



POVERTY REDUCTION

RESULTS OF LEQ'Á: MEL PUBLIC MEETING ON POVERTY REDUCTION HELD TUESDAY MARCH 21, 2018

Leq'á: mel First Nation hosted an area meeting on Tuesday, March 20th, 2018 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the Leq'á: mel Administration building.

An open invitation was sent to all residents both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents living in the area of Mission Hill, Lake Erock and Deroche and the First Nation reserves of Leq'á: mel and Scowilitz which is the neighboring reserve to Leq'á: mel.

Organizers prepared for 20 people and was very pleased to have 28 indigenous and non-indigenous residents attend.

The results of the engagements are outlined below.

What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?

1. Minimum wage is too low and people can't afford to get to work as the closest service area where employment is available is too far to travel for that wage. (Chilliwack is 30 minutes and Mission 15 minutes with no public transportation)
2. Unavailability of transportation
3. Unavailable of daycare
4. Fuel cost makes the travel impossible even for the few homes with vehicles
5. Female single parents have to take 2 or 3 jobs to make basic living costs
6. Young men are leaving school to take on minimum paying jobs to help support parents
7. More trades training has to be available within a shorter travel distance as accommodations are too high for the school allowance offered by the bands
8. Lack of opportunities to get drivers license and even if they do, the wages are too low to purchase a vehicle (area is remote)
9. Lack of resources for youth including career planning and life skills
10. Welfare shelter costs too low for people with disabilities
11. Utility cost are unaffordable
12. No jobs in rural areas
13. TV programming makes life too enticing for cities and boring in rural areas.

What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Reliable public transportation

Increase in minimum wages

Easier access to service delivery areas for needed resources such as driving schools

Trades availability in the area or cheaper student accommodations in Chilliwack or Mission

More Daycare spaces

More support and business incentives to create local economies

What changes in policies or programs could help to remove barriers for people living in poverty?

1. Reliable public transportation
2. Increase minimum wage
3. More support for Elders including cheaper housing and increase in pensions
4. More affordable housing
5. Ceiling caps on rental units
6. Prevent utility companies from increasing monthly services

What new programs or initiatives should be considered as part of a broader poverty reduction strategy?

1. Business loans for new businesses
2. Promoting partnerships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities to build an area economy including farming

How could service delivery be changed to help people out of poverty?

1. Government service delivery agents such as Work BC should come into the area for outreach activities and training support within the community for essential work skills (First Aid, Food Safe etc)

What specific policy considerations around health, education, transportation, housing, income support or other policy areas should be considered moving forward?

Short Term Solutions

1. Changes in Pharmacare and public medical transportation
2. Education at the local rural area in partnership with Indigenous and Non Indigenous communities

3. Cap the rental rates
4. Build more affordable housing
5. Transportation for medical and addiction support services
6. Increase welfare rates for people with disabilities and create more employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Long term solutions

1. More trades available at local level
2. More affordable housing
3. Business loans and financing for farming initiatives

Overall participants were concerned about losing young people to urban areas due to no economy in the area. Participants felt ignored by government and government service providers due to lack of services offered in the area by Work BC and lack of provincially sponsored day care facilities.

The event was awesome and people wanted to gather together to explore long term solutions and help put together an economic strategy for the area with home grown solutions.

<p>Moderator: Ellen Torng General Manager Leq'a':mel First Nation</p>	<p>Darrel McKamey Councillor, Leq'a':mel First Nation</p>	<p>Marita Paul Co-Facilitator Leq'a':mel First Nation</p>
--	--	--

Date: March 21, 2018

Poverty Reduction

Sponsored by
SPARC BC
&
Leq'a':mel First Nation

Poverty Reduction

What is “Poverty Reduction”

- ▶ The poverty rate in B.C. is among the worst in Canada. Too many people are struggling to make ends meet, earn a living wage, or find and keep affordable housing. Too many families are suffering without basic necessities, relying on food banks, going hungry or sending their children to school hungry.
- ▶ **It’s time to lift people out of poverty.**

Purpose of this workshop

- ▶ To determine if poverty exist within our community,
- ▶ To determine the poverty rate within our area and
- ▶ To determine the underlying reasons as to why poverty exist within our spear of “community”
- ▶ To determine the underlying causes

Factors leading to poverty?

