

Have Your Say!
Community meeting on Poverty in BC
Salmon Arm Event held at First United Church

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Abstract

After attending the SPARC BC (The Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia) meeting in Kelowna, it was clear to me that a conversation on poverty needed to happen in Salmon Arm including surrounding communities. I wrote a proposal and received confirmation and began planning an event to occur on March 27, 2018. It was just a three-week window but with quick work, it was possible. First United jumped on board along with Canoe United and invitations were sent and local advertising (posters, social media, and radio) were employed.

Have Your Say!

Our evening began with a meal of spaghetti, meat sauce, vegetarian sauce and gluten free options, tea, coffee, and water. Welcomes were given, and introductions made. Forty-two people attended, including 2 children, who were looked after by the child care provided.

Who Attended

Members of First United Church, Canoe United Church, Food Security, Unions, engaged citizens, Community Living, CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association), Okanagan College, citizens living in poverty and those that work with them, and local politicians, including Mayor Nancy Cooper and Councilor Louise Richmond Wallace. Ages ranging from the young to the senior, a well-rounded group.

Communities represented

It is hard to say for sure because attendance was not taken but there were people from: Salmon Arm, Sorrento, Enderby, Canoe, Tappen, Armstrong, Sicamous, and most likely others.

Why I Chose to Host A Poverty Event

Poverty can be found in many places, it can be hidden by the perception of being fine just because someone has a job. Low income caused by low minimum wage, seasonal work, and so many reasons, can be hidden. We had no idea that we would end up living in poverty, it was not part of our plan. The working poor are all around us. This community meeting was a first step for Salmon Arm. First United is planning an affordable housing forum in the future. The time is now for changes that will help people move from poverty to living well. For systems and policies to change recognizing that so many people are living paycheck to paycheck and are at risk of losing everything, if just one thing changes-car breakdown, dentist bill, school fees....

Table of Event

Date	March 27, 2018
Community	Salmon Arm and Surrounding areas
# of participants	42
# of Organizations	9
Number of participants who took an Honourarium	10

Statistics

The issues brought forward by our six table groups have been included in appendix III. You can see for yourself that the conversations were excellent, and people see great need in our communities. I was pleased by the animation of the room while the discussions were taking place.

The top Three issues that came out of our discussions were:

1. Everything to do with housing, social housing, access to appropriate housing
2. Advocacy for people who need to access services and help them navigate the systems
3. Income, living wage, better access to income and no wait times

Coming in almost tied to our third was:

4. Health Care, Dental Care and Mental Illness – access to counselling and clinics

I used the information on the giant sticky notes to create tables for both questions. I created a general topic and then listed the specific items as appropriately as I could.

It was a productive gathering and I look forward to receiving the report from SPARK BC when all the data is gathered and collated.

Hamlin Gravells, 2018

Question One Data Collation

What are the Issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?		Priority
Housing	Not enough social housing	
	Unavailable	
	Too expensive	
	Not pet friendly	
	Deposits too high	
	Makes the other expenses unaffordable when rent/mortgage is so high (phone, hydro, gas)	
	Addiction/mental health issues – lack of supports	
	Funding too low PWD/Multiple Barriers/Welfare	
	Not being able to share housing	
	Access to basics – toiletries – bedding – towels – dishes when housing is found	
	Most is more than 1/3 of your income	
	Illegal basement suites	
Jobs	Training	
	Counselling	
	Under-income gap between wage and expenses keeps growing	
	People with criminal records and mental illness experience more barriers to employment	
Dignity	Being treated as a human being	
	Removing stigma	
	Rules not applied fairly	
	Demoralized	
	Overwhelmed	
	Choosing between housing and nutrition	
	Sense of guilt – don't live up to 'expectations'	
Stigma		
Awareness/ Education	Public Education so people know what services are available	
	Sharing resources	
	No access to further education	
	Programs that would help: budgeting, cooking,	
Activities	For fun/entertainment are not available	
	Not affordable	
	More relational	
	More affordable	
Systemic	Family issue→trauma→addiction→crime→courts→prison	
	As a society we have moved from social values to economic values	
Shelter	Safe storage	
	Not enough spaces	
	Hours not long enough	
Family	Not enough money to support the needs of the family	
Intention		
Purpose		

