



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Caraquet- January 26, 2009
Club du Bel Âge
331, St-Pierre Blvd.
6:30 – 9 :30pm

Summary of Session Notes

1. What does poverty mean to you and what do you think causes poverty?

Basic Needs:

- Five basic needs: food, clothing, housing, health, safety
- Physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs
- Not enough income to clothe, house, and feed oneself adequately, to meet the basic needs
- High cost of meeting basic needs
- Basic needs not met
- Lack of food, housing, clothing; meeting the basic needs.

Childcare:

- Daycare costs

Communication:

- Media => society of overconsumption
- Awareness of general public; social conscience
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of means to express oneself
- The media do not always influence people the right way (e.g., tv=> happiness = a lot of material things).

Community:

- Farm, garden
- Putting too much value on the individual as opposed to community spirit. Philosophy of having to be the best.



- Many organizations in rural regions that have to help out poor people.

Economic:

- Globalization of the economy

Education/Skills:

- Needs relating to education
- Learning
- Lack of education
- Current school system does not encourage manual labour.
- Recognize the different forms of intelligence.
- Dropouts => insecurity. Fear of being too educated for your network.
- Education is essential.
- Lack of knowledge
- Educational institutions seem to be for the elite. They seem much less accessible for poor people.
- Student debt levels discourage people from seeking an education. Especially poor people. Difficult to develop to one's full potential.
- Lack of education, knowledge, motivation
- Intellectual poverty, lack of education
- Lack of education

Family Unit:

- Family network
- Teenage mothers have additional challenges.
- Disadvantaged environment – dysfunctional families lack help.
- Family education; family model is important.
- The family unit has a big role to play.
- Poor families cannot help children who want to make a better life for themselves.
- Women in single-parent families are more at risk of living below the poverty level.
- Family environment



- Family situation
- Separation
- Family breakdown, less help within the family

Health:

- Alcohol/drugs
- Physical + mental capacity
- Illness can be a cause of poverty. The cost of travel to obtain health services.
- It's very difficult for disabled persons.
- Persons with physical and mental disabilities are especially affected by poverty. Lack of effort by government for integration, little government support for integrating people into the workforce. No solid support.
- High cost of medications can cause poverty.
- Illness
- Mental health; alcohol and drug dependency
- Illness
- Drug, alcoholism, gambling, addictions
- Mental illness
- Intellectual disabilities

Housing:

- Housing => repairs

Money:

- Not only a matter of money
- Lack of financial resources
- Inadequate minimum wage keeps people below the poverty level. People remain poor even if they have a job.
- If you have a low-paying job, you lose all social assistance benefits.
- Seniors are often very poor. They often live below the poverty level.
- Persons living in nursing homes are also often very disadvantaged. They have little money left.
- Families need two salaries to get by.



- Lack of subsidized housing. Lack of adequate housing. The cost of housing is a cause of poverty.
- High cost of heat
- Lack of money
- Lack of resources: money, food, housing, human resources
- Financial failure
- Low wages
- Managing a budget
- Pay equity
- Minimum wage
- Income assistance is too low.
- EI benefits are too low.
- Cost of living
- Lack of income, resources...
- Less balanced distribution of wealth
- Inadequate minimum wage
- Social assistance too low
- Easy credit
- E-cash
- Cost of living

Other:

- It means not believing in yourself.
- There are different types of poverty.
- Solitude
- Need to overcome problems
- Not being able to assume responsibility for oneself
- Breaking out of role of victim => action
- Dependence on the system
- Emotional problems = other consequences
- Society – individual-community / family
- Opportunity to develop our resources
- Self-esteem (engagement)
- Discovering talents
- Excelling => by chance (engagement)



