



My Five Solutions to end poverty in SA Anti-Poverty Week Event, 19 October 2010

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Today is about solutions to end poverty and solutions are about actions. Nelson Mandela once said that "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is manmade and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings".

- Not my organisations views but mine. Local Govt. tends not to use this language
- Do well at describing poverty, its characteristics, its impacts and its causes.
- At least 3 significant Anti-Poverty reports released this week from Mission Australia; from Anglicare and from the Salvation Army
- What actions might us human beings take to produce enduring change to end poverty.

My first three solutions are: education, education and education!

1ST – Greater Investment in Early Years Education

- If the patterns and concepts of learning are not well established by the start of school the rest is far more difficult to achieve.
- Current system of early childhood education is not hitting the mark.
- Thinker in Residence Fraser Mustard called for early child development and parenting centres that are accessible, available and affordable for all families with young children.
- Some appreciation of this area is it not yet enough to build buildings but need to establish patterns of Life Long Learning.

2ND – Reforming School Based Education

- School based education requires significant additional investment and should be more targeted and tailored to meet specific needs.
- One area for improvement is in the design of super schools. We are missing opportunities to design in connections to community, making it less difficult not more difficult to engage parents in school life.
- Engagement of parents in school life will improve educational attainment yet the schools we are building now turn their back on the community in which they are there to serve.

3RD – Investing in Post Secondary Education

- This needs to be more targeted, more accessible and more affordable.
- How educated a city is explains 60% of economic wealth. USA Vice-President Joseph Biden at an Urban Forum in Chicago I attended last year said that an increase of 1% of 4 year college degrees in Chicago would add \$7.4 billion to the economy.
- Makes sense purely from an economic perspective and makes even more sense from a whole of community perspective.
- Should be investing more in pathways to both vocational and further education.

4TH – Micro-economic enhancement

- Developing local level micro economic programmes that are accessible and focussed on outcomes.
- Home based business and social enterprises have much to offer those in poverty including independence and self-reliance. Must be done in ways that are accessible.
- Example: City of Playford looking at establishing a Youth Enterprise café in a recreation centre as a pathway for participants into the food industry.
- Perhaps the same concept could be done for school canteens instead of contracting them out. They could be run as a social enterprise and as a pathway into the food industry for parents of school children.

5th - Aspirations

- Raising aspirations and creating pathways in targeted locations through strength based approaches.
- Many families struggle with establishing aspirations and don't have the experience of families' members participating in education or, for some, employment.
- Establish long term mentoring and case management services so that someone available 24/7 not just when it suits the agency or worker.
- Examples of NAMIG (Northern Advanced Manufacturing Industry Group) and local leadership development programmes are aimed at raising aspirations.
- Don't need to re-invent wheel but apply successful concepts more broadly.