



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

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

Basic Needs

- Poverty is the lack of resources to meet basic needs
- Poor people can't cover basic needs so they are missing out on things needed every day
- Lack of resources to prepare for the future
- Living on the cusp of always losing everything they have. They have no food, shelter or home for the family
- Not being able to buy nutritious foods
- Having to choose which basic needs to cover
- Not being able to get something you want
- It's essential to look at poverty issue as more than just having the basics of food, clothing shelter and some perks. It's about moving out of poverty and breaking the cycle. It is about living with a purpose
- Poor nutrition and hunger are a result of poverty
- Can't afford health, housing and food. Cheap food leads to health issues
- There are three basic needs to be met; housing, food and electricity
- There is a lack of sense of belonging to community for poor people
- Poor people lack the ability to participate

Childcare

- Child care is an issue because even when costs are covered they are not sufficient
- Different government departments doing different things; there are different policies regarding child care
- Lack of spaces causes problems for people with flexible shifts



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- Lack of affordable childcare
- Childcare expenses are too high
- Lack of qualified staff and safe child care spaces
- There needs to be national standards put in place
- Lack of options means people can't work
- Single mothers seeking child care assistance are looked down on
- Child care assistance should have a cost of living increase done every year as facilities raise their prices yearly
- Lack of childcare support

Communication

- Lack of communication
- We are working separately and we need to talk to each other; all three levels need to connect the dots differently
- Lack of common access to information. People don't know how to ask the right questions to access services for individuals living in poverty
- We do not know where to look for supports and resources
- Businesses, community and residents need to become aware and educated about poverty
- Invisibility is a problem and government is not asking people what they want
- Must have knowledge of what is available and be comfortable to ask for help
- Lack of awareness of community assistance, programs and support
- We need more dialogue between government and community.
- Lack of public understanding that an integrated approach is required



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- Lack of information community wide for the social and health program

Community

- Garbage pick-up now once a week instead of twice to help community
- We need a different way of dealing with vulnerable neighborhoods
- There is a need to put resources and programs in neighborhoods
- There is a need to engage the business community to work together to combat poverty. A collective effort is needed
- Segregation is an issue. We need mixed income communities
- Bring resources to the neighborhoods and increase community capacity
- Government working in their communities from the ground up. This approach must be fully integrated and fully resourced
- Lack of understanding in the community
- When there are concentrations of poverty you often don't have essential resources
- Private and public sectors need to be working together
- Imbalance in the community with so much wealth
- School closures in low income neighborhoods
- Positive recreational opportunities are needed. There is a lack of facilities for positive activities
- Are we subsidizing resources in communities?
- Community can only have a band-aid affect or we will always been in poverty
- Community support is needed
- The rural poor have difficulty accessing services



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- Rural poverty different from urban poverty
- More urban amenities means higher costs in cities
- There is a breakdown of community support

Economic

- There is less population contributing to the economics of a community with the mass exodus of workers going west
- Economic changes such as mill closures, no jobs to match skills of the people

Education and Skills

- Lack of training
- Lack of or low levels of education
- Low literacy
- Inequality in early learning opportunities
- General Educational Development is a barrier to getting out of poverty
- Need a skills based approach to getting employment
- Society demanding something that is not necessary, like higher education. Carpenters do not need to know how to write to do their jobs
- Education is the key to reducing poverty as it can offer freedom
- Supplementing the school system such as offering an after school program and lunch program would help poor children
- People don't have the resources to become more educated



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- Not dealing with issues is causing poverty such as not teaching social skills or social awareness and diversity in schools
- No trades in school is a cause of poverty
- General disrespect for trades training means people are not getting jobs
- New technologies not being taught
- Employers relying on General Educational Development or high school before hiring , need to look at essential skills
- Education and skills are assets
- There is a lack of ability to afford education
- Making good decisions about education and checking out the job market is essential
- Government and Education Programs not up to date
- Education system is insufficiently flexible for some kids and insufficient life-skills being taught
- Lack of support for retraining or education
- Lack of education credentials
- Access to education is an issue
- Not recognizing skills outside of formal education means people can't find jobs
- Cost of skills training and education are too high
- For some one living in an intolerable circumstance, teen pregnancy becomes a way out of poverty. It also enables a young girl to get access to education funding
- The job market has become more competitive with higher education required
- High school education is quite generic and doesn't provide a skill



