



# Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

Port Alberni, BC  
January 23, 2018

## Introduction and Event Summary

On January 23, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Port Alberni, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 180 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Chief Cynthia Dick of the Tseshaht First Nation, followed by opening remarks from Mable Elmore (Parliamentary Secretary on Poverty Reduction).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

Mable Elmore, the Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction then shared some closing remarks.

## Document Organization

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

## Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Affordable, safe housing
  - o No assistance for seniors housing or house repair
  - o Substandard housing
  - o Housing costs – too high: \$700 per month, no bathroom, hot plate, rowdy neighbourhood, not clean
  - o Housing – no affordable safe accommodation
  - o Sleeping in city – some have tents and some just a blanket
- Health:
  - o No culturally safe healthcare
  - o should have health outreach
  - o walk-in clinics needed
  - o Not enough doctors and dentists or health care vision
  - o Basic personal health care issue
  - o Health supports are not working together > Health Services should be under one roof
  - o Takes too much time to get appointments
  - o Need of electric wheelchair but was provided a cane
  - o Medical costs for people outside the Ministry umbrella
  - o Dental and glasses – not covered
  - o Complexity Eligibility requirements time delay – roadblocks to application
- Racism and discrimination
  - o E.g. Friendship centre clients calls for housing – they get turned down / told its rented
  - o People are banned from certain services as they are not liked
- Lack of timely services for preschool such as:
  - o Language testing
  - o Developmental delays
  - o Earlier supports for children at a younger age
- Children put into Foster Care due to:
  - o Lack of food
  - o Lack of appropriate housing
  - o Causes trauma to families and mental health issues like depression etc.
  - o Need alternatives to foster care
  - o Foster care system is broken
  - o Foster care sibling separation causes issues in child's future
  - o Foster care homes are often not providing adequate care
- Poor food access
  - o Poor access to affordable food
  - o Insufficient community kitchens
  - o Lack of funding for parents to provide children with nutritious food
- No assistance for grandparents or relatives raising grandchildren (living on OAS only)

- Public transportation
  - o Difficulty accessing transportation BUS
  - o No wheelchair access/not accessible
  - o Bus schedule not sufficient
- Training
  - o Tutoring funding needed
  - o Study sites with computer access
  - o Tutoring should be free
  - o Limited access to internet for information/education
  - o Lack of education links to low levels of literacy
  - o Need more resources – helping write a resume, job search
- Lack of options and poverty trap
  - o Forced to steal (crime rate up) to make ends meet/survive
  - o Many layers to poverty
  - o Takes time and funding to move through and out of poverty layers
  - o Lack of funding for sports activities > feel left out > lack of funding at schools
  - o “Better food bank and soup kitchens than not so ghetto”
  - o Depression and addiction – dealing drugs because they need money
  - o Theft – court time and jail. If caught with marijuana, put in jail (people steal to get what they need)
  - o Violence associated with poverty
  - o Street workers are “turning a trick” to get a hotel for the night
  - o Some treatments keep people in poverty cycle – side effects
  - o Embarrassing to go to store – takes a lot of mental effort
- Daycare
  - o No affordable daycare
  - o Especially for single parents
  - o Choice: either work and paycheque goes to daycare or not work and stay poor
- Poor infrastructure and economic context in Port Alberni:
  - o Poor access to buildings to have support offices
  - o Road access/highways
  - o community has to thrive to be able to support / reduce poverty
  - o actual physical service places scream poverty
  - o No jobs
  - o Lack of self-sustaining youth employment
  - o No jobs in Port Alberni
- Limited access to internet for information/education
- Drug Use and mental health
  - o Increase financial support for service providers to address youth drug issues
  - o Address underlying issues for drug abuse
  - o No treatment beds available

- Not enough treatment beds
- Filling gaps – where do you stay while waiting for treatment?
- Lack of housing for mentally ill (supported) and support workers)
- Mental health and addiction – do not get help soon enough,
- Long wait time
- First Nations
  - Not enough financial support for First Nations Dental Care
- Information and government support
  - Lack of advocacy and lack of information – what they are eligible for
  - Act team put a hold on her money – did not give her notice that it will be held. Cannot go shopping for needed supplies
  - Application process is difficult
  - System demands advocates and there are not enough
  - Need ease of access to service
  - ID needed for services
  - System is reactive not proactive
  - No flexibility within the ministry
- Mental health
  - Because of mental health issues, people often get evicted
  - Only 1 psychiatrist in town who writes a prescription but does not really provide support
  - Mental illness stigma
  - Stigma around mental health
- Service workers
  - Need better training for support staff
  - Some outreach workers complain about their job when supposed to helping them
  - Staff in some places are rude
  - People use their authority leaving feeling useless or less than
  - In a shelter – only people staying overnight can have a meal. Once person was not hungry so he gave his food to a hungry person so he was kicked out of the shelter
  - Services providers give incorrect information
  - Initial access to ministries: cold/impersonal/judgmental
  - Lack of employment and training for workers
- Affordable housing
- Cost of living
  - Amount of income needed is high
  - Can't afford medical costs and meds (diabetes)
  - Cost of living – comparability with other provinces
- Food security
  - Lack of food; \$60 doesn't last long at the grocery store
  - Whole income assistance cheque goes to groceries.

- Some people go bin to bin; they know when grocery stores throw out food. Freezes and resells the food
- Why can't grocery stores send food/meat to "Bread of Life" – M-F not weekends
- Need fresher foods – too much mouldy food for old income
- Salvation Army – not enough food for regular hamper
- Barriers
  - Lots of hidden barriers
  - Not enough focus on the individual in the medical system
  - Lack of relationship based assistance
  - Lack of food/shelter/money
  - Barriers to employment
  - Lack of supports, lack of integration
  - Lack of funds to connect to phone/internet
  - Lack of information and transparency WR2 services
  - Hard to get information
  - Don't get any information about resources – lack of information
- Health
  - Poverty = poor health
- Education
  - Lack of affordable education
- Hard to make food last – food insufficiency
- No benefits (health) at paid 10hrs/month placement
- Housing
  - Can't find house/good place to live
  - Affordability is an issue (housing)
  - \$375.00 shelter support is too low
  - Affordable housing huge issue
  - After pay rent, only \$100 per month left over
  - Thousands of acres of crown land available
  - Hard to get information on options (eg., How do I acquire a piece of crown land like Echo pass – most people don't know about it and forms are needed
  - Winter indoor sports – can't find or afford a gym
  - Increase welfare and the landlord raises the rent
  - Damage deposits – had too many damage deposits and can't get anymore
  -
- Old age pension is not high enough and seniors are struggling
- Transportation:
  - Lack of transportation
  - Need a transportation allowance: what do you need? A bus pass or food?
  - People buy food and not a bus pass
- Medical benefits:
  - Doctor's bills

- Challenging to get help with getting wheelchair or walker
  - Cut back on medications as cost is too high
  - Can't afford medications prescribed by psychiatrist
- Difficult to see a doctor – can wait in clinic all day
- Home security:
  - Landlords should have adequate locks and secure property
  - Some places are not secure
  - Looking for a bed – needs a bed, sleeping on the couch – some people don't have a bed and sleep on the floor
  - Lack of safety in own home
  - Other people in building are a risk
  - Right now no lock on door – get things stolen
  - Older buildings need renovating and are not safe
  - Slum lords like Randy Brown writes intent to rent for people who aren't living there
  - Cashing in on fake tenants
  - Eviction people
  - Don't fix things that are broken
  - Unsure where to report poor landlords– 2 year process
- Drug and alcohol
  - This is a huge issue in Port Alberni
  - Mental health also an issue
- Health services
  - Rides to doctor provided by nurses
  - Lack of bed in psychiatric hospital
  - A lot of people get turned away
- Bed bugs
  - Bed bugs are an issue
  - Pest control – affordable pest control such as bug sprays
  - People get different amounts of money for bed bugs
  - Everyone should get the same
  - Hard to ask for help
- Lack of education
  - No money for home schooling
  - Need more help and funds
- No information about what is available
  - Not enough advocates
  - People can't access the ministry because they can't get on a computer
- More free clothing stores needed
  - More locations for Salvation Army clothing and more places in town.
  - Literacy – courses available at church