Hygiene	Clean clothes	
	Warm clothes	
Food	Security	
	Healthy food	
	Food banks are lacking in supplies	
	Food that could be used is thrown out from stores	
	Special needs for food allergies \$\$	
	Affordable food is low in nutrition, high in salt, fat, sugar	
Literacy	Reading/math/communications	
Access	Computers/internet	
	Credit score	
	Education	
	Phones are unaffordable	
	Guide to help find resources	
Transportation	Gas money	
	Bike paths	
	Mobility	
	Taxis	
	Poor snow removal	
	Poor wheel chair access – not consistent	
	Lack of public transportation especially on weekends, holidays, evening and between communities	
	Public bikes	
Health Care	Medication expenses	
	No access to medical services	
Dental Care		
Mental Health		
Safety		
Identification	No Address, no money	
Companionship	Belonging/community	
Trafficking		
Alcohol		
Drugs		
Underemployment/ Unemployment	Not enough opportunities with full time hours 40 per week	
Child care		
Income Support	Paid every two weeks to help with budgeting	
	Office not easily reached	
	Phone workers do not always provide the same information	
	Too many rules you have to fit into a box or you do not get the support	
	Amount you can earn before “claw back” is too low	
Wait times	The amount of time you have to wait for income support and EI is too long. People end up so behind it is impossible to catch up on on-going expenses	

Question Two Data Collation

What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?		Priority
Housing	Need advocacy in between person to build relationships with people to find out their needs and help bridge to get them met – outreach	
	Communal housing	
	Safe affordable housing	
	Senior's housing – staff ratio up and better food	
	Laneway housing	
	Carriage housing	
	Basement suites	
	Small apartments	
	Family homes 2-3 bedrooms	
	Subsidies from government	
	Roommate/house sharing process	
	Year-round shelters	
	Better staff ratios in BC housing	
	Zoning for more social housing and building more social housing	
	Relax rules around rental/in house and basement suites	
	Better use of used construction material reusable refuse from demolitions	
	Tiny homes projects	
	Repurposing old RV's for housing	
	Shelters need common areas to hang out	
	Tax incentives for builders to build social housing	
	Integrate social housing throughout community to help eliminate stigma – scatter housing	
	Re-invent public spaces/churches	
	Land trust	
Health Care	Counselling	
	Clinics (open on Sundays)	
	Outreach	
Communication/ Policy	Peer support groups	
	Advocates – people who have been there who they can relate to, give support and help them reach their goals	
	Review and report on poverty locally (Salmon Arm) every five years	
	People with mental health issues need advocates to come to them	
	Hold things in public trust i.e. treatment centers, Medicare, food, shelter, clothing	
Advocacy	More supports for persons with disabilities helping to navigate systems connect to resources	
	Connect to resources lawyers, doctors, getting benefits (legal aid) help with eligibility	
	Poverty advocates to help with the many issues	
	Cut wait times for drug and alcohol treatment programs	
	Make programs culturally appropriate	

	Make new comers welcome	
Transportation	More bussing – especially on weekends and evenings	
	Bike lanes	
	Car share program	
	Remove red tape around getting reduced/free bus passes	
Income	Living Wage	
	Increased funding from government for PWD/Income Assistance	
	Easier to access funding	
	Flexible application rules	
	Clawing back child support/etc. when you are on PWD/Income Support	
	Cut wait times	
	Social enterprise work/add value to your community/sheltered workshop	
	Outreach workers	
	Access/capacity	
Education	Educate the wealthy (and everyone) how they can share, advocate, use their power to advocate – reduce stigma – bridge to understanding their needs and barriers	
	Teach how to...	
Outreach	Boys/girls club for after school programs	
	Provide more free/low cost community events	
	Maker sheds	
	Subsidy for after/before school care	
	Swim passes	
	Friendship center	
	Recreation	
	Public facilities showers/washing machines	
Food	Gleaning fruit, veggies, canning supplies	
	Better policy around food waste	
	Community kitchen	
	Community gardens	
	Back pack program to help feed families	
	Food banks providing quality food	
employment	Develop more flexible job options	
	Incentives to hire a wider diversity of applicants	
Statistics	GAP analysis	
	Social agencies	

Agenda

Small Group Discussion

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Refreshments, Territory Acknowledgment, Opening Comments
5:30 – 6:15 p.m.	Table discussions – Part 1: 1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
6:15 – 6:30 p.m.	Break
6:30 – 7:15 p.m.	Table discussions – Part 2: 2. What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?
7:15 – 7:30 p.m.	Priority Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual priorities (dots)• Top “3” priorities and solutions (table discussion)
7:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Report back from the tables
8:00 – 8:15 p.m.	Closing Remarks/Next Steps

HAVE YOUR SAY!