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- Poor decision making by individuals such as taking wrong course in university keeps them in poverty
- Students graduating with inadequate education and skills
- Where should the focus be? Early learning?
- Concentration on the early years it seems is everyone's comment. It all comes back to children. We need to invest in kids long-term as far as funding and continuous service goes. We are hearing lots about children
- Immigrants and language retention is a concern
- We need to learn a lot about nutrition and economics
- The high school drop-out rate is an issue
- Learning disabilities is keeping people from attaining the education they need to find work
- Student segregation
- There is a lack of standards and accountability in school

Family Unit

- Family violence is an issue
- Single parents are living in poverty
- Living in perpetual state of fear
- Generational cycle of poverty
- Marriage break-up can cause poverty
- Mothers go without so their children can have
- Children are a concern because there are things others get that they don't
- Death of spouse with no insurance



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- An accident causes people to fall into poverty
- Lack of supports from family and friends or an inability to access that support
- Some people are having kids just because that know they will get a welfare cheque
- Teenage pregnancy is considered a solution to solving poverty
- Teens may come from a dysfunctional family
- Can't victim blame
- Poverty has a negative impact on children who are being born into poverty
- Access to extra curricular activities or social sport activities is an issue for those living in poverty
- Single women accepting their status
- Seniors living in poverty
- Some young moms choosing to have children because they want someone to love
- Some young moms make a choice to receive assistance
- Some students are supporting younger siblings and therefore can't focus on school

Government

- Allocating government resources should be a priority
- Government policy and legislation is the key to people living in poverty
- Poor people are unable to participate in decision making process
- Not having a shared vision and a top down approach causes poverty
- Government needs to link business, community and residents



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- Restricted policies are being cut-off too early when money does not come in
- There are policies that work against people who co-habitate
- Get rid of regulations that prevent people in poverty from bettering their lives. More flexibility is needed
- System has limits on earnings making it hard to move from the system
- Social assistance conditions prohibit people from making the best use of those resources
- If a person is laid-off they can get social assistance for their waiting period, but then it is taken out of their employment insurance cheque
- Economic unit policy should be creating awareness that things can be done on a case by case basis
- If applying for assistance you need an address first
- There should be a cohesive integrated approach to reducing poverty
- Need government to be open to change and have departments communicate with each other
- We must make an impact on kids. The cycle needs to stop here (Move this to Family once translation comes in)
- Strategic decisions on how to deliver programs without regionalizing poverty
- Comprehensive policies are needed
- Historical decisions are causing people to continue to live in poverty
- There is no collective will between government, business and the community to do something about poverty
- Social safety nets have big holes
- Low rates for disability and social assistance



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- Disincentives are built into the system rather than incentives
- You need great management skills to survive on assistance and many recipients do not have these skills
- Programs not being responsive to actual needs
- The system feeds on itself
- Short sightedness by decision makers perpetuates poverty
- We need short-term and attainable goals related to reducing poverty
- Policies and programs are developed in isolation
- There are policies that maintain poverty such as transitional benefits, health cards and transportation
- There is a disconnect between what is needed and who designs solutions
- Align requirements and needs
- Income assistance should be considered as last resort
- People should not have to fall so low to get help. The system should be more preventive in nature
- We should move from a philosophy that social assistance is a last resort to seeing it as making a strategic investment in people
- Too much red tape
- Welfare wall is preventing people from moving off of social assistance. The wage exemption policy needs to be reviewed
- Portability and length of benefits needs to be addressed
- Provincial money is often misdirected
- Income assistance policies are inconsistent



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- Food bank should require vouchers
- Have people in poverty be part of government's social policy development
- There needs to be an enticement for people to transition from assistance to jobs
- Poor policy decisions accelerate the impact of poverty
- Lack of tax incentives causes poverty

