MEANINGFUL WORK FOR THE YOUNG WORKER

Social Justice Week 2013: 8-14 September

To young people experiencing difficulties in finding secure work, we say: do not give up hope. ... Each of you is a precious and valued member of our society.

To our parishes and the wider community, we say: get to know the young people in your community who are looking for work. Talk to them ... and support them in their job search.

– New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, 2013

Unemployment after the 2009 economic recession has affected everyone, but particularly young people. Four years on, youth unemployment remains high across the globe. Currently, 75,000 young Kiwis aged 15-24 are not in employment, education or training.

It’s disheartening, as your first experience of the ‘working world’, to be unemployed. For young people on the margins, the repercussions of long term unemployment can be scarring.

Social Justice Week is an opportunity each year to consider Catholic social teaching on a specific social justice issue. This year it focuses on youth unemployment and what it means for young workers to have ‘meaningful work’.

On behalf of New Zealand's Catholic Bishops, Caritas has provided resources for Catholic parishes, schools and the wider community to consider the issues for young people looking for stable, secure work that would lead to a meaningful life of employment.

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Meaningful work enhances human dignity. It provides people enough income to live on and leads towards life-long, secure employment.

New Zealand’s labour market has been slow to recover from the 2009 economic recession. Jobs available are below pre-recession levels, job queues are long, and young people are waiting at the back. Many employers may view them as unreliable, unmotivated or inexperienced. New entry jobs for young graduates are few, while there are 42,000 more young people aged 20-25 entering the labour force now than five years ago.

Young people are also often in casual employment with no fixed hours or security of work: 42 per cent of all casual workers are aged 15-24. These jobs are the first to go during financial hardship.

Many tertiary graduates seeking work in their field of study are struggling. In 2012, the Ministry of Education told Victoria University primary teaching students that only 20 per cent of graduates would find work within a year of graduating. Nicole, a recent graduate, has applied for over 60 teaching roles and is yet to find the job that she studied towards after 10 months of searching.

We have all become accustomed to this disposable culture. With all the young people out of work, even they are affected by a culture in which everything is disposable.
– Pope Francis, 22 July 2013, on the impact of the economic recession on young people.

While economic recessions come and go, the impact of insecure work and unemployment for young people and for our community can be long lasting.

Reflecting the sentiment of Pope Francis, we as a community are called to walk together, older and younger generations, toward a culture of inclusion where the skills and contribution of all can be recognised and realised.

Justice and Peace networking

Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions and coordinators met recently with Caritas staff in Wellington (photo below). Diocesan Justice and Peace workers and representatives are key Caritas partners in promoting social justice within Aotearoa New Zealand. Diocesan work includes submissions and environmental resources, social justice seminars and newsletters, and formation in Catholic social teaching.

The gathering reviewed the latest Lent campaign, and looked ahead to cooperation and activities around Social Justice Week. It also enabled Justice and Peace coordinators and Commission members from each diocese to share and learn from each other, and consider better ways to encourage reflection and action for social justice in their areas.

The 2013 gathering was also notable for the attendance of Caritas Samoa Director, Puletini Tuala, visiting New Zealand to exchange information on Caritas’ advocacy, communications and fundraising approaches. Caritas Samoa was particularly keen to learn from our popular Lent reflection programme with a view to implementing something similar for the Church in Samoa.

Social Justice Week - find out more

Social Justice Week resources, including the core booklet Walk Alongside: Meaningful work for the young worker, have been sent to all parishes, schools and key social justice contacts. They are also available through our website, or by contacting the office caritas@caritas.org.nz or phone 0800 22 10 22.

In addition, the special Social Justice Week website Meaningful work for the young worker has stories and videos from workers of all ages with different work experiences. It also has details on finding work, workers’ rights, basic facts and policy issues, and is being updated regularly.

Does the Starting Out Wage help or hinder young unemployed people? What does the 90-day probationary period for a new job say about our willingness to provide young people with stable, secure employment?

Join us online, debate the issues and share your own stories! Check out www.socialjusticeweek.org.nz
The young face of work

Ka’isa Beech is studying toward a degree in Public Policy and Music while working part-time, and relates two contrasting experiences of work.

One of my first jobs was working as a cleaner at a home for the elderly. There was a strong union presence. I didn’t think much of it and didn’t see the point of joining at the time. The home for the elderly was a pleasant place to work.

I took all of this for granted. In my second job at a hotel, I found we were not provided the cleaning products and tools we needed to do our job properly. My hours constantly changed without notice. I felt as if I was doing my job to the best of my ability, but every day I would be told off or put down by the manager.

