



Findings of the  
Poverty Truth Commission

March 2009 - April 2011

THE  
**Poverty Truth**  
Commission

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Commissioners sit in a circle at a Commission meeting



*"My involvement with the Poverty Truth Commission was a revelation in so many ways. Not least, I came to appreciate just how 'disempowered' people can feel when experts, officials and politicians talk about their plight but without any real reference to the people they're talking about.*

*"Through the Commission I have become convinced that we are more likely to identify solutions to some deep-seated problems if politicians and officials involve those who experience the reality of poverty in their daily lives. That is the challenge to policy makers and those who deliver public services at every level of government."*

**Jim Wallace**, Former Deputy First Minister and Commissioner

## We Call

**We call** for the involvement of people living in poverty in shaping and delivering anti-poverty policy.

**We challenge** government (at local, Scottish and UK levels) to develop and implement clear and accountable ways to involve directly people struggling against poverty at the heart of designing, implementing and evaluating solutions to poverty.

*"People have been suppressed by poverty, and that is what this group is all about - the truth about what poverty is and what it does to people. Through this group we've learnt to raise up our heads, speak our truths and ask people to take note."*

**Jessie Harvey**, Commissioner



# Nothing about Us without Us is for Us

## About the Poverty Truth Commission

The Poverty Truth Commission has been a two year project bringing together some of Scotland's civic leaders with people at the sharp end of poverty. They have worked together to discover the truths about poverty and explore real solutions to it. They have also become friends.

## Why?

Despite hundreds of charity reports and government strategies poverty continues to worsen in the UK. Our motto, taken from the South African post-apartheid process, is 'nothing about us without us is for us'. We believe that just as women's rights would never have been won without women at the helm, poverty will never be truly addressed until those who experience it first hand are at the heart of the process.

## What we've done

The Poverty Truth Commission was formed in March 2009 after a group of people from disadvantaged communities in Glasgow testified on

poverty in front of 400 people. That day a group of Scotland's decision makers decided to join with the testifiers, accepting that they could not address poverty without those affected. Since then the Commission has focused on three main areas of particular relevance to our commissioners: care for children unable to live with their parents, overcoming violence in our communities, and addressing the stereotyping of people living in poverty. Throughout our work we have sought to develop a new way of working. We have come a long way and we still have a long way to go.

In this report we share our experience, our key findings, the challenges we call others to meet, and, above all, our model of participation. We believe we have experienced something unique and valuable - something which has changed us as human beings. We hope it will be useful and relevant to others struggling against poverty, policy makers, voluntary sector organisations and many others.

**Maureen McGinn & Tricia McConalogue, co Chairs.**



*"The Poverty Truth Commission brought together a diverse group including, crucially, people living with poverty. All learned from each other, improved their understanding of poverty and developed their communication skills. I believe the Commission provides a template for the consideration of social policy formulation by government at all levels. The recommendations made on the three areas studied deserve serious consideration by the public bodies concerned."*

**Bob Winter, Commissioner**

## Co-Chairs:

**Maureen McGinn (Lady Elvidge)** Former Chief Executive - Laidlaw Youth Trust  
**Tricia McConalogue** Bridging the Gap, the Gorbals

