

# A WAY HOME KAMLOOPS

## YOUTH POVERTY CONSULTATION REPORT:

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### **Introduction:**

This Youth Poverty Consultation was facilitated by two Youth Advisors with lived experience with A Way Home Kamloops. Boys & Girls Club hosted the space for this event.

<b>Date</b>	Monday, March 26, 2018
<b>Community</b>	Kamloops, British Columbia
<b># of Participants</b>	11 youth.
<b># of Organizations</b>	A Way Home Kamloops, Youth Against Youth Homelessness and Boys & Girls Club

### **About the Participants:**

The participants included 11 youth who have experienced poverty, or are at risk of or have experienced homelessness or housing insecurity. The ages included: 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 24. Three youth identified as First Nations. Seven youth are currently attending school. Five youth belong to a group called Youth Against Youth Homelessness, which is a group of youth with lived experience creating community change in Kamloops.

### **About the Findings:**

#### **1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now? (Issues)**

- Saving money for the future.
- Food: not being able to get it sometimes. Leads to malnourishment.
- Buying cheap, unhealthy food such as fast food.
- Clean water
- Free meals, but being shamed to access it.
- Shelter
- Rent is too high. You can't find a place for \$375
- Can't pay rent
- Not having a proper bed.
- Need access to medicine that is needed
- Dental issues
- Can't afford eye-glasses
- Communication: not being able to afford minutes for your phone

- Can't answer calls for work. Need to call in for some part-time jobs.
- Lack of recognition of skills and informal employment such as serving tables in a rural community.
- Have to grow up too fast by getting a job or helping maintain the house.
- Starting a job and starting a new medication and not sure how the medications will impact you.
- Part time jobs are cheaper for companies.
- People judge you without knowing you (ex. job).
- It's hard on disability as you can't have a job and have to live on a set income.
- Getting food safe or education certificates.
- Life skills: don't know how to make food.
- Need seasonal clothes.
- Can't afford a jacket.
- Can't afford work clothes for certain jobs as you need steel toed boots, etc.
- Have to shop at dollar store and buy non-name brands.
- Not being able to buy things that enrich your life such as having a dog as you can't afford it.
- Can't go on vacations.
- Lack of comfort.
- Inflation is hard on people experiencing poverty.
- You could like to play music or art, but can't afford it: Creative expressions.
- Addictions.
- Substance use makes it harder to get out of the cycle.
- Mental health issues.
- Depression: Not able to move forward to get a house, clothes, or things you want.
- Being isolated.
- Low self-esteem.
- Not having healthy coping strategies.
- Social-anxiety.
- Parents may not be around a lot.

- Shame in accessing the shelter.
- Safety: sometimes you can't call someone when someone may be hurting your family
- Females living in poverty can be sexually assaulted.
- Trauma
- Healthy relationships. Ex. Living someone who is unhealthy, but you need two incomes to pay the rent.
- Higher crime rate: living in a place where crime is more rampant
- Getting involved with gangs: hard to stay out of trouble in a lower income neighborhood.
- "Do bad stuff to get money to survive."
- Criminal records.
- Bad friends.
- Harder time fitting in as you get picked on.
- Not knowing about services.
- Hard to access income assistance.
- Going to school becomes difficult: harder to get a good paying job.
- Hard to complete high-school education.
- People with disabilities have a different education than mainstream.
- Having to work to pay for education
- Hard to get school supplies, textbooks, school fees
- Not being able to access field trips, sports, and extra-curricular.
- You are not making money while learning. You sometimes have to choose between classroom or a job.
- If doing a program, you can't work.
- Transportation: bikes only get you so far
- Having to walk everywhere can sometimes be unsafe. Best to take main roads.
- Takes you a long time to get things done and time is money.
- It may be hard for a young parent to hang onto their kid.
- Hard to take care of dependents.
- Accessing child care can reduce your ability to work.
- You'd probably prefer to get sick rather than the child.

- Being sick, you can't make money and can't provide and everything falls apart.
- Parents may not support the young parents.
- Divorce disputes.
- Lack of family support.
- Kicked out cause you are not accepted.
- Indigenous youth and LGBTQ2S+ face more oppression.
- Hard to access services.
- Trans youth may not be able to afford hormones or surgery.
- Discrimination.

## **2. What would address these issues and help you or others out of poverty? (Solutions)**

- Adopt a "youth/family" living in poverty. A rich person could do this for tax deductions.
- Better training and education.
- Program to teach people life-skills and help their resume look better.
- Job readiness program.
- Donate rich people clothes to the poor.
- Rich people should buy poor people clothes.
- Easy access to services.
- Offer transportation.
- Hold events for the homeless such as Crash at the Club.
- Free basic health-care.
- Meet basic needs.
- Smaller hospitals in poverty areas.
- More walk-in clinics.
- More doctors.
- Train doctors in poverty ( ex. Have to support 5 poor people in a year).
- Kids in foster care: youth need to be introduced to independent living at age 16 opposed to 18. Full support for youth until age 24. Support the transition from independent living and a \$1000 a month to \$235. Teach youth in care life skills and budget training. Help youth in care save money so they have a lump sum for damage deposit, etc.
- Make it mandatory for people who own 20 apartments to identify one for low income people. This would help integration and hold people accountable who own property.

