

The Health Promotion Clearinghouse (HPC) would like to gratefully acknowledge our operational funder, the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection.

HPC would also like to thank the following conference funders, sponsors and contributors:



For a copy of the full post-conference report (50 pages), please go to our website.

A limited number of printed copies are available by contacting:

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I. Introduction

The “Building Wellbeing and Prosperity Together: Taking Action on Poverty in Nova Scotia”

conference took place in Truro, Nova Scotia, October 26–28, 2010 and was attended by over 260 participants. It was hosted by the Health Promotion Clearinghouse (HPC), planned and carried out by a diverse multi-sectoral steering committee and working groups, and funded by government, community organizations and the private sector.

GOALS

Tackling poverty and the policies that influence it requires new and innovative approaches that engage the many stakeholders connected to the social and economic factors that create and maintain poverty.

The conference goals were to: (1) improve our understanding about the human, social and economic costs of poverty; (2) share ideas about how we can reduce poverty; (3) learn about barriers to reducing poverty and how we can overcome them; (4) learn more about how we – as governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations and community groups – can reduce poverty by working together with those living in poverty; and (5) develop our ability as a community to be involved and active in reducing poverty.

ORGANIZING TEAM AND PRINCIPLES

The steering committee and working groups that planned and implemented the conference were made up of representatives from four sectors – (1) Non-profit/voluntary; (2) Government; (3) Business; and (4) Persons living in poverty.

Members of the Organizing Team included representatives from: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Nova Scotia; Community Advocates Network; Community Coalition to End Poverty; Community Links; Face of Poverty Consultation; Feed Nova Scotia; Feminists for Just & Equitable Public Policy; Halifax Community Health Board; Halifax Humanities 101; Halifax Regional Municipality; Health Promotion Clearinghouse; Nova Scotia Co-operative Council; North End Community Health Centre; Nova Scotia Association

of Black Social Workers; Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers; Nova Scotia Departments of Community Services, Health Promotion and Protection, and Labour and Workforce Development; Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission; Nova Scotia Federation of Labour; and Women’s Centres Connect.

Four principles guided the planning and implementation of the 2.5-day conference:

(1) Inclusion – The conference encouraged participation from across Nova Scotia and from four targeted sectors: Non-profit/voluntary; Government; Business; and Persons living in poverty. Participation of 60 low income participants was fully subsidized (transportation, accommodations and meals). Subsidies for services such as child, elder or attendant care were also provided.

(2) Social Justice: The conference content and format was based on the values of social justice, human rights, and social and economic inclusion.

(3) Collaboration: A key focus of the conference was building greater capacity in communities and in the province to bring all sectors together to address poverty in a more collaborative and effective way.

(4) Action: Action is needed to make the other principles come to life. It is not enough to understand and discuss poverty. The conference included a ‘next steps’ session to generate ideas/actions for addressing poverty in Nova Scotia.



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Tuesday, October 26 (Open to the Public)

- Opening Ceremonies
- First Voice Panel: Living in Poverty in Nova Scotia
- The Hon. Art Eggleton – “*We Can’t Afford Poverty Anymore*”
- Reception

Wednesday, October 27

- Greetings and Opening Remarks
- The Hon. Ed Broadbent – “*Out With The New Barbarism: Combating Poverty And Inequality*”
- Dr. Christine Saulnier (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives–NS) – “*The Cost of Poverty in Nova Scotia,*” followed by a panel discussion from the perspectives of groups particularly vulnerable to poverty
- Table Discussions
- Local Success Stories and Challenges: Eight presentations and discussions
- Lessons Learned from Different Jurisdictions: Panel discussion from the perspectives of non-governmental, business, and government

Evening (Open to the Public)

- Liz Weaver, Vibrant Communities “*Communities Can Reduce Poverty – Five Stories Prove It’s True: Creating Vibrant Communities*”
- Screening of films “*Poor No More*” and “*Four Feet Up*”

Thursday, October 28

- Liz Weaver, Vibrant Communities Presentation and Workshop on Collaboration “*Faster Alone, Farther Together*”
- “Next Steps” Sessions – Facilitated regional discussions on next steps for taking action on poverty in Nova Scotia
- Motivational Speaker – Robert Wright
- Flip Chart Gallery Walkabout
- Closing plenary

Videos of plenary sessions and other conference-related documentation and links are available on the Taking Action on Poverty Conference website at <http://hpclearinghouse.net/blogs/endingpovertyns/pages/home.aspx>.