Health

- Health problems, substance abuse, addictions and mental health issues cause people to live in poverty
- Poor people can't access medication
- Seeing a dentist is a luxury for poor people
- Chronic stress from living in poverty creates more health problems
- Poverty provides deprivation which has a long-term affect on health and learning
- Health system doesn't understand poverty
- Sleep problems
- Use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco drain finances and have behavioral impacts for people living in poverty. It is the result of the need to escape from their situation
- Persons living with a disability often live in poverty
- Loss of health care is a public policy that needs to be addressed
- Access to health coverage is a major issue because of the high premiums and the fees for the co-payer
- Working people moving from assistance losing their Medicare card, is a barrier to reducing poverty



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Housing

- Families are living in inadequate housing
- Government unable to take long-term view of the situation. The energy issue causes increases in rents or landlords not maintaining their units due to high costs
- There is a definite lack of affordable housing
- More people in poverty are living in poor neighborhoods and ghettoization occurs
- Being poor limits where you can live
- The public housing units have a ghetto stigma attached to them
- High housing costs are pushing people into poverty
- Energy costs cause people to live in poverty
- Concentrations of poverty are not good. The social housing needs to be mixed.
- More affordable housing and ownership should be an option
- Lack of thought in urban renewal
- Poorly maintained units
- Affordable housing is generally disconnected from the rest of city (urban renewal)
- Mixed income housing is required
- Lack of options is an issue for people living on low-income
- Boarding houses still cost a lot. The cheapest room in Saint John is \$50 per week
- Safe housing is a central solution for the poverty issue
- Lack of permanent address affects employment options



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- Access to the prescription drug plan keeps people on assistance (move to Health once translation comes in)

Money

- Low living wage
- Everything is affected by having no income
- Minimum wage in NB is too low
- Equal pay for women, men and seniors is needed
- Poverty is more than the absence of money
- The income gap between rich and the poor is wide
- Many people are living pay cheque to pay cheque. These are the working poor
- High student loans is causing hardship for many
- Lack of understanding of money management cause poverty
- Government needs to address the a minimum wage versus what is considered a living wage
- People do not have enough money to deal with the situation today
- Not having enough money to do anything extra except pay for the basics
- Low salaries and wages keep people in poverty
- The minimum wage needs to continue to increase
- Not having assets as leverage keeps people poor
- One disaster can ruin everything in a person's life
- Easy access to credit cause people to go into debt



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- Too many people are living beyond their means
- Pay inequality causes poverty
- Poor money management skills is a cause of poverty
- Selling drugs to make money is often what people resort to because a lack of financial resources leads to crime
- It appears that the price of groceries goes up at supermarkets when they know the welfare cheques have come in
- People in poverty can establish a plan/budget, however, they do not have access to enough money to follow their plan
- Some organizations and businesses prey on the poor, such as student loan collection agencies and credit card companies
- No level financial playing field
- Extra charges causes people to be poor
- We need to change the perception that money is the answer to reduce poverty
- Social assistance is inadequate
- Government policy is needed for a guaranteed income
- It is not necessarily more money that is needed to get out of poverty. There needs to be focus on eliminating commercialism because it puts pressure on people to keep up. People living in poverty feel excluded from mainstream society
- People who have financial means can make choices and can have big plans compared to those living in poverty

Other

- Lack of accountability
- Accepting there is going to be different levels in society (equal yet different)



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- Lack of role models
- Physical barriers to access services
- People turning a blind eye to the issue of poverty
- Society needs to understand that poverty is everyone's issue
- People don't want to try
- If you are living in poverty you don't feel you can participate in issues that involve you because you don't feel you have skills or can take the time to get involved
- Criminal record is a barrier to moving out of poverty and having no financial resources means some people commit crimes
- There is a lack of understanding about poverty because if you don't live it, you don't know it
- There is a difference in maintenance versus prevention and moving out of poverty
- Poverty today is different that poverty many years ago
- A continuity of care and services is needed
- Society must recognize that groups are marginalized for different reasons such as mental health and disability. There are many who will always be in need of supports.
- Social exclusion and economic exclusion are inter-related
- Poor people are always fighting the culture of pull up your boot straps
- Society accepts inequality in our culture
- Refugees seem to be more accepting to receive services
- Lifestyles can cause people to live in poverty
- Poverty is a very complex social issue
- People in poverty lack of political power