- Hidden aspects of poverty
  - o Emotional stress of poverty
  - o This challenge is more about health
  - o People worry about food, shelter, how long to stay dry
  - o 4.5 years to get on SAY PUD because of anxiety etc
- Dental care
  - o Needed dental surgery – 2.5 years to heal.
  - o Needed dentures cost \$2000 out of pocket
  - o Needed denture to eat – would get sick if not eating properly
- Inadequate support
  - o PWD as a couple is not enough
  - o Crisis cheques are not enough
  - o \$355 Social Assistance, one can't live of that – raise the amount of PWD \$1200 a year
  - o Why is someone on disability allowed to work more when able bodied on Social Assistance can't earn as much before claw backs
  - o If ministry makes mistake and takes things off your cheque, you do not get it back
  - o PWD need to respect reality of having a partner, not claw back money
  - o Need to have real people in satellite offices
  - o Lack of access to services: the digital divide
  - o Accessing income assistance a challenge
- Create projects to get work to people in poverty
- Discrimination
  - o Kicked out of extreme weather shelter 9am-4pm then harassed by cops
  - o Get on PWD – then need to get cop then a doctor (there are no doctors here)
  - o People looking to rent units being threatened by police when in front of problem building
  - o Ignorance from the community about people with mental illnesses
  - o Businesses take advantage of people in poverty
  - o Money Mart calls people and offer to cash early
  - o Sales at stores disappear on cheque day
  - o Cabs go slower and are more expensive
  - o Price of meat, quality foods at Save On, Walmart and other stores go up
  - o Price of cigarettes jump
  - o A price hike in Port Hardy on ferry days coming from surrounding communities
  - o Medical professionals say there are only addicts or normal people; nobody in between
  - o Go to get help and you are labelled a drug seeker
  - o When you don't want drugs they want to prescribe them to you and 'force them' on you
- Housing
  - o Need more housing types
  - o Need to focus on housing in places outside of Victoria

- Mental Health care
  - o Can't get anxiety or depression meds
  - o Need more trained advocates
  - o Wellness society wont drive to Qualicum just in case people might go to methadone clinic
  - o Recovery house in town by no one knows about it
  - o Depression is a huge issue
  - o There are many resources for mental illness
  - o If you are not a drug user you can't get help
  - o If you have mental illness you think about what to spend money on and get depressed
  - o Guys got 21 days in jail for foam handling – should have been treated for mental illness
  - o Lack of adequate supports for those with mental challenges
- Support people
  - o People need more empowerment to feel fulfilled
  - o Choosing between bills and food is sad
  - o More funding for entrepreneurs who are below poverty
  - o One pair of falling apart shoes to last all winter
  - o The rules on PWD for couples are completely unfair or going to lose a home
  - o Can't afford to travel to Ladysmith
  - o Nowhere to go to shower
  - o Community gardens in community
- Price hike on foods shipped from overseas
- Buy from local people / support local business
- Alberni has a pretty good bus system
- Volunteers drive people around
- Never enough money, and by cheque day only \$10 left
- Every person has the right to have leisure time and have some fun
- Employment
  - o There's no attainable work
  - o Extend medical coverage for people who are on SA and working
  - o Boost peoples self-esteem to get work
- Day care is low for parents to work and raise kids
- Housing options
  - o There's enough land to give everyone a trailer and have an acre
  - o Could afford a mortgage and a trailer over slum lord rent
- Basic services
- Laundry – no free places to do it
- Need a laundromat
- Cheaper to buy new clothes as opposed to doing laundry
- Not enough money on SA to buy a new pair of shoes
- Housing
  - o Lack of affordable housing

- Lack of compassionate landlords
- Unethical landlords
- Tenancy issues
- Crappy housing
- Lack of advocacy to address above
- Lack of supportive housing
- Lack of rent controls
- Inability to afford utilities
- Absentee landlords and crappy managers
- House poor
- Lack of community
- Food security
  - Lack of nutrition, health, medical, hopelessness
  - Lack of choice
  - Lack of funds for food
  - The grocery desert – lack of accessibility to nutritious groceries in uptown area
  - Lack of accessibility to affordable food
  - Because of housing issues, lack of places to store and prepare food
  - Lack of education as to how to prepare food
- Lack of adequate public transportation
- To create opportunities for grass roots/local small business as opposed to industrial mindset
- Discrimination against the poor
  - Racism
  - Lack of employers willing to work with the work force that is present
  - Lack of support from City Council
  - Insular community, stuck in the 1950's
  - Resistance to change in the wider community
  - Lack of ID
- Private sector
  - Lack of corporate responsibility and accountability to the 99%
  - Corporate greed
  - Corporate greed from commercial small businesses
  - Disconnect between corporate model and sharing society
- Fear... and the perception that we need to be fearful
- Inadequate community facilities and services
  - Lack of community and the resiliency that develops from trusting that community
  - Lack of cultural appropriate services
  - Lack of affordable day care
  - Lack of medical care access
  - Lack of a place to socialize
  - Lack of commons, communal space, recreational space, beach, village square
  - Lack of drinking water access

- Lack of access to showers
- Lack of access to laundry
- Lack of helps to address drug addiction
- Lack of place to keep stuff
- Housing
  - Housing costs high and availability is poor
  - Home ownership – everyone should be able to buy a home
  - Renting a room in a house costs too much
  - SA goes up, cost of rents go up, there is no way out and people get stuck in a broken system
  - One can be barred from access to a shelter and become homeless due to that
  - Ceiling in home collapsed but for 4 months landlord never did anything
- Drug use and discrimination
  - Drug addiction – police and social services get involved
  - Family maintenance system – judgement against me
  - Doctor will cut clients off drugs if they do not take medicine as prescribed
  - People take drugs for pain but it also creates pain
  - Get hurt young at work and start using drugs
  - Doctor had to keep increasing prescription. People don't know what they are taking. Everyone has a drug threshold for pain but society looks down on those needing meds.
  - So much judgement once you start using
  - Once you are labelled, people just walk right by you
  - Heroin problem is still the same, 30 years on
  - Drugs--you can just take it away
  - Someone needs to go the extra mile and break the rules or expectations
  - Portugal has a good model which helps to remove the stigma
  - Put money into supportive services and do what people need to get out of addiction legally
  - Some people not willing to talk about the steps that are needed
  - Too much emphasis on police and enforcement– poor emphasis and they can be power trippy
- Crisis centre will help for floods and other crises
- We don't have heat or a working stove, must go and make a deal with the owner,
- Too many people (6 or 7 people) all paying \$375 for rent.
- Supportive housing
  - More support housing and support, too much labelling across system
  - Need proper supportive housing, not just a room.
  - Anyone can give a room by dropping a mattress on the floor.
- Housing discrimination
  - Even to give me a house they have to call three people
  - Discrimination labelling
  - Landlords pick and choose their tenants

- I have actually been asked if I was native
  - Guy and his wife – no frills – 2 places – illegal suite and commercial space
- Food security
  - Food bank can give you food but not supplies you need to make it (Sugar margarine etc.)
  - PB has been able to offer good food
- Work program – shot.
- People want to know where will I can find someone with bad drugs or Netflix
- Disabled person unable to get any support until he said he wanted to kill himself – here I am in a wheelchair disabled
- Food policy
  - Tax breaks for rotten food
  - Government abuse of ALR agricultural Land reserve
  - Farming – government analysing in PB – can grow fruit
  - Farm workers hiring – people could work
  - People have farmers experience – would help better if we used the land
  - Enough food to last for the day/week/month (4 votes)
- Town is not very big – only can get one house ticket (PWD)
- Employment
  - Employment centre
  - Create economic opportunity
  - Not lifestyles training
  - Better training programs and easily accessible
  - More employment programs
  - Need transportation to get proper job
  - Not enough jobs
  - Automation decreases jobs. Everyone’s wealth based on past work – country was built often in unpaid labour and rich people are avoiding taxes
- Social isolation
  - Isolation comes with poverty
  - Lack of money is a barrier to going places and leads to isolation, depression, mental health issues
- Every time people get a raise, landlords increase rents – sometimes more than allowed
- Some rules have been implemented
- First move to a place and know what resources exist – used to be ‘welcome wagon’ but sure that happens
- Discrimination
  - Mayor doesn’t want people here because of low rents – awful thing to say, bad attitude, charter of rights.
  - People should be allowed to move anywhere they want.
  - Some wants to ghettoize and gentrify Port Alberni
  - Poor considered disposable but we contribute and spend money in town, not at Costco
  - Shouldn’t have to prove eligibility – just lack of income should be enough.

