

SUSTAINING OUR COMMUNITIES: CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAID AND UNPAID WORK AND THE VALUE OF VOLUNTARY WORK

New Zealanders spend more time on unpaid work than on paid work. This is a finding from the most recent Time Use Survey by Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (published in 2001).

This data shows that 3.5 billion hours are spent on paid work annually, equating to 1.7 million full-time jobs based on 40 hour working week

By comparison, we do over **4.2 billion hours** of unpaid work. If this is converted into full-time positions of 40 hours a week, it equates to over two million jobs.

Unpaid work in New Zealand in 1999 was valued in the report on the survey at \$40 billion, which is equivalent to 39 percent of Gross Domestic Product. Of the total hours spent on unpaid work, 2.7 billion are done by women and 1.5 billion by men.

The figure relating to unpaid work includes three quite distinct categories:

- unpaid work inside the home – 3,691 million hours
- informal unpaid work (carried out for people living outside the respondent's own household and not done for or through an organisation or group) – 292 million hours
- formal unpaid work (done outside the home, for or through an organisation or group) – 261 million hours

The information gathered to date clearly demonstrates the economic significance of this large investment of time in unpaid work. It also raises questions about the Government's stated position on "Work Life Balance". Finding a healthy balance has become a key Government strategy, but at the same time there is an increasing pressure for the people doing most of the unpaid work to move into paid work and thus contribute to GDP. This tension needs to be considered carefully given the current pressure on community-based support services, such as aged care, home support and social workers. These sectors are struggling to afford enough paid staff to deal with urgent referrals and high priority cases. From these two indicators alone it is clear we need to learn much more about the actual needs of our communities if we are to sustain their social fabric and protect the wellbeing of everyone.

Much will depend on how we ask the really important questions about our work and how we spend our time. The last national census report notes that while the census can provide a benchmark measure of unpaid activities, it will not adequately address the full complexity of the nature of (unpaid) voluntary work. Voluntary work and unpaid work are not necessarily the same thing. After all, slavery is unpaid work! The definition of voluntary work that is generally adopted is *work done, unpaid, of one's own free will and for the common good*. The conclusion of that report was that detailed information on types of unpaid and voluntary work and hours spent doing such work is better collected in an interviewer-administered survey such as a Time Use Survey rather than in the Census. The next Time Use Survey is urgently needed to ensure that the data for understanding the variety of contributions to our communities is of sufficient quality. This is particularly important as work proceeds on the Satellite Accounts for non-profit institutions.

A paper given by the Upoko of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu, Rev Maurice Manawaroa Gray, to the Volunteering NZ conference to mark the end of the recent United Nations International Year of Volunteering, raises further matters for consideration. Titled A Kaupapa Maori Framework for Volunteering, this paper gives glimpses of the richness inherent in moving on from a monocultural approach to sustaining our communities. For example, he refers to the way exploring the depth of Te Reo (the Maori language) in the maxim *Aroha ki te takata a rohe* gives insight into the dynamic

equivalent of “Volunteering” in a Kaupapa Maori context.

There is also a need to consider the developing literature on “gift work”. Giving of time, labour and resources are constructed within cultural philosophies of well-being and concepts of “self”. Acts of giving are important for the dynamics of establishing and maintaining key roles and relationships.

In her recent address to the Philanthropy New Zealand Conference “*Meeting the Challenges of Fairness and Equity - Tohu Aroha*” Joyce-Anne Raihania (Nga Puhī), senior analyst in the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector refers to the way Te Ao Maori (the Maori world view) provides a framework for understanding paid and unpaid work which extends well beyond North American and European world views. She points out that recognising and resourcing Maori approaches to better understand roles as *relationships* is key to a full acknowledgement of who really are contributing to the social and economic development of this country. The pending publication of the report on background research to these matters will also enrich the understanding of what sustains our communities.

As a first step in responding to this need, it is imperative that further analysis is done to recognise “*Tohu Aroha*”. It is also vital that “*work*” is seen as more than paid employment. Both these developments can be examined in preparation for the next Time Use Study.

