

*Teachers are what stand between students and repeating the patterns of poverty.*

—Ruby Payne

## Poverty in a Land of Plenty

—Karen Virag

*Blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the earth.*

—Luke 6:20

Christianity is not alone among the religions in preaching that people's qualities of character are more important than how much money they have. And this is something most of us know to be true, isn't it? Still, smug comments about the nobility of poverty are easier to make when one enjoys a full belly, lives in a nice house with a two- (or sometimes three-) car garage, and has a steady job and a defined pension plan (something that seems to be going the way of the dodo for a lot of organized labour these days).

Poverty carries deep stigma, especially in a wealthy society like Alberta. The poor are sometimes characterized as lazy, unmotivated, lesser human beings, and poverty as an almost morally depraved state. I spoke to a friend the other day whom many would consider poor. She has no car, rents a small apartment, and lives on a small amount of savings and old age pension. She told me that the biggest prejudice she has faced in her life was related to her financial state—poverty makes a lot of people uneasy.

In addition to the psychological damage wrought by poverty is the physical damage. Study after study has shown that children from poor families tend to do worse in school, not because they are inherently less intelligent, but because of the many



*The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is celebrated every year on October 17 throughout the world. The first commemoration of this day took place in Paris, France, in 1987, when 100,000 people gathered on the Human Rights and Liberties Plaza to honour victims of poverty, hunger, violence and fear. This call was made by Father Joseph Wresinski (1917–1988) founder of the international antipoverty movement All Together with Dignity (ATD Fourth World).*

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other negatives that are associated with poverty, notably for young children, malnutrition. Poor diets that lead to anemia can cause neurological defects that last a lifetime, and such conditions as asthma are more prevalent among children from poor families (Armstrong 2010). Armstrong (2010) cites a study in which it was discovered that certain brain functions of some low-income children in the US were markedly lower than those of their middle class peers. Wealthy families can afford to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, and lots of meat and dairy products. And beyond that, books and iPads and computers. They can even hire tutors, if required. Most of these things are a pipe dream for poor parents.

Many people on this planet live in circumstances much more horrendous than most Canadians could even imagine. After all, we are not in the middle of a civil war (into which Syria was descending at the time of writing); terrorists aren't setting off bombs in our marketplaces (think Afghanistan, Pakistan, India); no militaristic lunatic is kidnapping children, drugging them, putting machine guns in their hands and telling them to kill their parents (as Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, has done in Uganda). But consider this: according to a report in the *Edmonton Journal*, in 2010, more than three million Canadians were considered poor. This is about 1/10 of the population. Of those, more than 600,000 were children. Just over 867,000 Canadians relied on food banks in March 2010. According to Food Banks Canada, the national

umbrella organization that represents Canada's food bank community, that was the highest single month on record in the 29-year history of food banks. And just last month, in October 2011, the remote James Bay community of Attawapiskat declared an emergency over a housing crisis. Many families there live in uninsulated shacks and tents or abandoned construction trailers. According to a CBC report, "they really have not had a school, one with lockers and a hallway and a gym, for about nine years. The only one they had was built on a massive diesel spill. Kids were sick. Some were losing consciousness. The school was eventually torn down" (CBC 2011). One resident I heard interviewed on the radio said, "It's like being in a Third World country."

We all know that not everyone is wealthy (or as it is euphemistically put, that there are "less fortunate" people among us), but the vast majority of Canadians have nice homes and clean water and more possessions than they know what to do with (according to a Reuters report, the average woman in the US owns 19 pairs of shoes but wears only four of them regularly; 15 per cent have over 30) (Goldsmith 2007). However, many of us are not often exposed to true poverty; sometimes we look away from it. And we should stop doing this. All citizens have a vested interest in a more equitable society. Indeed, studies show that people in more equal societies live longer, have better mental health and are more socially mobile. Community life is stronger when income gaps are narrow and children do better at school. More equality also translates into less violence and lower rates of imprisonment. We need to be physically aware of the poor people in our midst, the often shunned and the invisible—except that they aren't invisible to teachers, as you will read in this edition of *Just in Time*, whose theme is being poor in one of the richest parts of the world.

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*Karen Virag is the ATA's supervising editor of publications and the administrative secretary of the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.*

The following two articles are from the front lines—that is, they are written by two teachers who have seen the effects of poverty close up.

### I Saw Poverty

—Mary Frances Fitzgerald

Poverty is so much more than not having money.

From 2006 to 2010, I was seconded from my role as high school guidance counsellor to become a manager in Alberta Education; this gave me the opportunity to serve my Edmonton community in a manner that was different from working in a school. While working in government, I did not want to lose my connection to working with people in vulnerable populations, so I volunteered as an intake worker with St Vincent de Paul, a Catholic charity. As a school counsellor I had had plenty of opportunity to witness emotional, academic and personal pain, but I had never really seen poverty. Sure, I had brought food and clothing to schools for kids who lacked them, scrounged bus tickets for students in need, saved pennies for whatever collection happened to be the “it” charity for the year, but, I soon realized, I had never really faced deep and true poverty.

My counselling skills did come in handy when I became an intake worker—these are the people who visit clients at home, find out their needs, make a list and give it to those charged with fulfilling the needs. I discovered that although some of my skills were transferable, the learning curve was huge, and my appreciation for the work of volunteers and champions of poverty rose quickly.

Often during home visits, we would walk into an apartment to find families bedding down on blankets laid on the floor. Not only did they lack beds, they lacked curtains, towels, dishes, clothing, television and personal articles.

Often, when someone’s need was truly desperate, we would go to the St Vincent de Paul warehouse and pack up a few boxes of things to satisfy immediate needs. Dishes, cutlery, cookware, bedding, window coverings, emergency food parcels, personal grooming items—whatever was available from the donations would be packed up in boxes and delivered to the client, usually that very day. Donated beds, tables, chairs, sofas are so

*60,000: the number of Albertans who received emergency food assistance from a Food Bank in Alberta in 2010*

—Action to End Poverty

### A Few Words about the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee of the Alberta Teachers’ Association

The Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee of the Alberta Teachers’ Association advises Provincial Executive Council on matters related to diversity, equity and human rights. This very active committee also undertakes such activities as administering the Association’s Inclusive Learning Communities Grant Program, publishing resources for teachers and working with like-minded groups to advance causes related to diversity, equity and human rights in Alberta schools. The members of the 2011–12 DEHR committee are

**Andrea Berg**, an executive staff officer in the Professional Development program area at the Alberta Teachers’ Association; Andrea is the ATA secretary to the committee.