COMMUNITY MEETING ON POVERTY IN BC

WE WANT TO KNOW...

What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

What would work to help you and people out of poverty?

Your ideas will inform the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy!

March 27, 2018

5:00 - 8:15 pm

First United Church

450 Okanagan Ave E

Register at: hgramlin@gmail.com or 250 675-3862

A hot meal will be provided

Supports are available to help you participate, including transportation, child care, disability and health supports, as well as secure storage for belongings.

If you need supports to participate, please contact:
Heather Hamlin Gravells 250 675-3862

Mar 27

Names removed

- Issues facing people in poverty.

- ● ● Housing ● unavailable
 - - too expensive
 - (deposits too high
 - phone
 - hydro
 - gas
 - rent deposit)
 - not pet friendly
 - addiction / mental health issues.
 - funding too low - PWD / Multiple Barriers / Welfare.
(not being allowed to share housing)

2. What is the progression?
- training? jobs? counselling?

3. Dignity - being treated as a human being - removing the stigma.
- rules are not applied fairly

4. Awareness - public education so people know what services are available - sharing resources

- more relational
- more community

5. Activities for fun / entertainment
- not available
- not affordable

Issues - People in Poverty.

Lack of donations/supplies for Food banks.

Wastage - large amounts of post-dated food thrown out - rather than given to those in need.

- Alcohol, drugs, mental illness + under-^{un}employment.

Special needs - for food (allergies) \$\$.

- Affordable housing (more than $\frac{1}{3}$ your income.)

- We've moved from social values to economic values (need to move back to social/community.)

People in poverty - demoralized / overwhelmed.

Having to choose between housing / nutrition, medication / childcare ... / further education.

Most 'affordable' food - low nutrition, high salt, fat, sugar.

Sense of guilt - don't live up to others 'expectations'.

- Under. income Gap between Wage + expenses keeps GROWING.

- shortage of affordable housing ☼☼☼
- no way to get \$ without permanent address.
- no safe storage; lost i.d.
- poor snow removal on sidewalks
- can't afford medication; can't access medical services
- poor wheelchair access - not consistent
- high cost of groceries; no place to cook
- stigma around poverty
- lack of public transportation - esp. evenings, weekends & between communities.
- S.S. office not easily reached
- computers / internet ☹
- can't afford phone

- people w/ criminal records & mental illness experience more barriers to employment.
- child care - \$●
- easy to find resource guide

Low Cost Housing - 3 yrs waiting list 641 - Income

Bus service once an hr. No weekends or holidays.
No service to Industrial Park. 8:00 to 6:00 P.M. Bus hours

Wait time for subways

Dental Care

Low Employment Opportunities with fulltime hrs 40 per week

Legal Basement Suites = ?

ISSUES
RIGHT
NOW

⊙ INTENTION

⊙ DIGNITY

⊙ PURPOSE

⊙ JOBS / TRAINING

⊙ MOM + DAD don't have
enough \$

⊙ FAMILY ISSUE

⊙ TRAUMA...



⊙ ADDICTION ^{JOBS}

↓
⊙ CRIME → ⊙ COURT



⊙ PRISON

⊙ SHELTER / SAFE STORAGE

⊙ HYGIENE / CLEAN CLOTHES / WARM CLOTHES

⊙ FOOD SECURITY - healthy food •

⊙ LITERACY. READING / MATH / COMMUNICATIONS

⊙ ACCESS (internet) ⊕ COMPUTER

⊙ CREDIT / CREDIT SCORE ⊙ EDUCATION 😊

⊙ GAS MONEY / MOBILITY / BIKE

⊙ BASIC TOILETRIES / BASIC ^{HOUSEHOLD ITEMS (mug, thermos)} BEDDING

⊙ HEALTH CARE ? / DENTAL CARE / MENTAL health

SAFETY ⊙ ID ⊙ COMPANIONSHIP

Housing

→ More Low cost housing

Government Concerns

→ paid every 2 weeks instead of every 5 weeks to help with Budgeting
→ Ministry too many rules you have to fit into a box or you don't get the support

Food Bank

→ Specialty foods for Celiac

Communication

→ get to know people on the street, build relationships find out what their needs are
→ Peer support groups, people who have been there who they can relate to, give support and help them reach their goals

Homelessness

→ Shelters requirements need some changes

→ Need Advocacy imbetween person to build relationships with people to find out their needs and help bridge to get them what

Outreach

Advocacy

→ More supports for persons with disabilities helping to navigate systems connect to resources
→ Connect to resources Lawyers, doctors, getting Benefits, (legal aid) help with eligibility

→ Addressing social needs as well as basic needs.
- Belonging
- community
- support
→ ~~More low cost housing~~

Transportation

→ Busing on the weekend
→ Busing in the evening able to get out and enjoy evening events in the community
→ Bike Lanes to neighbouring
→ Bicycles available for low income

What would help?

