



## Working for a National Plan to Make Canada Poverty-Free

### ✚ Updates from the National Scene

Recent reports remind us of the need for persistent and powerful persuasion and advocacy. The most recent statistics for Canada show that 967,000 children and their families still live in poverty, down very slightly from 979,000 in 2010 (Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 202-0802 LIM-AT 2011). [\*Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada\*](#), a new and incisive analysis released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Save the Children Canada, reveals that 40% of Canada's indigenous children live in poverty according to the 2006 census. Sadly, indigenous children also lag in other indicators of health and well-being including educational achievement and suitable housing. Clearly, the need to continue our collective work is paramount. From the Idle No More movement to the vibrant activity from coast to coast to coast, activists are striving for a poverty-free Canada.

- **National report card release**

Campaign 2000 released its 21<sup>st</sup> national Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in November, 2012, which received extensive national media coverage in both print and electronic formats. Notably, a Toronto Star editorial supported Campaign 2000's policy proposal for an increased National Child Benefit. The report card release also prompted responses from opposition parties while the federal government released a related statement. In addition to television and radio interviews, we helped coordinate media interviews with some spokespersons with lived experience of poverty for various media outlets.

As in past years, several provincial partners also released their provincial report cards in or around the same time as the national release, which attracted wide local and regional media attention.

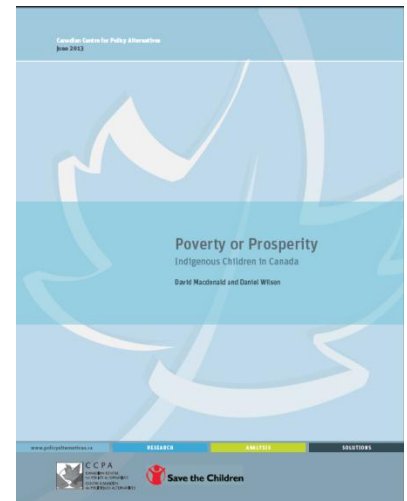
- **Laurel Rothman became the inaugural recipient of the Bill Bosworth Memorial Award from Mothercraft**

We are delighted to share the good news that **Laurel became the inaugural recipient of the Bill Bosworth Memorial Award from Mothercraft** on June 17th! As stated on Family Service Toronto's website, "Ms. Rothman, who is both FST's Director of Social Reform and National Co-ordinator of Campaign 2000, was recognized for her long and distinguished career as a social justice and child poverty advocate, policy and social planning expert and child care activist." More info at: [http://www.mothercraft.ca/index.php?q=bb\\_award\\_recipient](http://www.mothercraft.ca/index.php?q=bb_award_recipient)

**Our heart-felt congratulations to Laurel for receiving this well-deserved award!**

- **The anti-poverty community lost two valiant advocates recently**

**Colin Hughes**, one of our most dedicated members and a long-time partner/friend/supporter passed away suddenly on Friday, February 1, 2013. Colin worked at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto for decades and was actively involved for many years in Campaign 2000, Toronto and Ontario Coalitions for Better Child Care, the Scarborough Arts Council and the Scarborough Anti-Poverty Coalition (just to name a few). His passionate anti-poverty advocacy and valuable research - especially regarding the Toronto region - greatly enriched our work.



We were delighted that Colin's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children, youth and their families was recognized posthumously with two awards: **the Public Health Champions Award** from the City of Toronto Board of Health and the **Frances Lankin Community Service Award** from Social Planning Toronto. Our thoughts and condolences are with his family.

We also mourn the loss of **Steve Kerstetter** of First Call BC: Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, who died suddenly in May. Steve worked as a journalist in Winnipeg and Ottawa and was the director of the National Council of Welfare before retiring to Vancouver in 2000. He loved music and was a wonderful painter. In retirement Steve remained a committed campaigner to end child poverty and expertly wrote the BC Report Card on Child and Family Poverty. Dianne G. of Halfmoon Bay captured the essence this way: "Steve was a passionate champion for social justice always striving to make this a better place for everyone. He called the political scene as he saw it and shared his points of view with his meticulous explanations of the facts and statistics. He has left us with fond memories, great stories and the determination and commitment to speak up for equality. He was a kind and caring friend" (from the online guest book). Our thoughts and condolences are with his family.