## Commissioners:

**Anne Marie Peffer**  
Casework manager for Scotland, Buttle UK

**Blair Green**  
Full time HGV driver and surveyor, Drumchapel, Glasgow

**Carol Turner**  
Original testifier, Yorkhill, Glasgow

**Daniel Boyle**  
Apprentice mechanic, Ruchazie, Glasgow. Sadly passed away.

**Darren McGarvey**  
Hip Hop artist and founder of Volition Glasgow

**Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan** Head of Strathclyde Police Violence Reduction Unit

**Donna Barrowcliffe**  
Community worker from Ruchazie, Glasgow

**Salah Beltagui**  
Chairman of the Muslim Council for Scotland

**Dr Alison Elliot**  
Convener of Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

**Dr Alastair McIntosh**  
Fellow- Centre for Human Ecology and Director- GalGael Trust

**Frances Wood**  
Head of Employability and Tackling Poverty Division, Scottish Government

**Ghazala Hakeem**  
Community worker, Govanhill, Glasgow

**Jamie Lee Smart**  
Qualified nursery nurse, Glasgow

**Janette Harkess**  
Director of Policy, Scottish Council for Development and Industry

**Jean Forrester**  
Church and community volunteer, North Glasgow

**Jessie Harvey**  
Kinship carer and Chair of North Glasgow Kinship Care support group

**Johann Lamont MSP**  
Deputy leader of the Scottish Labour party

**Lord Wallace of Tankerness**  
Former Deputy First Minister of Scotland

**Marie McCormack**  
Bridging the Gap, Glasgow

**Martin Johnstone**  
Chief Executive - Faith in Community Scotland

**Most Rev Mario Conti**  
Archbishop of Glasgow

**Nicola Boland**  
Youth Worker in Royston, Glasgow.

**Professor Pamela Gillies**  
Principal of Glasgow Caledonian University

**Rt Hon Bob Winter**  
The Lord Provost of Glasgow

**Sadie Prior**  
Kinship carer, North Glasgow

**Scott MacKinnon**  
Student, Cranhill, Glasgow

**Stephen Lynch**  
Nitshill resident, Glasgow

**Very Rev David Lunan**  
former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

**William Barrowcliffe**  
Student, Ruchazie, Glasgow



# Working together

As people from vastly different backgrounds, learning to work together properly has not been easy and it has taken time to build trust and shared commitment. We have actively tried to leave our labels and titles at the door and break down the many stereotyped assumptions we held. We have recognised the way we use or don't use our power and position. We have

learned to listen deeply to each other. Many of us who hold positions of leadership have found these relationships invaluable to our work and outlook. Many of us struggling against poverty have discovered we have something worthwhile to say. We are part of the solution to poverty rather than the problem.

**"We have actively tried to leave our labels and titles at the door"**

found these relationships invaluable to our work and outlook. Many of us struggling against poverty



## We recognise

**We recognise** the wisdom, knowledge and expertise of people living in poverty – the real experts without whom limited progress will be made.

**We challenge** people who are struggling to overcome poverty to share their struggle and to come together with others to work for lasting change.

*"We have worked for each other. Maureen is good at understanding the policy, Martin's good at putting the points over, and I've got the real experience. When we work together we have something powerful"*

**Jessie Harvey**, Commissioner

*"The Commission shows the power of relationships based on trust, shared learning and mutual respect. People with very different experiences and expertise have collaborated in new ways to bring about positive social change."*

**Maureen McGinn**, Commissioner

*"The truth is that poverty is not a lifestyle choice, and the people who understand it and have the best ideas for fighting it, are those living with it. Contrary to the image often portrayed in the media, these people are decent, honest, inventive and determined to change their communities and their personal situations. Working together with them through the Poverty Truth Commission has been one of the most positive and productive experiences in my career."*

*"My abiding memory of the inaugural meeting of the Poverty Truth Commission was the stories of the testifiers, speaking from the heart about the effect of poverty on their lives. It was measured, authentic, positive, and very moving. It's people that change people, not concepts; and this was real."*

**David Lunan**, Commissioner

**Our top tips on working together to tackle poverty can be found on page 17.**

# Poverty in Scotland today

Many people in the UK think poverty is something that happens in Africa. In fact we have deeper levels of poverty and higher levels of inequality than most rich countries. Poverty is not just about lack of money and resources, but also about loss of community and lack of hope.

In the Commission, the truths we have heard about modern day poverty have often been distressing, sad and hard to hear. We have heard about in-work poverty, the struggle to provide for a family, the difficulty in getting any job, and the battle for dignity in the face of discrimination.

**"I'm so sick of the way people treat me"**

We have heard of 'put downs' from service providers, public authorities, the media and the general public. We have heard about violence, frustration, turning to drugs or alcohol, and being unable to afford basics like bus fares and shoes. We have also heard about people going hungry in one of the world's richest countries.