- Stigma associated with Social Assistance handout.
- Haven't gotten past colonialism – key to reconciliation and reclaiming dignity and NDP needs to think about that.
- Sometimes get followed in store because fear of stealing and looking poor
- Pets help with mental health depression, help with exercise and can protect people. Most landlords rent to people with pets and can't say no to pets
- Kids – Not renting to families is illegal but we know our tenant rights.
- Dental
  - Need help with dental
  - Health benefits should include dental
  - Dental partially covered and then have to wait 3 years to get coverage – same with eyes, 2.5 year wait for checkup, 1 + year for glasses
- Paying hydro on Visa, increase in interest until get senior pension will use visa for basics like groceries, but only making ruin. Payment of interest. 30 + years to pay it off and would pay if they could.
- System hard to use
  - Forms to apply for S.A – people don't have access to them, or to printers, so they often don't bother
  - It got to the point where forms were traumatic to do and therefore would cause anxiety
  - Online apps/services need help
  - Privacy – stand in line, take a number to fill in each and every form
  - Still have trauma getting rent in on time
  - Tons of paperwork to get a food hamper so you don't do it and fear being overheard and loss of dignity means people don't apply
- Living wage
  - Living wage would reduce need for big ministry of SDPR – cheaper or basic income
- Library use
  - Library time limits – by the time you have found what you need your time is up
  - Lack of privacy at library when you need to look things up.
  - Cost is 25 cents to print one page
  - Can't use printer if you don't know how
- Food and water security in changing climate
- Women
  - Women earning less than men.
  - Food prices affect women more – undermining community
- People from out of town need to wait 3 months to get help – delay increases risk
- Transportation
  - when using services to keep check coming – without car can't go to all offices
  - No car allowance
  - bus routes too limited in rural areas
  - Getting paperwork in order can take weeks with transport barriers – without the barrier of a lack of income it wouldn't be an issue

- Busses stop too early at the end of town in the evening. Inconsistent service
  - Isolation can result from late bus service – you can be late for work, or get stranded
- Crime rate too high
- Some places have shut down due to crime/robbery so need to do groceries and basics at the other end of town
- People who can't work regularly buy are maybe artists still work and income is clawed back
- You can't get ahead, but others don't consider these legit job barriers
- Lack of nutritional food, big challenge on low budget affects everything else (illness from poor diet, pain from inflammation, prices only increasing, hear it every day at local MLA office)
- Need to game the system
  - You feel powerless when you hear no to everything
  - Only thing that works is advocacy in powerful places like MLA office but shouldn't be this way
  - Accessing info about support – need to know right things to say to access program like clothing assistance crisis grants ((must meet qualifications, if you miss one, you won't get any \$)
  - Some people get coaching but that support isn't widespread
  - Everyone is assumed to be playing the system – poor people being criminalized with no control over our own circumstances
- Getting close to retirement and people get encourage to retire early but lose portion of pension if you do that
- When doctors find out you are on S.A, they give you cheaper meds but they don't always work as well
- Criminal justice system
  - poverty affecting people getting help in court system, legal aid fund cut backs, only with risk of jail time to your get representation.
  - Discrimination against poor going through court system.
- Housing
  - Inadequate housing mould – not well heated
  - There should be rules for landlords to maintain standards and enforce it
  - \$700 for bachelor suite
- Bus costs also barrier for families and getting kids to schools.
- Some people one paycheck away from living on streets – scary
- Income disparity keeps increasing
- School policies
  - Raising kids on S.A, field trips are \$50-\$90 each.
  - Have to say no to kids, make them feel worse and left out
  - Kids become target for bullying and learn less.
  - Victim blaming for poverty starts at school.
  - Schools needing indoor and outdoor shoes for kids costs more and makes no sense – 'it keeps schools cleaner' is a BS excuse.

- For people with diabetes or other health conditions requiring a special diet, stipend is too small to get type of food you need (25\$) per month. It is renewed annually and you also have to ask.
- Don't even know how welfare rate is decided on old age pension went up \$5 per month – what can you do for that?
- Health care
  - o Access to doctors is limited –
  - o RN in area a good move in the right direction
  - o Lack of family doctors
  - o Out of pocket medication costs (prescribed and over the counter)
- Economic change
  - o In the 70's, the highest earning incomes were primary industries (fishing, mining, logging); shifting now because of resource development corporation.
  - o People here keep looking to past but it's not coming back and it's not our fault it's not coming back.
  - o Government must look at this issue and see what industry can work here, taking climate into consideration.
  - o Some people here still earn incomes the old way which divides us. Not enough to keep whole community afloat.
  - o this meeting is a good step and the government consulting people is a good start.
- If you win \$ at the casino, don't report that and get in trouble, it gets deducted from cheque.
- Not allowed to treat yourself if you are 'poor',
- As if poor can't relax too, don't deserve it.
- Rent (too high), bills (hydro), phone, transportation costs
- Increase to I.A, landlords increased rent
- Government system broken
  - o Difficult navigating system, forms and requirements
  - o Ministry access difficulty, technology too difficult
  - o Transitioning from Band Assistance to ministry causes wait times
  - o Identification is expensive and hard to get
  - o System very hard to understand without an advocate
- Housing
  - Bad landlords – properties without repairs,
  - increase rent illegally
  - Substandard housing
  - No safe place at night for people to go to socialize, loneliness, a community place, warm dry, coffee, able to talk
- Transportation
  - Public transit limited-- bus service (evenings, Sundays)
  - Routes do not reach housing, (eg., Beaver Creek, Sproatdale)
  - Taxi too expensive, must walk a lot
- Food security
  - o Food bank is very limited, only can visit once per month

- only bread and kraft dinner, bread of life,
- no longer have groceries available
- healthy food hard to access
- No escape, no holiday from poverty, no special outings, holidays or movies, no extras
- Medical
  - Uncovered medication and often have to use alternate drugs that do not work, suffer in pain because cannot afford proper meds
  - Medic alert – cannot afford bracelet
  - Dental – very limited coverage, no emergency dental hospital, have to find a dentist that accepts Ministry rules
  - Mental Health – long waits during mental health crisis can lead to suicide
  - Hard to get help at hospital
  - medication coverage, lack of drugs and services being covered
- Racism
  - rental issues, when an aboriginal renter shows up and Landlord sees the renter, it is suddenly no longer available
  - Store security watches you to see if you are stealing
- Childcare –
  - expensive, cannot afford. If child is in home of relative, no longer subsidized,
  - still must feed them, clothe them, but no financial help.
  - Not affordable
- Housing
  - Shortage of affordable housing,
  - Rising housing costs,
  - Substandard housing
  - Lack of references a problem
  - Over priced housing
  - Need for safe Housing – homelessness, crime, couch surfing, mental health result from lack of housing
  - Landlords – raising rent more than allowance,
  - Barriers to legal rental (rules)
  - ‘Legalize Housing’ not legislate housing options away
  - Funding for housing rehabilitation
  - Need more affordable housing
  - Dorms, too small, run down, should be renovated or demolished
  - Bed bugs
  - Housing is like living in a ghetto.
  - Rentals are too expensive, \$375 a month for a single person
  - No cable in apartments and not included in rent
  - High hydro bills
  - not enough housing that accepts pets so people end up homeless
  - Elders should not be homeless, this is not ok.

- Landlords are keeping damage deposits unfairly, moving frequently which means deposits are not returned
  - Landlords won't let people share rooms to afford rent
- People with disabilities don't get help
- No support for one off reserve people, not a healthy or safe environment
- Food Security
  - Healthy food hard to access
  - Waste of food
  - Cost of healthy food
  - Shame, embarrassment in needing food supports
- Transportation
  - Limited bus service
  - Wheels for wellness (for medical appointments)
- Seeking employment – expenses, clothes, transportation, lack of support
- Minimum Wage – insufficient to live on
- Government system and supports
  - Big gaps in the system – safety net, rules, dependency, qualifications
  - Social Assistance – process is too complicated and difficult to access
  - PWD, limits on PWD leaves people with no income
  - Lack of Support, process too long
  - Lack of Knowledge and awareness of services, educational opportunities
  - Lack of advocates sometimes nerve wracking to go to the ministry and there is not enough help
  - Need advocates for landlord/tenant issues
  - Lost forms, have to bring files multiple times
  - Local ministry offices doesn't listen or care
  - Clawbacks – have to pay back welfare once you get a job – this is wrong
  - Waiting period to get on assistant is too long, desperate situation, need help ASAP
  - Local office distrustful, make you feel like a criminal/crook
  - Lack of creative solutions
  - Administrative fairness is lacking, have to fight for clothing supplement and is inconsistent as to what the Ministry gives you
  - You don't always get the same response in difference offices
  - Some staff are helpful, others have a bad attitude
  - Have to access programs based on where you live, who you are
  - Hard to know what programs are out there especially if no internet
- Racism and stigma
  - Racism– barriers in finding jobs
  - Stigma over mobility
  - Stigma – mental illness, addictions, people won't seek help
  - people won't accept native people
  - Racism/discrimination from social workers

- Indigenous people treated differently/ poorly at ministry offices
- Young people are being denied assistance, have to live off their parents
- White foster families get paid more for indigenous children than families trying to raise them on their own – splits indigenous families apart
- Stereotypes on minorities: assumptions that you are an alcoholic, double standard
- Racism/discrimination like having a security guard at the office. What does that say to us? Makes one feel like a criminal.
- Housing
  - No decent safe, affordable places to live in Port Alberni
  - Drugs like Marijuana, Heroin, Meth, Alcohol – there is no affordable housing that is free of drugs or alcohol
  - People are building ‘affordable housing’ but it is not really affordable at all. No real help
  - Housing available for \$375 is shit and dangerous
- Need basic public hygiene facilities – showers, laundry, haircuts
- Health Services
  - Lack of Doctors and specialists locally
  - Health system very complicated
  - Dentistry – coverage/services are too limited
  - Proper dentistry and health costs are too high
  - Ambulance fees \$2200 Tofino to Nanaimo
  - Can’t pay the user fee
- Child policy
  - Children taken away from families
  - No proper investigation for molestation from MCFD when grandson ran away from foster family because he was being abused, that person was not taken off the list for foster despite a letter to the ministry
  - MCFD doesn’t recognize that people change, records from 20 years ago are brought, denied rights to grand children
  - Grandparents taking grandchildren away from parents and they will be homeless
- Better help to change lightbulb, more help around house needed to keep people housed
- Cut backs on incentive programs, volunteer grant
- Inadequate support
  - Assistance money not enough to last
  - Disability isn’t enough to pay for what we need to survive
  - More money for people on disability assistance and income assistance needed but shouldn’t be given directly to landlord for housing.
  - Increases don’t help because then the housing increases the cost of living
  - It’s hard to live on \$375 a month, not enough, everything goes to rent
  - Not enough outreach workers, helpers, advocates – some people need help to do these things
  - Too hard to live off social assistance that veterans receive from government
  - Need for increase in advocacy