**Cathy Campbell**, a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge

**Miriam Cooley**, a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta

**Mitchell Elser**, a teacher at Alternative High School, Calgary Board of Education

**Denis Espetveidt**, a teacher at Sir Winston Churchill High School, Calgary School District No 19, and a district representative for Calgary City on Provincial Executive Council. Denis is the chair of the committee.

**Mary Frances Fitzgerald**, a guidance counsellor at Ross Sheppard High School, Edmonton School District No 7

**Linda Grabas**, a Grade 4 teacher at Elk Point Elementary School, St Paul Regional Division No 1

**Robert Mazzotta**, an executive staff officer in the Member Services program area at the Alberta Teachers’ Association

**Diane Sellars-Myschyshyn**, a teacher at Manachaban Middle School, Rockyview School Division No 41, and a district representative for Calgary District on Provincial Executive Council

**Yvonne Jones**, a social studies teacher at Bellerose Composite High School, St Albert Protestant Separate School District No 6

**John Milford**, a kindergarten teacher at École Edwards Elementary School, Rocky View School Division No 41

**Karen Virag**, the ATA’s supervising editor of publications, is the administrative secretary of the committee.

**Jennifer Wathen**, a teacher at Mother Teresa School, Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School District No 28



in demand that they rarely last very long in the warehouse; workers knew that timing really mattered when it came to what was given to the clients. In the face of this overwhelming need, my conscience was assailed whenever I thought of how much food students discard, the amount of clothing that ends up in the lost and found, and just how much waste is generated in a school. Or even how many possessions I have in my own home.

I learned that when you have nothing, you will accept imperfect goods. Sometimes the pots and pans would not be in great shape, but if you have nothing, this does not matter. The cups, plates and cutlery would never match, but even to have a cup and a plate and cutlery was great. A winter coat was a blessing. A bus ticket meant so much. I learned that some clients were humble and did not want to rely on agencies, and some wanted to reciprocate, but were not ready to because they had to solve their own problems first. I also learned that most relationships were power-based and functional; that is, client and authority.

Newcomers to Edmonton from all over the world encounter linguistic, educational, cultural, financial and religious barriers. They need enormous amounts of courage and perseverance to face their day-to-day challenges.

Poverty does not discriminate. Family violence, people being discharged from prison, mental illness—all these things can thrust people into poverty. Poverty also tends to be self-perpetuating and passed down through the generations.

Poverty is so much more than not having money.

I once heard a teacher talking about her “relationship account”; how her teacher–student relationships formed a kind of balance sheet, with deposits, withdrawals, refunds and interest. This started me thinking about my own relationship account with my students, and about my own emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual, mental and financial well-being, and it made me think about the people who champion the impoverished every day. If you are one of those people, I thank you for the time you have committed to lightening the load of others.

I have seen poverty, and having seen it, I was able to forge a relationship with some people who taught me some humbling lessons. Let poverty teach you, too.

*Mary Frances Fitzgerald is a guidance counsellor at Ross Sheppard High School, in Edmonton, and a member of the ATA’s Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.*



## Who Is Poor?

## Who Is Rich?

—Anonymous

In my school poverty is a 15-year-old student sitting in front of me with \$150 running shoes and a Roots t-shirt telling me there is no food in his house and hasn't been for three days. He says he will go to his aunt's that night—she will have food.

In my school poverty is a dying student in a wheelchair who has to be toileted. The teacher assistants tell me he wears men's large underwear on his emaciated body, so they buy him smaller underwear and some warm socks too. Each day they put new socks on his feet and send him home with another toque and mitts. His hair is always dirty and he is not washed. I call a social worker; he tells me that he went to the house and found that the family has no running water. The parent must go next door to the neighbour's place for water and have to lay the child on the living room floor with a bowl to wash his hair, because he is getting too heavy to lift. The teacher assistants start washing his hair and brushing his teeth at school. They buy him Boost and Ensure to drink. He likes the chocolate ones.

In my school poverty is a pregnant teen. I ask her to talk to the health nurse about a proper diet during pregnancy. One day she is excited because they have money, and her parents are going shopping that night. She comes back the next day embarrassed and disappointed, because her parents came home from the shopping expedition with only chips and pop. The ladies in the office make a deal with the cafeteria manager to pay for the girl to have a hot nutritious lunch each school day.

In my school poverty is the bus driver who phones the school to report that even though it has been freezing cold for two weeks he has not seen any sign that the furnace is running at a student's house. I call, and the social worker goes to tell them there is a way to get money to pay their gas bill.

In my school poverty is the bright young Grade 9 girl who barely ever shows up. The ladies in the office buy her a certificate for a free cafeteria breakfast if she comes to school before 9:30. She is hungry, and she turns up most days. I am happy to say that last year she graduated.

In my school poverty is two Christmas angels—our librarian and head secretary. They collect money and, amazingly, manage to buy enough food for struggling families to have a week's worth of groceries at Christmas. They stay late at school each night so parents can pick up their hamper with anonymity. Some parents arrive smelling of liquor. One single father relies on the hampers for years as his three children pass through our school. The children tell us their mother lives in a car. Last year his final child was in Grade 12. A Christmas card from the father arrived at the school. Inside were \$20 and a note saying "thank you." He wanted to help another family after having received help himself.

In my school poverty is the formal spring dance, where normally the girls wear long dresses and boys dress pants with white shirts. The kids from two local foster homes also come. There are seven of them in all. They wear old jeans and sweatshirts. The courts have decided that their legal guardian is the government of Alberta. Their clothing allowance went to winter boots, coats and underwear—their legal guardian does not give money for dresses or shirts for a spring school dance. The kids spend the night standing together, by themselves.

In my school poverty is a deaf mother who has moved here from another province to escape an abusive relationship; she has spent all her money and has no food. The assistant principal calls a local pastor, who drives her to see a social worker, an hour away. A local school trustee says she will talk to the landlord for the woman. The head secretary finds money and gives it to her for groceries.

In my school some parents show up with grocery bags full of juice boxes and granola bars for the kids who don't have breakfast or lunch. These parents ask for anonymity.

In the face of deprivation and suffering, I can say that I work with amazing people who do regular acts of kindness to fight poverty and discrimination to help young people and their families.

In my school, we are rich.