There is a postcode lottery for living, jobs, benefits, loans and services of all kinds for people living in our poorest communities. The result is that if you are from a deprived community life is more expensive and opportunities are fewer, creating a poverty trap.

*"What is poverty? Worry, worry, worry. Everything is going up in price, everything apart from my wages. I feel physically sick with worry, and I'm so cold. The Housing haven't repaired my radiator for three weeks now. I just sit in the cold and go to bed early. My hair is falling out with the stress. I don't see how things can change for me. I think this is the way it's going to be all the time. I'm so sick of the way people treat me. It feels like there's a barrier in front of me the whole time."*

**Marie McCormack**, Commissioner



## Did You Know?

**In 2008/9 13million people in the UK were in poverty.** 44% were in 'deep poverty' (household income at least one-third below the poverty line), the highest proportion on record. (JRF, 2010)

**Poverty shortens your life.** A boy born in Calton, Glasgow will live an average of 28 years fewer than one born a few miles away in Lenzie.

*"The hardest part of the struggle against poverty can be in your own mind; behaviours and patterns you have learnt and an acceptance of poverty - a poverty consciousness. This is the hardest thing to shift."*

**Carol Turner**, Commissioner



*"I've long been aware of the extra financial hurdles we place in the way of people in poverty – unknown to the comfortably off with their easy access to credit. What the Poverty Truth Commission has brought home to me are the emotional hurdles people in poverty have to clear and the strength that can come from enabling good relationships to flourish."* **Alison Elliot**, Commissioner

## We Call

**We call** on the people of Scotland to share our outrage at the huge and growing levels of disparity which exist between rich and poor.

**We challenge** civil society, including the faith communities, to enable those in poverty to lead the debate on how we can develop a fairer and more equal Scotland.



# Overcoming Violence

Violence is not just a poverty issue, but it is exacerbated by poverty. Violence is directly linked to levels of inequality – the greater the disparity between the richest and poorest, the greater the fear and frustration that cause violence.

Our Alternatives to Violence working group has included an academic, a senior police officer and people with direct experience of poverty and violence in our poorest communities. We have explored topics including domestic violence, early intervention, gang culture and community disempowerment.



*"People feel helpless and there's nae hope"*

**Donna Barrowcliffe**, Commissioner

## Key findings:

- Early intervention is the key to preventing violence. Domestic violence and early years traumas are the nexus of violence in our society.
- People feel controlled and frustrated when they don't have a say in their communities. Service providers like the housing association, the job centre and police can make people feel diminished and disempowered, increasing violence and reducing the capacity of communities to look after themselves.
- Solutions to violence work best if they are created and owned by local people or those affected by it. Empowerment of communities is essential. There are many superb local initiatives but they often don't get the recognition or funding they deserve. Participatory budgeting is one of a range of ways of doing this.

*"The schemes around Ruchazie and Cranhill are not easy places to live because of territorial and gang violence, as well as bad relationships between the police and young people. With the support of some of the commissioners we ran our idea for a mixed team football tournament with rival gangs and the police. We also set up regular meetings with local community police to enable collaboration and understanding instead of excess stop and searches, fear and antagonism. This relationship has been useful for both ourselves and the police. Our hope is that the barriers of schemes and police will slowly dissolve, and that one day all schemes can get along as friends instead of enemies."*

**William Barrowcliffe (Ruchazie), and Scott MacKinnon (Cranhill)**, Commissioners



*"Reducing violence is an issue for everyone, no matter who we are, nor where we live. The police, health, education, all have a role to play, but unless we listen to and work in tandem with the people who are affected by violence day in, day out, we will never make any long lasting difference. The Poverty Truth Commission has helped shift my perspective and influenced our work - we now look for the assets in a community which will help effect positive change, rather than assuming change is something that needs to be bought in by an outside agency. We will continue to support people from Glasgow's most hard pressed communities in their efforts to reduce violence locally as well as using their experience as a reference group in our ongoing work."*

**John Carnochan**, Commissioner

**For more information please see 'Violence and Community Breakdown' at [www.povertytruthcommission.org](http://www.povertytruthcommission.org)**

## We Recognise

**We recognise** that the best and most sustainable work to tackle violence is often done locally.

**We challenge** local government and the police to move beyond processes of consultation and community engagement and to devolve real power (including budgets) to local neighbourhoods.