- **Momentum builds for action on affordable housing**

Our partner Dignity for All and a wide range of activists lobbied all parties to vote for Bill C-400 **the Secure, Adequate, Accessible and Affordable Housing Act**, a private member's bill initiated by Québec MP Marie-Claude Morin. The bill calls on the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments to join with the non-profit and private sectors to develop a plan for affordable housing to meet the needs of Canadians. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass second reading in February; however, mobilization continues as activists urge the premiers to put housing at the top of their agenda at the Council of the Federation Meeting, July 24 – 26, 2013. For more information, contact Megan Yarema by email or phone at: [megan@cwpcsp.ca](mailto:megan@cwpcsp.ca); **Toll Free: 1-800-810-1076** (Ottawa); or visit: <http://www.cwpcsp.ca>.

- **Update on the All-Party anti-Poverty Caucus**

The All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus (APC), co-chaired by the Hon. Michael Chong, MP (Conservative), Jean Crowder, MP (NDP) and Hon. Art Eggleton, Senator (Liberal), continues to raise important issues and provoke discussion. In June, Canadian Medical Association president Dr. Anna Reid urged the group to consider the social determinants of health. Twenty per cent of health care spending goes to care for diseases that can be attributed to low income and poor housing, she explained. Furthermore, adverse socio-economic conditions in childhood can be a greater predictor of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in adults than later life circumstances and behavioral choices, she added.

One key recommendation from the CMA is to develop a comprehensive prescription drug strategy in consultation with the life and health insurance industry. The goal is to ensure that those Canadians lacking access to prescription drugs – estimated to be 10% of the population - can gain access.

- **Caledon Institute takes on some work of the former National Council of Welfare**

Kudos to our colleagues at the Caledon for filling some of the gaps created by the termination of the National Council of Welfare. They will be preparing and distributing Welfare Incomes and Poverty Profile reports as part of a new Canada Social Report which will provide data and information on many dimensions of social policy in Canada. Check out the first report, the online Policy Monitor which tracks developments in federal and provincial/territorial social programs here: <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1011ENG.pdf>.

### ***Donate to Campaign 2000***

With poverty reduction strategies in place or being developed in most provinces and territories, we're continuing to make progress. Your ongoing support is crucial at this time of the year -- with your renewed support, we can keep the momentum going. Please send your donation today to **Campaign 2000, c/o Family Service Toronto**, 355 Church Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1Z8 or donate online through Canada Helps at [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca) **Thank you for your support!**

## Updates from Regional Partners

### British Columbia

#### May 2013 Provincial Election

In BC's recent election the issues of income inequality, high poverty levels and solutions like universal quality child care were successfully promoted by community advocates, garnering lots of traditional and social media coverage. Post-election analysis continues, but the evidence is that public support for our concerns and solutions were and remain high, but didn't rise to the top of the priority list for enough voters. The re-elected Liberal government is expected to stick to its [message](#): "...the best way to lift children out of poverty is to ensure their parents have a job. We do not believe that we can legislate away poverty."



#### Community Advocacy

[First Call](#) and other partners in the [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#) will be focusing our attention on continuing to mobilize public support for a provincial poverty reduction plan, the [\\$10/Day Child Care Plan](#) proposed by the [Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC](#) and the [Early Childhood Educators of BC](#) (now endorsed by thousands of individuals and [organizations](#)), an increase in welfare rates (see a summary of the work of the [Raise the Rates Coalition](#)), and other policy solutions.

Our [Living Wage for Families Campaign](#) continues to grow. Last fall low-income parents participated in our Listening Circles project and helped produce a [video](#) and other images illustrating their experiences and how making a living wage would change their lives. One parent, Jenny Zhen, spoke at First Call's news conference on the release of the [2012 BC Child Poverty Report Card](#) in November. There is also a focused [campaign to make Simon Fraser University](#) the first living wage campus in Canada and exploratory work on a campaign at the Vancouver Airport. In addition to the Metro Vancouver campaign, towns and cities around BC are now calculating their local living wage and advocating for municipal adoption. The Metro Vancouver campaign has now certified 34 [Living Wage Employers](#).