I didn’t want to question the boss even though I knew he was wrong. My fellow workmates felt the same as me. I was the youngest employee, so to see my older workmates just as scared as me did not make me feel secure.

My uncle suggested I join the Service and Food Workers Union. I joined the union then and became involved. My experience at the hotel did improve and I felt more confident being able to give advice and support my workmates. The manager continued to put me down every day saying I was lazy and useless – until I handed in my resignation after two years ... when he told me I was his best worker and asked me to stay to train new staff!

I think so few young people are not involved in unions because there is currently not much awareness or education into what unions can offer.... I see the main point of unions as creating and upholding the dignity of workers in their jobs.

SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEK IN SCHOOLS

Catholic schools’ resources focus on the nature of work as an important part of life. The teacher’s booklet Justice at Work draws on key ideas from the core Social Justice Week booklet Walk Alongside, adapting them for a younger audience. Learning is underpinned by the enduring understanding of how God works in our lives to make us more Christ-like. We are in God’s creative and loving hands.

Primary school materials explore the meaning of work, why people work, and different kinds of work. Older students (Years 7-13) are encouraged to research and engage in topics such as workers’ rights and responsibilities, and using our gifts in working towards the Reign of God.

The schools poster (pictured left) sent out this year doubles as a board game, using commonly heard phrases by those seeking work. It aims to encourage conversations about the uncertain future of work for many young people. These conversations are important as preparation for the challenges ahead.

Prayers, liturgy and worksheets are available to download from the website. School visits are planned for September.
The two halves of the Melanesian island of New Guinea north of Australia have followed divergent paths in post-colonial times. Papua New Guinea became an independent nation in 1975, while West Papua became part of Indonesia in a much disputed 1969 ‘vote’ by a hand-picked group.

Recent visits by Caritas staff to both regions highlight the different issues facing each.

**Bearing fruit in Papua New Guinea**

Caritas Director Julianne Hickey accompanied Programmes Officer Leo Duce in July to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to visit an expanded livelihood programme across three PNG dioceses. They saw the ‘first fruits’ of a pilot programme in the Kapo community of Kimbe diocese, West New Britain – cocoa pods from trees planted 2-3 years ago. About 75,000 cocoa seedlings have been planted, and the community is moving towards marketing the cocoa expected to be harvested in a year.

This programme has been challenging to implement, but Caritas has a capable hand in the person of Matthias Ire, who has worked for the Diocese for many years. He is committed to do whatever he can to ensure the programme’s success.

In his first quarterly report, Matthias says the Caritas visit has significantly strengthened the people’s desire to work harder on the project. He writes, ‘I am looking forward to this challenge and will ensure that funds are spent according to the budget. I will also ensure that the people get maximum benefit out of the funds provided. Collaboration between the three Dioceses is very important and it is my responsibility to make sure that it remains strong throughout the three years and the people are also fully involved in their projects.’

**Justice and peace for West Papua**

Programmes Officer Nick Borthwick visited West Papua where the disputed integration with Indonesia has created a backdrop of a heavy military presence, human rights abuses, and severe restrictions on public gatherings.

Indigenous Papuans have become a minority in their own land through transmigration from other parts of Indonesia. Access to land has been lost to palm oil, mineral exploitation and timber logging.

In this context, Caritas has supported the Sekretariat Keadilan Perdamaian (SKP) Justice and Peace network of the Catholic Church across West Papua’s five dioceses.

‘The network advocates for a peaceful dialogue to tackle West Papua’s problems, and provides a voice for the voiceless – documenting and speaking out about what happens when communities lose their land and forests,’ says Nick. Our support includes English language and human rights training for staff, and assisting the network to improve its human rights and advocacy work.

Caritas also provides solidarity support to the Papua Peace Network founded by Papuan priest Fr. Neles Tebay of Jayapura. This network promotes a genuine dialogue between the Indonesian government and the Papuan people, to overcome fears and misunderstandings, and create a framework for progress toward genuine peace and prosperity for all in West Papua.

Herman Fatagur (pictured) lives in Keerom, near the northern border with Papua New Guinea.

Herman’s land converted to oil palm in 1982. After 30 years his family situation has not changed. In the last few years his health started to fail him, but there was no support from the company to help with medical care. Life is a real struggle for him now, and the SKP network is trying to get him the medical attention he needs.

Families like Herman’s that have given up their ancestral lands to companies have no choice but to work in plantations for the equivalent of around $100 per family per month.

You can read more about Nick’s visit to West Papua in our One World Partnership newsletter for regular donors. If you would like to join us as a One World Partner, please contact the Caritas office.
EMERGENCY UPDATE

Typhoon Bopha rebuild in the Philippines

Rocky Silverio and his wife lost everything when Typhoon Bopha hit the southern Philippine islands of Mindanao and the Visayas last December. His family was among one million families affected by the cyclone, in which 2000 lives were lost.

