

Reminders

“Save-the-date,” we’re going to be supporting Raise the Rates, the BC Federation of Labour and many of our other member groups with a Rally for a Poverty Free BC on March 4th 2017, and we’d love to have a big contingent out for that. There will also be a whole set of actions in the week prior, which you can see at <http://povertyfreebc.ca/> There is a Facebook sharable here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BCPovertyReductionCoalition/photos/a.182830125127563.44387.108826069194636/1208184975925401/?type=3&theater> and a Facebook Event Page here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/734570070040625/>

If you’re interested in receiving Facilitation Training, please fill out this poll, so that we can find a day that works for you: <http://doodle.com/poll/upnwgxczcsn3idpa> Facilitation Training, in general, is about teaching people how to create welcoming environments, and encourage participation in dialogues, workshops and events. For the Action Team, the facilitation training is about basic facilitation skills as well as practice leading workshops that the Poverty Reduction Coalition does in classrooms and in the community.

Cynnimon is tabling at the at The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation’s Provincial Social Justice Conference, Equal is not Enough: Equity and Inclusion for All, on February 11. Sharnelle is considering it. Please let Trish and I know if you’d like to go to and if so what time. The conference is 7-9 pm on Feb 10 and 8:30-4:30 on Feb 11.

Guest Speaker

Megan Hooft from Canada without Poverty shared some learning from Canada without Poverty’s 2016 [Poverty Progress Profiles](#). As consultations about a federal poverty reduction strategy are beginning, she suggests following the Federal Housing Strategy, for which consultations started last year to get an idea of what the Federal government is willing to do. If they are willing to attach strings to the provincial cash transfers that ensures the money is spent actually addressing poverty that would be a good sign.

There is a real patchwork of data across the various provinces and territories making it difficult to make comparisons. What provinces that have poverty reduction plans have in common are consultations often with a visioning document and actual funding.

There are positive and negative aspects of each provincial program. For example, Quebec has a strong childcare plan and low social assistance rates. Positives from other provinces include:

- Ontario has accountability legislated into their plans, so that they have to report on their progress every five years and renew accordingly
- Newfoundland’s social assistance rates being high enough to put single parents above the poverty line (the only province to do so) and indexing those rates, as well as having a broad focus attacking many issues at once.
- Alberta doesn’t have a plan yet, but have taken bold steps on housing, childcare, and the minimum wage without a plan.

Megan also suggested that Quebec civil society’s willingness to protest and state honestly what’s needed has played a big part in addressing poverty.

She also said that the extent that cost of living has exceeded welfare in BC is unlike anywhere in the province, which creates a whole other conversation about affordability that other provinces are not having.

She also suggested that some provinces may be waiting to see what federal funds come in before making decisions about how much they will commit to poverty reduction.

Poverty Reduction Coalition Update

Trish updated us on what the Coalition is up to.

We will soon be launching our election strategy under the title “Make Poverty Public.” There are 2 streams to this: in response to the dehumanization of poor people, we need to make poverty more visible through stories and images; and, we have public health care and public education, now we need public poverty reduction – this very clearly articulates our demand for government responsibility through a framing that the general public strongly believe in. The strategy will involve a toolkit that we can share with members for organizing “Celebrations of Humanity” which are a different way of doing All-Candidates Meeting, which are mostly people sharing their stories, and then asking the candidates one question at the end for example, “will you support a poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines?” We are also looking to support our Members who are Getting Out the Vote.

Speaker Series: We had a great 2 days with David Morley from UNICEF Canada to launch Value BC: Equality, Justice and Prosperity for All with a focus on children’s inequality. We hosted a webinar on Tuesday morning with a small but engaged audience of 35 from around BC after a very successful event on Monday night with about 130 people – great feedback on presentations and dialogue. And we also took him out to UBC for a student roundtable with a class of 15. *Update since last night:* We’ve rescheduled the Justice event to April, so our next event will be March 29.

Doug will continue to be the Action Team rep at the Coalition meetings. Please let Trish and I know if you’d like to join him as the second rep. The next meeting is Wednesday March 15th at 10 AM

Podcast: We looked over the drafts of questions for Brian to ask when he interviews Paul Taylor tomorrow. The main edits were:

1. To narrow the intro questions to be about food security right away
2. To remove the question about a “healthy diet” because the question about how food security impacts people in their daily lives will get the same type of answer without some of the connotations that have unfortunately come to accompany talk about “healthy diet” (judging individuals)
3. Adding the example of France’s legislation to the question about Food Waste.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/04/french-law-forbids-food-waste-by-supermarkets>

Mythbusters: The Mythbusters subcommittee presented their idea which involves a comic sharing why people need welfare and that welfare isn’t enough. The comic can be printed out as a whole and distributed AND individual comic frames can be split into social media sharables. We will arrange a

meeting with the subcommittee, Raise the Rates and Debra the artist, present them our idea on the structure, and ask them for how they'd like to frame the stories.