A new report profiling growing [Health Inequities in BC](#) by the Health Officers Council of BC, a new [poverty reduction plan for the City of Surrey](#) supported by the [Surrey Board of Trade](#), a new [Social Housing Coalition](#), and forums on child poverty all around the province hosted by the University Women's Clubs also point to the breadth of activism on addressing poverty in BC.

#### Public Policy Changes

A few positive changes were made in the last year to [BC's welfare rules](#), such as the restoration of a \$200/month earning exemption for people on income assistance who are classified as employable, allowing recipients to keep income tax refunds, and increasing allowable asset levels, among others. A negative change was the extension of the "work search" period before new applicants are eligible for benefits from 3 to 5 weeks. There was no change in the abysmally low welfare rates for children and families.

### Alberta

Albertans can be forgiven for thinking they are trapped in an episode of the twilight zone over the past year. Many promises and commitments made in early 2012 to secure the re-election of the provincial Conservatives were ignored or broken in 2013.

Work on an Alberta poverty reduction framework was subsumed under a broader Social Policy Framework (SPF). Much of the consultation on the SPF was about vision, values and strategies rather than specific policy changes or investments. Consultation on the second phase which includes the poverty reduction plan has been much more limited. The earliest a plan will be developed is Fall 2013.

The 2013 Alberta Budget contained many spending reductions in core programs for low-income Albertans. Despite the commitment to end homelessness, investments in affordable housing construction and rental assistance programs were cut significantly. Skills development and academic upgrading programs were cut 15 to 20 per cent. There were major cuts to post-secondary education, community supports for developmentally disabled Albertans, and privatization and reductions to home care services. Popular and



effective programs for summer student employment and crime prevention were cut entirely. All because the government's priority is to keep revenues \$10.7 billion lower than the next lowest taxed Canadian province.

Leadership in fighting poverty is coming from Alberta cities despite their limited resources. Calgary City Council recently adopted a poverty reduction plan called Enough for All. Work on a City of Edmonton municipal poverty reduction plan continues.

Other hopeful work also continues. On June 18, 2013 the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region is launching a new strategic plan called "Creating Pathways Out of Poverty." At the end of June 2013, our partners Action to End Poverty in Alberta and Vibrant Communities Calgary are releasing [Poverty Costs 2.0: Investing in Albertans](#) This report will lay out a blue print for the types of strategic investments required to significantly reduce poverty in Alberta.

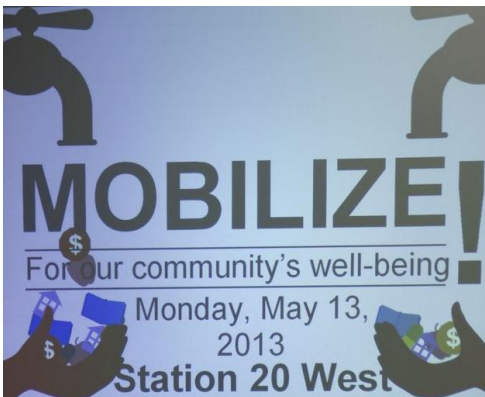
#### **Related reports and web links:**

- Link to the Alberta Social Policy Framework documents:  
[http://socialpolicy.alberta.ca/Document/Albertas\\_Social\\_Policy\\_Framework](http://socialpolicy.alberta.ca/Document/Albertas_Social_Policy_Framework)
- Link to Fact Sheet on Alberta Budget 2013:  
[http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/images/stories/pdf/FactSheet/fact\\_sheet\\_alberta\\_budget\\_march\\_2013.pdf](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/images/stories/pdf/FactSheet/fact_sheet_alberta_budget_march_2013.pdf)
- Link to blog about PDD and home care cuts from the perspective of disabled Albertans: <http://camtairtalk.blogspot.ca/>
- Report on the impact of the loss of the STEP for the community sector:  
[http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/images/stories/STEP\\_Elimination\\_Full\\_Doc.pdf](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/images/stories/STEP_Elimination_Full_Doc.pdf)
- Link to City of Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative: <http://www.enoughforall.ca/>

### **Saskatchewan**

Saskatoon was the centre of much activity on the social determinants of health including poverty and affordable housing. Campaign 2000 was pleased to participate in the summit *Developing a Health Equity Agenda: from a shared vision to policy and practice* convened by the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, the National Collaborating Centre for the Determinants of Health (NCCDH) and the Canadian Council on Social Determinants of Health (CCSDH) on May 13.