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- Social injustice not equitable
- Social determinate
- Unless one is challenged by it they are not going to act to reduce poverty
- What things for someone with financial means can be an inconvenience can be a major change of circumstances for someone in poverty
- People in poverty constantly react. They do not have the opportunity to be proactive
- No level personal playing field
- What is a person's responsibility for their own poverty?
- Business hasn't taken into account the cost of poverty in their bottom line

Transportation

- Lack of transportation
- Limited choices
- Using public transit is associated with poverty
- Poor public transportation does not help people living in poverty. The cost is high and poor availability in both rural and urban areas
- Lack of transportation is an issue for poor mothers

Volunteer

- People need to look at what they can do to help those less fortunate and give more of themselves to community
- Everyone needs to help to reduce poverty. One victory at a time can help. Business and universities could give one hour a week to community



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Well-Being

- Fear of not having
- No sense of freedom
- Feeling trapped
- Powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Isolation
- Over-whelming
- Lack of hopes and dreams
- Lack of self-esteem and confidence
- Lack of support
- People have given up trying to get out of poverty because they feel it is not worth it
- No vision
- There is a state of mind about being poor that says “you are what you live” and that you are a product of your environment
- Feeling like you belong would help people get out of poverty
- For poor people, there is a fear of success, not of failure
- The issue of stigma
- Our values are tied to what we can do. We work to get things
- Poverty breeds apathy. There is an attitude of “what is the point?” With a loss of voice there is learned helplessness
- Being poor creates an inability to plan and have long-term goals



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- When you are poor, you move frequently chasing happiness
- People lose time when living in poverty. For example, when they have appointments, they are often missed because one day runs into the next. They have a hard time getting into a routine
- Being poor is not laziness, but if you are not working you can't get structure into your life
- Feeling in control would help people living in poverty
- Lack of desire for some, lack of opportunity for many
- No knowing "A better way"
- There is a stigma attached to using food banks, the neighborhood you live in and the school you attend
- Personal drive and discipline causes people to live in poverty
- Personal values
- Poverty isn't a dirty word
- Lack of choice in your life and no freedom of choice if you are poor
- There is an inability to participate in enriched aspects of life beyond food, clothing, and shelter when you are poor. For example, there is low literacy because poor people don't have access to books and recreation
- Lack of envisioning a life any different from what they know
- Poverty causes entrapment. Poor people feel like they are caught in quicksand
- Poor people are often unhappy
- There are expectations of success but most have no hope for future
- There is an inability to see the future when you are poor



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- When you are poor you are not able to live fully and with human dignity
- When you are poor, you have to advocate for yourself and you have to be positive about your goals
- If you don't see a change in a situation and no solution, then you don't see a path out of poverty
- People living in poverty are just surviving not living
- Many have never experienced the feeling of poverty and can't relate
- Fear based on ignorance
- Poverty is seen as a way of life
- Poverty is seen as a choice
- Complacency
- Lack of **efficacy** and not feeling they deserve it
- There is a lack of resources to meet an individual's full potential. Poor people can lack self-esteem, self-worth, and safe, adequate and affordable housing. They don't get to enjoy a quality of life comparable to community standards
- Social habits cause poverty
- Difference between teenagers understanding of poverty versus a man living on the street
- Some people are a victim of circumstances and it goes back to the lack of control over their situation
- People in poverty can't make choices about their lives other than what is required for immediate survival

Work

- Lack of opportunity



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- Lack of choices of employment
- Loss of job
- Lack of meaningful work
- Static employers
- Lack of a employment is due to people being unqualified for what is available
- Lay-offs in many companies
- Low wage jobs with higher education requirements
- We don't allow people to be employed and therefore generational poverty may result. Consistent employment is required to build a community
- Difficult to pay living wage with competition from other countries where there is cheaper labour
- We need to open up traditional workforce to reduce poverty
- Lack of resources to work with employers
- Employers make assumption about other's skills and abilities
- Resources lacking to work with employees who may be different
- Many people are working and still living in poverty
- Exploitation by business of poor people
- Low paying employment
- Underemployment
- Quality of employment
- Lack of value added jobs
- Incentives to work are needed to reduce poverty