# Kinship Care

Kinship Care involves relatives (usually grandparents) who become permanent carers for children whose parents are unable to look after them. This is usually due to addiction or bereavement. 2,990 children are recognised to be in 'formal' kinship care in Scotland and an estimated 17,500 more children are in this situation 'informally'. Most of them receive little or no financial, educational or psychological support. This leaves many of them in extreme poverty and struggling with physical and mental problems.

The Commission included Kinship Carers from some of Glasgow's most disadvantaged areas. Kinship Carers have been supporting each other and struggling for recognition and justice for many years. They know they are saving the Government millions in avoided care costs and are frustrated by money assigned to them often being misdirected and failing to help the children. They know how

funds could be best used to give children in their care a better chance and help prevent bigger problems to society in future. They know that legal distinctions between carers are often unfair and restrict access to much needed support.

The Commission formed a Kinship Care Working Group of senior politicians, policy advisers, charity workers and Kinship Carers. We have achieved a lot by working alongside each other. We have met numerous officials, held a National Lobby Day in the Scottish

Parliament, asked parliamentary questions, built alliances, and brought the main bodies charged with supporting children in Kinship Care together. Each time, Kinship Carers have been around the table at the heart of the process, keeping it relevant and grounded in reality. We are deeply aware of the struggle that lies ahead for these children but are more convinced than ever that this struggle must be won.

**"We are deeply aware of the struggle that lies ahead for these children"**



Kinship carers demand justice at our Lobby Day in the Scottish Parliament.

Commissioners Jessie Harvey and Johann Lamont MSP speak together in Parliament



## Moirá's Story

*"When I took the kids from an unsafe situation I had no bed for them and very little clothing. I had to give up work to take care of them. There had been no social work involvement when I took my granddaughter so she wasn't recognised as officially under kinship care and I got no support. The first five years were a chronic struggle. I wish I could say this was in the past, but women in my group are still going through exactly the same thing today."*

**Moirá is a 66 year old kinship carer of four grandchildren, including two 18 years olds, in Barlanark, East Glasgow.**

*"The Kinship Carers, testimonies took you by the throat - you had to listen to them. I found the combination of the lack of support from the system, but their absolute determination to do everything they can for their children so inspiring."*

**Johann Lamont, Commissioner**

**For more information see 'Kinship Care: Observations and Recommendations' at [www.povertytruthcommission.org](http://www.povertytruthcommission.org)**

## We Recognise

**We recognise** the massive contribution which kinship carers are making to the quality of life for children in their care.

**We challenge** the Scottish and UK Governments, local authorities, health boards and Kinship Carers to work together to improve the quality of life for this highly vulnerable group of children and young people.

*"Nobody wants responsibility for these children's rights, and seem to forget that they're the future of the UK. Social work and councillors used to be very dismissive but through the Poverty Truth Commission we've now got a voice. We've said if there are decisions being made about kinship care we want to be part of them. People in power should realise they are not being accountable to the children's needs. Invest in early intervention and we can look forward to fine upstanding citizens we can be very proud of in the future."*

**Jean Forrester, Commissioner**

# Stereotyping Poverty

Politicians, the media and wider society still find it acceptable to describe people from deprived communities as scroungers and benefit fraudsters. There is a demand for scandal and bad news about people and communities in poverty. Negative and stereotyped reporting can make people feel hopeless and ashamed of where they live as well as deepen divisions such as racism and fear of young people. It also creates a culture which blames those without resources for their problems rather than accepting that we have a shared responsibility to create a more just society.

People want to be proud of their communities and promote them

**“People want to be proud of their communities”**

as good places to live rather than feeling ashamed of them. There are incredible stories of community spirit, mutuality, courage and resilience in deprived communities but they don't make the papers. As a Commission we have continually sought to work with members of the media to promote positive examples. We have seen the beneficial effect that this has had.