The requirement for a wider understanding of “*work*” which recognises and values all contributions to sustaining and strengthening our communities was the key conclusion of the Sustainable Livelihoods Project of Healthy Christchurch in June 2003. That project also identified a number of questions as the basis of discussion to enable such understanding. These included:

- * What makes for a genuine sense of security?
- * How does a lack of a secure livelihood distort our values as individuals and communities?
- * What are the things we most value as individuals and as communities?
- * What keeps people and communities going in the hard times?
- * What treasures and values do we want to pass on to future generations?

If we are to build a society in which all people have sustainable livelihoods and are able to live in dignity, in healthy communities, while at the same time replenishing our depleted natural systems, with consideration for future generations, a much better picture of just who does what “*work*” in our communities is of pivotal importance. A parallel step must be to recognise that, currently, income is primarily distributed on the basis of paid work. Entitlement to income must be assured for those whose key roles and relationships are not paid. Seeing the unseen activities which contribute to sustaining our communities will mean being aware of creativity and actions to address injustice. The voluntary work that is associated with these unseen activities is at least as important as the more obviously visible tasks, whether those be voluntary, unpaid or paid. Valuing the full range of voluntary work is vital to determining how to live more sustainably.

The next Time Use Study is an important step forward in making this happen. It is proposed to be in 2008/09. It is imperative that this data is advanced so that the current work on the Satellite Accounts for non-profit institutions is based on the best data possible.

Katherine Peet taught maths and sciences and has thirty years experience in adult education and the voluntary sector. Her current primary commitment is to Network Waitangi Otautahi which focusses on Pakeha responsibility under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, particularly in relation to sustainable development.

25 August 2005

FOLLOW UP FROM “SUSTAINING OUR COMMUNITIES”

The article (above) was published in the Christchurch Press under the title "Unpaid and Underestimated".

A lot of feedback was received so Network Waitangi Otautahi (NWO) initiated follow-up because we were concerned that the data available for the work on the Satellite Account for the non-profit SECTOR were too limited to provide a good basis for reflecting all the unpaid contributions made outside the household to our communities. This concern was sparked by reservations raised by tangata whenua during the presentation on the Satellite Account to the Association of Non-Government Organisations (ANGOA) Research forum in August 2005.

At 1 November 2005 this initiative had the support of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu (Louise Tankersley), Christchurch City Council (Kath Jamieson), Christchurch Council of Social Services (Sharon Torstonson), Canterbury WEA (Daniela Bagozzi), Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch (Chrissie Williams), Christchurch Third Age Forum (Lesley Keast). Christchurch-based Garth Nowland Foreman and Donna Matahaere were Chairperson and member respectively of the Advisory Committee for the Study of the Nonprofit Sector in NZ also supported this initiative. Subsequently Professor Maria Humphries School of Management, Waikato University and Chair of the Australia New Zealand Third Sector Research Association has supported these developments.

In particular, we saw the need for the next Time Use Survey to be completed in order to ensure the Sector is recognised beyond the non-profit institutions (NPIs) as defined within the Johns Hopkins Study of NPIs.

We also believed that these matters would influence the understanding of the SECTOR and how agencies registering, or not registering, with the Charities Commission would be understood. The Charities Commission is referring to the Charities SECTOR. Questions are therefore raised about the relationship between the non-profit sector, non-profit institutions and the Charities sector. They are not all the same.

A further point was that we suspect the interface between formal and informal activity and organisation outside the household is less clear-cut than is currently understood. These matters influence the relationship between paid and unpaid work in the whole of the non-profit sector.