- Violence is everywhere
- Transportation
  - o You can't afford to go anywhere
  - o bus pass costs \$45 eats up transportation budget
- Have to use the injection site for food, comes in every Monday, sometimes the only place to get food
- Effects of residential schools on families: PTSD and various trauma – carry the pain of our arrests
- People need to be kind, treat people with respect. It is hard to be kind to people that aren't kind to you.
- Residential schools
  - o Takes so much healing to remake the armor from bad experiences growing up. ' An open door is not always an open door'.
  - o The residential school effect.
- RCMP/ welfare office/ health system/businesses are discriminating against indigenous people
- This is our ancestral home, and it makes you feel like you shouldn't be here
- There should be a distinction between people with disabilities and those on income assistance
- \$ going into immigration would be better spent in our province
- Only able to make into places once they are run down
- Housing is all political, band politics
- Cycle of poverty
  - o people need to heal to get out of poverty
  - o Suppressing people suppress the community – KARMA
- Employment
  - o Not enough jobs for elders, middle aged people
  - o applied for minimum wage jobs but denied jobs that go to youth
  - o Businesses don't grant leave of absence, had to quit to take care of aging mother
- Stigma
  - o being labelled, living in poverty, labelled as poor/drug user etc. makes it hard to find a place to live.
- Cost of living
  - o Affordable housing rents too high, assistance, income too low
  - o Utilities, hydro phone, all adds up and rent = not much left over even if you have a job depending on the job
  - o Access basic needs, can't afford healthy food due to cost of rent and utilities and lack of transportation
  - o Medical services have to walk far, depending on where you live and pharmacies etc.
  - o Lack of \$ for medicine, lots not covered by pharmacare
  - o Can't afford furniture – saw a broken couch for \$10, old, yucky, dirty furniture and beds
  - o Not enough money for everything, you gain one thing but lose another
  - o Not enough money to buy clothing, expected to visit free stores, skyrocketing prices at Salvation Army

- Transportation
  - o Can't afford a bus pass if no PWD,
  - o walking, carrying bags, shoes wear out, walking in the rain, carrying children are all challenges
  - o Can't run errands using the bus
  - o lack of transportation to get medicine
- Need help filing taxes, accessibility to free tax clinics
- Housing
  - o Homelessness: not enough affordable housing/supply
  - o Trust issues – landlords not wanting to rent to you
  - o Lack of rentals, lack of co-op housing
  - o Applications for housing – wait lists – hard for some people to fill out the applications
  - o Crowded housing
  - o Housing often not secure
  - o Some landlords always looking for a reason to kick you out so they can get rent \$ from the next guy
- Food security
  - o Food banks – not enough food available
  - o Lots of people using the food banks which is related to higher housing costs
  - o Nutrition – food bank food doesn't last/lack of a balanced diet
  - o 6 weeks in between visits to food bank
  - o Cooking – lack of stoves/ oven / fridges – some people can't cook on their own/ need help/ don't know how to cook
  - o Can't buy anything (food) in bulk – no storage area/no place to keep things, food can spoil
- Social isolation and depression
  - o Mental health social isolation, depression, people really suffer, feeling alone
  - o Can't afford a phone to keep in touch
  - o Internet access - \*accessibility, have to go to the library, only allowed 30 minutes/ day
  - o Feeling bad about myself – not healthy – stuck in a rut – can't ever seem to get ahead
  - o lack of transportation/social isolation
- Stigma
  - o Some addresses have a bad reputation – people automatically think bad of you if you have a certain address
  - o Stigma – not fun – people assume I'm a bum, people assume I am a drug addict
- Alcohol and drugs
  - o Some people use alcohol, drug abuse, self-medication instead of proper medication simply because they don't know how to access medication or how to get help
- Social pressure– you might have basic needs met but social pressure to always spend money
- Disability and lack of employment/what you can make in addition to limiting as to what you can do

- Skills training
  - o Hard to sometime access training, lack of internet,
  - o lack of training available in smaller communities
  - o Upgrading and training – need for a computer, need \$ for internet
  - o Lack of literacy skills
  - o Feel ashamed if you can't read or write
  - o Lack of Jobs
- Self esteem
  - o Loss of respect, love and sharing
  - o Loss of self confidence
- Class divide
  - o Political will – divide between classes
  - o Rich get richer and poor get poorer
  - o Marriage inequality
  - o PWD and employed couple can't get in home care giver assistance after \$14.000/ year the disability assistance is reduced for families
  - o Lack of empathy between those that have and have not
- Only received fair treatment from health care system after complaining
- Stigma with low income
- Instability and difficult circumstances
  - o Cut off assistance due to missed appointments
  - o Drug addiction
  - o Desperate times lead to desperate measures
  - o One pay cheque away from poverty
- Health system
  - o They don't try to find solution to heath issues, just give a prescription
  - o Medication alters brain
  - o Pain meds due to accident not covered so need to pay resulting in using own money
  - o Doctors only deal with one issue each visit, and you forget the other 2 tings waiting for next appointment
  - o Lack of specialists
- Aboriginal
  - o INAC med list of what is or isn't covered (changes) poor communication with Ministry
  - o Colonialization – need to redefine what a relationship means in simple language
  - o Cultural barriers, lack of access to education
  - o Losing access to resources and sources of food
  - o Loss of traditions
  - o Unceded territory, royal proclamation, inequality, perpetual oppression and constant exclusion
- Complex system
  - o Need to use direct and simple language to answer questions (too many big words, forms are complex)

- Transportation
  - o Having to leave city for healthcare
- Cost of living
  - o No money left for food
  - o Utilities, cost of food increasing but income is not
  - o Can only afford to eat one meal a day
- Buying medical equipment/supplies caring for a disabled spouse
- Education and school policies
  - o Student fees. We had no fees going to school, now our kids do
  - o Can't graduate or attend school trips without paying fees
  - o Teachers not there for students, just for money
  - o Secondary school doesn't provide food – need to pay
  - o Access to education is a necessity – access to post-secondary education is a necessity
- Racism and Aboriginal
  - o Racism affects opportunities – no training, no job, can't access car transportation
  - o Lack in empathy in schools, police, ambulance, hospitals for people of colour
  - o You get labelled
  - o Lack of access to psychiatric assessment due to profiling
  - o Stigmatizing of children by their race
  - o Need more integrated programs, cultural learning and sharing.
  - o Open people up to new foods, cultures and traditions
  - o We are all just people
  - o Need to stop using trigger words
  - o Communication is lagging, segregation and isolation, general gaps
  - o Social studies education – need to teach real Canadian history
  - o People believe what they are told
  - o Divided, isolated
  - o Need political will to make change happen
  - o Without intergenerational teaching confidence is lost
  - o Exclusion from policy making system
  - o We can adapt if people are a part of the process
  - o \$ come from fiduciary duty of royal proclamation trust – not from tax dollars
  - o First Nations status constantly requires renewal – why?
  - o Using it in an area where it is allowed but it is rejected because of expiry date
  - o Face possibility of getting cut off
  - o Stereotypes about first nations
- Education
  - o Loss of assistance due to taking on 3 or more courses.
  - o Restricting education opportunities can cause lack of interest or apathy. Can lose access to funding if you can't take full course load
- Food security
  - o Low assistance rates result in poor diets health.