II. Highlights

OPENING CEREMONIES

Charla Williams, conference moderator, introduced Elder Doug Knockwood of the Shubenacadie First Nation. Elder Knockwood opened the conference with a Mi’kmaq prayer and smudging ceremony. Greetings were provided by: Mayor Bill Mills (Town of Truro); the Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse (Minister of Community Services); The Honourable Marilyn More (Minister of Labour and Workforce Development); and Jeanne Fay (Co-Chair of the Conference Steering Committee).

FIRST VOICE PANEL

The panel was moderated by **Rita Shelton Deverell** (Mount Saint Vincent University) and featured three people with direct experience of living in poverty in Nova Scotia. Their stories told of difficult life experiences that led to living in poverty—disability, injury, loss of a job, and escaping an abusive relationship. They told of frustration, anger and hard-won accomplishments in caring for themselves and their families. Fear, loss of dignity and loss of choice were part of the experience for each of them in their relationships with the social assistance system, in realizing the inadequacy of welfare allowances, and their difficulties with housing.



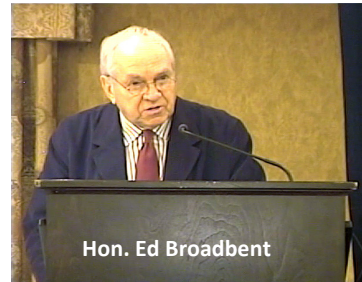
L to R: Wayne MacNaughton, Rita Shelton Deverell, Kimberly Bush and Laura Smith

“WE CAN’T AFFORD POVERTY ANYMORE”

Senator Art Eggleton delivered a presentation based on the Canadian Senate Committee’s report *In From the Margins: A Call for Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*. The Senator described the economic costs of poverty, quoting a recent study that concluded poverty in Canada costs over \$30 billion annually, more than half of the current federal deficit. The underlying common sense premise of the Report, he stated, is that social programs should lift people out of poverty, not keep them there.

“OUT WITH THE NEW BARBARISM: COMBATING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY”

The **Honourable Ed Broadbent** described poverty and the growth in inequality in Canada as “the most serious issue of our time.” He pointed to the major ideological and material reversal that began in the 1990s in Canada and other Western democracies as responsible for increased poverty and inequality among its citizens. He used the book *The Spirit Level* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, to illustrate the society-wide positive social consequences of greater equality. Unequal societies are not only unfair, they are dysfunctional. “We have known for a long time that poverty and inequality are bad for those directly affected by it ... we now also know that inequality harms us all.”



THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS OF POVERTY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Dr. Christine Saulnier from the Nova Scotia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA-NS) highlighted the shared economic burden of poverty in Nova Scotia and the business case for reducing and ultimately eliminating poverty in the province. CCPA-NS estimates the total economic costs of poverty in Nova Scotia at \$1.5 to \$2.2 billion per year or 5–7% of Nova Scotia’s GDP in 2008. Also referring to “The Spirit Level,” Dr. Saulnier called for investment in preventative measures such as literacy programs and improved education outcomes, and for greater economic democracy through employee ownership, union membership and cooperative enterprises.

A panel responded to the CCPA-NS report and presented additional perspectives on the social costs of poverty for women, people with disabilities and Aboriginal people.

Lucille Harper, from the Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre, spoke of Nova Scotia’s gender gap being higher than the national average, and pointed to the disproportionate distribution and undervaluing of women’s caring and nurturing work. She talked about the high level of entrenched poverty and underemployment, the lack of sustainable jobs, and the need for affordable public transportation in rural communities. Ms. Harper called for a guaranteed liveable income based on an understanding of, and more equitable distribution of, our “common wealth.”

“What I don’t think most people realize is the economic cost of poverty. How it is costing each and every one of us - forcing up our tax bills, depressing the economy, increasing health care bills and breeding alienation and crime.”

“Poverty is not benign. It affects us all. It costs us all. We spend a lot of money and don’t get the results we should. Overall we don’t need to spend more money, we need to spend smarter, more efficiently and effectively.”