The full-day event brought together a national multi-sectoral group to advance health equity approaches and to build a sustainable network of networks. Strong progress was made on the goal of developing an agenda to guide health equity practice, policy and research through action on the social determinants of health over the next five years. An evening session featuring several community initiatives was held at Station 20 West, an innovative community enterprise centre in one of Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods.



Laurel Rothman of Campaign 2000 (middle picture) and Ed Buller of Aboriginal Corrections Policy Division, Department of Public Safety (right) speak at the Saskatoon forum in May.

### **Manitoba**

The Manitoba Budget included \$6.3 million more for Rent Aid supplements for low-income renters. There had been a concerted campaign to increase the Employment and Income Assistance Program (EIA) rent allowance to 75% of the median market rent (MMR) however the EIA rent rate remains \$285.00 per month for individuals. There was also a commitment for 500 new social housing units

and another 500 affordable units over the next 3 years costing \$139.3 million. There is also a 10% tax credit for construction of rental units below the MMR. Child care saw a commitment for 2,000 new spaces.

The Manitoba Child and Family Report Card released on November 29/12 was well covered in the local media, including comments by Senator Art Eggleton. Senator Eggleton also participated in a News Café that was pod cast. We have a few other projects in the works; tracking the Federal cuts to Manitoba and creating a presentation making the business case for ending poverty, based on our 2012 Poverty Report Card and other information.



Above photos taken at the release of the Manitoba Child and Family Poverty Report Card, November 2012

#### **NEW REPORTS AND LINKS:**

Manitoba Government released the ALL Aboard Action Plans on their 7 priority areas: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/allaboard/>. There was also a new advisory group established for the Sustainable Employment and Stronger Labour Market area. The Social Planning Council is one of sixteen community agencies represented.

Healthy Child Manitoba released a report 2012 Manitoba's Children including results on a number of indicators. [http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/publications/hcm\\_2012report.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/publications/hcm_2012report.pdf) In the City of Winnipeg Budget \$45,000 was cut from the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council and \$45,000 for the Peg Indicator Project, both United Way initiatives.

### **Ontario**

The last year was a tumultuous and busy one for advocates in Ontario, responding to austerity measures in a shifting political landscape. [Premier Dalton McGuinty resigned](#), the legislature was prorogued for almost 5 months and the governing minority Liberals selected [MPP Kathleen Wynne as party leader and Premier of Ontario](#). Through it all, advocates managed to keep positive social assistance reform on the agenda as the [final report from the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario](#) was released in October 2012. Communities pushed back against negative recommendations and rallied around positive rule changes to social assistance, a few of which were passed in the [2013 budget](#), including a \$200 earnings exemption for Ontario Works recipients and an increase to asset limits. Advocates also responded to the 2012 budget's elimination of Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) with a months-long, [province-wide-protest](#) highlighting the necessity of the homelessness prevention fund for social assistance recipients. In late December 2012, government announced a one-time transitional grant of \$42 million to municipalities for the management of local housing and homelessness needs until March 2014.

Ontario Campaign 2000's [2012 report card](#) joined the movement for positive social assistance reform and called on the Ontario government to return to the original schedule of [increases to the Ontario Child Benefit \(OCB\) and to increase the minimum wage to \\$14 per hour](#), building on the two major policies that reduced child poverty from 2008-2010. Unfortunately, the OCB was not increased to a full \$1310/child/year in the 2013 budget despite parent advocacy [featured in the Toronto Star](#) and by participants in our second annual Mother's Day Breakfast celebrating low-income women advocates. A 6-month long minimum wage panel was passed in the 2013 budget, and as a steering committee member of the [Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage](#), Ontario Campaign 2000 will monitor the panel's progress, once it is announced.