- Property work for rent.
- Ask friends' moms to stay with them if you can't stay at home. "Adopt a family." It's not like foster care, but integrates youth with families.
- Need more housing that is affordable.
- Tiny houses for people who can't afford it.
- Guidelines for suites such as bachelor suites should be more mindful.
- Change hotels into youth homelessness shelters or low income housing.
- Have low-income housing integrated into regular housing to spread it out.
- Give education about education.
- Access to harm reduction.
- Change public opinion about low-income housing. Education. It takes time for views to shift.
- "Necessity is the mother of intervention". Support innovation.
- More affordable food for low-income people in restaurants.
- Make a policy for restaurants/grocery stores that food could go to people in poverty. Give companies tax receipts or tax reductions and help protect the companies.
- More youth coaches.
- More school counsellors and assemblies that support youth to get connected to services.
- Turn a gym into a youth shelter.
- Turn ice rinks into youth shelters.
- Turn schools into activity centers when not being used.
- Low-Income Lottery. A person in poverty should be able to buy a ticket, but set a limit on how much they spend. You would win essential services in this lottery such as food, groceries, gas coupons, cleaning your house, or babysitting. You should be able to choose what you win. If you agree to babysit for someone, you get extra tickets. The rich should have to contribute to the low-income people by paying into the low income lottery and

getting a tax receipt to support the lotto max. The rich should also help babysit. This creates community as people are helping each other.

- Make cell-phones and cell-phone bills cheaper.
- Internet access should be free.
- Welfare and PWD rates need to be revamped as they are forcing people to live in the poverty line. More money!
- Giving supports to secure housing.
- Government could give money to people staying in the shelters so they can save up enough money for a house.
- Return dignity to people.
- Barrier of having to do chores to maintain your shelter bed. Cuts into time looking for a job.
- Protect people's stuff when they are in the shelter.
- Individualized support plans.
- More flexibility in shelters to help with people accessing new jobs.
- More help for people
- Naloxone training.
- Free counseling.
- Have more community/rec programs.
- Mandated housing worker and life skills program that is government funded.
- Lower costs for pharmaceuticals, hormones, etc.
- Free child-care and waitlists: daycares and pre-schools.
- Waiting lists for services.
- Have better food support systems that are more affordable.

- Combat stigma with food banks.
- Better quality food at the food bank, but not at the expense of getting less food.
- Have food banks in more accessible areas.
- Having accessible kitchens.
- Better access to community gardens that are protected with better security.
- Fresh water
- Access to eco-friendly products.
- Free education.
- Less debt with student loans.
- Have more public services involved in helping with education.
- More adapted programs to get grade 12 so you can work.
- Online schooling should be free.
- Need a computer.
- Free transportation.
- Free bus-passes.
- Free gift cards for different stores.
- Fun allowance for recreation and video games, etc.
- Gas cards.
- Cars for big families is a need.
- Free driving school and bring driving back into the school system.
- Government needs to work together.
- Tax the rich people and give it to the poor.

- Laws should stay in place even when government changes ( ex. This poverty plan).
- Tax the savings of rich people.
- Don't penalize the middle class for working extra hard and then they get taxed.
- Help the kids out of the poor people with toys and fun.
- Build houses like Rio.
- Help people stop substance use by having fun.
- Do a program where rich people have low income people move into a section of their house.

### **Solutions and Actions That Can Make a Difference:**

#### **a) Looking at the list of issues and solutions generated, what types of solutions did the individuals who participated in your meeting identify as most important to them?**

- **7 dots:** Kids in foster care: youth need to be introduced to independent living at age 16 opposed to 18. Full support for youth until age 24. Support the transition from independent living and a \$1000 a month to \$235. Teach youth in care life skills and budget training. Help youth in care save money so they have a lump sum for damage deposit, etc.
- **7 dots:** Low-Income Lottery. A person in poverty should be able to buy a ticket, but set a limit on how much they spend. You would win essential services in this lottery such as food, groceries, gas coupons, cleaning your house, or babysitting. You should be able to choose what you win. If you agree to babysit for someone, you get extra tickets. The rich should have to contribute to the low-income people by paying into the low income lottery and getting a tax receipt to support the lotto max. The rich should also help babysit. This creates community as people are helping each other.
- **5 dots:** Free education.
- **5 dots:** Free transportation.
- **3 dots:** Tax the rich people and give it to the poor.
- **2 dots:** Make a policy for restaurants/grocery stores that food could go to people in poverty. Give companies tax receipts or tax reductions and help protect the companies.
- **2 dots:** Better training and education.



- **2 dots:** Easy access to services.
- **2 dots:** Free counseling.
- **1 dot:** More doctors.
- **1 dot:** Increase community support.
- **1 dot:** Government could give money to people staying in the shelters so they can save up enough money for a house.
- **1 dot:** Turn schools into activity centers when not being used.
- **1 dot:** Adopt a “youth/family “living in poverty. A rich person could do this for tax deductions.
- **1 dot:** Property work for rent.
- **1 dot:** Gas cards.

**b) What emerged as the top 3 solutions or ideas based on the conversations and the individual priority setting?**

1) You should create the Low-Income Lottery. A person in poverty should be able to buy a ticket, but set a limit on how much they spend. You would win essential services in this lottery such as food, groceries, gas coupons, cleaning your house, or babysitting. You should be able to choose what you win. If you agree to babysit for someone, you get extra tickets. The rich should have to contribute to the low-income people by paying into the low income lottery and getting a tax receipt to support the lotto max. The rich should also help babysit. This creates community as people are helping each other. (7 dots).

2) Kids in Care: they should get on independent living at age 16, so they can practice living on their own before they turn 19. Youth should get full support till age 24. Youth should get help with life-skills, budgeting, and training. There should be savings for youth when they age out so they have a lump sum of money for a damage deposit or a house, etc. There should be help with the transition from \$1000 a month on independent living to \$235 on income assistance. (7 dots).

3) Free education. (5 dots).

4) Free transportation (5 dots).