– Senator Art Eggleton

“70% of Canadian households have a smaller share [of the national income] now than they had at the end of the 1990s.”

“Research has shown that more equal nations like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, are better off in almost every way. Their citizens are healthier, live longer, have fewer teenage pregnancies, are more law abiding, participate more in civic projects and are more trusting of their neighbours.”

– The Honourable Ed Broadbent

Cheryl Maloney, President of the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, identified lack of transportation to get to work and health facilities as a huge problem for women in First Nations communities. She focused on the historical violence to families within First Nations, starting with the bounty Europeans placed on the Mi’kmaq, and the impact of residential schools. She explained that today’s violence is marked by missing and murdered women, and suicide. Ms. Maloney spoke about the lack of support for aboriginal women and families and emphasized the need for allies to reach out to aboriginal communities.

Claredon Robicheau, of the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities, noted that there are 198,000 persons with various disabilities in the province, and that 20% of disabilities are invisible. He explained that persons with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty because of lower incomes and the high cost of technical aids. M. Robicheau illustrated the financial benefits of investing in persons with disabilities, and spoke of the strategy being developed by 15 organizations across the province to provide self-determination, the right to work, dignity, and universal access to technical aids so persons with disabilities can continue to contribute to their communities and families.



L to R: L. Harper, C. Robicheau, C. Maloney, C. Williams, and Dr. C. Saulnier (presenting)

PANEL ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS

The panel consisted of speakers from three sectors: non-governmental, business and government.

Gail Nyberg, from the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto, talked about the comprehensive review of services and tax credits conducted as part of Ontario’s poverty reduction strategy. The review recommended the social assistance system be dismantled in favour of a system focused on income security. As it is, “living in poverty is a full-time job.” Ms. Nyberg’s advice included engaging with government, paying attention to the sustainability of proposed reforms, actively engaging business, and seeking a high level of inclusiveness to avoid backlash.

Monica Chaperlin, of the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI), talked about how the business community in Saint John has been organizing since 1997 to address poverty. Over time, these programs have focused on the improvement of policies and programs for low income children, youth and young families so that “no child in the future will suffer lifelong poverty.”

Lynn Vivian-Book, Assistant Deputy Minister of Income, Employment and Youth Services with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, spoke about her province’s poverty reduction strategy. The strategy is currently in its sixth year, involves 12 ministries working collaboratively, and includes \$134 million worth of initiatives. The 2009 Progress Report documented 15 indicators to measure results. It concluded that all available measures of low-income showed positive trends and substantial progress towards meeting the goal of becoming the province with the lowest poverty levels in Canada.

Brenda Murray, of the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, shared the podium with Lynn Hartwell of the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development. Ms. Murray talked about the consultations conducted when developing Nova Scotia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. The number one issue identified during the consultations was that people did not know how to access government services. The inventory conducted during the consultations identified 70 different programs offered by government departments for persons living on a low income in Nova Scotia.

Lynn Hartwell began by talking about the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit. The credits began in July 2010 and are intended to reduce the impact of changes in Nova Scotia’s tax system on individuals and families living in deep poverty. She commented on the different language used by different government departments in talking about poverty, and suggested that a common language would be a step in the right direction. Ms. Hartwell also highlighted the need to engage the wider community. “We [the people in this room] are the choir,” she stated, “The move forward needs to start here and get bigger.”



L to R: G. Nyberg, M. Chaperlin, L. Vivian-Book, B. Murray, and L. Hartwell

WORKING TOGETHER FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Liz Weaver, Lead Coach of the Vibrant Communities Canada Team from the Tamarack Institute, contributed two presentations on collaboration. The first, *Communities Can Reduce Poverty – Five Stories Prove It’s True*, illustrated successes and lessons learned in four Canadian cities and a rural community in the USA. The second, *Faster Alone, Farther Together*, included a presentation, an interactive exercise, and table discussions on the benefits and challenges of collaboration.

