

Some Facts on Poverty

Canada

Three resolutions were made in Canada's House of Commons: 1989: eliminate poverty among children in Canada by the year 2000; 2009, eliminate poverty for all persons; 2015, eliminate poverty among children. Today, 4.9 million Canadians and 60% of indigenous children on reserves live in poverty.

Approximately 42% of Canadians who need EI receive it. Payments should be increased to 60% of earnings. Maternity Benefits - 56% of mothers with incomes under \$30,000 can't qualify for benefits. 14.6% in Quebec.

Rent - 1.5 million households pay more than 30% of income on rent. Over half of these need core housing. It would cost the federal government \$540 billion of \$745b total revenue to do a Basic Income at \$15,000 per person and even then some people would be in poverty.

One-third of newcomers live below the poverty line. In lone parent families, 45% of the children are in poverty while 28.8% of unattached older people are in poverty.

Government is at its lowest level sizewise since 1948 and therefore lacks the capacity it should have.

Prince Edward Island

A Poverty Eradication Strategy for PEI requires; clear, legislated robust targets and timelines; accountability mechanisms; – Measurable results; Support of all Ministries; Senior Cabinet Minister to coordinate; Annual Report to the Legislature.

The voice of those in poverty needs to be heard.

A Poverty Reduction Strategy must focus on those who suffer most acutely from poverty and truly reflect the problems of the people, after province-wide consultations for prioritizing and follow up action.

- *PEI is the only province that doesn't have a Provincial Child Benefit.*
- Investing in Early Learning and Child Care can address high costs to families, low wages to educators, and lack of spaces. The result of this long term benefit to the children, families and society cannot be underestimated.

A Poverty Eradication Strategy must: increase income through eradicating low wages; give greater assistance to those who can't work; enhance the social safety net including early childhood education; safeguard the public good, not add more fees for housing, health, or food security; must be accompanied by job creation – employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors, training and re-skilling workers for green jobs anchored in local communities, building Green communities; increase public housing, recreation, post-secondary education and training.

The poverty rate of PEI seniors is 19%, the highest in Canada. (some stats say 21%)

In 2014 PEI's child poverty rate stood at 17.8 overall; the rate for children under six is 21.6%.

The federal government and the provinces - except Manitoba - accepted less money for health care than the 5.2% increase that is needed.

Universal Pharmacare could save PEI \$45 million per year and cut waste. We wasted \$276 million over the last 10 years by not having Universal Pharmacare.

A National Senior's strategy is needed for accommodation in retirement homes and Nursing Homes.
PEI has no targeted programs for seniors.

Direct cost of poverty in PEI, \$100 million

The indirect cost of poverty to PEI is \$315 million, using 5 year-old statistics. It costs the province \$40 million annually in direct health care costs due to poverty. The total direct costs are \$100 million annually and these are conservative estimates.

Cost to transforming Social Assistance = \$40 million.

The Solution is always about income but not just. Transforming labour markets, housing policy, education system, globalization and deregulation, social safety net, social networks, tax policy are part of the solution.

Example of enhancing childcare in Nova Scotia – Nova Scotia GDP multiplier for childcare is \$2.23 which is larger than other sectors including 67% higher than construction, 112 higher than manufacturing. The employment multiplier is 48.8 jobs per million dollars.

45% of children in lone parent families live in poverty.

28% of older unattached people live in poverty.

Household indebtedness is at a record 168%.

PEI has the lowest median wage in the country.

In 2013, 9.3% of PEI workers were working for the minimum wage.

40% of workers were working for \$15.00 or less per hour.

55% of workers earning the minimum wage or less are women.

36% of low wage workers have a post-secondary diploma or university degree.

The unemployment rate in 2016 was 10.7% (at times it peaked to 11.5)

32% of women with children have access to childcare.

We need Poverty Eradication and we need it now.

Strengthening the social safety net is essential.

Don't put off or linger. Step on the petal.

(draft prepared MacKillop centre for Social Justice for Workshop, June 12, 2017)

Prepared by Mary Boyde, PEI

Hi Maureen, Marion and Charlie:

Attached is a 'Poverty Fact Sheet' that Mary Boyd had prepared for the recent June 12 webinar on Poverty Reduction in Canada. I'm thinking that this may be useful to us for our JPIC Moment at the July 9 fraternity meeting. Please read through it before our JPIC meeting this Wednesday. I will bring paper copies to the meeting and we can select some information that would be appropriate.

Marion and I are still checking on the project with Jen Nicholson but that will probably be an endeavour over the next month or two..

Charlie will pick up Garry for the meeting and I'll drive him home.

Take care of yourselves.

Mike

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More Stuff:

Good day,

Our Jesuit Pope on the Feast of a Franciscan Saint quotes St Francis of Assisi (again) in his message for the World Day of the Poor.

Here are a few quotes to whet your appetite:

"Let us love, not with words but with deeds ... We must go from empty words to concrete acts ... [and be] Christians who, in utter simplicity and humility, and with generous and creative charity, [serve] their poorest brothers and sisters! The most outstanding example is that of Francis of Assisi, ... He was not satisfied to embrace lepers and give them alms, but chose to go to Gubbio to stay with them. ... [we need to foster] a true encounter with the poor and a sharing that becomes a way of life. ... If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist. The Body of Christ, broken in the sacred liturgy, can be seen, through charity and sharing, in the faces and persons of the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom's admonition remains ever timely: "If you want to honour the body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments, and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness" (Hom. in Matthaem, 50.3: PG 58).

Let us, then, take as our example Saint Francis and his witness of authentic poverty. Precisely because he kept his gaze fixed on Christ, Francis was able to see and serve him in the poor. If we want to help change history and promote real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization.

You can get it all here: <https://zenit.org/articles/popes-message-for-1st-world-day-of-the-poor/>

Peace & joy,

Andrew, ofs

June 13, 17