*“As former Deputy Editor of the Herald I know that the media still have the power to influence change and to change lives. However, more people with the experience, the insight and the stories to tell need to feel empowered to articulate these to the right people in the right media at the right time. That's a big ask - both for media outlets and individuals and groups who want to share their experiences of injustices and their ambitions for positive change.*

*It's not going to happen overnight and is highly unlikely to happen in a bold revolutionary way. Really, it's about people talking to people. And listening.”*

**Janette Harkess, Commissioner**

**BENEFIT SCROUNGERS!**  
SCOTLAND A POPULATION OF BENEFIT THIEFS?

*Headlines like this cause misery for people in deprived communities.*

*A benefits claimant who has fathered ten children and receives more than £30,000 a year in state handouts has been branded as lazy and 'nothing more than a sperm donor' by his scheme in Easterhouse, Glasgow.*

*Jobless Robert McBride, 46, and his partner Joanne Shepard, who is pregnant with her 12th child, have been moved into a free five-bedroom house in which to raise their brood.*

*The £1,200-a-month rent on their Glasgow home is covered by the taxpayer, Mr Bateman's daughter Jessica, 18, who is from a previous relationship, said she was ashamed of her 'useless' father. She said he walked out on her family when she was five years old. 'I am so ashamed of him. That family seems to be living the life of Riley, when my family works hard to earn a living and can't afford half of what they can,' she said.....*

We have convened a group of press officers from civil society organisations to continue our work ensuring that the real stories are heard.

*“Not only does it give an area a bad name, if you are continuously hearing stories about violence but it takes away people's hope. It makes them give up trying. Why not feature more of the positive stories in the newspaper? Why not start giving communities good feedback rather than only reporting the negative incidents? Not only would it give the whole community hope, it might inspire many individuals to change their way of life to match those gaining positive publicity. I believe that if communities become stronger and closer many problems can be resolved.”*

**Scott MacKinnon, Commissioner**



*“The BBC got in touch regarding a programme on poverty. They filmed my daughter for over an hour and then decided she was 'not poor enough'. This kind of selective journalism feeds the public mindset, leading to stereotyping and prejudice. Later I was one of the guests for a programme on domestic violence on a local radio station. I knew it was imperative for me to do the programme as not many people who have been in this situation speak openly. Next day I received a phone call from a survivor of domestic abuse. She had heard me on the radio. What we need is more people empowered to talk – we need more people to listen.”*