- Can't afford rent, utilities, food, etc. Have to make choice.
- Housing
  - Rent instability
  - Diversity in supports available readily (housing first model)
  - Barriers for emergency
  - Housing and shelter unaffordable
  - Need for more low barrier options
  - Lack of funding
- Employment and programming
  - Need for program options (mentoring)
  - Lack of diversity in employment options
  - Lack of enough diverse employment options (i.e., too many requirements for wage subsidy, work placements)
  - High unemployment, under employment
  - No jobs in town
  - Have to leave town to work
  - Raw log exports creates unemployment
  - Opportunity lost for local jobs
  - Racism in workplace
- Seniors are an under resourced population
- Government system
  - Wages/ supports face cut backs and centralization, create confusion and frustration.
  - Lack of face to face or local interaction.
  - Focus is online options.
  - Increase supports available to navigate, access, literacy
- Income
  - Lack of living wage
  - Rates of welfare too low
- Mental health and addictions.
  - Options are out of reach for so many. Need for one on one supports by required full time and cost.
  - Need for flexible access options for all (i.e., extended health options).
  - Shouldn't have to wait for an emergency to access services
  - Supports
  - Burnout for those providing services. Increased frustration for those working to address/respond in our communities
- Housing
  - Cost of housing too high
- Social Assistance
  - People denied welfare when they do all the right steps
  - Welfare rules, application process, too long/complex
  - Everything through computer – need accessible services

- Basic welfare is not enough – rates for employable too long
  - Work search requirements excessive and not realistic for places with no jobs
- Transportation costs are too high
- Cost of living and self-improvement
  - Cost of accessing services
  - Cost of upgrading skills – technological skills not good
  - Cost of preparing for jobs – transport and clothing
  - Eligibility requirements for welfare takes too long, requires internet
  - Cost of application process – bus fare, cell phones
- Health issues
  - Medical supplies – labour to install medical equipment
  - Diabetic supplies – expensive medicine, diabetic drugs
  - Coverage for safe injection but not for diabetics
  - Need dental coverage
- Basic welfare does not include bus pass
- Busses too small, old busses were better
- Employment
  - Work search - 75% of businesses closed
  - Nowhere to apply for jobs
  - No jobs, businesses hire younger people, not older, problem for 40-60 year olds
  - Lack of programs specific for 40-60 year olds
  - Work search with no bus pass, need to walk, proper resumes
  - 30/60 day programs send people back to bad situations
- Why a province is so rich in resources do we have poverty?
- Automation
  - Technology is reducing jobs
  - Technology skills hard to keep up with
  - Service require computer/ internet
  - Need for technology training
  -
- Concern over pensions when out of workforce
- Housing
  - Cost of living too high
  - Rental supply low - \$1100 without hydro
  - Cost of utilities high
  - Alternative heat dangerous, people using gas BBQ's indoors
  - Landlords increase rent in excess of regulation
  - Landlords ask for cash to dodge taxes
  - Landlords bump tenants to increase rent
  - Landlords don't fix problems with suits, mould, broken appliances and bad conditions
  - Emergency shelter needs are not meeting need for 40-60 year olds
  - Local people are opening their homes to help

- People helping others put themselves at risk
- Rental stock at risk
- Landlords are stereotyping
- Landlords are pushing boundaries
- Landlords don't take care of bed bugs, mites, exterminator, rats
- Landlords – need to make information available about tenant rights, not just online
- Need to overhaul RTA
- Low cost housing not accessible – forced to pay high rent
- Rent increases are taking more of income
- Lack of respect from landlords
- Not feeling safe where I live – forced to live in a dump – needles in hallways
- PA has unoccupied housing that is not available for rent
- Organisations such as AA ask for donations – cannot afford
- Accessing government services
  - Need printed resources
  - Not just online resources
  - Internet costs money
  - Need to address for welfare – eligibility requirements
  - Change rules so that PO BOX or shelter address can be used
  - Shelter portion \$375 for shelter and only available at Roger Street
  - Access to services and fair employment opportunities
  - Need government issued ID for many things
  - Process to get SIN is deceptive and fraudulent
- Profile of poverty
  - Having to pawn things to make ends meet
  - Alcohol/drugs
  - Affecting those who drink and those who do not
  - Desperate situations
  - Crime affects everyone
  - Saving money is impossible
  - Can never get ahead
  - Pawn shop/cheque cashing makes situation worse
  - Forced to live in environment that is harmful both mentally and physically
  - Cannot pay hydro
  - Having to access various resources where food is available
  - Living conditions I can afford are far below my standard
  - Hydro increases – have no control – forced to pay
  - Cannot afford food, more people accessing food banks, less food, hamper sizes are smaller
  - Lack of understanding of the reality of how people are living
  - Have been homeless for 2 years
  - Bed bugs are common in low income housing

- Forced to live in shared accommodation by lack of income, not by choice
- Live with people who you may not get along with
- Unemployment and poverty
- Normalizing poverty – intergenerational poverty becoming acceptable – setting standards lower
- Dig big hole, hard to get out
- Feel hopeless
- Can't get help they need, loose self esteem
- Poverty increases crime
- Education
  - computer training, accessible course to help elders, technology skills, basic skills
- Local economic action
  - Price controls to address inflation (3 Votes)
  - Need a local currency and a currency for tourists
  - Need rules so that tourists contribute to local economy
  - Secondary manufacturing to use local resources/people
  - Lack of good paying jobs in this community
  - Support needed for social enterprises for food production and fund them social enterprises to help people become employed – be part of the community by working
- Income support
  - Welfare rate too low
  - Shelter rate too low forcing people into bad situations
  - With current income assistance cannot afford to contribute to RDSO for children's education
  - Earned income: disability allows greater earned income on disability but there is a lack of help to find employment to take advantage of the extra income opportunity
  - When I became homeless quickly, I was not given emergency funding and could not access housing. Needed to have MLA represent me. No shelter, beds for 4 days – sleeping on streets for 4 days. Emergency/ crisis funding deducted from next pay cheques.
  - If I find I work it will be deducted so trapped at income level – the only way I can get ahead would be to get income working under the table. I have been forced to take out loans. I owe \$300 in interest and still trapped.
  - Volunteer incentive program is no longer available
- Discrimination
  - Racism
  - Age discrimination (4 votes)
  - Give older workers a fair opportunity
  - Ages workers and workers with injuries get cashed out
  - Age of retirement is higher now and need to help 65 + workers
  - Still face discrimination/prejudice
  - Give people their human rights

- Stigma and lack of respect for people with mental illness and or living in poverty. It is being normalized across generations
- Change in corporate mentality – need to put people over profits (4 votes)
- Health
  - Sometimes medicine are not covered – going with out
  - Lack of legal advocacy for people with mental health challenges
  - Need real medical emergency services for people with mental illnesses because they are mentally ill their rights are not being respected
  - No access to dental – But if on Social Assistance I would have access
  - Pay high premium whilst waiting for tooth to be fixed
- Housing
  - Lack of affordable housing that meets community housing standards
  - Adequate housing – cost of renting and heating not close to what is needed
  - Difficult to get housing
  - Landlords are going past their space
  - Landlords take advantage, jack rent up
- Make \$2000 above what is allowed for Social Assistance—makes me the Working poor
- Compartmentalizing the issues
- Addictions
- Addictions substance abuse
- Difficulty of poverty
  - Food is expensive
  - Hydro is pricey
  - Need another hydro company in BC--generate competition
  - Bring fair prices
  - Need to heat home
  - Security of the person is in question
  - Taken away right through loans and hydro
  - Do away with legal fiction
  - Cost of living increases faster than income – affects bottom line and low self esteem
- Homelessness
  - Difference between homeless and not homeless is ability to pay rent
  - Homeless can't sustain themselves on current wage
- Society labels people with ability to be self-sustaining
- People making decisions are not qualified or educated
- No preventative measures taken before it gets in to an emergency situation
- Mental health only helped once in crisis
- Government Services
  - Not aware of eligibility to access resources
  - No one tells you there are things/ people out there to help you
  - Government benefits are hard to get
  - Not friendly voice 'we don't like free loaders in Canada'

- Typical attitude is to eliminate me as a problem
  - Really hard to get help
  - Social Services doesn't give clothing advance – only every 2-3 years
- Social Services is inadequate
- Politicians not realistic , have lost touch
- \$9 million @ shelter but still kicking people out
- 'poverty is becoming a commodity'
- Drug industry
  - Pharmaceutical industry taking control of the addiction issues
  - Pharmaceutical companies are an industry to make money off government sector
- Poverty increases crime, theft
- people don't have fun, desperation,
- Poverty is a stat- not a person. Each person's story should be heard and considered qualifying
- Lack of legal advocacy for the poor
- Accessing services in health care
- Cost of living is too high
- IA rates not enough to meet needs inadequate health care coverage – for diabetic supplied
- Safe affordable, secure housing, legislation aimed at making safe housing law/right
- Education
  - Access to education
  - Education system doesn't meet individual needs and differing abilities high cost for post-secondary education
  - Lack of post-secondary education – must commute out of town
  - In debt from student loans
- Centralized income assistance is a barrier to many individuals – put individuals at risk
- Guaranteed income for those in need
- Lack of access to health care, services aren't there, doctor shortages, drop in clinic
- Lack of respect and judgement
- Access to services
  - Long walk to bread of life
  - Services are spread out
  - Lack of recovery programs
  - Lack of residential programs
  - Transportation system is not efficient
  - Lack of funding for the transitional housing – more staff required to support individuals
  - Lack of dental coverage, eye glasses/ exams, hearing aids, dentures
  - Hard to get access to food, system not geared for easy access, disrespectful treatment accessing services
  - Income/asset test to qualify for IA puts people in poverty
  - Cant access food bank if you work
  - Require better accessibility
  - Need community based recovery programs like the Duncan facility

- PWD eligibility criteria – doctors that disagree, refuse to complete/support applications because they philosophically disagree with PWD
- Fragmented social programs – agencies are fragmented – don’t work together. People have to travel all over town
- Non visible disabilities create barriers for people. Don’t understand they have a disability (cognitive)
- Hydro costs are too high
- Criminalizing mental health and addiction
- Need for computers – literacy issues. Required for everything including applying for IA.
- Social isolation
  - Poverty is isolating socially – can’t afford meals/ activities/ movies etc.
  - Lack of community and inclusion – not family, no social, no capital
- Racial discrimination
- Reality of poverty
  - Need fundamental things like access to facilities to shower and wash clothes
  - Lack of literacy programs
  - Hopelessness – depression – self-medication – addiction. Lack of sense of belonging
  - Lack of understanding around trauma based behaviors – addiction, self-medicating, pain
  - Issue with 2 year independence test

## Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?

