

## Introduction

Firstly, my congratulations to the Productivity Commission for taking on this important and challenging review.

Inclusion Aotearoa was contracted by the Ministry of Health to support the demonstration of The New Model for Supporting Disabled People (2010-2014). In this work I gained a detailed knowledge of the way policies were developed and implemented. Inclusion Aotearoa also developed Local Area Coordination in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, with its high Maori and rural population. Previously I had worked for 30 years in community development and the disability sector in many roles, including setting up the national office for People First and recording and publishing disabled people's stories. At present I have limited time to make a submission so these are just key thoughts to convey before your imminent deadline.

### A. National consistency and local knowledge

One of the themes that came from the National Reference Group that provided advice on the New Model was the need to have much more national consistency than had arisen in the disability sector. For example the Needs Assessment and Service Coordination entities all had different names and some processes. In a small country where people often move from one place to another this makes for difficulties. This fragmentation has also resulted in unnecessary cost and duplication of processes: each NASC has to develop policies and processes, training etc.

Alongside this however is the huge advantage in social services gained by local knowledge and networks, and local responsiveness. This is especially apparent in my home communities of the Eastern Bay of Plenty, with its rural and Maori population.

I believe there is an answer to these twin imperatives that has yet to be used in this country: the possibility of social franchising. Below is an excerpt from information on [www.the-icsf.org](http://www.the-icsf.org).

*The essence and power of social franchising is that a proven social change project is turned into a 'franchise' and then quickly replicated. At its simplest, social franchising can be equated to the highly successful commercial franchising seen all over the world: Body Shop, Subway or McDonalds. The central franchise documents their processes and then franchisees adopt the approach and are given support in establishing themselves. This allows them to set up a successful business much faster, with reduced risk, whilst maintaining quality. The critical difference with social franchising is that rather than creating profits for shareholders the aim is to create benefits to society.*

*The social franchising model can be successfully applied to the full spectrum of third sector organisations, from social enterprises to NGOs. The power of a social franchise is greatest when a network is established under a common brand. Rapid innovation becomes possible because of the number of semi-independent, highly motivated franchisees tackling the same issues. In some cases the shared brand has given the ability to influence policy far beyond that of an individual organisation.*

This also could solve the issue of ensuring that the many positive trials of services with positive social impact could quickly be spread throughout the country, with in built quality control by the franchisor to ensure the essential elements of success are maintained.

It could also solve the problem where the commissioners have so many small contracts which are inefficient to contract and evaluate. The franchisor would have responsibility to ensure the maintenance of quality by franchisees. There are many examples of this on the website referenced above.

## **B. Client Directed Services**

In my work for the Ministry of Health's New Model, I facilitated most of the National Reference Groups that provided strategic advice to the Ministry. I have also had considerable first hand experience of Enhanced Individualised Funding (EIF), through supporting disabled people to take this up, including some with intellectual disability. Some thoughts are:

- a. The closer decisions are to the end user the better they are. Individuals and their whanau know what is right for them, and their lives are not constrained by what others see as best, or is expedient for an organisation or fits into their timeframe. With an agency providing home help at lunchtime you have to be at home each day at 12 noon or you miss out on help, and you can only have lunch at home. If you employ someone yourself you can have whanau give you lunch one day of the week and use the extra time to use the support to have a picnic with friends another day.
- b. If you are a young male who likes punk music you can employ another young male with similar music tastes, and you might use some of the hours to go to a concert together.
- c. I have facilitated courses (alongside Maori) in Te Tiriti and cultural safety for over a decade. We all agree that EIF is the ultimate in cultural safety.
- d. To have to have someone in your life much of the time is intrusive. To not to be able to choose who supports you is ultimately disempowering. The disabled people I have known in services have sometimes had core staff who go well beyond their job descriptions to ensure people have interesting experiences. But when those staff leave, the person's life once again becomes dull. Services are so capricious: one moment your life is good and then it all turns to custard again and you have no control over that. In larger the services there is even less consistency of practice over place or time.
- e. A family with several children needing help bathing and dressing their disabled child under the current system have to have someone come in morning and night. This is an intrusion into family life. Under EIF they can elect to have someone come in during the day when no one is home to prepare the evening meal, clean the house and do the washing. This then allows parents time to care for all their children in the evening.
- f. EIF can be used much more flexibly than IF, including for things that are not hours of support. E.g. One man pays a gym fee of \$10 a week for a gym buddy to support him there to learn how to use equipment – kind of like a personal trainer. A woman with physical disability has bought a tablet so she can internet bank reducing the support hours and taxi fares needed when going to the bank, and keep in touch through Facebook with whanau. Flexibility increases quality of life.