Ms. Weaver talked about five main reasons for collaboration: 1) because you share a concern; 2) to pool power; 3) to add diversity; 4) to overcome gridlock; and 5) to increase your ability to deal with complex problems and issues. She explained that collaboration is about broad participation, building relationships, systems thinking, empathy and distributed leadership. Some of the keys to successful collaboration include overcoming mistrust, using open and participatory processes, being able to see ‘the big picture’, and watching for windows of opportunity for building relationships and taking action. She also spoke of some of the challenges of collaborating —e.g. power differences between collaborators, lack of a common vision, hidden agendas, apathy, difficulty in identifying the ‘real problem’, and the tendency to try to avoid risk.

INSPIRATION FROM ROBERT WRIGHT

Robert Wright began by reading excerpts from a James Baldwin essay about Harlem, “Fifth Avenue, Uptown”, first published in 1960. The key message in the essay, he explained, is that poverty is expensive. Living in poverty is expensive, and allowing poverty to continue is expensive. Mr. Wright illustrated that “poverty is personal, poverty is structural and poverty is political.” He suggested that a good start for programmatic answers to poverty was to implement the recommendations of the Senate Committee’s report *In from the Margins*.

Mr. Wright described the presence of poverty in society as social and moral bankruptcy, and pointed to the need for a social and economic revolution to eradicate poverty. He spoke of the impact we as voters have in creating the political will to end poverty. “Those who seek elected office without being willing to speak about poverty and their solutions, and who don’t understand the complexity and structural nature of poverty, should not be elected to the office they seek.”



III. Next Steps

Facilitated sessions for discussing ‘next steps’ for taking action on poverty in Nova Scotia were held on the final day of the conference. The concurrent sessions were organized regionally (Cape Breton, Northern Nova Scotia, Annapolis Valley to Yarmouth, South Shore and Southwest Nova Scotia, Dartmouth and Halifax) so that people could ‘connect’ before they left the conference.

Four main directions emerged from these sessions: (1) increase public awareness and political will; (2) focus on policy change and government initiatives; (3) develop enabling mechanisms and structures for addressing poverty; and (4) enhance community-based resources for people living in poverty.

1. Increase Public Awareness and Political Will

a. Dispel poverty myths.

There is widespread belief that public opinion and pressure is necessary to move public policy in the direction of addressing poverty. To this end, participants suggested that a social marketing campaign should be launched to heighten awareness about the social causes and consequences of poverty and to dispel myths about poverty and people who live in poverty. The campaign needs to be based on a better understanding of the general public’s attitudes and perceptions of poverty. As stated by one participant, “We need to understand how Nova Scotians actually see this issue... Until we understand this, we can’t get them engaged.”

- b. Build awareness about the social and economic costs of poverty among the middle class and business sector.

Many participants agreed on the need to reach out to the middle class and business sector to make poverty a 'voteable' issue. To more effectively engage these sectors, a change in language was suggested—e.g. using terms like “mutual prosperity” or “opportunities for change” rather than poverty. It was also noted that a socially conscious market-based approach is needed to engage the business community.

- c. Emphasize that human rights and equality benefit everyone.

Ed Broadbent's keynote address resonated with many participants. Participants pointed to the need to clarify our provincial and national values and to nurture a political discourse valuing social justice and equity. There was agreement that we need to eliminate the idea that poverty has to exist and convey that eliminating poverty is in everyone's interest.

- d. Monitor and advocate at provincial and federal levels.

Participants suggested that more effort is needed to monitor the activities and discussion/debate of the Provincial Legislature and Legislative Committees in order to support the effective lobbying of MLAs by citizens and other groups. Federally, it was suggested that MPs be lobbied to support the implementation of the recommendations from the Senate Committee's report “In from the Margins: A Call for Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness.”

- e. Engage municipal government in addressing poverty.

The need to engage municipal governments in tackling poverty was also raised repeatedly. Participants suggested that the community asset inventory in Wolfville (Vital Signs project) may be useful in engaging other municipalities.

2. Focus on Policy Change and Government Initiatives

- a. Resolve jurisdictional confusion around Aboriginal peoples' access to services.
- b. Conduct a public review of the Residential Tenancies Act with a focus on housing standards and rent control.