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- No experience with work is preventing people from getting jobs
- Many poor people feel they are better off on social assistance
- Having a criminal record means people can't get work and therefore live in poverty
- Lower labour force attachment



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

Childcare

- On-site childcare should be provided by companies
- National childcare program is essential.
- Good quality licensed day care spaces are needed
- Public investment is needed in providing supports for people to work like child care and babysitting.
- Access to daycare should be universal
- Accessible daycare
- Childcare subsidies
- More funding is needed for daycare accreditation

Communications

- Communication is needed and business can help here
- Government should be aware of people's literacy levels for example when designing their websites
- Government reaching out to citizens and sharing information with citizens on solutions to change
- Have a communication strategy that ensures policy gets to all levels of government and the people affected



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Community

- Communities need a mechanism to bring people together from business community, government, and people living in poverty
- Give kids a chance to be engaged in their communities
- Organize people in the community around the issue of reducing poverty
- Community leaders need to come together to find solutions
- There is greater accountability to the strategy established by themselves when it is a community committee
- Deliver services in a different way. That is, services need to be located in the community
- Money for a poverty reduction strategy needs to come directly to the community
- Funding needs to be available for innovation from the community
- Cost-sharing between government and community is needed
- Government should support the work of community groups
- Keeping neighborhood schools in communities is essential
- Community workers need to be working with families to encourage kids to higher education
- Community involvement is required. Social enterprise is needed to encourage new behaviors and new skills for those living in poor neighborhoods
- The PALS model is an excellent example of community involvement in the schools.
- The strategy must be based on bold innovative community action based on best practices and measurable outcomes and incorporating government and community partnerships.
- There must be a sense of community



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- Poverty reduction must be resident driven
- Community centers are doing more to help reduce poverty and we need a variety of these
- Community schools are essential
- Neighborhood development results in ownership pride
- When neighborhoods are accountable for their community it promotes safety
- Neighborhood groups and continued citizen engagement has to get a buy in from government
- Keeping a sense of community helps reduce poverty
- Community based practical education for residents and business
- Stronger mentorship programs at the community level are needed
- Community volunteerism is important
- Community renewal is needed. More neighborhood schools, community centres and parks would help
- Give money to the community to spend
- Invest in communities
- Awareness of poverty is needed within communities
- Community based outreach programs are needed
- There needs to be a greater sense of community. Community centres, community schools, more programming, mentors, community networking, and the faith community need to identify barriers within communities and work towards bringing harmony
- Empowerment of individuals can lead to participation in community capacity building
- Social activism would help
- Must be helpful at grassroots



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- Enhance access to programs and give information to those in community to pass on to those in poverty
- Government services need to be located in the neighborhoods
- Government needs to engage in the communities. There need to be partnerships. Each community is different
- Government can't do it themselves. There needs to be a partnership with each community to look at the needs of each community
- Some targeted funding for certain at risk communities is needed

Education/Skills

- Provide continuing learning opportunities
- Addressing literacy issues
- There should be investment by employers to sponsor targeted employment programs
- Government should determine what the labour market needs are and train people for those jobs
- Education needs to be the focus of reducing poverty. For example more emphasis on Trades schools, other ways to get General Educational Development
- Focus elsewhere other than General Educational Development
- Free programs to learn essential skills provides enlightenment for those providing service
- Literacy is essential. We need to figure out what is wrong. That is why, rates are so low. We should look at best practices elsewhere
- Supports for education are needed. No failure should be accepted. There should be no drop-outs if the necessary supports are there



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- We need to focus on how we give people the right skills to enter the workforce with more credentials
- More resources are needed for people to go back to school. The training and skills development program versus social assistance
- Investments should be made in planning and should be done with kids leaving high school who need career planning
- There should be more incentives to continue education after high school
- Education and reading are the keys
- More emphasis on practical training like getting a trade (carpenters training) at community colleges is needed
- Skills' building is needed. People need more of the soft skills
- A skills investment fund is needed
- Breaking the Cycle - Parent skills training would help
- The school system (K-12) need access and increased resources. There are too many understaffed schools. We need to allocate more resources to schools and provide a wider range of programs and opportunities in high school system
- There should be greater exposure to wider range of programs, especially middle and high schools
- More access to life skills training is needed
- There should be a more welcoming educational environment with diverse learning experiences. Bring art, music and sports, etc back to schools
- How many times have we said education is imperative? When will we make post-secondary education more accessible?
- There should be greater access to seats in post-secondary education institutions for low-income earners