Note that the draft report seems to imply that people with EIF/IF have to contract to an agency for support. Very few of them do this, most take the path of becoming an employer which means they can write the job descriptions and set the policies. This is what brings flexibility to ensure supports help you shape the life you want to live.

- g. Any misuse of money is miniscule compared with the amount misused and wasted in the services I have worked in. People are protective of the money they have and careful to use it well.
- h. Job satisfaction. The assistants I know who work directly for disabled people gain much more job satisfaction as they know what they are doing directly improves their lives and they are unhampered by agency rules. They develop a better relationship with their employers.
- i. Pay rates are usually higher than rates paid by agencies. EIF users can pay their staff up to \$19 an hour for home help and \$28 an hour for supported living (budgeting, shopping, organising social events, medical appointments, etc.), as they get paid the same rate as agencies and do not have the management and other hierarchies to pay for.
- j. Staff training is important but the Ministry of Health now allows training money to be used by holders of EIF/IF as well as by services. This is beginning to allow staff to take up some of the excellent web based learning. Potentially EIF users and their assistants can come together in groups to support one another through training.
- k. In the Eastern Bay of Plenty EIF users and some of their assistants meet on the last Thursday of each month, share ideas about options, and arrange joint staff training etc. If the Commission staff would like to meet with them I can arrange this.
- l. There is an issue yet to be addressed that concerns families: the lives of their sons and daughters are so much better now that they are on EIF

### **C. The gap between commissioners and on the ground realities**

- a. I believe there is a large gap between what commissioners believe happens on the ground and the reality. Many believe the services they commission are supporting people to have a good life and see little reason to change. They do not have the training or experience within services to know of the realities, they are rarely confronted with direct feedback from disabled people who receive services.
- b. This is especially apparent when commissioners are based in the cities far from the services they commission.
- c. The continuing abuse of disabled people in services is evidence of this. I directed and produced the Tell Someone DVD that informs people in residential homes of their rights and of abuse. During the trials of this resource I visited many places and heard many disturbing stories. Disabled people are very vulnerable and independent advocates need to be well known by each and everyone in residential homes so that if they need support they know who to call.

### **D. Community development**

I believe there is a huge gap in the draft report in that it does not have any focus on the vast potential for community development in reducing the growing reliance on services and the cost to taxpayers.

Submission to the New Zealand Productivity Commission More Effective Social Services draft report.

by Ruth Gerzon, Inclusion Aotearoa ([www.inclusionaotearoa.co.nz](http://www.inclusionaotearoa.co.nz))

- a. Back in the 1950's people helped neighbours, mowing lawns, listening to one another, looking after the sick and children, sharing trips to hospital. All of these have become paid services, (child care, counselling, home help) many paid for by the state. Now you can get by as an individual without anyone in your life who is not paid to be there.
- b. Yet when disaster strikes we need each other, and Christchurch response to the earthquake shows how important that is. Contrast that with what happened in New Orleans after levees broke, where communities are even more atomised and individualistic than here.
- c. We need to build communities of place, neighbourhoods, again and there are signs that this is happening but they need to be nurtured. Local Area Coordination (LAC) is an important part of the New Model. Disabled people have a better life with the flexibility of EIF but they can still be profoundly lonely if there is no coordinator to help them share their gifts in community in ways that bring a sense of purpose and belonging.
- d. LAC also has great potential to be cost saving, as community support can keep disabled people out of residential care. Early evaluations began to show this but it needs to be evaluated over five or more years. People's lives take time to change, communities take time to build.
- e. John McKnight (author of The Careless Society, Community and its Counterfeits) puts a good case for the root problem being the services we have built up over the decades that destroy communities. Before the first kaupapa Maori residential home in Te Teko was built the whanau helped disabled people at the marae. Once the home was built and staff there trained, whanau stepped back, expecting the professionally trained ones to do the work, as they were seen as the experts.
- f. Other reasons are also behind the stepping back of communities and rise of paid professionalised services such as mobility than leaves people far from their familiar community and family, and women working in paid jobs. But there is truth in all these and a small reversal of some could make a large difference in cost to taxpayers.
- g. The internet can be a catalyst for change in local neighbourhoods. Timebank is a wonderful example of neighbours swapping time and skills to help one another. It is based on the premise that everyone can contribute something to community and builds community and trust while providing support to one another. In Japan, Fureai Kippu involves support for older people using this. By supporting older people then you will gain support when you need it. No need for exchange of money.

If Commission staff would like to discuss some of these ideas further I am willing to talk to them, forward references and background information. I can also arrange for them to talk directly to EIF users in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

Thank you for your consideration of these ideas.

Ruth Gerzon