- c. Conduct a public review of the Employment Support and Income Assistance program, focusing on claw backs, allowable assets, adequacy of shelter and personal allowances, and maintaining the dignity of those in need. Explore the merits of a system based on income security versus social assistance was suggested (e.g. Guaranteed Liveable Income).
- d. Develop a provincial Affordable Housing Strategy.
- e. Conduct a Labour Standards Review to explore how to encourage employers to improve their employment policies.
- f. Develop a provincial Transportation Strategy.
- g. Explore sustainable job creation, particularly the development of social enterprises.
- h. Establish poverty reduction performance measures and monitor levels of poverty across the province as a way to assess the effectiveness of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- i. Review Education Policy to better ensure inclusivity and a level playing field for children from poor families.
- j. Establish an ombudsman and/or a formalized non-governmental grievance body for the appeal of income assistance complaints.

3. Develop enabling mechanisms and structures for addressing poverty.

- a. Establish a provincial mechanism to discuss and disseminate success stories, and to contribute to the definition of more concrete outcomes, timelines and guidelines for the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy. This mechanism should engage stakeholders and provide one place where information is accessible (e.g. a website).

- b. Establish more regional coalitions. Groups from the Annapolis Valley and Cape Breton left the conference with this intention.
- c. Establish Rural Community Development Councils. These councils should focus on improving quality of life, an idea consistent with creating a common language to engage the middle class and business sectors, as mentioned above. They could also be effective vehicles for engaging the municipal level of government.

4. Enhance community-based resources for people living in poverty.

- a. Initiate and continue work at the community and neighbourhood level:
 - Establish Community Advocate Centres in every town and networks in every community.
 - Establish local “system” navigators, possibly peer navigators, to assist with poverty-related programs and services.
 - Establish mentorship programs for low-income individuals/families in communities similar to those for new Canadians and refugees.
- b. Disseminate the Welfare Rights Handbook developed by Dalhousie Legal Aid more widely.
- c. Conduct courses and training for both income assistance clients and service providers concerning clients’ rights, available programs, and maintaining respect.
- d. Establish or better promote (where they already exist) community-based volunteer services to maximize access to government benefits through taxes.
- e. Establish a website, one source of information about services available to people living in poverty.
- f. Expand roles of existing structures to include poverty reduction (e.g. Community Health Boards, libraries, school boards, family resource centres, women’s centres, post-secondary institutions).



IV. Measuring Success

Evaluation surveys were completed by participants at the end of each of the two days of the conference.

The diversity and inclusiveness of the conference is supported by responses to the demographic questions. More than half of participants self-identified as currently living in poverty (24%) or having done so in the past (31%). Participants worked/volunteered within a diversity of sectors, their interest in poverty stemmed from various perspectives, and a substantial proportion of them were focused on issues not traditionally associated with anti-poverty work.

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

The majority of participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the conference overall, as well as with registration and subsidy processes, conference sessions, and conference facilities. The strongest ratings were for the sessions by the Hon. Ed Broadbent, Robert Wright, and the First Voice Panellists. Eighty-one percent of participants rated the conference as either Good or Excellent.

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

1. Improve Our Understanding about the Human, Social And Economic Costs Of Poverty

Increases in knowledge were reported by almost all participants. Overall, between 90% and 97% reported some increase in knowledge related to the human, social and economic costs of poverty and to poverty as a human rights issue.

2. Share Ideas about How We Can Reduce Poverty

Across the sessions, 92%–97% of participants reported increases in knowledge related to ideas for reducing poverty.

3. Learn About Barriers Involved in Reducing Poverty and How We Can Overcome Them

The ideas that arose in the “Next Steps” break-out sessions identified key barriers to reducing poverty, including: lack of public awareness and political will, ineffective policies and initiatives, inadequate enabling mechanisms and structures, and the need for enhancing community-based resources for people living in poverty. More than 90% of participants reported that their knowledge about the barriers to addressing poverty and how to overcome them had increased as a result of the conference.

4. Learn More about How We – As Governments, Businesses, Nonprofit Organizations And Community Groups – Can Reduce Poverty By Working Together With Those Living In Poverty

In total, 96% of respondents indicated that they had learned about collaboration on poverty reduction, and 69% indicated that they had learned *A Lot* or *Quite a Bit*.

This assessment is supported qualitatively by the number of initiatives identified in the “Next Steps” sessions that include building new relationships and strengthening existing ones.