Despite his trials, Rocky is representing NASSA (Caritas Philippines) to identify and work with locals on a project building 800 homes for affected families. Thanks to support from the New Zealand government and our donors, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has contributed almost $300,000 towards the project.

Caritas Humanitarian Programmes Officer Mark Mitchell visited Mindanao in July and says the recovery programme is going well.

‘The response is being done to high standards, and has been well received by beneficiaries.’

NASSA is using local materials such as coconut timber for cladding, and timber salvaged from destroyed homes. The new transitional shelters are expected to last 5-10 years. Occupants will often expand or extend the life of the basic 18-square-metre home according to their needs and ability to source additional building material.

Local chainsaw operators are sawing timber, and carpenters employed on construction, while each family receiving shelter is expected to provide 80 hours of labour towards clearing land, digging foundations, and sometimes assisting with building.

The project is on track for completion by the end of August, ensuring a more cyclone-resistant shelter for families.

This programme is supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme.

Getting ready in Vanuatu

Local villagers and Port of Vila Diocesan workers participated in a mock needs assessment after a ‘cyclone’ hit Vanuatu for a disaster simulation exercise in June.

The exercise was the first in a series of three across Vanuatu, Tonga and Fiji to improve disaster preparedness and response in the region.

Caritas Humanitarian Programmes Officer Mark Mitchell has worked on the programme in a consortium with six other New Zealand-based humanitarian organisations, and participated in the Vanuatu exercise.

Coordination between different organisations from national down to local level, and sharing of emergency response plans was a key part of the exercise.

‘It was a good demonstration of emergency response management in the Pacific,’ says Mark. ‘I met some of the key stakeholders, and got a working knowledge of their capacity. Being prepared is a huge part of emergency management. Preparedness measures such as this enable all involved to respond better, more effectively and more efficiently.

‘In an emergency having a prior relationship with other responders is a huge advantage. An exercise such as this provides an opportunity to see how other stakeholders operate.’

This programme is supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme.

Caritas support for Syrian refugees

The crisis in Syria and the surrounding countries continues to worsen. There is a huge need to provide assistance to the growing number of families.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is supporting Caritas Lebanon as it works with refugees from all religious backgrounds to provide healthcare, food, fuel, counselling, blankets, clothes and shelter for the most vulnerable.

We are accepting donations for this work, and a short film on Caritas Lebanon’s work is on our website: www.caritas.org.nz, search for ‘Syria crisis’.

Caritas Lebanon assisting new arrivals in the Bekaa Valley.
SCHOOLS SPOTLIGHT

Mufti Mania

On the last day of term two, all Catholic primary school children were encouraged to donate money to a Caritas partnership by not wearing their uniforms for a day, for Mufti Mania Day. This ongoing partnership between Caritas and the Catholic Primary Principals Association has successfully raised money over the last six years for projects improving the lives of children and their families in the Pacific.

Mufti Mania 2013 will help children and their families in Tonga face the challenge of climate change, by improving water supplies and tackling coastal erosion. In low-lying Ha’apai, people are needing to move inland away from higher tides and bigger waves. Ha’apai also experiences drought every year.

Our partner Caritas Tonga is employing a climate change officer in Ha’apai to work with children and the wider community, to identify water needs and sources and make improvements to water supplies. They will also work with the Government on ways to deal with coastal erosion. Mufti Mania funds this year will support the work of this person in schools.

Lent 2013

Lent has once again resulted in a very generous outpouring of donations from schools. Schools have contributed more than $67,000. This continues to grow as schools gather their funds from various activities.

We have loved reading about how schools motivated their young learners to participate meaningfully in Pacific-themed days, in moving liturgies, in service and sacrifice throughout the country. Our heartfelt thanks goes to everyone who worked so hard to bring about the fantastic result of over $1,017,000 raised for the good work of Caritas.

Lent 2014: Challenging times ahead

The Caritas Education team is already gearing up for next Lent. In 2014 we will be launching the Caritas Challenge: a new nationwide, 24-hour event for intermediate, secondary schools and youth groups. It will provide an opportunity for young people to take up a collective challenge and experience in a small way some of the difficulties faced by those living in poverty on a daily basis. The aim is for students to join together in solidarity with the poor, raise money towards alleviating their hardship, while having a bit of fun along the way.

The inaugural Caritas Challenge is scheduled to take place during Lent 2014 on the weekend of 4-6 April, although schools and youth groups may decide on another more suitable date based on their own circumstances. The focus for our inaugural event will be the work of Caritas in the Solomon Islands.

