry of Justice).

Financial implications

21   There are no financial implications.

Human rights implications

22   There are no Human Rights Act implications.

Legislative implications

23   There are no legislative implications.

Gender implications

24   A number of reducing inequalities initiatives target gender-specific issues and impact on outcomes for men and women accordingly.

Disability perspective

25   The goals of the reducing inequalities strategy are consistent with the fully inclusive vision of the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

Publicity

26   Once approved by Cabinet, I intend to release this paper and attachment to the Māori Affairs Select Committee.

Recommendations

27   It is recommended that Cabinet Social Development Committee:

1   **note** that Attachment 1 provides the six-monthly implementation report on specifically-funded reducing inequalities initiatives for the period July to December 2003

2   **note** that the majority of initiatives are making positive progress towards full implementation and that agencies report that some initiatives have shown significant achievements, in some cases overcoming past problems

3   **note** that a small number of initiatives (15 out of 109) are experiencing some implementation difficulties which they are working towards resolving

4   **agree** that this Cabinet paper and Attachment 1 (subject to minor editing) be released to the Māori Affairs Select Committee

5   **note** that Social Development Committee will receive a comprehensive report on the reducing inequalities initiatives covering 2000 – 2004, with expenditure and where possible effectiveness information in November 2004.

Hon Steve Maharey
Minister for Social Development and Employment