

The next Poverty Free Action Team meeting is NOT the last Wednesday of May. It will be the Wednesday prior on May 24th.

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition Election Campaign

We launched our election campaign at <http://makepovertypublic.ca/> where we have lots of resources. A volunteer also offered to build us an “Action App” which you can access at <http://bit.ly/MakePovertyPublic>. Today at the meeting we filled out the “[Reduces Poverty](#)” sign, and took a picture to post on social media.

Speaker Series

Since our last meeting, there’s been two speaker series events: [Prosperity for All](#) and [Justice for All](#). Tomorrow (Thursday April 27) from 3-4 pm, Dan Meades and Iglia Ivanova, who spoke on the Justice for All panel, will have a webinar. You can register for the webinar here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4347594702529853699> If you register and don’t watch it live, we’ll send you a recording.

Sharing Our Realities report/Podcast

We launched [Sharing Our Realities: Life on Disability Assistance in British Columbia](#) with Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods. The report interviewed people with disabilities across the province as well as government workers who work within the income assistance system and found that they both identify the same problems.

Brian will be interviewing Heather who co-wrote the report for the next podcast.

Poverty Mythbusters

Debra the cartoonist is hoping to have a draft of some cartoons to show us by next week. We need to talk about distribution.

Vote PopUps

We are supporting an organization called Samara Canada with a get out the vote project called “VotePopUp.” We’re talking to people about why they think it’s important to vote and there’s also a mock ballot box that people can use to practice. If you’re interested in helping, email Trish who is coordinating at trish@bcpovertyreduction.ca

Guest Speaker: Derek from Union Gospel Mission came to speak to us about their election work

2011 UGM had an intern do research about the municipal elections. They found accusations that DTES residents were being kept from voting. Some did not have the right IDs, some were banned from the polling location etc.

For the 2013 provincial election, they started a get out the vote campaign. Elections BC offered to do Voter Registration at UGM; many who had never voted registered to vote at UGM.

People would come in and watch; not register right away; go eat; come back; and then decide to register. The proximity of the process made a big difference.

Then Elections BC asked UGM if they wanted to host advance polls. 200 people voted and told Derek that they otherwise wouldn't have voted. Elections BC also hired workers through UGM: 586 hours of work including for many people with significant barriers to employment

UGM partnered with LifeSkills, MissionPossible and Carnegie on this.

Along the way somebody came up with the idea that pill bottles, inhalers, hospital bracelets, etc could be used as secondary ID; at the same time there was a court case going on about accessible IDs; eventually Elections BC made the change; and it ended up adopted federally

People were asking who to vote for. UGM can't say. So they invited MLAs to come speak and had people write in questions. No MLAs showed up, but some responded via email. Actually having politicians answer questions was exciting for many.

During recent municipal elections, there was a scandal that there was only one polling station on the east side of Vancouver and three on the west side. UGM was transporting people in vans from the eastern polling station down to the western polling stations.

Two pieces of advice from UGM's election work

1. Having the right partner within the government (the right bureaucrat) really helps; Someone who is open and not too bureaucratic, but also willing to say "no, that's not possible"
2. Find somebody who has event planning experience to help with event planning.

UGM's side Benefits of the election work

- Media relations (Brings awareness to some of the challenges caused by poverty)
- Saved staff hours because they were voting at advance polls

If you'd like to see UGM's Strategic Plan for their election work, email Omar (info@bcpovertyreduction.ca) and he'll get it for you from Derek.