Keep a look out for more information coming your way very soon. Together we can help engage young people in the work of the Church, developing a deeper understanding and awareness of the injustice of poverty, empathy for the poor, and a life-long commitment to work towards a more just world.
A short video course at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Honiara, Solomon Islands has been a great success.

Mahitahi volunteer Hayden Powick assisted with the technology, and says the enthusiasm and willingness of the students to experiment enabled some professional looking short films to be created in just a few days.

‘From rap videos to kung fu fight scenes, and storytelling films, everything was in full flow,’ he says.

‘It’s been wonderful to be part of the media industry, where we inform, educate and entertain the public. As “digital natives” we are important to the development of our country,’ says course participant Georgianna Lepping.

Elsewhere in the Solomons, Jane Banfield of Paihia is working for two months with the Dominican Friars at Loga (Gizo Diocese), helping with strategic planning and general organisational management. Her partner Doug Buchan, a boat builder, is assisting with general maintenance.

Tim Gisler, an architect from Te Awamutu, recently helped the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul with plans for a whole new rural training centre including three classrooms and workshops, and accommodation for up to 20 students. He has also worked with the Daughters of Mary Immaculate on extensions to their Mother House in Honiara.

Coming to New Zealand on a reverse exchange in late August is Cypriano Nuake, Catholic Education Secretary of the Archdiocese of Honiara. He will be in New Zealand for four weeks to work with our volunteer Brendan Schollum (Education consultant of Auckland). This project will help to define the Catholic character of schools in Solomon Islands which were Catholic schools before independence in 1978 and are to be returned to the Church for administration.

Left: Radio producer Walter Turasi instructs Francis Kiri, Theresa Dola and Georgianna Lepping on taking good shots during the video course.

**Latest submissions**

In recent submissions, Caritas has commented on:

- **The Constitutional Review**: Caritas has supported a formal, written Constitution to incorporate a stronger Bill of Rights, and reflect and honour the Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi as the fundamental agreement providing the basis for the peoples living in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also favours the existing three-year electoral term, In the absence of better checks and balances and stronger human rights protections.

- **Employment Relations Amendment Bill**: Caritas opposed changes in the Bill which increased the vulnerability of workers, in particular changes to ‘good faith’ bargaining, the 30-day provision for new employees, and the Section 6A protection of vulnerable workers. It supported extending the ability to request flexibility in employment arrangements to a wider group of workers.

- **Social Housing Reform**: Caritas welcomes a willingness to address a shortage of low-cost housing, including an expanded role for non-government social housing providers, provided this extends and expands current provision by the State and private sector, rather than replacing it. However, it opposed the extension of reviewable tenancies to all state tenants, as such assessment on a household by household basis can overlook the impact on communities as a whole.

All Caritas submissions are available on our website.
COMING UP

Keep an eye out for these upcoming events.

World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel

22-28 September

Please pray for Peace in the Holy Land, during this event organised by the World Council of Churches. The week coincides with a visit to the Holy Land by Caritas Programmes Officer Anna Robertson and our Chair Mark Richards. They will assess our partnership with Caritas Jerusalem to provide community-based healthcare, and visit Taybeh, where the Peace Lamps for the Holy Land are made. The Peace Lamps promote prayer and solidarity for peace in the Holy Land, as well as providing employment and income for Palestinian people in the West Bank.

Peace Lamps remain available for sale from the Caritas office at $45 (small) and $70 (large – 2 styles). Postage is additional.

We also have available for free, A5 size prayer cards with the ‘Prayer for Peace in the Holy Land’. The prayer was developed by Caritas Jerusalem to accompany the Peace Lamps.

More details are available on our website.

Remember Parihaka

5 November

‘Go, put your hands to the plough. Look not back. If any come with guns, be not afraid. If they smite you, smite not in return. If they rend you, be not discouraged. Another will take up the good work.’

– Te Whiti o Rongomai, Parihaka 1879

Caritas has been approached in recent years by parishes and schools wishing to commemorate Parihaka Day on 5 November. In the late 19th century, under the leadership of Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, Parihaka became a place of non-violent resistance to the confiscation of land. There is growing international recognition for the peaceful actions of the people of Parihaka, more than 50 years before the non-violent resistance movements of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Parihaka continues to be a place of gathering to discuss issues of the day, and look for a collective response to injustice.

Caritas staff have visited Parihaka, and have been working with the community to produce resources to support Catholic parishes, schools and other groups who wish to reflect on the Parihaka story through the lens of Catholic social teaching. It is intended that the booklet will be available in September.

David Nonu, Caritas research and advocacy officer, addresses the community at Te Paepae marae, Parihaka.