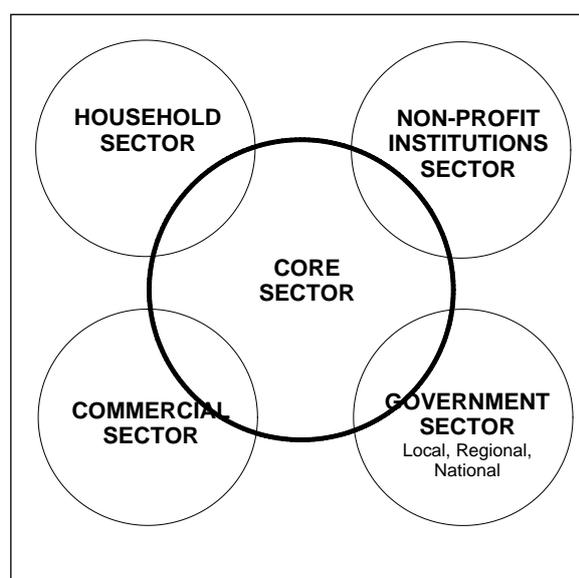
We asked that Statistics NZ delay the final conclusions on Satellite Account for the non-profit SECTOR until the Time Use Survey information is available.

We are very pleased that Statistics NZ acknowledged that our initiative deserved a considered response. Statistics NZ had decided to develop a Satellite Account for the Non-Profit Sector, to stand alongside the regular National Accounts (Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product).

While they did not agree to bring forward the Time Use Survey they did make it clear that the Non-Profit Satellite Account work was only of Non-Profit Institutions, not of the whole SECTOR. Publicity from Statistics NZ now makes it clear that the Satellite Account under development is *not to be of the Non-Profit Sector as a whole but rather will detail the activities and assess the economic value of Non-Profit Institutions (NPIs)*.

This clarification of terminology acknowledges that there are aspects of the Sector as a whole that are not included in what we are now calling Non Profit Institutions.

An example of unseen and unrecorded work that sustains our communities would be the work done by Southland farmers at the time of the Wairarapa floods. The energy and resources, the aroha and the gifting was planned, unpaid and performed outside the Household, but not done through a NPI.

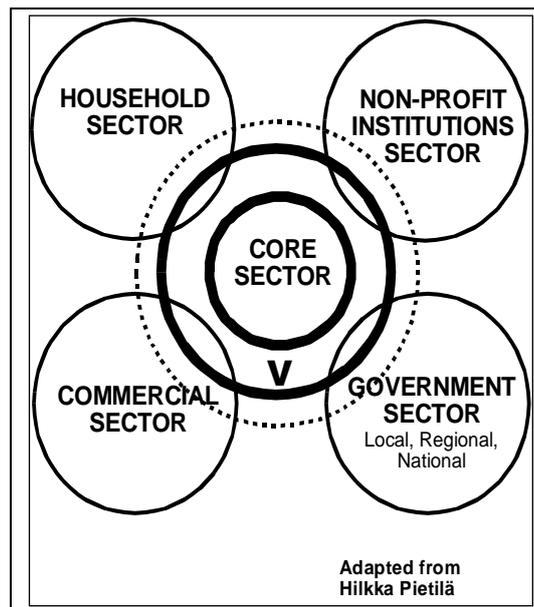


NWO experience is that Maori work really hard in such activities and that many other people also just roll up their sleeves and organise what needs to be done. Often these activities are the backbone of what is needed to sustain our communities.

In particular there is concern at the prospect of these being commodified. It is vital that these activities are resourced, and resourced in ways that do not destroy the gift relationships by transforming them into a market-valued transactions.

One way of looking at all that goes on in our communities is to recognise "Core" activities as important, alongside activities we recognise in the Household, in Government (whether local, regional or central), in Commerce or in Non-Profit Institutions. The diagram indicates that while there is overlap between the types of activities there is still part of the Non-Profit sector that needs not to be ignored, if we are sustain our communities i.e. keep valued things going in the long term.

Another aspect of clarification is to note that Volunteering (V) occurs in all Sectors:



Follow up to this initiative involves

- Working with Statistics NZ on the development of the questions for the next Time Use Survey
- Contributing to the research being undertaken in preparation of the socio-economic statistics for the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). This measure of progress takes into account social and ecological factors, not simply the quantity of market activity.
- Working with the Living Economies Forum in order to discern the emergent properties of local currencies such as Time Banks and Green Dollars / LETS that lie outside the market.

Anyone interested in being involved is invited to contact:

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The Network Waitangi Otautahi website is www.nwo.org.nz

October 2007