

# FACT SHEET—Recognizing the Impact of Poverty on Youth

## POVERTY SNAPSHOT

### POVERTY RATES IN 2004<sup>1</sup>

- Prince Edward Island (lowest): 11.7%
- **Nova Scotia: 14.4%**
- Canada: 15.5%
- British Columbia (highest): 19.2%

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY IN 2004

- **Nova Scotia: 131,000**
- Canada: 4.8 million

### CHILD POVERTY RATES IN 2004

- Prince Edward Island (lowest): 10.8%
- Canada: 17.7%
- **Nova Scotia: 18.1%**
- British Columbia (highest): 23.5%

### NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY IN 2004

- **Nova Scotia: 34,000**
- Canada: 1.2 million

### GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH HIGH POVERTY RATES

(BASED ON 2001 CENSUS DATA)<sup>2</sup>

	UNDER AGE 15	AGED 15 TO 24
• all young Canadians	19%	20%
• young people with a disability (activity limitation)	28%	31%
• young visible minorities	34%	32%
• young Aboriginal people	41%	37%
• young immigrants	42%	33%

<sup>1</sup> From *Income Trends in Canada, 1980-2004*, Statistics Canada, 13F0022XCB

<sup>2</sup> The *Progress of Canada's Children and Youth*, Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006, page 18.

### WORKING FOR PAY, BUT STILL POOR<sup>3</sup>

- Families that received more than half of family income from working:
  - 47% of poor families
  - 57% of poor singles
- Major income earner worked full-time, all year:
  - 26% of poor families
  - 18% of poor singles

<sup>3</sup> Poverty Facts 2003, *Poverty Profile, 2002 and 2003*, National Council of Welfare, July 2006 - [www.ncwcnbes.net](http://www.ncwcnbes.net)

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN NOVA SCOTIA

- 18,000 children were recipients of social assistance as of March 31, 2004 in Nova Scotia<sup>4</sup>
- 16,900 of them lived in lone-parent families

### WELFARE INCOMES ARE INADEQUATE ACROSS CANADA<sup>5</sup>

#### LONE PARENT WITH ONE CHILD

- Alberta (lowest): \$12,326
- **Nova Scotia: \$12,917**
- Newfoundland and Labrador (highest): \$16,181

#### COUPLE WITH TWO CHILDREN

- New Brunswick (lowest): \$17,567
- **Nova Scotia: \$19,032**
- Newfoundland and Labrador (highest): \$21,213

<sup>4</sup> *Social Assistance Statistical Report: 2004*, Federal-Provincial-Territorial Directors of Income Support, September 2005, pg 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Welfare Incomes 2005*, National Council of Welfare, Summer 2006, pg 31-31.

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## The Impact of Poverty on Children and Youth<sup>6</sup>

Many factors can influence children's healthy development, but family income is one of the key determinants.

### Children who live in chronic poverty are :

- Less likely to be academically prepared to start school
- Have less positive, successful school lives—with poorer scores in reading, math, science and writing
- More likely to have emotional problems, to exhibit anxiety and aggressive behaviours and hyperactivity
- More likely to be involved in illegal activities

### Poverty affects children's experience in school

- Low-income parents are more likely to say they do not feel welcome in their child's school
- Low-income parents are less likely to participate in school activities
- Low-income youth are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to attend post-secondary, especially university

<sup>6</sup> *The Progress of Canada's Children and Youth*, Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006, pages 16 and 63.

## Canada needs a national anti-poverty strategy

In Canada, we have never had a national anti-poverty strategy. Only two provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, have provincial strategies.

### Quebec

- Initiated by a broad based Quebec citizens' movement called "Le Collectif". Enshrined in legislation by the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion* (Bill 112), unanimously adopted by the provincial legislature in December 2002
- General goal: achieve one of the lowest levels of poverty among industrialized societies by 2013
- Education for both children and adults is targeted as part of poverty prevention.

### In Newfoundland and Labrador<sup>7</sup>

- A strategy to address poverty was announced by the Conservative government in the Speech from the Throne in March of 2005.
- The goal is to transform Newfoundland and Labrador into the province with the least poverty in the country.
- The early focus of the strategy includes initiatives to assist "at risk" youth and works to prevent poverty by increasing inclusiveness and attachment of children and youth to their schools and communities.

## Anti-poverty strategies in other countries

### United Kingdom<sup>8</sup>

- Goals:
  - By 2010: halve child poverty
  - By 2020: eradicate child poverty.
- One specific goal of the strategy is that every child in primary school is making the best possible progress in reading, writing and maths, with high-quality teachers and support staff in the classroom giving children more tailored learning
- Early results: In 2003 at least half a million fewer children were living in low income poverty than in 1997.

### Ireland<sup>9</sup>

- Launched a 10-year National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) in 1997
- Implemented various National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion
- Set specific poverty reduction targets
- Results: Percentage of people experiencing "consistent poverty" dropped from 15.1% in 1994 to 5.2% in 2001

<sup>7</sup> *Reducing Poverty: An Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*, Appendix A: Key Budget Initiatives for 2006/07, June 2006, pages 1 and 29.

<sup>8</sup> <http://dwp.gov.uk/ofa>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.welfare.ie/publications/naps/natantibgnote.html> and <http://www.socialinclusion.ie/poverty.html#current>