- Have support for children aging out of foster care and transition them at older age
  - Need a place like Cool Aid
- Childcare
  - Day cares need to be subsidized to provide service for low income families
  - Government daycare provide food and early childhood education at low cost to families/single parents
  - daycare that can provide early interviews/health assessments
- Use the “HUB” Food concept like in Nanaimo
  - One central place where all food surpluses from businesses go for distribution to low income
- Address local infrastructure – a town has to have road/highways/buildings to prosper and can then take care of low income
- Better psychiatric assessment for those with mental health issues
- Improve government services
  - Increase access to and knowledge for working through political maze/bureaucracy
  - Better access to applying for Social Assistance
- School that support entrepreneurial approach to education
- Do not sell agricultural land to other nations

- Support to seniors to maintain housing
- Service Canada access needs improvement
- Do not sell Canadian Fishing Rights (will increase poverty if sold)
- Guaranteed Annual Income
  - o Income security (2 votes)
  - o Make it a liveable income
- Employment strategies
  - o Youth Employment/ self-employment
  - o More businesses staffed and supported with persons with Developmental disabilities like FASD
  - o Apprentice programs for proper careers
  - o Self-sustaining employment projects
  - o Give people opportunity To work for cash daily by opening a labour unlimited in Port Alberni
  - o Provide job for the tenants of the low income housing, such as picking up garbage off of highways etc.
- Care for troubled children/youth
  - o Money for children in home of relative especially for grandparents
  - o Foster care system needs to be changed
  - o Subsidize low income families so they could choose between staying home or working
- Education
  - o Free university or education/community college
  - o Free tutoring for kids and adults (including food and books)
  - o Encourage people on Social Assistance to go to school – pay incentive
  - o School and job training for those on Income Assistance
  - o Allow University/College attendance while on Social Assistance
  - o Community school open at night (workshops)
  - o More education for people in poverty (2 votes)
  - o Affordable, flexible, self-paced higher education for those with mental illness or anyone
- Youth
  - o More youth addiction services – ADAPS is fabulous but underfunded
  - o Recreation activities ages 12-18 for youth to develop /thrive
  - o Better access to supports
  - o Provide safe environment
- All issues are interconnected
- Food security (sustain and keep our agriculture and water fishing Canadian and do not sell to other Nations) (3 votes)
- Restore confident and dignity of individual
- Staff in shelters should be able to give a list of other resources without getting in trouble for doing this
- Housing
  - o Affordable, safe housing (3 votes)

- More rent subsidies (1 vote)
- Put a cap on rents (1 vote)
- Need better/stricter policies for slumlords (2 votes)
- Provide more low income housing, let the applicants be part of the construction (1 vote)
- Make it easier for first time home buyers to apply and receive a mortgage...
- Funding for fully independent housing
- Stable, safe, supported, affordable, housing (4 votes)
- Rebuild / renovate homes / old buildings
- Make the same, stronger building materials, buildings that last
- More homeless shelters
- Programs in Denmark/Germany/Japan/Sweden got rid of housing issues (5 votes)--Took crown land and gave it to people
- Community
  - Beautify the low income areas, ie. Paint buildings (1 vote)
  - Bring community together. When place look good it makes you feel better about yourself (2 votes)
  - Drive people out of town in Tsunami, more drivers for Tsunami warnings (1 vote)
- Addictions
  - Root of problem needs to be addressed (trauma) PTSD. People are self medicating. Not the symptom (4 votes)
  - Provide counselling – deal with the trauma (2 votes)
  - Need more local treatment beds and provide funding for it
- Facilities
  - A wood and metal machine shop for people to invent stuff (1 vote)
  - Access to shower/washer/dryer
  - Designated areas year round for camping
  - Hot showers, hydro, fresh water, hire staff – supervised care taker with high standards (2 votes)
  - Supports available to help people gain employment i.e. use of a shower, clean clothes, etc.
  - Make mini storage lockers available for people to store their shit, safely, and cheaply (1 vote)
  - Provide a space where people can store their tools and share their skills (1 vote)
  - There is a park in town where if it rains, there's a cover, but by-laws kick them out
  - No showers – need to provide help to prep for jobs, need showers, clothes
- Income
  - Automatic cost of living increase (2 votes)
  - Guaranteed annual income (7 votes)
  - Improve standard of living (4 Votes)
  - Guarantee basic Income (1 vote)
  - Guaranteed income
- Make more fifth wheel properties available

- Government services
  - Clear available information for everyone (hard Copy)
  - Automatic application for Services that one qualifies for
  - Remove requirements to re-apply for medical services that are for permanent conditions
  - Accessible and fair distribution of subsidies for everyone
  - More advocacy (4 votes)
  - Easier access to ID
  - Reinstate case workers
  - Easier access to funding to focus on community and peoples' needs
  - Ministry take more responsibility for clients' needs
  - Information Access Improvement
  - Lack of information – provide information to individuals
  - Make information more widely accessible
  - Help income assistance clients and others know what is available
  - Hire more support workers
  - Get access to support workers and mental health workers (2 votes)
  - Increase social assistance rates (1 vote)
- Government actions
  - Law against doctors charging extra to fill out paperwork (1 vote)
  - Government sponsor volunteerism fund transition from volunteer to employment
  - Educate the community on real issues
  - Incentives for business to hire those with disabilities
  - Reallocate money for local need
  - stop sending money overseas – people at home need help
  - offshore account and capital gains loopholes should be closed
  - Province should get involved across province.
  - BC Government should generally build on local committee work like this.
  - Sue fossil fuel companies for creating climate change
- Health
  - Medical and dental paid for pensioners and low income
- Support for social Enterprises (5 votes)
  - Interest free loans to work land and villages/lots to garden
- Jobs/Education (2 votes)
  - Multiple forms of communication (written and oral)
  - Create answering service for people without jobs. A person can give the phone number to employers.
  - Tailored education for the needs of the person
  - Employment – stabilize people via employment as vehicle to get their kids back.

- Addictions
  - o More facilities/safe place even for people who are doing drugs and alcohol
  - o Sobering centres need more beds – more 24/hour services for people using drugs and alcohol
  - o – places to go
  - o Safe injection sites (1 vote)
  - o Alcohol and drug resources and help alcohol and drug treatment (1 vote)
- Affordable housing (1 vote)
  - o Interest free loan so people can buy a home instead of paying rent every month (1 vote)
  - o Tiny house, pipes turned into homes, use crown land, shipping containers
  - o Looking at housing programs in Europe aimed at reducing homelessness/poverty by providing crown land and interest free loans which allow people to sustain themselves
  - o Ministry needs to investigate landlord complaints
  - o Penalize slumlords
- Pets
  - o Hard to have pets while renting
  - o People pay landlord a pet deposit and damage deposit
  - o Ministry should pay pet deposit
  - o The ministry should pay for people’s pet deposit, creating more options for housing
- Damage deposit
  - o Rebate renters \$20 month for damage deposit
- Need for more support workers, i.e. mental health and substance use to ensure peoples needs are being addressed. Also, increasing access to those workers that are already in place
- Jobs/education:
  - o Identifying individuals ways of learning, and tailoring education for the needs of the person
  - o Education should be a right
  - o If you’re on SA you should be able to get training to get off
  - o PWD lots of training
  - o SA no training available
  - o People want to work/can’t afford training
  - o
  - o More jobs/training for people
  - o Job fares with lineup of work ready
  - o Job board
  - o Help people on PWD get jobs to earn up to max they are eligible to make (3 Votes)
- Youth
  - o Need youth shelter / outreach program
  - o Safe place for anyone who needs it youth included
- More empowerment for community organizations
- If you list certain addresses on resume, you aren’t getting a job

