

Hunger is a problem for families in New Zealand

In New Zealand many people have different beliefs about hunger and poverty. It is very common to hear many people being very discouraging as to the people that need help. These people have no experience of food insecurity, are not directly affected by it and cannot understand how and why people are going short of food in New Zealand.

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The people that need help are commonly perceived as 'lazy' and that they 'abuse' the benefit/help that people give them. This meaning that they create a situation where they are able to work but choose not to because they believe that they have no need to if they are able to get money from the government. Therefore they do not attempt to find a job but just stay on a benefit when other people who actually do it are being put into this generalisation also. Such as '5279 drunks and druggies are staying at home and drawing a benefit, taking money off people who have a job.' (6)...

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I believe food security in New Zealand is an issue meaning that hunger is a big problem for some families. This is because not all people have access to sufficient food, in particular a wide variety of foods. Many families that have a low income and limited transport do not have access to sufficient, affordable healthy food. "Poverty in New Zealand is living at less than 60% of the median wage. That's about \$16,999 a year and weekly, it's \$307.70. According to this definition 200,000 children are living in poverty, about 20% of the nation's young.' (1) This means that many of the families living in New Zealand aren't able to achieve food security because of financial distress, showing that many families are also going hungry as they can't afford to purchase or access even the simplest of foods.

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The main reason why hunger is a problem in New Zealand is that not enough people have the money to be able to buy food. This is because a lot of families are living on a low income or a benefit and have to distribute this money between many things such as rent, power bills, school bills, clothing, food and so on.

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One of the determinants connected to poverty and hunger is housing. Many people cannot afford to buy a house in today's market and are therefore forced to rent which in the long run costs even more and they never end up with something of their own. Because of limited income and sometimes a lack of education many people are forced to live in below standard housing. People without the knowledge and skills to get a decent income are stuck with the minimum wage and can't afford food and /or a warm house. '375,000 New Zealand kids live in cold, damp rental houses that are expensive to heat'. (2) If you were to look at a three bedroom apartment outside a city centre, you are looking at roughly \$1,800 per month so about \$450 a week and inside the city centre just under double that. (3) These prices are extremely expensive and some people are just unable to afford this therefore they have to live in very poor conditions.

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It is not uncommon for people to become ill living in these conditions. "Children in the lowest income families are three times more likely to get sick.' (4) These same children who are getting sick from their poor housing conditions are also forced to go to school hungry and without having eaten breakfast. Because of this many of these children are becoming malnourished, thus making them more likely to get sick. '50 New Zealanders are admitted to hospital per day because of illnesses made worse by unhealthy homes.' (5) This statistic puts into perspective how many people are being seriously affected by having insufficient

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money to support their families and being able to provide both a roof over their head and sufficient food – both of which are essential for life.