Statistics released in late June 2013 show that in 2011, 371,000 children lived in poverty in Ontario. A significant number of children live in poverty even as the province's child poverty rate continued to trend downwards in 2011. The child poverty rate in Ontario was 13.8% in 2011, a decrease of 9.2% from 2008, the first year of the 5-year Poverty Reduction Strategy. Investments in effective social policies like the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) can be credited with the decrease in child poverty rates. Whether or not 2012 statistics will

show a continuation of this downward trend remains to be seen, especially as low-income children and families in Ontario absorb the effects of 2012's austerity budget.

In the coming months, Ontario Campaign 2000 coalition members will actively engage in government consultations to inform the second phase of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Ontario. [An Op Ed by members of the 25in5 Network for Poverty Reduction](#) published in the Toronto Star highlights the lessons learned through the first poverty reduction strategy. The consultations will begin in August 2013 and are expected to continue until late September as a new strategy is expected to take effect in January 2014.

## **Quebec**

Anti-poverty groups swiftly opposed Québec's recently-announced changes to social assistance which would eliminate the additional payment of \$129 per month that has been available to individuals older than 55 years, children under five and their families and people on social assistance who are pursuing treatment for drug or alcohol addiction. Minister of Labour Agnes Maltais provided no advance consultation or notice that new applicants would henceforth not be eligible for the additional supplement until the age of 58 and that eligible families would need to register with Emploi Québec in order to receive the supplement. Those recipients engaged in treatment would be evaluated more regularly. In response to the public outcry, the Minister postponed implementation of the new regulations to September 2013 and announced that anyone over 55 seeking work would receive assistance in the search for work. A "progressive and significant bonus" for the lowest-income people in Québec would be forthcoming, the Minister added. It's interesting to note that this restriction is announced as the most recent statistics (2012) indicate that the trend toward reduced number of adults and children receiving Social Assistance and Social Solidarity continues. (see [Québec Handy Numbers 2013.](#))

The non-profit childcare sector in Québec was recently successful in avoiding proposed changes to the on-going funding for CPE's (Centres des petites enfance) that primarily operate childcare centres for children under 4 years at the fee of \$7. per day. The government and the CPE's arrived at a one-time agreement to use allowable surplus funds generated by the CPE's to meet the target of \$31 million in savings for 2013-14, as opposed to decreasing the amount the CPE's get for each funded space. However, Family Minister Nicole Léger confirmed that the province will be reviewing the financing of the childcare sector despite an earlier election commitment to freeze the parent fees at \$7. per day. Commercial childcare programs face a proposed \$15 million decrease in funding as the province seeks to implement a promised increase of 15,000 spaces exclusively through the non-profit CPE's.

Québec's new kindergarten pilot program for up to 8,000 low-income children across the province takes a surprising approach. Beginning September 2013, up to 1,200 four-year olds in low-income neighbourhoods will have the option to begin kindergarten according to Bill 23. This program will be in addition to the existing option that parents have to enroll their child in a local centre de petit enfance. Currently, only 27% of four-year-olds attend CPE's despite the option to waive the \$7. daily fee. Critics offer that this new kindergarten program is setting up a separate system for low-income four-year-olds, one that does not offer support to parents. Minister of Education Marie Malovy frames this program as a way to help reduce the number of Québec students who do not complete secondary education.

## **Nova Scotia**

Arising from concerns about last year's changes to the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) Special Needs program and general lack of attention to developing a coherent Poverty Reduction Strategy, the provincial government invited the Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia (CSEP-NS) to help organize a provincial consultation on poverty reduction with about twenty other groups. The government clarified its proposed direction for the Department of Community Services and the ESIA program, while community groups underscored the need for more money to be put into the hands of the poor and reiterated their desire for a coherent, cross-departmental poverty reduction strategy which included accountability mechanisms, benchmarks and targets. While CSEP-NS is still awaiting a response to these latter recommendations, the 2013-14 budget did increase income assistance rates by \$17 a month, bringing the total increase over four years to \$47, or 22 percent. The 2013-14 budget also extended free dental care for children by three years, to the age of thirteen and announced more tax relief for seniors.