- Housing
  - o Penalized for living in some rental places or shelters
  - o Living in supported/affordable housing units
- Need more advocacy (3 votes)
- Need more people with knowledge of mental health issues
- Ministry
  - o Know the resources to guide people to find help
  - o Social service staff need to have more empathy
  - o Ministry treats people like addicts
  - o Ministry policy “if you don’t ask they won’t tell you”
  - o PWD needs to cover the basic needs
  - o Speedier/more efficient service
  - o Face to face services from ministry (5 Votes)
  - o Should deal with one case worker to support as advocates mature people
- Homeless
  - o Make sure people with Dietary Requirements can eat at shelters
  - o Need shelter/ food kitchens on weekends – nothing on Saturday’s or Sundays
- Medical
  - o Support for Diabetes/Lactose/Dietary Requirements
  - o More coverage of all medications
- Poor should be entitled to housing medical and education (3 Votes)
- Better off being an immigrant in this country
- Take care of Canadian citizens (2 Votes)
- Stop deducting CPP for people aged 60-65. Laws let this happen but it’s not right.
- Incentive program on I.A used to give \$ for volunteering for NFP. Build experience on resume, make a bit of \$ which in crisis makes a big difference, otherwise had nothing in PA – also built community – big way to belong to PA.
- Community engagement, Volunteers
- separate cheque from Social Assistance. Might be challenging for people with kids re child care but still a positive program, builds self-esteem, reduces isolation, increases network, bridge to have courage to apply for job
- Food security
  - o Bring back \$1.49 a day for groceries
  - o PA has food security and climate disruption committee – recommended food retrieval program to nutritional food access.
- BC’s poverty stats are high – and PA child poverty is one in 10.
- Territory BC lots of baseline info on poverty to measure changes against. (1 Vote)
- Mental health
  - o MH assistance – not enough resources,
  - o lack of access/knowledge,
  - o hire more people,
  - o provide incentives for doctors, MH workers to move to PA (remote communities)

- Peer training, increase advocates, create jobs around advocacy, decrease barriers and judgement
- Housing
  - o Programs to build small houses (Similar to Habitat for Humanity)
  - o Low barrier housing, pet friendly housing (1 Vote)
- Pet emergency cost help to keep them healthy without having them taken away
- Social isolation
  - o Increase opportunities like this meeting for people on SA to connect, come up with solutions and decrease isolation. (e.g., trade resources)
- Reduce barriers to starting small businesses
- Transportation
  - o Night buses go longer on both sides of town so that people with late shifts can get home – reduce transport barrier
  - o More efficient timely public transportation
- Local solutions
  - o Implement bartering systems to trade skills, food, resources, childcare
  - o Local currency system to keep money in the town, build local community and economy
  - o More paid community cleanups – job creation and keeps communication. Cleaner, cared for – trim hedges v picked up garbage.
  - o Social enterprises to give people job skills, reach allowable, under S.A.
  - o Alternate EC department to capitalism (Social Economy)
  - o Support group that is solutions oriented too.
  - o Micro financing works well in poverty stricken countries worldwide. Support women, lending circles to help with business plans etc.
  - o Co-op lending – get loan to get on feet, foot an unexpected bill, without having interest rates. E.g., replacing old furnace, fix roof.
- Law and safety
  - o Better policing in higher crime areas (south port)
  - o Police move out of water front to 3<sup>rd</sup> area (more central) and do more foot patrolling
  - o More and better lighting in town for safety
  - o Police impounded vehicle – muffler was too loud, but they were taking away my home.
  - o Better community policing
- Stigma
  - o Reduce stigma around poverty, reduce separation of people in society.
  - o TV campaigns to reduce MH stigma and poverty (Public education campaign, empathy)
- Community facilities and solutions
  - o Places to have a shower, wash clothes – not necessarily housing but accessible.
  - o Summer cooling stations
  - o Better access to public bathrooms
  - o Restoration of the commons
  - o Encourage and educate to support and shop local
  - o Community gardens in South Port down town area

- Grocery store in uptown
- Cooperative grocery store uptown area
- Create the environment so that small businesses can thrive
- Keep the dollars made here, here (2 Votes)
- More local controlled decision making would lead to better decisions being made as long as it is done by a diverse group representative of the whole community.
- Allowing municipalities the freedom to tax other things in order to raise funds. E.g tax every log leaving the valley (2 Votes)
- Local currency (make sure they're beautiful)
- Expand access to the waterfront
- Housing
  - Take curfews away from some housing (low barrier)
  - Co-housing model – often for seniors, maybe solution
  - More housing and support services to let seniors age at home and live at home
  - Elevator maintenance for buildings, especially seniors who cannot use stairs
  - Force slumlords to fix issues in buildings.
  - Government fix and charge landlords or takes off landlords' taxes
  - Even social housing can have too many rules – too long a wait
  - Policy to create more housing ownership options
  - More tiny housing
  - Cooperative housing (4 Votes)
  - Relaxed housing zoning
  - Mixed housing
  - Make Ministry stop verifying shelter arrangements with landlords
  - Do what is necessary to address the effects of unethical and absent landlords (4 Votes)
  - Tiny home communities (rent to own),
  - container housing (4 Votes),
  - Use government owned land for supported housing (4 Votes)
  - Allow pets
  - Subsidy to be applied to where you choose to live
- More diversity in government leadership
- Micro financing
- Encourage all of the helping/educating groups to work together, combine forces, to be more effective
- A social planning commission (2 Votes)
- Energy assistance – potential lower rate for low income, directly paid to hydro, grants for converting to solar energy
- Food security
  - Cooking class that includes food and take home what is cooked
  - Greater access to food banks
  - Fresh food, more money (food stamps, not cash), gift card like in USA, Incentive classes, participation get gift cards.

- Make nutritious food more affordable, offer more options, people need to ask for healthy choices,
- programs for babies/pregnancy
- Education – cooking programs, food matters
- Health Unit – cooking for new moms, water subsidies grow food, free seeds and suppliers (donations), Healthy harvest , Musqueam Farm Model (train youth/cultural connections with land and food production)
- Abattoir – more affordable to locally grown products
- Food Gleaning Project – registry, food box programs, farmers market coupons
- Community Kitchens – Kuu-us, Saturdays. Use existing buildings(Fairways market, indoor market).
- Food Safety in soup kitchen, expiry dates (1 Vote)
- Food allowance, people with disabilities that can't work should get more
- Look at the increase in food costs during cheque issue
- Cooking classes, something fun to do to bring people together
- Grocery/ restaurants: give food to people in need, don't throw food away, food security
- Need for quality decent food forces people to dig in garbage.
- Look at food policies
- Over population of deer – use for food
- Every Band needs to heal – assist on and off reserved people
- Option to have IA Cheque diverted to community supported agriculture (CSA) – social enterprise – money goes to the food growers – fresh produce less expensive. (3 Votes)
- Fresh food boxes delivered
- Community gardens.
- Medical care
  - Access to doctors and services, long from health chronic conditions
- Employment
  - Job training (no age limit), fast tracking to start your own business
  - Improve employability
  - Adequate employment services (Kuu-us), INEO, Alberni Employment
  - Help with applications for assistance/PWD
- Housing
- Registry, providing references, identifying character references (e.g. teachers, doctors, support worker).
- Computer access at library (30 mins), club house.
- Kuu-us, advocates need more
- Drivers Licences, NETP, INEO
- Education – about residential schools, violence against women, lateral kindness, make it happen
  - More training/education so there are more employment opportunities (1 Vote)
- Community
  - Be Kind – bring back community, remove prejudice(1 Vote)

- More community gathering – activities for people, warm places to connect, fast food restaurants (1 Vote)
  - Community with music/dancing/healing (Eden Alternative) (1 Vote)
- Overdose prevention site – more people inside, smells trigger, this is where people go for food/clothing (1 Vote)
- Housing
  - Tiny Houses – shipping containers, safe spaces close to services, out of Tsunami Zone (1 Vote)
  - Houses with and without drugs and alcohol, have separation,
  - With \$375 one is in places with drug/alcohol (1 Vote)
- Disability
  - Disability Assistance
  - Treatment for families so they can stay together, support for people with mental health challenges (1 Vote)
- Housing
  - Bachelor apts should have real fridge/ stove/ oven (1 Vote)
  - In all BC housing, minimum standards in place – people that are part of the problem can be part of the solution
  - More affordable housing for elders/ seniors
- Understand dementia/ FASD – every person in community. Community dinner to learn and educate about the issue.
- Income supports
  - Funding for gas/transportation to visit family – bus pass eats up all \$\$
  - Put a cap on utility bills
- Transportation
  - Shuttle bus – especially on cheque issue days – drop off and pick up to the ministry office, groceries, housing, key residential areas, doctors’ offices, hospital (3 votes)
  - More intentional planning around transportation – accessibility to public transportation
  - Provide transportation for special appointments
- Ministry
  - Information distribution – knowing what programs are available
  - Agencies share more information. Some don’t know what others do –
  - Better communication between service providers (5 Votes)
  - Information on job posting, housing, health. At an office and get the handouts or a booklet that you can keep and hold on to.
  - Produce a community social services directory.
  - Do not deduct income of working spouse from PWD’s assistance chq. (3 Votes)
  - Do not deduct child’s income from single parents assistance
  - Separate PWD with regular SA – have people specialized in disability
  - Have qualified workers – have educated workers
- Employment
  - Job skills training – awareness of programs, knowing where training is available