Factors

- ▶ Regional Transportation
- ▶ Day care services
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Areas Economy
- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ High overhead (fuel, hydro, food)

Overall Factors

- ▶ Social
- ▶ Cultural
- ▶ Economic

Impacts of Poverty

Food Security

- ▶ 4 million people in Canada experience food insecurity.
- ▶ 1 in 8 Canadian households struggle to put food on the table.
- ▶ In 2014, the majority of food insecure households - 62.2% - were reliant on wages or salary from employment.
- ▶ 8 out of 10 provinces saw an increase in food bank usage in 2016.
- ▶ Food bank usage across Canada is 3% higher than 2015 and 28% higher than it was in 2008.
- ▶ Food bank usage has increased in all provinces since 2008, apart from Newfoundland and Labrador.
- ▶ 2% of food bank users are Indigenous.

Impacts of Poverty Health

- ▶ 1 in 10 Canadians cannot afford to fill their medical prescriptions. Canada is the only industrialized country with a universal healthcare system but without a national pharmacare policy.
- ▶ A McMaster University study found a 21-year difference in life expectancy between the poorest and wealthiest residents of Hamilton, Ontario.
- ▶ Researchers have found that men in the wealthiest 20% of neighbourhoods in Canada live on average more than four years longer than men in the poorest 20% of neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Estimates place the cost of socio-economic disparities in the health system to be 20% of all healthcare spending.
- ▶ It has been estimated that \$1 invested in the early years of a child's life can save up to \$9 in future spending in the healthcare system.
- ▶ Food insecure households were 80% more likely to report having diabetes, 60% more likely to report high blood pressure, and 70% more likely to report food allergies.

Impacts of Poverty Housing

- ▶ 3 million Canadian households are precariously housed (living in unaffordable, below standards, and/or overcrowded housing conditions).
- ▶ An estimated 235,000 people in Canada experienced homelessness in 2016, with roughly 35,000 people being homeless on any given night.
- ▶ Almost 1 in every 5 households experience serious housing affordability issues (spending over 50% of their low income on rent) which puts them at risk of homelessness.
- ▶ Three-quarters of Yukon's population live in Whitehorse where the average price of housing increased 80% over six years.
- ▶ Estimates place the number of homeless individuals living with a disability or mental illness as high as 45% of the overall homeless population.
- ▶ In Toronto, there were 5,219 people who were homeless in 2013
- ▶ According to new research, spending \$10 on housing and support for high-need chronically homeless individuals resulted in almost \$22 of savings related to health care, social supports, housing, and the justice system.
- ▶ Youth aged 16-24 make up about 20% of the homeless population
- ▶ The number of older adults and seniors experiencing homeless is rising, making up a combined 4% of shelters users in 2016

Basic Stats about Poverty in Canada

- ▶ 1 in 7 (or 4.9 million) people in Canada live in poverty.
- ▶ 1 in 8 individuals are currently living in poverty.
- ▶ Poverty costs Canada as a whole between \$72 billion and \$84 billion annually; Ontarians pay \$2,299 - \$2,895 per year, while British Columbians pay over \$2,100 per year.
- ▶ Precarious employment has increased by nearly 50% over the past two decades.
- ▶ Between 1980 and 2005, the average earnings among the least wealthy Canadians fell by 20%.
- ▶ Over the past 25 years, Canada's population has increased by 30% and yet annual national investment in housing has decreased by 46%.

Poverty & Demographics

Marginalized Communities

- ▶ People living with disabilities (both mental and physical) are twice as likely to live below the poverty line
- ▶ Nearly 15% of people with disabilities live in poverty, 59% of which are women.
- ▶ Estimates place the number of homeless individuals living with a disability or mental illness as high as 45% of the overall homeless population
- ▶ Children with disabilities are twice as likely to live in households relying on social assistance
- ▶ 21% of single mothers in Canada raise their children while living in poverty (7% of single fathers raise their children in poverty).
- ▶ Women parenting on their own enter shelters at twice the rate of two-parent families.
- ▶ Nearly 15% of elderly single individuals live in poverty.
- ▶ Nearly 2 million seniors receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and live on about \$17,000 per year. However, the most basic standard of living in Canada is calculated at \$18,000 per year for a single person

Discussion

- ▶ What do you believe are the causes?
- ▶ What does success look like in a BC Poverty Reduction Strategy?
- ▶ What do you think are the best ways to reduce poverty in British Columbia?
- ▶ What can we do as a province, a community or as individuals to reduce poverty and contribute to economic and social inclusion?