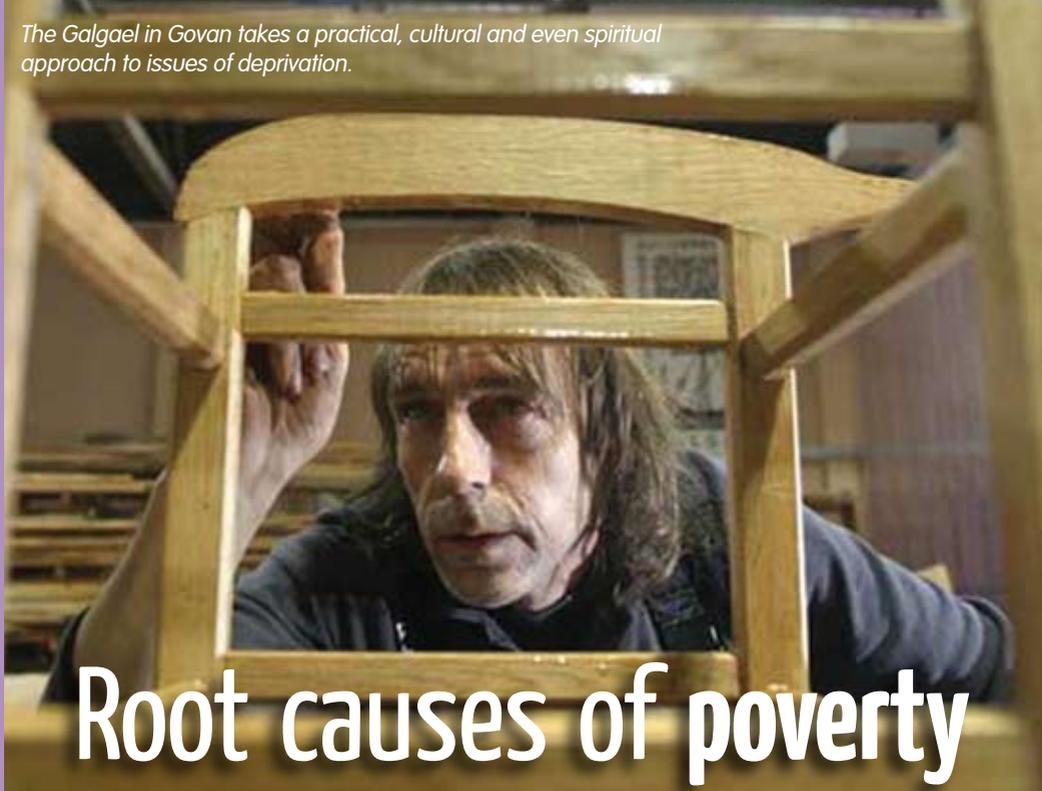
**Ghazala Hakeem, Commissioner**

## We Recognise

**We recognise** the damage stereotyping does to people in poverty and to society as a whole.

**We call** on the public to challenge biased reporting, the media to establish better links with community groups, and politicians to include people with a direct experience of poverty amongst those who advise them.

The Galgael in Govan takes a practical, cultural and even spiritual approach to issues of deprivation.



# Root causes of poverty

As a Commission concerned with truth and reconciliation we wanted to understand what causes poverty. We believe this is crucial to change, so that solutions are not just sticking

plasters for the symptoms but actually create systemic social change. Here are the views of some of our Commissioners:



*"Global growth capitalism is the single most pervasive force shaping the lives of people around the world. Its agenda permeates everything in our lives from education to employment, our environment and opportunity, sometimes even our sense of identity. Only a critical thinking public can properly reflect and address these issues. What we have now is a crisis in education which is more concerned with preparedness for work than it is with deeper human understanding and progress. We must begin to shape our own curriculum based on our own needs and not the needs of the intellectual elites."*

**Darren McGarvey**, Commissioner

## "Poverty is a form of violence"

### Case Study



Commissioner Darren McGarvey's organisation Volition works with young people who have violent or challenging behaviour, often as a result of multiple deprivations. They use hip hop and other creative arts to encourage young people to express their anger, conquer their fears and discover the roots of their problems. Volition is owned and run by the participants, giving them a sense of worth, identity, inclusion and capacity.



*"It is crucial that we understand the roots of what poverty is. First, it is structural, being systemic to the distribution of power, resources and educational opportunities in society. Second, it is a form of violence that comes from a deficit of empathy between those who have much and those who have little. Third, it is intergenerational, with its life-crippling seeds getting passed on in early childhood. And fourth, it is sustained by blindness to the full humanity of one another, showing it to be a pathology of the rich and not just a deficit of the poor."*

*These four drivers are so fundamental to the human condition that they require not quick fixes but an evolution in human consciousness and in how we see our national identity. To walk this path we must allow ourselves to be challenged by Truth – the truth of where we and our world stand, the truth of where we know we are called to go, and the many truths of how to bridge that gap.*

*Truth is an active power for change. Reconciliation is what brings us back together again in our common humanity. Both spring from the sharing of community. Truth and reconciliation are about seeking that which gives life. Life as love made manifest."*

**Alastair McIntosh**, Commissioner

## We Recognise

**We recognise** that bringing about the long term and sustainable involvement of people in poverty requires long term commitment to listening and working together.

**We call** for government and third sector organisations to commit time, people and resources to make this happen.



# Principles & Practicalities

Over the two years of the Commission's life, we have learnt a great deal about one another, the ways things work (or don't work) and about ourselves. We began as individuals and have ended as a team. We began as strangers from very different backgrounds and many of us have become firm friends. We would highlight the following principles and practicalities as significant.