Early in 2013, a report announced that Early Learning and Childcare would move from the Department of Community Services to the newly named Department of Education and Early Child Development--a move supported by most advocates. It also announced the development of three early years' centres across the province "to provide support for young children and their families at accessible locations in the community." The centres are intended to "bring seamless access to regulated child care, early learning programs, early intervention and parent education." The budget said it would invest \$1.2 million in these centres. The Margaret and Wallace McCain Foundation will contribute \$500,000 to the development of the first three centres and \$100,000 a year thereafter.

Following a series of community consultations, a Housing Strategy was also unveiled this past spring. A broad document, with no real plan of action and a tendency to rely on density bonusing and subsidizing developers to increase the stock of affordable housing, it is uncertain what this will mean for the non-profit housing sector, the housing first approach, or in terms of outcomes for low-income people and vulnerable groups.

In May, the Participatory Food Costing Project run through Food ARC at Mount St. Vincent University published its 2012 Food Costing report showing significant income deficits in the ability to buy nutritious food in various low-income scenarios. Despite increases in the minimum wage (now pegged to the Low Income Cut-Off for an individual living in Sydney) and ESIA rates, the higher cost of food, when combined with increased energy, housing and child-care costs, is preventing low-income people from purchasing a nutritious diet.

At the end of June, CSEP-NS held a 1.5 day conference with about 50 participants to share insights on the need for a stronger poverty reduction strategy. A report from this conference is being prepared and will be sent to each political party in the lead up to the election.

Meanwhile, the provincial government has been seen as responding in a timely and relatively positive way to the Rehtaeh Parsons case which brought to the fore an increase in bullying and gendered sexual violence amongst youth and the need for more adequate resources to respond.

#### **Latest reports and related weblinks:**

CCPA Nova Scotia prepares an alternative provincial budget each year and always includes a section on poverty. See: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/strengthening-connections-connecting-communities>; For a list of government poverty reduction initiatives see: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/poverty/index.html> and for 2013-14 budget documents on poverty related issues click on: <http://premier.novascotia.ca/making-life-better/most-in-need/>

### **New Brunswick**

New Brunswick's economic and social inclusion plan *Overcoming Poverty Together* covers the period 2009-2014. It has made some progress on its ambitious agenda since the last update.

Late last year the government received the report of the Advisory Committee on Health Benefits – *An Insurance Plan for Prescription Drugs for Uninsured New Brunswickers*. It recommended a mandatory insurance plan for all uninsured New Brunswickers with “affordable premiums”, subsidies for low-income families and contributions by employers who do not offer an insurance plan. It didn't take long for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to launch an online petition against the drug plan. It wants the government to wait until the budget is balanced. In February the government appointed an implementation advisory committee and announced that it will be in place until summer 2014.

The government also announced long awaited increases to social assistance rates. Beginning in October, all social assistance clients, **except for single clients with no identifiable barriers to employment**, will see their basic rates increase by four percent and by another three per cent in April 2014. In effect, the province has revived a two tier system for single clients. This discretionary increase raises two important questions: 1.) what is an “identifiable barrier to employment”? and 2.) who decides?

A progress report for the period April 2011 to March 2013 describes other government actions and outlines the work of the province's 12 Community Inclusion Networks. It can be found at:

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/esic/pdf/ProgressReportMarch2013.pdf>

### **Prince Edward Island**

#### **Poverty Eradication in PEI?**

The most encouraging news from Prince Edward Island is that community groups and activists continue the struggle against poverty with many still asking for a Poverty Eradication Strategy. The government, on the other hand, is showing little or no signs of moving in that direction. This was evident early last month in the latest report on the *Social Action Plan* released by the Department of Community Services and Seniors.



This was the second year in a row the Department issued a Social Action Progress Report and for the second time it proved to be a disappointment. The biggest stumbling block seems to be a failure of the government, including the Minister responsible, to recognize that an increase in income is very essential if people are to be lifted out of poverty. There is also a failure to: recognize that poverty has detrimental effects on peoples' health, causing much suffering for the victims; recognize that it costs much more to maintain a situation of poverty than to eradicate it; recognize that the tools are there to be used anytime the government chooses to use them. Our Coalition believes that maintaining a situation of poverty is a choice that government makes.