*The teacher who wrote this article wishes to remain anonymous to protect the identity of the school and students.*

*The Calgary Interfaith Food Bank has experienced a 70 per cent increase in the number of clients since 2006–07.*

*—Calgary Food Bank annual report*

*This is a province with its heart in its wallet and its soul in utter darkness, so that it can't see the linkages between cuts in services and increases in poverty and life on the edge of disaster.*

—Catherine Ford, journalist, from her book *Against the Grain* (2006)

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## Using Education to Reduce Poverty

—Teresa Cardinal

*This article originally appeared in Volume 31:2 of Alberta Counsellor, the journal of the Guidance Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.*

A current issue in education is the increasing level of poverty and how to educate students living in those conditions so that they meet certain standards of excellence. The increasing income gap has an impact on families and children, which in turn has an impact on schools. Teachers face the challenge of teaching not only students with a variety of cognitive abilities and students from diverse cultures but also impoverished children and disengaged families.

With the pressures of accountability and standardized tests, education has become a means to produce economically productive citizens. However, education should also be used to help students end the cycle of poverty. Teachers must be given opportunities to be creative and to teach students not only the mandated curriculum but also strategies to help them lead successful lives. I see many people flow through homeless shelters, and they all lack education and the basic life skills most of us take for granted. Almost everyone spends time in an educational setting at some point, and this should be an opportunity for people to learn skills they can use to make their way out of poverty.

To create an environment conducive to reducing poverty, we need to embrace, rather than marginalize, students and families living in poverty. We need to help them build life skills and to develop opportunities for postsecondary education or workforce training. After discussing the nature of poverty, this article looks at strategies for engaging students and parents living in poverty, as well as teaching strategies for encouraging student learning. Next, a definition of success for this group, within the framework of accountability and data-driven environment of today's schools, is considered. Finally, programming options that further support the unique needs in the school context will be explored as a wraparound model benefiting students and parents.

### Poverty

Canada does not have an official definition of poverty. Statistics Canada uses the low-income

cut-off (LICO) rate to measure poverty levels over periods of time. The LICOs are "income thresholds below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income [to] the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family."<sup>1</sup> In 2005, approximately 3.4 million Canadians existed on incomes lower than the LICO rate, nearly 11 per cent of the country's population.<sup>2</sup> The global recession has since had disastrous ramifications. Thus, the income gap continues to widen, and the impact on schools needs to be addressed within the context of how to reduce the income gap and empower students and families living in poverty.

Students living in poverty are at risk of not engaging in their learning and of dropping out of high school. Pellino (2006) outlines contributing factors that may lead these students toward academic failure, including young, uneducated parents; a single-parent family; unemployment; addiction; abuse; neglect; homelessness; transience; exposure to negative experiences; a dangerous community; and a lack of positive role models and educational resources. Given the home environments of many impoverished students, their level of preparedness for school will be limited and, as Pellino (2006) notes, poverty involves not only finances but also how one responds given the lack of resources. These students come to school with a deficiency of finances but also with deficiencies in social skills, resiliency and emotional coping skills.

### Engaging Students

Students entering schools with the burdens of poverty often are already disengaged and cannot relate the curriculum or social experiences at school to their daily lives. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) explain that poverty is about more than finances: it's also about how students respond to the lack of resources. Teachers need to recognize that all students can learn, just at varying rates. Students living in poverty need time to adjust to a different environment and structure; they need a longer transition period supported by the school community. The home and school typically will have different values, and students will become frustrated and feel disconnected. For students to feel comfortable and safe, a balance needs to be found between these differing value sets (Pellino 2006). Forming positive and authentic relationships between teacher and student is essential for encouraging students to trust the school environment.

In instruction, teachers need to include content related to poverty, not only to educate the students



who do not live in poverty but also to provide relevance for the students who do. Highlighting the similarities between the socioeconomic groups will help students foster connections with their peers and feel less alienated. Impoverished students may then recognize that many students have the same goal of living a successful life and that education is a way out of poverty. When students can see the rewards of an education, they may be more motivated intrinsically to engage in the demands of an education (Pellino 2006). With students at risk of academic failure, implanting a desire to work toward goals through pursuing an education will have more authenticity than merely encouraging them to go through school because they are expected to.

The emotional burdens impoverished students carry will contribute to negative self-esteem, and they often do not respond well to teacher authority or use teacher criticism as a means for improvement. Teachers need to maintain a safe environment that encourages individual growth and encourages students to become responsible for their learning and choices (Pellino 2006). Teaching beyond the curriculum and instilling agency in students will lead to self-development, responsible life choices and personal achievement. “Academic failure is a consequence of the beliefs that students hold about themselves and about their ability to have control over their environments” (Pellino 2006). Teachers need to find a balance between the values of school and home, and to regard these

students as students who can learn. As Slavin (1997/98) states, teachers need to change their views on children living in poverty before any strategy can work. When teachers are prepared to engage these students, then the students will feel the authenticity of the relationship and will begin to feel motivated to obtain goals through the demands of an education.

## Engaging Parents

One frustration in teaching students living in the culture of poverty is the lack of parental involvement. Working to engage students is not as difficult as there is face-to-face contact with them, usually daily; however, engaging parents is more challenging. Teachers need to understand not only their students’ culture but also that of the parents.

Many impoverished parents are getting by without an education and have been entrenched in a lifestyle that can involve violence and addiction. When parents have lost sight of their own goals, their children have difficulty planning for the future. However, as Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) note, when parents feel supported and understood by the school and when they can see their children achieving, they will develop confidence in the school and will begin to see education as a way out of poverty. This can help align the differing values between home and school.



Living in poverty does not necessarily mean that parents are not interested in education; rather, they are unable to become involved not only because of their values but also because of the burdens they carry. As Pellino (2006) discusses, parents living in poverty are weighted down by anxiety and emotional stress. Their ability to parent has been diminished because of their socioeconomic status, not because they do not care. They may be working multiple jobs or during unusual hours; they cannot afford child care or transportation; their own education is lacking; and their language skills are limited. All of these factors contribute to parents' inability to attend to their children's education.

Teachers need to make continued attempts at collaboration with parents, in spite of the lack of parental follow-through, as the relationship forged between home and school will contribute to students' academic success. Adams, Forsyth and Mitchell (2009) suggest forming a support network and social collaboration with parents, as parents know their children better than teachers do and are just as responsible for their learning. Collaborating with parents is crucial to forming a home environment supportive of academics and will help engage parents, which further increases the engagement of students. Forming authentic

relationships—not only with students but also with their parents—will build trust.

Teachers need to keep parents informed of what is being accomplished in the classroom and how they can best support their children at home. Teaching parents strategies for working with their children, as well as basic organizational and time-management skills, will help them feel more able to help their children. Once parents feel like they can help their children, they will be more willing to engage in their education. Pellino (2006) suggests making child care available during parent-teacher conferences or holding conferences at a location closer to where most of the students live. Holding information nights on classroom content and showcasing student work will help parents feel more comfortable and allow them to see their children's achievements. Parents also need to be encouraged to get involved in the classroom when they are able. This way they can see that their children are learning and that the school is working to support the children, which may counteract negative educational experiences a parent has had in the past. Communication with parents needs to be regular, whether or not the parent responds, and teachers need to keep parents informed of school events, activities, opportunities for involvement and the curriculum being covered





in the classroom. Supporting the family, as well as the student, will help reduce nonacademic barriers (Slavin 1997/98).