- Wider variety of training options
- Restore funding to have more skills training, beyond ABE, English as a second language.
- Don't penalise people attending educational programs or full time courses by taking away social assistance
- Job Skills training
- Budgeting, Financing and education.
- Medical supports
  - Clinic is at the end of Port Alberni – need another medical clinic in south end for accessibility.
  - Offer a walk in clinic at south end
  - Offer a mobile clinic – clinic on wheels – bringing medical care to people
  - Provide mobile education about prescriptions/medical awareness.
  - Stop giving free needles
  - Eliminate prescription out of pocket costs for all medications
  - Cost of medication should not be the determinant of the treatment
- Supports
  - Support Group/ Socialising in healthy places/ healthy ways.
  - Need more support groups, need more outreach
  - AA + and step programs for Alcohol/ Drug treatment and support.
  - Need more opportunities to share, listen and talk to each other
  - Have classes on cleansings, programs on how to talk about solutions and take away negatives
  - Equal education on how to live in society, other cultures, take time to understand each other
- Stigma
  - Avoid labels
  - Stop labelling people and respect them
  - Treat people on income on disability assistance as individuals.
  - More love, compassion, reduce prejudice
  - Less isolation, more caring and sharing
- Community facilities
  - Clothing depot – free or low cost clothing
  - Regional autonomy to keep jobs, resources decisions local, more local control of resources keeps money here
- Increase political will to eliminate corruption
- Keep the jobs here, resource extraction
- Tax the rich, spreading the wealth, put a cap on wealth for individual
- Gain back respect with more communication (1 Vote)
- Housing
  - Need more affordable housing (5 Votes)
  - Cap rents
  - Rent controls

- Reduce absentee home owner (1 vote)
- Cap hydro rates (freeze or reduce for low income)
- Build tiny/container houses to allow people to rent or own
- Ministry action
  - Use plain, simple language when communicating to allow everyone to understand, participate, learn etc.
  - Cover the cost of necessities of life (food, housing, utilities) and allow people money to pay/ buy extras
  - Hold government accountable for human rights
  - Make emergency funding available
  - Funding for advocacy so people's needs being met needs based funding
  - Advocacy with teeth not advisory
- Education
  - No fees for K-12 school children to go on trips, participate in activities or graduate
  - Fully fund education
  - Teach children value and how to raise money
  - Teach basics in education
  - Evaluate what isn't working
  - Public education should have to be sentenced and licenced
  - Public education about racism/impacts of racism
- Food security
  - Increase access to farmers market coupon program, less restrictions, more people who can qualify
- Housing
  - Offer diversity in emergency shelter availability (family, women, low barrier, etc.)
  - Diversity of housing options fully supported, subsidized, mixed market, co-op, reduced market.
  - Awareness of resources increase residential tenancy branch
  - More supportive housing (6 Votes)
  - Subsidized housing
  - Low income housing for single people, seniors, people with disabilities (4 votes)
  - Landlords required to make rental properties safe and clean (bed bugs and mites and mould)
  - Income based rent? 30% of income for rent (3 votes)
- Required increased funding, developing community awareness and involvement in supports
- Build capacity for understanding
- Systemic issue (awareness)
- Employment
- Create long term employment opportunities with decent pay/ living wage (3 votes)
- Government action
  - Export tax on raw logs (2 votes)
  - High tax on foreign land speculation (3 votes)

- Government gives itself raises without helping low income people – direct democracy
  - Political wages should be based on success of improving situation of low income people
- Poverty is a problem
- Power and inequality
  - Power structure on reserve
  - Families in power get all benefits
  - Restructure power balance
- Planned production (3 votes)
- People in community form volunteer group, mental health emergency response team rather than police showing up with guns/force towards people with mental illness
- Every law year provide certain amount of free representation and legal services
- Law and advocacy
  - Vancouver law courts --2018 BC law asking court for mentally ill to be prohibited for free legal services
  - Be open about resources available – have advocates (2 votes)
- Medical services
  - Providing funding for all medical and dental services below a certain income level (3 votes)
- Education
  - Expand free adult basic education and post-secondary for better employment opportunities
  - More supports to access employment opportunities (3 votes)
- Food security
  - More help with food banks
  - Centralize food distribution – hub – group services, expand hours for working people, individualise services
  - Recycle grocery store product, don't waste, redirect
- Housing
  - Increase in culturally based housing
  - Government to regulate unoccupied houses
  - More co-op housing
  - User-based co-op set up. Owner gets from co-op rather than paying agency to manage an unoccupied building city can help with rezoning commercial/ residential buildings
  - Build more houses/tiny houses
  - Allow pets in rentals
  - Rent to be linked to cost of living
  - Public funded housing – apartments, town houses, co-op model
- Co-op business revitalize 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave
- Stop interest rates
- Income
  - If not asking for an increase in minimum wage, what should we ask for?
  - Guaranteed minimum income – reduced crime and reduced stigma

- Make information to get help more accessible – help you through steps, help you know what you are eligible for
- Stop taking away money from CPP, if you are a PWD.
- Collaborative approach to receive assistance (3 votes)
- Childcare
  - o \$10 a day daycare
- Training
  - o single parent training
  - o More training for people on SA, employment centres, create more with experience
- Raise shelter rate from \$375 (5 Votes). Make a shelter allowance at market rate
- Medical
  - o Have a vision care that is comprehensive, laser eye surgery
  - o Have comprehensive dental care
  - o Have comprehensive wellness centre (2 votes)
  - o Have more mental health care (1 vote) long term case workers, preventative care
  - o Clinic in South End of PA
- Local facilities
  - o Full access to transportation and communication, wifi, cell phone,
  - o Laundromat for people on assistance
  - o Newspaper for rentals, currently all on internet
  - o List of advocates on hand
  - o Fund social enterprises to facilitate community inclusion
- Youth
  - o Long term support for youth in foster care assistance to go to school
- Income
  - o Guaranteed income for needy
  - o Raise minimum wage – income security
  - o Living wage legislated
- Ministry services
  - o Reopen ministry offices with face to face service
- Study other country models in France, Netherlands that have successful social service models
- Services
  - o Universal childcare
  - o Fund post- secondary education
  - o Fund dental, hearing aids, eye exams, etc.
  - o Universal – fully funded health care, dental, eye care, etc.
- Re-distribution of income in society
- Transportation
  - o Bike sharing
  - o Shuttle bus for food on Cheque Day

- Community action
  - o Build a shop to repair bikes, small appliances, teach, train people living in transitional housing, job, skill creation
  - o Create self – esteem by working/volunteering
  - o Facilitate/ fund programs – beautiful communities, murals, painting, gardening etc, revitalize communities
- Education
  - o More literacy programs and access to post-secondary programs
- Involve BC program, volunteer program funded by Government
- Addictions
  - o More residential treatment centres/ programs
- Advocacy
  - o Fund poverty law advocacy again
  - o Law foundation legal services society over seas
  - o Need knowledgeable advocates and more face to face time and guidance with the ministry
- Streamline PWD Process
- Work around for un-cooperative/unsupportive doctors
- Entrepreneurship
  - o Micro loans for home and small business
  - o Fund social enterprises for community involvement, community gardens and skills training
  - o Fund business incubators
  - o community invest in technology and cheaper power
- Social inclusion
  - o Provide social opportunities to foster inclusion, belonging/ sense of more entertainment – hockey games and other activities,
- Ministry
  - o Better information distribution about services
  - o More staffed offices in smaller communities
  - o Need one on one support, but requires time and increased cost
- Housing
  - o Improve standards for people living in supported housing and affordable housing
  - o Crack down on slumlords, investigate complaints
  - o Affordable housing – nice place to live inspires you to live a better life, specific to elders and single people with kids/ grand kids
  - o Housing must be a foundation for all, regulate roles and rights
- Need to create diversity in the EMP options
- Income
  - o Need a good living wage
  - o Wage subsidy, work placements

- Health
  - o Need for flexible access options for all
  - o Access to extended health options
- Everyone should be entitled to housing, education and medical
- Education
  - o Native elders need training, learn your own languages,
- training wage , volunteer grant (100\$/ month) bring back incentive program
- Collaborative approach to resource assistance
- Have advocates
- Ministry action
  - o Raise shelter rate
  - o Comprehensive wellness shelter with good rates
  - o Help PWD get jobs to earn up to the max available income level
  - o Increase disability assistance and income assistant rate
  - o Do not deduct incomes of working spouse from PWD assistance cheque
  - o Do not deduct child's income from single parents assistance
- Food security and climate disruption committee including food reclamation
- Sue fossil fuel companies for climate change
- Province should work with local initiatives like this and create partnerships
- Employment
  - o Offer an incentive program for people receiving I.A to volunteer, get paid a bit whilst building confidence
  - o Decrease isolation
  - o Build their courage to apply for jobs
  - o A win-win for people, governments and non-profits
- Guaranteed basic income
  - o Run pilot for this in this region of BC where poverty rates are 1 in 3
  - o Alberni – Clayoquot region have lots of baseline data to measure, observe changes
- Housing
  - o Cap on housing so increase doesn't go to landlords
  - o Need more affordable housing, clean and safe
  - o Rent control, eliminate absentee landlords responsible for repairs
  - o Complete review on BC housing
- Raise people out of poverty the whole community benefits
- Treatment for families so they can stay together, importance of culture/ family
- Treat people on income disability assistance as individuals
- Teach children value and how to raise \$\$ for extras not basics