We are disappointed as well that thus far the government has not moved to hold public hearings on poverty despite the fact that over four years have passed since the Premier promised publicly that P.E.I. would adopt a poverty eradication strategy. Since then little progress has been made and no accountability measures or assurances of progress are evident. What they describe in the report is nothing more than the business of a government department going about its routine, daily tasks.

The report points to improvements in early childhood learning as government's crowning achievement, but this was the last province to adopt a formal program. Many new places are now available and improvements have been made both in the qualifications of teachers and their salaries but the fees are a big burden for many families. The many small inputs in housing, a shelter increase of 3% and a 5% increase in food allowance for singles are still a tiny fraction of the need especially since these are the first increases in years and costs have risen way beyond those percentages since the last increase. The list of drugs on the formulary has increased thanks to Dept of Health and the use of more generics. In addition, a program has been established to help social assistance recipients enter the workforce with claims that about 250 recipients received this support. There are questions about how the provincial government can proceed with the implementation of the Canada Job Grant program given that people have to be employed before they can enter the program.

Cuts to Employment Insurance, Inflation, introduction of the HST, rising food and rental costs and government cutbacks more than cancel the meager assistance the provincial government offers. But the good news is that people are just as determined as ever to pursue the goal of poverty eradication.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland continues to make progress on its Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, according to The Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure (NLMBM), an indicator that has been developed for use in Newfoundland and Labrador. This has been attributed to several government and community initiatives including:

- an expanded prescription drug program, reduced income tax rates for people on low incomes
- effective programs which help the transition between social assistance and employment including a modest earned income supplement for some workers, retention of the drug card for 6 months from the start of employment and an earned income supplement for single parents working full time
- the provincial Homelessness Fund which supports community organizations to provide outreach to people at risk of becoming homeless
- increased board and lodging supplements for adults with disabilities who live with family.

While the Newfoundland government aims to achieve the lowest poverty rates in Canada by 2014, critics remain skeptical that this goal will be reached and point to the high rate of food bank usage and recent cuts to crucial community programs which could threaten progress. Advocates also continue to call on government for a follow-up to the 2009 Progress Report on the Poverty Reduction Strategy which was promised in 2011 and never delivered.

As a complement to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Newfoundland Labrador government released its 10-year child care strategy for growth, *Caring For Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador*, followed by a commitment to double the child care budget over the next decade.

In 2012, Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador released their report, *Innovation in Practice: Making Positive Impact in Communities across Newfoundland and Labrador*. The report highlights some of CSC's most recent initiatives in poverty reduction strategies, social enterprise, cooperative housing and employment programs.

Here is the link to the report: [http://communitysector.nl.ca/sites/default/files/success\\_stories/2012/innovationinnl.pdf](http://communitysector.nl.ca/sites/default/files/success_stories/2012/innovationinnl.pdf)  
<http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/income-support/IncomeSupportProgram.pdf>



The Department of Advanced Education and Skills (AES) provides financial benefits and other services to eligible low-income individuals and families to assist in meeting daily living expenses.

<http://www.easternhealth.ca/WebInWeb.aspx?d=3&id=1428&p=1425>

## The Territories

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The territorial government has completed an overview of poverty in the NWT and a road map to eliminate it. The report, "Building on the Strengths of Northerners: A Strategic Framework Toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT," was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in June 2013.

[http://www.gov.nt.ca/research/publications/pdfs/Anti-poverty\\_Strategic\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.gov.nt.ca/research/publications/pdfs/Anti-poverty_Strategic_Framework.pdf)



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The strategic framework is a research document that provides the latest information on the scope of poverty in the NWT, the economic argument for addressing poverty, and the results of two round table discussions held last year among key decision makers. The vision for anti-poverty work in the NWT is "building on the strengths of our people and communities, Northerners will have access to the supports they need to live in dignity and free from poverty as active participants in community life." There are five pillars for action: children and family support; healthy living and reaching our potential; safe and affordable housing; sustainable communities; and integrated continuum of services.

"Building on the Strengths of Northerners" was developed collaboratively by an Anti-Poverty Strategy Steering committee, appointed and resourced by the territorial government. Active committee members represented the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, business, non-profits and the territorial government. Committee members had the opportunity to read and comment on approximately 20 drafts before the document was finalized.