5. Develop Our Ability as a Community to be Involved and Active In Reducing Poverty.

While the true impact on community action and involvement in reducing poverty can only be assessed in the future, there are some clear indicators supporting this objective:

All but two participants reported an impact on their motivation/intentions to connect with others and to use information from the conference in their work. Overall, 85% of participants said the conference impacted their motivation/intentions to connect with others to reduce poverty *A Lot* or *Quite a Bit*. Similarly, more than three-quarters said they intended to use information from the conference in their work *A Lot* or *Quite a Bit*.

V. Concluding Thoughts

Charla Williams provided a recap of the main conference themes. “The themes are very clear,” she began. “Number one is that poverty has got to go. There is just no need for it. It is unacceptable.” The second theme is the need to raise the level of public awareness and to put a human face on the issue of poverty. “We need to get every Nova Scotian to be aware of the issues relating to poverty. We need to get everybody doing something to eliminate—not to reduce—but to eliminate poverty.” Other themes emerging from the conference included:

- Getting the general public involved will also get the government involved. Elected officials will not work on poverty unless supported by voters.
- The general public needs to understand that we have the ability to meet everybody’s basic food, shelter and clothing needs.
- The language associated with poverty is aggressive (e.g. “the war on poverty”) and does not engage everyone.
- We need to send the message that eliminating poverty is manageable.
- We need to dispel the myths and stereotypes surrounding poverty (e.g. the poor are lazy, addicted, not willing to work, etc.)
- A living wage is a requirement. Minimum wage in this economy is not enough.
- System “navigators” could help people living in poverty learn about and access available services/ programs.



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QUOTES FROM THE CONFERENCE

“When you are on social assistance, you are forced to beg and ... you are forced to feel second class.”

– **Wayne MacNaughton**

“The only way that I could see anything getting any better for me and my children was education.”

– **Kimberly Bush**

“I fell very hard into the social safety net... Any semblance of self worth that I had garnered for myself had to be liquidated before I was given a penny. The grace of my career, my life, was disintegrating before my eyes.”

– **Laura Smith**

“One witness who has experienced poverty expressed it this way: ‘Poverty steals from your soul leaving you with little or no hope. It robs you of all that can be good in life. It leaves you isolated, lonely and hungry. Every day is a struggle’.”

“A recent study estimates that poverty costs this country about \$7.5 billion every year in health care costs alone and between \$8 and \$13 billion in lost productivity.”

“Imagine what eliminating poverty would mean to our fiscal situation! To our ability to pay for education, innovation, public transit, affordable housing and health care.”

– **Senator Art Eggleton**

“We now have more than 55 billionaires and thousands of multimillionaires. But the vast majority of Canadians have actually seen a downward shift... More than three million Canadians live in poverty.”

“People like to be inspired, but before they vote they need to be persuaded... Democratic citizens will support serious change when they are convinced by evidence that those promising it can make it work.”

“We have known for a long time that poverty and inequality are bad for those directly affected by it—the unemployed, poor kids, anxious seniors, overburdened middle-class families. But as I have said, we now also know that inequality harms us all.”

– **The Honourable Ed Broadbent**

“When we help those in need, we make Nova Scotia a better place to live for everyone.”

– **Dr. Christine Saulnier**

“We are a small province, we know each other, we see each other, and we can change it.”

– **Lucille Harper**

“Reach out to [First Nations] communities. We need to partner.”

– **Cheryl Maloney**

“Our motto [League for Equal Opportunities] is ‘Nothing about us, without us’. It is about a life with dignity. There are so many falling through the cracks.”

– **Claredon Robicheau**

“We don’t have the luxury of not being able to have those conversations with one another; we don’t have the luxury of not opening the doors to more voices and more people to be involved in the conversation.”

– **Lynn Hartwell**

“The system has become so big, so cumbersome, so fragmented. It’s really hard to know exactly what is going on, who’s doing what and what impact it is having.”

– **Brenda Murray**

“If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organizations and community.”

– **Liz Weaver**

“How do we take children out of poverty while leaving their parents in it?”

“We need to recognize the intersections of poverty and gender, poverty and race, poverty and First Nations.”

– **Robert Wright**

“In my personal opinion, this is amazing... that those who have attended this conference have come to those conclusions. Not everybody thought that we could get here. This is a small step. The longest journey begins with a single step so, as some in my community would say, ‘Let’s get to stepping’.”

– **Charla Williams**