- Participation of all young people / others
- Labels lead to rejection.
- Peer pressure among young people
- Have models. Provide leadership.
- Not enough collective undertakings
- Desire to improve one's lot
- Self-help and helping others
- Lack of encouragement, lack of model
- In disadvantaged areas, there is a lot of poverty.
- The social environment in which one lives can be a cause of poverty.
- Poverty of spirit
- Lack of self-esteem gives rise to poverty.
- Persons living alone are at greater risk of living in poverty.
- Lack of services and benefits to help people improve their lot or get a better education or return to the workforce.
- Lack of self-esteem – confidence
- Being poor => alone
- Energy conservation
- Individualization (less mutual help)
- People are more dependent on services and thus less independent.
- Consumer society – credit easy to obtain.
- Cultural history in more closed environments
- According to the environment (rich or poor) / geography / province, etc.
- Loss of social values.....real values...centred on materialism.
- Poverty begets poverty.
- Poverty: depends on what comparison you use => Canada vs. Guatemala, or Canada vs. Cuba, or Canada vs. Africa.
- Some are content with their lot (lack of effort and motivation).
- Some lack organization => they remain poor.
- Lack of self-esteem (inner pain).
- Lack of ways to improve one's lot (physical, psycho., financial, educ.)
- Causes: prejudices, exclusion
- Inability to manage one's affairs
- Culture of poverty
- Misfortune
- Loss of self-sufficiency



- Individualistic, consumer society
- Community-based mutual help
- Rigid, punitive standards
- False consumer needs
- Ability to adapt to change
- Lack of resources (fishery)
- Being disconnected from nature
- Exploitation of the most vulnerable
- Poor self-esteem

Transportation:

- Rural areas – lack of services. Distance from essential services.
- Distance – lack of transportation – difficulty in getting to places
- The distances separating people from services contribute to poverty. It costs a lot to obtain health care.
- Distance to services and/or work

Volunteer:

- Lack of food banks

Work:

- Lack of jobs
- Lack of skilled workers
- Enhance the image of manual labour.
- Lack of well-paying jobs
- Lack of work
- Seasonal work
- Globalization leads to job losses.
- Job instability
- Unstable jobs



- Working conditions (benefits, wages)
- Seasonal work



2. What do you think can be done to reduce poverty?

Basic Needs:

- Help with heating
- Meet basic needs adequately.

Childcare:

- Daycare services (e.g., province of Quebec). Available to all: govt./private.
- Daycare costs – have access to a less costly and more accessible system.
- Daycare: more free spaces

Communication:

- Inclusion/engagement. Encourage community engagement.
- Continue the consultations, and implement the suggestions that come out of them.
- Open the lines of communication.
- Consultation
- Enhance the image of trades.
- Include poor people.

Community:

- Inclusion program: education, engagement, community project
- Community participation program
- Put community programs back in operation (kitchens—gardens)
 - => population
 - => private enterprise
 - => media.
- Community gardens:
 - => shared agricultural land
 - => creation of manual jobs / integration of disadvantaged



- => agricultural education
- => independence
- => re-educate people
- Community farms:
 - => shared agricultural land
 - => creation of manual jobs / integration of disadvantaged
 - => agricultural education
 - => independence
 - => re-educate people
- Community awareness program regarding poverty:
 - => education
 - => prejudices

Economic

- Rural regions should be promoted in order to develop their economy. There is a lot of potential in rural areas outside the large centres. To reduce poverty, financial incentives are needed. Help rural regions develop in order to keep young people with good wages.
- Give incentives to rural regions to promote development – government.