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- Resources should be available for tutors
- Increased access to online education and distance education is needed. There has to be more flexibility in ways to attain post-secondary education
- Practical education is needed like how to manage finances and healthy eating.
- There should be a coordinated education of employment program with partnership between government, business, non-profit
- Better supports and programs from early childhood to post-secondary education is needed
- Find a way to join the silos that exist within the departments that deal with education from early childhood through to post-secondary education
- There needs to be major investments in education and training for both adults and children
- Teach civics in school to promote and empower people to have a voice in making change
- There needs to be more training schools for people to get proper training for skilled jobs
- Shifting more resources to kids before age eight to ensure they have proper literacy levels and skills
- Preschool supports like daycare and kindergarten and more resources for preparation to school
- Culture of performance in education properly handicapped
- Making education accessible
- Access to training
- A good solid education is needed
- A poverty workshop should be provided. Post it online and take it out to more members of the public to educate them
- Increase government funding so tuition is affordable to get out of cycle of poverty



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Family Unit

- Requiring people to pay their child support is needed
- Focus on single parent families and reducing teen pregnancy
- Strengthen and support programs for teenage mothers
- Family approach
- A quality early learning family centered approach is needed
- A safe home environment, for children in particular, is needed
- Children from poverty need access to models who can model different ways of being

Health

- Working poor still face a problem with diabetic supplies not covered
- We should be changing policy to cover those with chronic conditions
- There is a need for more services for addictions
- Need for nutrition counseling and more family doctors
- A universal health plan is required to help those on assistance or the working poor
- Health benefits should be provided until you are above the poverty line
- Greater access to health care benefits and long-term support for people with disabilities are required
- Health and wellness should be the focus. Maybe have different programs such as one for Chronic illness
- More access to mental health support and addiction services is needed
- Income based Pharmacare would help reduce poverty



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- The health card should remain intact for more than a year after people leave social assistance
- Open access to health card for low income

Housing

- Construction companies can fix-up buildings
- Business and others need support for example temporary housing and change
- We should work towards mixed income housing neighborhoods
- Reduce waiting list for social housing
- Consider a direct rent subsidy, mixed income housing, mixed rental and home ownership programs
- Provide more opportunities for home ownership
- Homelessness is a problem for those deinstitutionalized
- More affordable housing and emergency shelters needed
- No ghettos should be created. We need mixed housing developments
- Derelict buildings destroy the fabric of community
- More adequate, safe affordable, non-profit subsidized housing is needed
- Cap on rental increases because of fixed income
- Rent control should be put in place
- There should be incentives to fix apartments for private owners and encourage renovations without them increasing rent
- Maintain good housing stock



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- There should be incentives to maintain and upgrade rooming houses. They should have to comply with minimum housing standards
- Better municipal planning and neighborhood planning would help the housing issue
- Proper facilities for seniors and people with disabilities are needed

Money

- Increase the minimum wage to a living wage
- Increase the minimum wage
- Basic essentials like food and clothing should be at a tax free set value
- There is a need for a living wage. It is essential
- An increase in social assistance or a guaranteed annual income is needed. We need to stimulate the economy
- Money needs to move around within government
- Student loans are too high. Government must do something else for those who are stuck with high debt loads
- Remove **the clawback** until person gets to living wage
- Supports for working poor should be available. For example, home ownership, wage supplements over living wage and Employment Insurance Transitional benefit
- Find ways to enable people to earn a living wage
- Higher social assistance is needed
- Guaranteed income policy
- Wage equity
- Money for training and infrastructure



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- Financial support for post-secondary education
- Government must take a serious look at a living wage which is not the same as minimum wage
- Incentives to build assets such as a matched savings program would help
- A person who works full-time should receive a living wage and if business doesn't pay it government should