Next steps: The territorial government is creating an integrated action plan for several reports and strategies delivered during the last session of the Legislative Assembly, including the anti-poverty strategy. The finance minister has said there is a total of \$7 million available this fiscal year for implementing all the strategies, meaning that the allocation to poverty will be small. Government will present the results of its action planning to MLAs during the October sitting. Meanwhile, the lead minister for the anti-poverty strategy, Glen Abernethy, is planning to host a symposium of key decision makers in November. The purpose of that meeting is to look at what other sectors can contribute to realizing the elimination of poverty and to plan that response over a 10-year period. Questions about measuring poverty and evaluating results have not yet been resolved.

The minister has committed to forming an anti-poverty strategy office, staffed by one full-time person. His or her work will be guided by an advisory committee with members drawn from different sectors of society. This new committee is expected to begin work in the fall.

### YUKON

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition (Coalition anti-pauvreté du Yukon) has been busy over the past year with a wide range of activities on reducing poverty and tackling homelessness in the region. Below are a few highlights of anti-poverty activities:

**Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy** –YAPC's involvement in the development of the strategy included its leadership as a co-chair of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and participation of a YAPC member on CAC. **The coalition was pleased to see the release of the strategy on December 10, 2012.**

YAPC has also taken a leadership role with the **Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness**. The **Housing Task Force** released a progress report on "*A Home for Everyone: A Housing Action Plan for Whitehorse*" in May 2012 and is due to release the next one before the end of this month, June 2013. Other initiatives throughout the year have included a Tenant Wisdom Curriculum project and landlord collaboration projects, both funded by CDF (Community Development Fund); meetings with Minister Graham about supported housing and monthly task force meetings to share information and concerns. The coalition lobbied MP Ryan Leef to support Bill C400, which called for a National Housing Strategy. YAPC is currently working with the City of Whitehorse to begin the development of a plan to end homelessness in Whitehorse.

**Sally & Sisters/Soeurs** is in its third year of operation and YAPC's coordinator chairs the Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Food Bank, Salvation Army, Les EssentiElles, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Council. This initiative was borne from a concern raised at a monthly YAPC meeting and offers a sober and safe lunch program for women and children at the Food Bank two days/week.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, (Coalition anti-pauvreté du Yukon) has a mandate to eliminate poverty in the Yukon through education and awareness programs, advocacy and action.

## NUNAVUT

### ***Nunavut's Poverty Reduction: The Makimaniq Plan***

The **Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction** has been busy releasing a number of reports and implementing initiatives as part of *The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction*. On March 19, 2013, The **Collaboration for Poverty Reduction Act** passed Second Reading at the Nunavut Legislature. The bill was sent to the **Standing Committee on Legislation**, which "may invite organizations and members of the public to present their views on the Bill to the Standing Committee."

Acting on a pledge made in *The Makimaniq Plan: A Shared Approach to Poverty Reduction* (November, 2011), government departments, Inuit organizations, and community groups formed the **Nunavut Food Security Coalition**. The coalition held a symposium in Iqaluit, January 22 to 24, 2013, to focus on programs, policies, and initiatives that are most likely to impact on the food security of Nunavummiut. The coalition is developing a **food security strategy** for Nunavut.

A new report called ***Understanding Poverty in Nunavut*** was released in April this year. It is a report commissioned by the Nunavut Anti-Poverty Secretariat as a contribution to the territorial discussion about how to best measure poverty and support the implementation of *The Makimaniq Plan*. <http://www.makiliqta.ca/en/resources/news/report-understanding-poverty-nunavut>

## **Special Thanks to all the contributors**

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***Campaign 2000's E-Bulletin*** provides updates on national and regional initiatives related to poverty reduction for children and families or poverty in general. To unsubscribe from ***Campaign 2000's E-Bulletin*** at any time, e-mail us at [liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org](mailto:liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org). For more info, please visit [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca) and [www.familyservicetoronto.org](http://www.familyservicetoronto.org). You can also download previous editions of Campaign 2000 e-bulletin on our website at: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/reportCards/enews.html>

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