The school environment must be relationship-based and built on factors leading to authenticity: honesty, trust, reliability and confidence (Adams, Forsyth and Mitchell 2009). Engaging parents is critical to forming a positive educational value system and the realization that education is a means out of poverty. Once parents feel valued by the school, they will encourage their children to engage in learning and will work with teachers to support learning in the home environment.

## Teaching Strategies

Engaging students and parents will also come about through teaching practices.

Building on authentic relationships, teachers need to understand the lens through which people living in poverty view life. Teachers should be provided with professional development on the culture of poverty so that they can see warning signs and possible barriers to learning (Pellino 2006).

Teachers also need time to collaborate and discuss strategies, guided by master teachers well versed in this demographic. Master teachers or curriculum leaders can become mentors for teachers who work with diverse learners to make the curriculum more authentic for students. As Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) discuss, mentors can help teachers work through issues or devise new strategies to relieve the pressure of teaching high-needs students. Teachers can become frustrated when working harder to accommodate students without seeing immediate results. Without proper support, teachers will feel discouraged, jeopardizing any progress that has been made.

In instruction, teachers should incorporate cognitive strategies, goal setting, and relationship and coping skills, and should not rely on textbook teaching, instead working with the curriculum outcomes students are expected to master (Acker-Hocevar and Touchton 2001). Also, they should include lessons and activities related to the culture of poverty to develop sensitivity, caring and peer relationships. Creating a community of learning in the classroom will help students feel connected, give them a sense of belonging in the school, and help them become responsible for their learning. To further entrench this sense of belonging, Pellino (2006) suggests using cooperative learning among the diverse cultures in the classroom. When students are placed in cooperative learning opportunities, they will come to realize their own

strengths and knowledge and will feel the sense of achievement that comes from making a positive contribution to peers. Feeling valued and developing self-worth will help students form meaningful relationships with the other people in their lives.

Students should be regularly tested on the curriculum to gauge their learning, and those who are falling behind should be given opportunities to work with teachers or peer tutors until they have grasped concepts, to prevent feelings of learned helplessness. Schools should be flexible with instructional or tutorial time for students, allowing for more direct instruction to reinforce learning.

Schools can provide academic materials for the home environment, as well as access to books and resources. Encouraging students to devote an area of their home to learning will give them a sense of power over their environment and help them feel comfortable in pursuing academics. Creating a safe and caring atmosphere at school will allow students to take risks and learn not only curriculum but also skills that will help them escape poverty. Once students begin to feel a sense of achievement, they will be more willing to attend school and discipline problems will be reduced (Acker-Hocevar and Touchton 2001).

## Defining Success

Students living in the culture of poverty may have a different level of success from that of other students. However, when schools are mandated to deliver standardized tests to measure curriculum outcomes, this difference is not usually taken into account; instead, lower scores are viewed as a dysfunction of either the school or the teacher. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) point out that the discrepancy in scores is, rather, a reflection of noninstructional factors.

Consideration should be given to the fact that children living in poverty need more time to acquire skills. Test scores should be used to gauge individual student improvement instead of comparing students with each other. School education plans should reflect internal measures—what is working in the school and what needs improvement—and not focus on comparisons across schools. Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) suggest that the plans should be living documents, not something pulled from a filing cabinet every three years.

Success for students living in poverty needs to be defined differently. These students still need high standards to aim for, to help them become on level with other students and work their way out of

*Who lives in poverty in Calgary? One-third of all persons with disabilities, one-half of all Aboriginal persons, almost one-half of all recent immigrants, close to one-third of all visible minority persons, over one-half of all single-parent families, over one-quarter of seniors, and one-fifth of Calgary's children.*

—Alberta Health Services Quick Facts

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*Alberta teachers pay approximately \$900 a year out of their own pockets to buy school and classroom resources and materials.*

*—from The Courage to Choose, Alberta Teachers' Association, fall 2010*

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poverty through employment or postsecondary opportunities. Curriculum must remain the same but, as discussed, teaching and learning strategies can make the curriculum more achievable for students. As Pellino (2006) discusses, the classroom environment has an impact on student achievement, and the curriculum needs to remain challenging to give students living in poverty the same opportunities as their peers; however, different groups should not be held to the same standards when it comes to test scores. An increased focus on student achievement and individual success for students living in poverty will help reduce the gap in academic achievement, as well as the income gap in the future (Slavin 1997/98).

### **Accountability**

School accountability has become a major focus of schools and school divisions. Like student success, accountability needs to be as diverse as communities (Acker-Hocevar and Touchton 2001). Different demographics will have an impact on accountability measures across different schools. Control should be internally driven, and goals should be achievable by all students using resources at hand. When schools have control over goals and measurable outcomes, a greater level of confidence can be realized in the school, and student achievement will reflect the successful environment. Students and teachers are accountable for learning, administration is accountable for providing resources and professional development, and parents are accountable for supporting their children—all within a given school, not as a comparison across divisions, across years or across similar schools.

Schmoker (2008/09) points out that when data suggests weaknesses or failures, schools can work to improve the flaws to obtain higher levels of success. This can be done through more professional development, adjustment of resources or obtainment of new resources, different teaching strategies, more alignment of curriculum, or other strategies. Using the data that schools have established as relevant can help them more readily address and improve problems and maintain the practices that are working.

Maintaining a high level of achievement for all students may seem unrealistic; however, increasing student supports in the classroom and providing professional development for teachers will help keep opportunities consistent. By expecting a high level of achievement from all and supporting students living in poverty, a focus on

internally directed accountability will help create an environment that ensures success for all.

### **Programming**

Supporting students and families through reducing nonacademic barriers will also help ensure individual academic success.

Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) stress the importance of programs that provide free or reduced-cost breakfast and lunch. Access to nutritious items in healthy portions not only serves to meet students' basic physical needs but also shows them what a healthy diet is and helps them translate this knowledge into their daily lives outside of school. Many grants exist to fund such programs, or collaboration with local agencies can bring programs into schools. Teachers can provide time for healthy snacks during the day and, through discussion and modelling, teach students about nutritious meals. For many families living in poverty, prepackaged food or fast food seems like a low-cost alternative. Providing parents with access to community kitchens or free cooking classes (offered by local community groups or supermarkets) can encourage a nutritious diet at home.