Other

- They can do food drives and other fundraising events
- Non-profit groups could offer sponsorships
- Give incentives to start to work and paying tuition
- Campaign for government policy change
- Business realize better that it's not that simple
- Business venture group
- Social enterprise
- Micro business
- There is skepticism if business is involved in helping reduce poverty
- Fear business interest may conflict
- Get business sector to "get on board" with helping reduce poverty
- Small business has challenges so it is hard for them
- Businesses should be creating scholarships
- Government services need to be more understandable and user friendly



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- A client advocate is needed. A one-stop referral service where someone is available to help poor people get through the system.
- The level of government service and accountability needs to improve
- Better ways to spend government funding is necessary. Government should reprioritize where the money is spent
- A Government review is needed to improve social policies, wages **and** housing
- Review **the** social assistance policy or rules for eligibility. That is, a family taking care of a family and the transportation policies need to be addressed
- Engage people who are living or have lived in poverty to find out how to come out of the poverty cycle
- Ask front line people who work in trenches what is needed
- Don't take care of people in poverty and move them out
- What is the cost of poverty?
- Are we missing investment opportunities? We have the workforce and therefore we should invest in them
- A broad social commitment is needed to fix the problem of poverty
- Soft budgets in non-profit a concern
- Public Policy that works and works together not against each other is needed
- If we had to choose between a work ready work force and child literacy or school readiness what would we choose? We need to have this conversation
- Government needs to be working together
- Bring the programs to the people because poor people feel intimidated
- Are we subsidizing poverty? Should we? On the other hand, we are giving services to those who need them



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- There needs to be a buy into programs that work for different populations
- We need to be looking at how we do things and make changes to those that are not working like the claw back for those on income assistance
- Long-Term strategy to reduce poverty is needed
- Government can provide incentives for people to invest in social housing and social enterprise such as tax credits.
- Wage exemption reform is needed
- Rates and structure of the social assistance system causes problems
- Eliminate interim rate for social assistance
- Household income policy reform is needed because for a single parent/TAP/Interim no exemption currently exists
- Investment in people is needed to prevent poverty
- Change government attitude toward poor and community from looking at them as being a burden to seeing their potential.
- The Benefits Blueprint is a good example of looking at investment in people
- Government should have a “Poverty Czar” who could work with all required departments
- There should be a CEO of Poverty Reduction within the provincial government
- Wage exemption should be increased and maybe should consider a sliding scale
- The strategy and action for poverty reduction must be shared between government and community and must be long-term in nature
- Lower social worker caseloads are needed. Ensuring social workers are doing social work not administration
- Improved policing



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- Transition support is required
- Accessibility of systems and supports needs to be more user-friendly
- Review standards
- Align needs with services
- Paid advocates should be put in place
- Can't make it easier to get welfare
- Partner with government and business to pay for some needed services
- Aligning government policies to promote social equality
- Breakdown the silos within government so they work together to effective to complex issues
- Focused strategy is needed so that different departments with different mandates coordinate efforts to reduce poverty
- Keep government accountable by using a balanced scorecard
- Breakfast programs in schools and food banks are inadequate. They need resources
- Lunch programs should be implemented
- Adequate food is a must because poor people cannot afford to feed their family well
- Government has to legislate the change and provide leverage to business through tax system and business has to pay higher wages
- Someone needs to look at where and what government is spending money on
- There should be a debate over increasing taxes. It is ok to pay more if the money is spent wisely
- Continuum of assisted living
- There should be an accountability time line



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- Look to the countries doing a better job of reducing poverty like the Scandinavian countries
- Government should verbally recognize non-profit have no money
- People's accountability for the **issues** that directly impact poverty
- Commit to make one change. We need results. It needs to be more than talk!
- Offer free post-secondary education and training
- Our human resources **need** to be maximized
- Better allocation of health care dollars
- Create a structure or process whereby government, business and non-profit continues to be engaged in a coordinated manner
- Clear joint goals are required
- Better bang for government money would be to focus on young people
- The way to deal with child poverty is to deal with poverty as a whole in society
- There needs to be an ombudsman to ensure good policies are enforced
- We need a social development auditor
- Solutions shouldn't be "one of," they should reach everyone
- Stop studying poverty and solve it. Shouldn't have to have the same conversation over and over again
- If you are going to consult the public then empower the public to be part of the solution
- Churches are an incredible untapped resource and not available for funding from government
- Be intentional about putting dignity back into the equation
- **Reassess social promotion practice** (move to education once translation is in)