*"Real collaboration only happens when you take out the barrier between officialdom and the real people. When they start to talk together they realise that they are on the same side, but as long as one is sitting behind a desk and the other is not they cannot really work together."* **Salah Beltagui**, Commissioner

## Some principles:

- The causes of poverty are systemic and it is not enough to be simply concerned with its symptoms. At the same time practical progress matters.
- Leave your title at the door. Meet as people not as professionals or service users but as fellow humankind.
- People with a direct experience of poverty have the missing expertise. Let their concerns set the agenda. Learn to listen with your heart as well as your head, then set your hand to action.

### "Take time with one another"

- Choose your members wisely. They need to be committed, creative and willing to work together – or at least willing to learn all of these skills.
- Take time with one another, building relationships, friendships and trust not just examining problems.
- Encourage and support one another throughout the process. Create spaces for people individually and collectively to reflect on their experiences.
- Don't get involved unless you are willing to be changed. Some of the things you will hear will be challenging and difficult. Your perceptions of people in power and people in poverty will not be the same again.

*Poverty Truth Commission founder Paul Chapman with the Lord Provost of Glasgow, a Commissioner.*



## Some practicalities:

- The space where you meet matters – it has to be somewhere those not used to formal meetings feel comfortable.
- The way you meet matters – the style of meetings needs to encourage participation and demonstrate the shared nature of the task.
- There is value in a limited budget – the reality of not having a lot of money to do the work makes it more authentic.
- It is important to be realistic – it is better to work for change in a few important areas rather than tackling everything at once.
- Keep in mind the common vision that unites you, and keep coming back to it, especially when faced with divisions.

# Nothing about Us without Us is for Us

## We Call

**We call** for others to take up our model - bringing together, over a sustained period of time, diverse groups of people to listen, learn and work together for practical and systemic change.

**We challenge** those concerned with injustice not only to talk about those who are marginalised but to support them to bring about change.

# Our Shared Legacy



We have created a model for working collaboratively on poverty which we believe is unique and vital if this work is to succeed. We want others to learn from us and have worked with a few key organisations. The following groups have made pledges to take on specific elements of our legacy:

The **Church of Scotland** will continue to strengthen and support its work of directly involving people struggling against poverty in its strategy and structures.

**Citizens UK** will work with Scottish partners including churches, trade unions and anti-poverty agencies and others to establish broad-based community organising in the West of Scotland.

**Glasgow City Council**, in collaboration with other partners, will continue to involve people in poverty directly in the development of community planning within the city.

The **Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector** will identify and work with local community organisations within its membership and networks to participate in anti-poverty campaigning.

**Just Fair**, in collaboration with a range of other human rights campaigning organisations, will develop participatory anti-poverty models based on the experience of the Poverty Truth Commission.

The **Poverty Alliance**, as a core priority, will continue to ensure that people in poverty help to set the agenda to overcome it.

Press officers from the **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Citizens Advice Scotland** and a range of anti-poverty organisations will work together to ensure that the opinions and expertise of people living in poverty are more effectively heard in the media.

The **Scotland Office** will involve people with a direct experience of poverty as it develops and implements its thinking around the 'Big Society' in Scotland.

The **Scottish Government** will pilot mentoring for civil servants in which those with responsibilities in key policy areas tackling poverty and inequalities will have the benefit of direct engagement with people and organisations experiencing these issues directly.

The **Scottish Government, the UK Government and local authorities in Scotland** will continue to work together with **Kinship Carers** to address the needs of children in Kinship Care.

The **Scottish Government's Community Safety Unit** will be represented on the Poverty Truth Commission's continuing Overcoming Violence Working Group, using it as a reference group for their work to reduce violence in disadvantaged areas.

The **University of Glasgow's Refugee, Asylum, Migration Network** will work with colleagues and other agencies to establish an **Asylum Truth Commission**, drawing on the practices of the Poverty Truth Commission.