Both Slavin (1997/98) and Pellino (2006) discuss the importance of early intervention programs to support the development of language, literacy and social skills and to provide opportunities for positive interaction with adults in an educational setting. Because students living in poverty may come from homes with different values, they are at a disadvantage in terms of communication and social skills. As Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (2001) note, students are a reflection of what they know from home. Early intervention programs tend to be free and are abundant in many communities. Helping parents become aware of these programs and supporting a transition will encourage families to participate and begin the process of student engagement at an early age.

Developing family support networks through community agencies and continuing this method in schools will allow families to access education and other supports. Pellino (2006) suggests that families be referred to services that support emotional, health, recreational and social needs to give students a sense of belonging to and being valued by their community.

Students will be more engaged in learning when they are capable of having shared experiences with peers and when they are in good health. Other community programs that can continue the process of developing positive values include mentoring

and after-school programs at local clubs, recreation centres and libraries. Teachers should present the services of local agencies to their students and consider taking field trips to those places (inviting parents along). When the school has built trust with families and students, they will be more willing to access the services presented to them.

## Conclusion

Working with students from the culture of poverty has many challenges, but with proper supports and professional development, teachers can make a difference with these students and place them on a path out of poverty.

Engaging parents and students through building authentic relationships and holding them accountable for their learning will encourage academic success. Once students develop relationships with their teachers and peers, they will feel connected to the learning community. Recognizing that students from all backgrounds share the goal of living a successful life and must work toward it will give students the motivation to excel in school.

High standards need to be in place for all students in the school community; however, students living in poverty will require increased support and resources in order to meet those standards. Schools can use test scores and accountability measures to work on improving the practices that are not working, but internal accountability, as opposed to a comparison across different demographics, should be the focus. This will allow schools to achieve success at a realistic pace. When schools are meeting relevant achievement standards, parents, students and teachers will feel that they are making progress toward standards of excellence, further increasing their ability to accept education as a way out of poverty.

## Notes

1. See [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2010005/lico-sfr-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2010005/lico-sfr-eng.htm).
2. See [www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/famil19a-eng.htm](http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/famil19a-eng.htm).

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*Teresa Cardinal has devoted much of her career to working with youth in diverse settings including treatment centres, homeless shelters and now as a learning specialist with Rocky View Schools. Passionate about working to increase resiliency and see all students be successful, Teresa continues her work with the loving support of her husband and sons.*



**Diversity • Equity • Human Rights**



## **ATA Committees That Deal with Poverty**

The Association knows that socioeconomic conditions have an enormous effect on students' ability to learn. Therefore, the Association has a number of committees charged with dealing with aspects of poverty that impinge upon learning. The Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee is one. Two others are described below.

### **Committee on the Well-Being of Children and Youth**

The Committee on the Well-Being of Children and Youth (CWBCY) of the Alberta Teachers' Association advises Provincial Executive Council on issues pertaining to the well-being of children and youth; promotes the Association's Principles on the Integration of Children's Services in Schools; fosters awareness of the impact of poverty as a barrier to learning; advocates for the importance, maintenance and expansion of early intervention; recommends ways in which the Association can advocate for children and youth; proposes initiatives to help teachers work more effectively with children who experience barriers to success; and undertakes programs individually or in cooperation with other groups.

Much of the committee's time in 2010–11 was spent planning "Can We Talk? Communities and Teachers Supporting Mental Wellness," a conference designed to promote the Association's partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association.

CWBCY receives advice from the Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty, a group of people from the education, health, justice, social service, business and volunteer communities that meets to promote issues related to children and poverty.

### **Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty**

#### **Background**

The Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty is a coalition of Albertans representing the province's business, education, government, health, social service and volunteer sectors. It was established by the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) to address child poverty and its implications for education. This committee is a culmination of the strong ties that formed between the ATA's Committee on Children and Poverty and community stakeholders who, in 1992, attended the ATA-sponsored conference *Missing Pieces*, a two-day invitational conference showcasing a variety of initiatives to address child poverty. Participants broke into strategy sessions, where they developed recommendations for improvements in the areas of education, health and social services. The conference concluded with participants presenting those recommendations to members of the legislative assembly representing the province's three major political parties.

#### **Emerging Directions**

It is logical for the ATA to assume a role in seeking to end child poverty in Alberta: the cognitive, physiological and emotional effects of child poverty are manifested daily. As teachers know all too well, their classrooms are not segregated from the larger social order; they are an integral part of that order.

Teachers—or any other profession, organization or group—cannot be expected to solve the problems associated with child poverty in isolation. The solutions are to be found through a holistic approach involving the education sector, governments, health and social service providers, and the business and volunteer communities. That is why the Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty continues to solicit broad representation; multisectoral cooperation is essential.

#### **Today's Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty**

The Joint Stakeholder Committee on Children and Poverty continues to advocate for the elimination of child poverty and examine issues that often coincide with poverty, such as addiction and mental illness. Through such activities as discussions, guest presentations, and the sharing of ideas and resources, the group gathers the intelligence that informs the undertakings of the ATA's Committee on the Well-Being of Children and Youth.

#### **Contacts**

For more information about either of these two committees, contact Dr Gaylene Schreiber, at 780-447-9447, or Laura Harris, at 780-447-9476. Either can be contacted toll free at 1-800-232-7208.

# Make Poverty History, and Why Alberta Needs a Poverty Reduction Plan

**M**ake Poverty History, part of the Global Call to Action against Poverty, is a coalition of organizations that have come together for the common cause of making poverty history both at home and abroad. Make Poverty History has over 260,000 individual supporters who have signed on in support of its platform.

The Make Poverty History campaign is also supported by a network of local groups and activists across Canada who organize local public events, meet with members of parliament, engage the media and take other actions with the aim of raising public awareness and bringing about policy changes that would help make poverty history.

Although Make Poverty History is a national organization, it does address poverty in the wealthy province of Alberta. Here are some stats from Make Poverty History that show us why Alberta needs a poverty reduction plan:

- 77,595 children in Alberta—that's one in ten—live in poverty.
- Low-income children in Alberta live in deeper poverty than children in other provinces.
- Of those children who live in poverty, almost 25,000 have one or both parents working full-time all year.
- Aboriginal children are more than twice as likely to live in poverty.

- Alberta's cost of living, especially housing, is amongst the highest in Canada.

## Action to End Poverty in Alberta

The Inter-City Forum on Social Policy (ICFSP) has been researching the effects of poverty in Alberta for several years. In 2010, member municipalities of ICFSP agreed to take the lead in promoting the need for a comprehensive poverty-reduction plan for Alberta.

