

Date: March 15th and March 20th, 2018

Community: Ucluelet and Tofino

of Participants: 30- 40

of Organizations: 4

About the Participants: The participants were both male and female and ranged in age from youth to young adults and adults, to seniors. The majority of participants had some degree of lived experience with poverty, although not all identified as being “poor”.

About the Findings:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
 - Meaningful and/or purposeful work (e.g. beach cleaning)
 - Being broke. The cost of living is so high at \$13/hr it doesn't cut it.
 - Living in a van, often penniless
 - More than 50% of summer workers live in “non-conforming” housing
 - Lack of choices
 - Housing
 - Access to mental health & addiction services
 - Selection of food
 - Disgrace of going to the food bank
 - Homelessness
 - Decisions between food, rent, fuel, dog food etc.
 - CPP income insufficient especially between ages 60-65
 - “\$83 at the end of it all after all bills are paid; \$20/week”
 - I am not in poverty, just broke!
 - Cannot live without family support
 - High disparity between rich and poor
 - Pension: no leftover \$ for medications. Pharmacare has a \$500 deductible (but \$500 is hard to get!)
 - Living paycheque to paycheque
 - Any unexpected costs impact daily, monthly expenses. For e.g. gas prices increase now it is hard to get to work.
 - Stress
 - High rent costs and no available units
 - Homelessness, employment, and mental health
 - “brain injury...any challenge worsens it”
 - Addictions, drug and alcohol

2. What would address these issues and help you or others out of poverty?
 - Appropriate housing that is geared to income
 - Build healthier communities (less drain on health services)
 - Free land for food growing
 - More healthy role models and activities for youth (culture, sports)
 - Eliminate the pharmacare deductible
 - Attainable housing (rent is too high!)
 - Housing strategy
 - Reduce stigma on accessing mental health services (idea: healthy cooking class with service providers)
 - Community fishing programs
 - Community gardens (X3)
 - Increase minimum wage
 - Accessible and affordable housing
 - Sustainable communities located on the periphery of city centres
 - Increase access to food
 - Support small, sustainable communities and alternate living arrangements
 - Encourage municipalities to zone for alternative housing solutions
 - Free fishing rod
 - Housing co-operatives (CMHC should provide insured mortgages for housing co-ops)
 - Proper education, affordable education, community leaders and teachers
 - Land availability
 - Positive role models

The top three solutions and/or ideas that emerged from the small group discussions were:

1. Strategies and policies that support affordable and attainable housing
2. Community gardens and availability of land for food growing
3. Positive role models and education as a pathway out of poverty