Education/Skills:

- Skills development (private, govt., comm.)
- Have access to basic and post-secondary education at affordable cost.
- Reduce student debtloads.
- Skills development – education, post-secondary institutions
- Have visions for the future. Bring back the basic trades in education in order to give all young people the tools to develop to their full potential.
- Literacy program should be reviewed and reassessed to meet the needs.
- Invest so that everyone is able to function in terms of literacy.
- Keep educated people in the regions.
- Help those who want to get an education, give them the means to do so, and keep them in the region.
- Reduce student debtloads in order to encourage more young people to pursue an education.
- Cap on student debt



- Bring back essential basic concepts such as cooking and budgeting, as was offered in home economics courses in the past.
- Promote collective kitchens.
- Teach agriculture basics to help people meet their needs.
- Importance of education and training
- Importance of literacy
- Increase the level of education/training.
- Economic development policy for rural regions
- Re-educate people (budget, self-esteem, planning...) and put them back on the job market or place them in more advanced studies, according to principles (intake, listening, referral, follow-up).
- Entrepreneurship course in schools
- Encourage people to go back to school.
- Put trades back in the schools.

Family Unit:

- Basic training program for parents
- Establish a family policy.

Health:

- Access to medications and health care, specialized treatments. Have an integrated approach.
- Working poor: drug program based on earnings
- Integration program for persons with mental health problems
- Provide benefits such as health card for low-income workers.

Housing:

- Create adequate and affordable housing.
- Access to adequate housing
- Increase the number of subsidized housing units.
- Increase housing for low-income earners (who: govt., private enterprise, population, organizations, e.g., co-op, job creation).



- Improve home repair and energy conservation programs.
- Housing: (education + autonomy)
 - => have more housing
 - => lowering of taxes / grants for entrepreneurs
 - => sharing of tasks and responsibilities
 - => encourage the emergence of cooperatives
 - => develop sense of belonging / pride in collective projects.

Money:

- Tax incentive
- EI funds should be used for the right reasons: needs, job training.
- Budgeting program
- Minimum wage should be increased to a reasonable level.
- Tax reform to help the poor, not the rich
- Tax credit for volunteers
- Pay equity should be regulated. A lot of inequality.
- Tax reform favouring the disadvantaged
- Raise the minimum wage.
- Reduce student debtloads:
 - => establish foundations
 - => govt.
- Increase in resource persons and other resources (financial...).
- Increase income assistance.
- Lobby for changes in EI policies (e.g., eliminate the two-week waiting period).
- Better wages
- Wages for home workers
- Pay equity
- Increase social assistance benefits and relax the rules.
- Better pension fund

Other:

- Prevention
- Decentralization of services (fed. & prov. gov.)



- Increase income assistance benefits and allow people to work during a transition period without penalty.
- Improve our social programs.
- Incentives for people who want to assume responsibility for themselves. Non-profit organizations can help people do that, but there are few financial means.
- Reduce regional disparities in terms of health, the economy, and the regions.
- Make changes to legislation and policies to provide incentives for people to improve their lot, instead of penalties.
- Make better use of our human resources.
- Humanize access to services.
- Decentralization of services (health, education...)
- Enhance the image of the disadvantaged.
- Process and protect our natural resources.
- Eliminate prejudices.
- Invest more in social programs.
- Invest in the social economy.
- Incentive program => promote => social engagement / volunteering
- Create opportunities.
- Go where the poor people are.
- Restore people's confidence.
- Give people the tools to become self-sufficient.

Transportation:

- Have means of transportation in rural areas.
- Establish public transit services.

Volunteer:

- Increase funding for food banks to meet the needs of poor people => govt./comm.
- The government should help non-profit organizations hire people instead of leaving people without work.
- Volunteer work (community organizations)
- Volunteer work



Well-Being:

- Nutrition, physical activities, community life, family. Have access to sports facilities. Promote sport for fun instead of performance (culture of competition).
- Benefit/access: transition to work – govt./private

Work:

- Have skilled workers – education/training, community/govt./private enterprise (partnership).
- Put healthy income assistance recipients to work in order to give them back a sense of pride and self-esteem.
- Job creation (govt. / private enterprise)
- Job creation: e.g., grant program for purchase of pellet stoves
=> motivates entrepreneurship for the pellet industry
=> motivates employment, reduces poverty (entrepreneurship).
- Have a mechanism to refer employees in need to assistance and share the costs between the employer and the government.
- Create permanent jobs with better wages.