In November 2010, the ICFSP and the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) hosted "A Dialogue on Poverty." Over 100 people from across the province participated. Response from the forum unanimously supported the development of a poverty reduction plan.

The ICFSP believes it is necessary for a steering committee of invited stakeholders to oversee this initiative. The Steering Committee will help put conditions in place that lead to the development and implementation of a comprehensive poverty reduction plan for Alberta. To do this, the committee will promote and raise awareness of the need for a poverty reduction plan, act as advisor to the coordinator of the initiative and oversee the budget for the initiative. Members of the Committee will also be spokespersons for the poverty-reduction strategy initiative.

The goal is to create and help implement a comprehensive plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty in Alberta. To do this, ICFSP will act as a hub for the exchange and gathering of information from across the province and the nation in order to promote a strategy and develop policies to reduce poverty in Alberta, build networks and advocate for those living in poverty.

*53,000  
children in  
Alberta are  
living below  
the poverty  
line.*

*—Public Interest  
Alberta*



*Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.*

—Father Joseph Wresinski (1917–1988) founder of ATD Fourth World

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**The following letter from an elementary school teacher in Alberta was published in the *Edmonton Journal* on November 28, 2011**

Re: “20,000 more Alberta children living in poverty; Growing number ‘not acceptable,’ premier says.”

As an elementary teacher with decades of experience teaching young children, I must say that the proposal to focus on a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction outlined in the *Journal* absolutely resonated with what I see on a daily basis in our classrooms.

Most of the “educational” problems of many of our students actually have very little to do with education, and have a great deal to do with social and economic problems that affect them in many ways. It has been said before that poverty is the greatest learning disability, and that is certainly what I have seen over the years.

Quite apart from coming to school hungry, too many of our children fall behind because they simply lack the experiences and supports that are in place in the homes of more advantaged children, including books and parents who have the time to read and talk with them. This is despite the best efforts of their parents, who are too often forced to work two or more jobs for low wages just to make ends meet.

Teachers and support staff will continue to work hard to try to develop the full potential of every child, but what would really make the greatest difference is a comprehensive approach to reducing the poverty that is playing the key role in limiting their futures in this wealthy society.

*Gloria Nordin is a Grade 1 teacher at Thorncliffe School, in Edmonton.*

## Public Interest Alberta

Public Interest Alberta (PIA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, provincewide organization focused on education and advocacy on public interest issues. PIA exists to foster an understanding of the importance of public spaces, services and institutions in Albertans’ lives, and to build a network of people and organizations committed to advancing the public interest.

We believe the primary responsibility of our provincial government is to advance the collective interests of the citizens of Alberta. This entails a commitment to equity, accessibility and democracy in our society and institutions.

Founded in June of 2004, PIA and its network of member organizations and individuals undertakes a wide range of activities to promote the public interest, including

- developing strategies and actions to preserve and enhance public spaces, services and institutions,
- coordinating political action related to matters of public interest,
- collecting research, media and other information on the public interest to disseminate to member organizations and the public at large and
- directing new research on public services and the public interest.

PIA has eight areas of concentration:

1. Democracy
2. Child care
3. Education
4. Postsecondary education
5. Environment
6. Seniors
7. Privatization
8. Human services and poverty



**Public Interest Alberta**  
Advocating for a Better Alberta for All

For more information, contact PIA  
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E-mail: [pialta@telus.net](mailto:pialta@telus.net)  
Website: [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org)

The ATA library has many resources on various aspects of poverty. They are too many to list here. For more information or for comprehensive research and reference services, in French or English, e-mail the library at [library@ata.ab.ca](mailto:library@ata.ab.ca), telephone 1-800-232-7208 (780-447-9400 in Edmonton) or stop by in person. The library is located on the main floor of Barnett House, 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta.





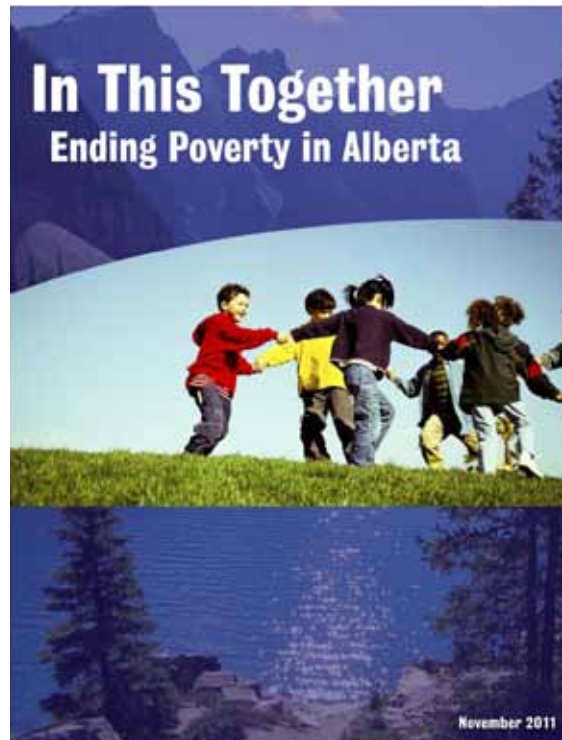
# Statistics of Low-Wage Workers in Alberta

In November 2011, Public Interest Alberta published *In This Together; Ending Poverty in Alberta*. This report is an eye-opening account of the true cost of poverty in Alberta. It provides much detailed information about the growing disparity between the rich and poor and offers concrete ideas for achieving a more equitable province.

## **We are all in this together— We are all part of the solution**

The development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty in Alberta is a bold commitment that will be an important issue in the next provincial election. To be real, a comprehensive plan must set clear poverty reduction targets and timelines and address the systemic and underlying causes of poverty.

This process should lead to a strong partnership and plan that recognizes the roles of the municipalities, the provincial government and the federal government. There also needs to be strong involvement and commitment from the community human services sector, education and post-secondary education institutions, social workers and other health professionals, the business community, faith groups, First Nations and Métis, immigrant communities, funding bodies, academic researchers, and those who live or have lived in poverty.



The report is available online at [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org), [acsw.ab.ca](http://acsw.ab.ca) and [www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca).