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- People on assistance moving to full-time employment lose health benefits and housing
- **Enhanced PALS program would help** (move to education once translation is in)
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- Developing financial incentives for getting off assistance instead of financial barriers
- Study best practices in other countries
- Greater cooperation between government departments
- Exit strategy from social assistance is needed
- An advocate for change is needed
- People need to get involved to have say for change in government
- Get to know someone living in poverty
- Inclusion is the solution
- If you are going to fix poverty get people who aren't in poverty to understand
- Strong social network
- People affected by poverty can build solutions
- Power to the people
- Arts, culture, and sports eliminate barriers to access and open eyes to opportunities
- There should be financial incentives to work in non-profit to help build stronger communities. Tie it to education
- **Non-profit needs to support the changes** (move to education once translation is in)
- **Non-profits need to continue their leadership and services and continue to push** (move to education once translation is in)
- **Give non-profits the tools to make difference** (move to education once translation is in)



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- Make it more than just a charity issue
- Long-term commitment is required
- Remove barriers to living in poverty
- Start with youth and provide opportunities for them to grow up with choices that empower them
- Government should not be imposing solutions on the poor, they should be asking what they need
- All sectors of society need to be part of the solution
- Common vision and common goals are needed
- Solutions should be built from the bottom up
- Not their problem, it's our problem, poverty is shared
- Change is profound when people in poverty work with someone who sees their value and it affects their self perception
- Demystify what it means to live in poverty because it also includes the working poor
- People working on poverty issues like front-line workers and volunteers need to have their knowledge and values as human beings elevated to higher ranks of society
- Empower people already working to alleviate poverty
- Greater cooperation between groups, communities is needed
- Early intervention is the key

Transportation

- Subsidize taking the bus to work for low income people. It is like paying for a parking spot without a car



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- Accompany vulnerable people from here to there
- Accessible transportation
- A better bus system leads to more use

Volunteer

- Support employee volunteer initiatives
- Business community can do more mentoring such as what is done by the business community anti-poverty initiative in Saint John
- Business people could volunteer to be on community boards
- Business should get junior staff to learn how to work in community training
- With businesses and non-profit organizations they should have employees come together to make donations for those less fortunate and encourage volunteering or participating in community with pay
- Tax rebates should be paid to volunteers
- Volunteers are needed
- A day of giving should be implemented

Well-Being

- Peer ignorance by business and unknown misconceptions
- Empowerment and mentoring can help. Provide a “you can do better” philosophy
- There should be no stigma attached to trying to better your situation
- To motivate people you need to work on self-esteem, sense of belonging and get them to participate



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
Saint John-January 19th, 2009
Summary of Flipchart Notes

- People's accountability for the issues that directly impact poverty
- Vision brings hope
- Become more equal
- Everyone should have the same opportunities

Work

- Flexibility in employment conditions
- Focus more on a person's skill and talent rather than their academic level
- Look at other ways to provide jobs. For example, there could be jobs in neighborhoods to fix up
- Make work pay
- Working with employers is necessary to help them see barriers to employment and ways to overcome with the end result being beneficial to the employer
- More flexibility in hiring practices is needed, that is looking at skills not just formal education
- Connecting employers with individuals who want to work and helping them get the skills that they need
- Businesses should make it easier to get a job
- Keep workers happy because that is the key to the future workforce
- Essential skills should be the focus for hiring. Competency over formal qualifications is needed. We should be challenging employers to look at jobs through essential skills lens
- Businesses need to extend benefits packages to employees because this can be a problem particularly in low-wage jobs
- Business benefits to encouraging more full-time employment



DIALOGUE SESSIONS
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Summary of Flipchart Notes

- Reduce barriers and increase incentives to transition to work and build assets