The **Violence Reduction Unit** will work directly with people experiencing poverty to monitor and evaluate its strategy and operations.

Other organisations that will seek to learn from the lessons of the Poverty Truth Commission include:

The **Scottish Human Rights Commission, Faith in Community Scotland, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation** and the **International Futures Forum**.

**If you are a community group, anti-poverty organisation, a government department or someone interested in how our way of working could apply to you please contact us:**

tel: 0141 248 2905

email: [info@povertytruthcommission.org](mailto:info@povertytruthcommission.org)

web: [www.povertytruthcommission.org](http://www.povertytruthcommission.org)



and find us on facebook

*"We haven't come as far as we'd have liked to in the two years, but the doors are open now and we need to keep letting them know that it's worth their while to listen to us. Because not only will our ideas on poverty be better than anything they come up with from their desks, but because we need to be recognised as equal human beings. What we're doing is revolutionary."*

**Donna Barrowcliffe**, Commissioner

# Our Challenges to others

**We call** on the people living in poverty to be involved in shaping and delivering anti-poverty policy. **We challenge** governments to involve directly those who struggle against poverty in designing, implementing and evaluating solutions to poverty.

**We recognise** the wisdom, knowledge and expertise of people living in poverty – the real experts without whom limited progress will be made. **We challenge** people who are struggling to overcome poverty to share their struggle and to work together with others for lasting change.

**We call** for the people of Scotland to share our outrage at the huge and growing levels of disparity which exist between rich and poor. **We challenge** civil society, including the faith communities, to enable those in poverty to lead the debate on how we can develop a fairer and more equal Scotland.

**We recognise** that the best and most sustainable work to tackle violence is often done locally. **We challenge** local governments and the police to move beyond processes of consultation and community engagement and to devolve real power (including budgets) to local neighbourhoods.

**We recognise** the massive contribution which kinship carers make to the quality of life for children in their care.

**We challenge** the Scottish and UK Governments, local authorities, health boards and Kinship Carers to work together to improve the quality of life for this highly vulnerable group of children and young people.

**We recognise** the damage which stereotyping does to people in poverty and to our society as a whole.

**We call** on the public to challenge biased reporting, the media to establish better links with community groups, and politicians to include people in poverty amongst those who advise them.

**We recognise** that bringing about the long term and sustainable involvement of people in poverty requires long term commitment to listening and working together. **We call** for governments and third sector organisations to commit the time, people and resources to make this happen.

**We call** for others to take up our model – bringing together, over a sustained period of time, diverse groups of people to listen, learn and work together for practical and systemic change. **We challenge** those concerned with injustice not only to talk about those who are marginalised but to support them to bring about change.



*My question is: what comes next? The problem of poverty remains, albeit with much better understanding and a fuller commitment to its resolution. I am grateful to have had the privilege of serving as a Commissioner.”* **Mario Conti**, Commissioner



*“Of course the problem is not poverty, it's wealth. As long as we live in, and even applaud, a culture in which money is the bottom line, the top line and the front line, there will always be people having to live below the poverty line. The Poverty Truth Commission is teaching us a new way to listen, and relate to one another, and make critical decisions; and its legacy will change how we think.”* **David Lunan**, Commissioner



# Nothing about Us without Us is for Us



*"People said they were going to eradicate poverty when I was young - but what has changed?"*

*I remember when I was about ten when the Salvation Army brought Christmas presents round because we had no money or food. We had to go to my Gran's Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays to get fed. It was only one meal a day, but it was absolute heaven, as there was nothing else to eat.*

*People are still going to bed hungry in Glasgow today.*

*I have always worked all the hours I could as my family couldn't have survived with me just working a 40 hour week. I work on average 70 hours a week. Friday used to be bad for me. Working 9-5 in an office, then 6-12 doing security at the Bowling, and then I would start a cleaning job at the chippy. That is just to survive, and put a bit away for the future. I can't change the past, but as for the future I want to make a difference. We're not going to stop after the Poverty Truth Commission. We're on the move. After this I want to say these things in Holyrood and in Westminster. I'm not stopping until things change."*

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