*Canada's first food bank was created in 1981, in Edmonton. Today, there are more than 700 food banks in Canada, assisting close to 900,000 Canadians each month.*

*—Albertans  
Who Care*

## **What Is to Be Done?**

What can teachers do to mitigate the effects of poverty in schools? Like all citizens, teachers have a number of options to express their views. For example, teachers can

- contact their MLA (member of the legislative assembly) or MP (member of parliament) and ask them about their stand on poverty reduction;
- buy street newspapers from the homeless (for example, *Our Voice*, in Edmonton);
- join an antipoverty group—go to the Resources section of this newsletter to find a group that appeals to you;
- support antipoverty groups with donations of time or money;
- sign petitions;
- donate to charities; give food to food banks (but forget saltine crackers—they have no nutrition. Give protein.);
- write letters to the editors of newspapers, journals and magazines; and
- get on mailing lists; for example, sign up for an e-newsletter from Action to End Poverty in Alberta, which publishes a monthly e-newsletter that contains updates and events from municipalities around Alberta. See the Resources section for more information.

*A new report shows the number of Alberta children living in poverty has increased 40 per cent in recent years. The report, In This Together: Ending Poverty in Alberta, was released by a coalition of antipoverty advocacy groups. It cites Statistics Canada figures that show the number of children living below the poverty line in Alberta jumped from 53,000 in 2008 to 73,000 in 2009, the last year for which figures are available.*

—Edmonton Journal, November 24, 2011

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### PROVINCIAL

#### Albertans Who Care

A grassroots organization that speaks out for quality human services to citizens of this province.

[www.albertanswhocare.com/site](http://www.albertanswhocare.com/site)

#### Community Plan on Homelessness and Affordable Housing, Fort McMurray, 2007–10

To address a shortage of affordable housing in the booming city of Fort McMurray, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) worked with federal and provincial governments and community organizations to identify problems related to social housing infrastructure in the region and to find solutions. The plan's partners include seniors and Aboriginal groups, service providers, the local health region and many others. One partner, the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation, succeeded in providing hundreds of rental, ownership, emergency shelter and transitional housing options for people who need them. A partnership with the Centre of Hope will engage coordinators in meaningful dialogue with the homeless in the region, with the goal of finding them appropriate and sustainable housing.

For more information, visit [www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca) and type "social services" into the search function.

#### Community Village, Grande Prairie

The Community Village houses many community service organizations in its unique space. Guided by principles of collaboration, partnership, accessibility and harm reduction, the Village offers a wide variety of services with the common goal of working to alleviate poverty.

Groups such as the Salvation Army, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter, HIV North Society, the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council and the Suicide Prevention Resource Network are all part of the Community Village.

For more information, visit [www.thecommunityvillage.ca](http://www.thecommunityvillage.ca).

#### Crisis Assistance Network, Medicine Hat



The Crisis Assistance Network (CAN) works to relieve the suffering of those in poverty in Medicine Hat. CAN is involved in such activities as distributing food, supporting low-income housing and helping people manage their finances. In 2008, CAN worked with the McMan Youth,



Family and Community Services Association, the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society and other agencies and organizations to create a temporary shelter called the Winter's Inn to meet the needs of those with no place to stay during the coldest months of the year. CAN plays an important role in Medicine Hat by working with like-minded groups to provide leadership and a vision to end poverty.

[www.medicinehatcan.ca](http://www.medicinehatcan.ca)

### **Edmonton Social Planning Council**

The Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) is an independent, nonprofit, charitable organization that conducts social research, particularly in the areas of low income and poverty. The ESPC is dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations that are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians and educating the public about the social issues that affect them on a daily basis.

[www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca](http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca)

### **Family Services of Central Alberta, Red Deer**

Based in Red Deer, Family Services of Central Alberta (FSCA) meets the needs of approximately 300,000 residents of 16 communities in central Alberta. FSCA is a nonprofit organization committed to promoting the health, autonomy and dignity of families. FSCA offers programs and services to all ages, including counselling, home visitation, drop-in programs and community outreach. Their Understanding the Early Years (UEY) program, a partnership with local schools focused on early childhood development, has met with success in the community. All of FSCA's programs and services are affordable and meant to ensure that every individual and family has access to the support they need.

For more information, visit [www.fsca.ca](http://www.fsca.ca).

### **Public Interest Alberta**

Public Interest Alberta (PIA) is a provincewide organization focused on education and advocacy on public interest issues. PIA focuses its attention on ten broad areas: childcare, postsecondary education, seniors, democracy, privatization, environment, rural issues, living wage, education, and cities. See page 14 for more information about PIA.

### **Vibrant Communities Calgary, Calgary**

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) is a nonprofit organization that promotes community-based actions to address poverty in Calgary. VCC works collaboratively on such initiatives as Fair Calgary, which promotes universal access to public services and spaces, and a campaign for affordable transportation. VCC continues to work on establishing a living wage policy in Calgary (recent research shows that 65,000 Calgarians make less than a living wage and are unable to meet their basic needs, and that a disproportionately high number of them are women.)

For more information, visit [www.vibrantcalgary.com](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com).

### **Women Together Ending Poverty**



A Calgary-based group dedicated to investigating the root causes of poverty and taking action to end poverty.

[www.wtep.ca](http://www.wtep.ca)

### **Womanspace, Lethbridge**

Womanspace is a community-based organization in Lethbridge that encourages and supports equality for women on a political, social and economic level. Womanspace has conducted projects to meet the needs of new Canadian women and to raise women's awareness of and engagement in politics. A current project, Your Money and Your Life, focuses on empowering low-income women to manage their finances wisely and effectively, a first step towards greater financial security, autonomy and freedom from poverty. Stories and statistics both show that some groups, women among them, are hit harder by poverty.

For more information, visit [www.womanspace.ca](http://www.womanspace.ca).

*The majority of low-wage workers in Alberta are women; 150,600 (or 64.3 per cent) of the 234,200 people earning less than \$12/hour were women.*

*—Public Interest Alberta (2011 figures)*



*43: the percentage of children under the age of 18 living in low-income households in Alberta (2008)*

*—Action to End Poverty*

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## NATIONAL

### Campaign 2000



Campaign 2000 is a cross-Canada public education movement to increase awareness and support for the 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Campaign 2000 began in 1991 out of concern about the lack of government progress in addressing child poverty. Campaign 2000 is nonpartisan in urging all Canadian elected officials to keep their promise to Canada's children.

[www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)

### Canada Without Poverty/ Canada Sans Pauvreté

Canada Without Poverty (CWP) is a federally incorporated, nonpartisan, charitable organization

founded in 1971 that is dedicated to the elimination of poverty in Canada. Since its inception, CWP has been governed by people with direct experience of living in poverty, whether as children or as adults. This lived experience informs and helps to guide their work. CWP believes that poverty is a violation of human rights and that poverty elimination is a human rights obligation; CWP's work includes raising awareness about poverty, participating in research to generate new knowledge about poverty, and striving to influence public policy to prevent and alleviate poverty.