1. Living wage

Senior's Housing
- staff ratio ↑
- better food

2. Communal housing

3. Affordable housing - laneway housing
(safe)
- carriage houses
- basement suites
- small apartments
- family / 2 or 3 bedrooms
- subsidies from gov't

4. Increased funding from gov't

- ↑ Welfare / PWD / etc

- ↑ SAFER - make it easier to get

5. Flexible application of rules

6. Roommate / house sharing vetting process

7. Stop clawing back child support / etc
when you^{are} on PWD / welfare

8. Outreach / Education

9. Year round shelters

- review & report on poverty in S.A.
- Zoning ^(every 5 years?) for more social housing
- building ^{→ more social housing} around rental / in house units / illegal suites
- relax rules
- storage & distribution of donated / used / reusable building materials
- gleaners - fruit, veggies, canning supplies
- Car Share Program
- Boys/Girls Club or Resource Center before/after school
- remove "red tape" around getting programs.
- reduced bus passes
- "subsidy for after (before) school/daycare
- poverty advocates office (to help with many issues)
- TINY HOMES - CITY PURCHASE
- better legislation around food waste
- develop more flexible job options - incentives to hire a wider diversity of applicants
- Community kitchen; community garden
- repurposing old RV's for housing
- "back pack" program to help feed

- Educational programs available
 - disability benefits
 - gov't assistance
 - budgeting
 - education
- cooking
- access housing

Solutions

- Social assistance paid every 2 weeks or Bi-M to help with budgeting.

- Educate the Rich - how they can best share or be involved
- & general public

- Provide more low cost/diverse community events or free

- how can my wealth be used
- maybe through presentations at organizations, service clubs, churches
- Break the Stigma
- A bridge to understanding their needs and barriers

- Change Basement Suite ruling to be more accommodating to Low cost housing

- Shelters more safe and accommodating
 - common area/hangout
 - allowance for pets & care
 - Lockers for belongings
 - better hours not 7am need to be out

- Outreach for advocacy Looks like
 - people hired to meet people (homeless) on the street one on one and getting to know them and help bridge them to resources needed to reach their goals.
 - Find out their needs and motivation levels. *It's a process and takes time to help people to help in the direction they want to go.*
- More funding for Bus routes, busing on evenings and weekends

② What would address these issues?

policy - for people w mental health issues
 services the resources need to come to
 programs them.

s. - Free bus passes (Can be in partnership w
 service group)

Social assistance in form of food vouchers / rent
 like a debit card. ● pre-paid

- Cut waiting times
 for drug + alcohol treatment programs.

- make these programs more culturally appropriate

● Hold things in public trust e.g. treatment center
 medicare, 'food, shelter + clothing' e.g. tax incentives

- Social housing - need to give incentives to builders
 for ↑ incorporate/integrate social housing through out
 community -- so there is no 'stigma' about income.
 'scatter' housing.

WHAT WOULD ADDRESS THIS?

scattered housing

- pocket neighbourhoods
- makersheds



Housing

- zoning
- re-invent public space/church
- land trust



Clothing
Items
cleaning

- public facilities
- showers
- washing machines



Income

- outreach workers
- access/capacity



"WELCOME newcomers"
Belonging/Communities
gathering together connection community



Health care
addiction

- counselling
- clinics
- outreach



Transportation

- Free transit/reduced/subsidized
- car sharing
- trails/

upstream
VS
downstream.

- swim passes
- Friendship centre



Recreation

garden plots



FOOD

- FARM hands
- FOOD BANK
- QUALITY DONI
- GROW FOOD



EDUCATION
TEACH "HOW TO"



SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE
WORK/ADD VALUE TO
YOUR COMMUNITY.
SHELTERED WORKSHOP

STATISTICS! GAP ANALYSIS!
SOCIAL AGENCY