[www.cwp-csp.ca/about-us](http://www.cwp-csp.ca/about-us)

### Canadian Economic Development Network

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) is a national member-led organization committed to strengthening Canadian communities by creating better economic opportunities and enhancing environmental and social conditions.

[www.ccednet-rcdec.ca](http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca)



## PovNet: Building an Online Antipoverty Community

PovNet provides online tools to facilitate communication, community and access to information regarding poverty-related issues in Canada. PovNet collects news and resources for advocates, community workers, marginalized communities and the general public. PovNet also offers online courses for advocates, community and settlement workers that are facilitated by experienced advocates and works to keep people informed through newsfeeds, popular social networking tools, collecting feedback from the communities and multimedia projects.

<http://www.povnet.org>

## National Council of Welfare

The National Council of Welfare reports to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The Council advises the Minister on matters concerning poverty, the realities of low income Canadians, and related programs and policies, and acts as a conduit by which people concerned about poverty, especially low-income Canadians, can make their views known to government.

The Council publishes reports, operates a website devoted to poverty and social policy issues and makes submissions to parliamentary committees.

[www.ncw.gc.ca/h.4m.2@-eng.jsp](http://www.ncw.gc.ca/h.4m.2@-eng.jsp)

## INTERNATIONAL

### Oxfam Canada

Oxfam Canada is a member of the international confederation Oxfam. Oxfam has 15 national Oxfam agencies in 98 countries that work together to respond to humanitarian needs. Together, they raise about \$350 million every year.

[www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca)

### Poverty and Conservation Learning Group

The Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (PCLG) is a multistakeholder forum coordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED); its goal is to investigate links between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. The PCLG

- studies how to link biodiversity conservation with poverty reduction so that poverty reduction policy better reflects biodiversity concerns, and conservation policy pays greater attention to issues of poverty and social justice;
- studies how participants from a range of backgrounds can share and analyze their experiences in conservation–poverty and identify knowledge gaps and research needs.
- promotes understanding of the links between conservation and poverty to improve conservation and poverty policy and practice.
- promotes dialogue between and within different communities of interest around the world, and
- collects and disseminates information.

[www.povertyandconservation.info/en](http://www.povertyandconservation.info/en)

*A person working full time (40 hours/week, 50 weeks in a year) for \$12/hour would make a gross salary of \$24,000/year. A living wage in most of Alberta is considered to be approximately \$12.25/hour for a single person working full-time. There were 234,200 Albertans earning less than \$12/hour out of a total number of employed Albertans of 1,686,000. That is, about 14 per cent of Albertans make less than \$12/hour.*  
—Public Interest Alberta (2011 figures)

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## VIDEO RESOURCES

### ***Poor No More: There Is a Way Out***

330 P823 DVD 53 min 2010

This film offers solutions to Canada's working poor. The film takes three Canadians to a world where people do not have to beg, where housing is affordable and university education is free. They ask themselves: if other countries can do this, why can't we?

For more information, go to [www.poornomore.ca](http://www.poornomore.ca).

### ***Poverty as Social Exclusion: Relational Dimensions of Social Class Stratification***

AV DVD 47 min 2010

"If there is any segment of society that should be concerned with the impact of classism and poverty, it is those within the helping professions—people who have built their careers around understanding and facilitating human emotional well-being. In her engaging address, Dr Smith helps redefine social class and provides suggestions of promising new approaches to serving poor communities that go beyond remediation, sympathy and charity."

## NOTICES AND EVENTS

**January 26 –27, 2012. Edmonton, Alberta:  
The Alberta Association of Services for  
Children and Families annual conference.**

Conference theme is “Strengthening Today, Building Tomorrow.” The conference provides cutting-edge educational value while strengthening member agencies and promoting attitudes, practices and conditions that contribute to quality services for vulnerable children and families in Alberta.

[www.aascf.com](http://www.aascf.com)

**March 8–10, 2012. Bangkok, Thailand.  
Fifth Annual Poverty Alleviation and Social  
Protection Conference.**

This three-day conference focuses on poverty and its eradication, social inequality, race relations, and policy management from an international perspective. The conference will also address the role and importance of equal distribution of resources and social inclusion, the roles of less-developed countries in politics, business, education and the public sector, and major social and economic trends and their potential for poverty reduction.

[www.tomorrowpeople.org/poverty-alleviation-and-social-protection-conference-2012.html](http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/poverty-alleviation-and-social-protection-conference-2012.html)

**April 19–21, 2012. Edmonton, Alberta. The  
sixth annual conference of Public Interest  
Alberta. “Make Shift Happen: Mobilizing the  
Power of the Public.”**

Each year Public Interest Alberta (PIA) hosts an advocacy conference addressing pressing public interest issues in Alberta. These conferences are essential opportunities for individuals and organizations to collaborate on public solutions that strengthen our communities and provide us with the tools to build a better Alberta for all.

<http://pialberta.org>

**April 23–26, 2012. Washington, DC: The  
Annual World Bank Conference on Land and  
Poverty.** Each year this conference brings together representatives from governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and the development

community to discuss issues of concern to land practitioners and policymakers worldwide.

[www.landandpoverty.com](http://www.landandpoverty.com)

**Spring 2012. Date and location tba. Conference  
on the Well-Being of Children and Youth.**

Sponsored by the Committee on the Well-Being of Children and Youth of the Alberta Teachers’ Association. Check the ATA website for updates: [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca).

**May 29–31, 2012. Lausanne, Switzerland:  
Technologies for Sustainable Development:  
A Way to Reduce Poverty?**

This international event will bring researchers and practitioners to focus on collaboration, methodologies, instruments and policies that will lead to integrated and sustainable development with developing and emerging countries.

For more information, go to <http://cooperation.epfl.ch/2012Tech4Dev>. E-mail contact: [Tech4Dev@epfl.ch](mailto:Tech4Dev@epfl.ch).

**June 25–28, 2012. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Tenth  
Conference on Globalisation for the Common  
Good.**

Conference theme: “Strengthening the Public Good: Business, Government and Civil Society Relationships.” Organized by Dalhousie University.

[www.dal.ca/commongood2012](http://www.dal.ca/commongood2012)

**October 14–19, 2012. Ixtapa, Mexico.**

**Opportunity Collaboration.** A four-day problem-solving, strategic retreat for nonprofit leaders, for-profit social entrepreneurs, grant-makers and social investors engaged in economic justice enterprises. On World Poverty Day, break down the silos of unproductive competition and go beyond the boundaries of conventional poverty alleviation. The gathering leverages resources, shares innovations, enlists allies, builds coalitions and creates force multipliers.

[www.opportunitycollaboration.net](http://www.opportunitycollaboration.net)

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