

Recommendations for Implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act (Manitoba)

January 2012



Social Planning Council
of Winnipeg

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1. Executive Summary

In June 2011, the government of Manitoba put its All Aboard program before the legislature and passed the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act. Putting the All Aboard Poverty Reduction Strategy into legislation is an important and valuable initiative on the part of the government. Activists and representatives of agencies working to eliminate poverty and reduce the effects of poverty now have a way of monitoring government action in areas it has defined as critical to a “long term strategy to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion across Manitoba.”

There are, however, some major structural and operational weaknesses in both the strategy and the legislation. As a strategy for directing government resources, the Act and All Aboard does define how the government will coordinate services, prioritize high risk populations and formalize its commitments (in budgets and annual reports). As a framework for monitoring government action, the legislation is somewhat satisfactory. However, a coherent encompassing public strategy for reducing poverty in Manitoba is missing and the legislation provides virtually no direction on how to “increase social inclusion.”

This report will look at the Manitoba legislation and different poverty reduction strategies (PRS), to consider how these government plans have benefited and can benefit people living in poverty. We will compare and contrast strategies to learn what seems to be working and what has been less effective.

For example, Newfoundland and Labrador has had a PRS since 2006. Since then, the number of people living in absolute poverty has declined significantly while the number of people in relative poverty has continually gone down. A lesson from their experience is that effective poverty reduction requires a broad range of interventions, must be tied to economic development, and needs to include short, medium, and long term goals to make substantial progress even during economic downturns.

In the “View from Here: Manitobans call for a poverty reduction plan” (2009), a consultation of community organizations defined the basic elements of a poverty reduction plan:

- Comprehensive and coordinated approach
- Consult meaningfully with citizens
- Targets and timelines
- Collaboration across government departments, and
- Evaluation and reporting on progress.

While the Manitoba government has incorporated some measures that follow the above elements, there is not enough in the Act to assure comprehensive implementation and results.

We at the SPCW are going to work with the government to reduce poverty and implement its PRS. To assist the government, we think there are ways to enhance the government’s implementation of the PRS legislation and to develop the mechanisms to concretely reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. In this report we look at the Act in some detail and suggest what can be done to more effectively address poverty in Manitoba.

In particular, we think the government should:

- i. Define poverty in the legislation and thus provide a vision of poverty that can elicit support and action from government, private sector and non-governmental agencies.
- ii. Involve or invite other community players to be part of implementing a public strategy.
- iii. Recognize that people living in poverty are the most critical ally of the government in reducing poverty. Working with them in changing their circumstances is another means of building our provincial economy, and acknowledging that they are an asset to our society.
- iv. Make the All Aboard Committee authoritative and able to direct the implementation, evaluation and changes to the government's policies, not just be an advisory body.
- v. Plan an annual consultation on implementing and monitoring the PRS with community representatives and organizations - those involved in delivering services, assisting, advocating for or supporting people living in poverty.
- vi. Develop regulations that include targets and timelines to accompany the legislation before the next provincial budget is presented to the legislature.
- vii. Outline key policy and operational changes the government will make to current programming (income assistance, housing, employment and training) which will immediately help people living with low incomes and in the long term, will assist in reducing poverty.
- viii. Develop evaluation tools to measure how the PRS strategy and government programs are affecting or benefiting people living in poverty. This evaluation must include input from the people who experience poverty.

This paper is intended to be a discussion document and therefore part of the ongoing contribution to how organizations, groups and individuals collaborate to address issues of poverty in Winnipeg.

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2. Current Conditions of Poverty

a. Defining and Measuring Poverty

Poverty is a multi-faceted concept, understood by different people in different ways. While there is no universally agreed upon definition of poverty, people who live in poverty know it beyond academic definitions and arguments.

At the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, we see poverty as linked to inequity and inequality. Poverty is the consistent lack of resources, choices, opportunities and power that people need to live fully in their community. People living in poverty know the constant threat of always being a little behind, of running out and never catching up, of making hard choices between one need and another.

We have chosen a relative measure of poverty - the low income measure, before-tax (LIM-BT) - to reflect this perspective of poverty. This is measure used by international bodies including the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and has been correlated with health and educational outcomes. According to this measure, when a family's income is less than half of the median income for a family of an equivalent size, they are seen as living in poverty. In 2009, this meant families with incomes below the following levels:

Low Income Measures, Before Tax, 2009			
Number of Adults	Number of Children		
	0	1	2
1	\$17,720	\$24,810	\$30,120
2	\$24,810	\$30,120	\$35,440

In 2009, the most recent data available, people in poverty (below the LIM-BT) in Manitoba (not including people living on reserves) included:

Age Sector	Numbers	Percent of population
Children (Under 18)	92,650	32.6%
Adults (18-64)	137,660	18.9%
Seniors	20,140	12.3%

Some governments and agencies use other measures of poverty. They look at the absolute levels of what people need to survive, based on a basket of goods and services (including food, shelter, clothing and some basic social needs). One way to measure this material deprivation is the Market Basket Measure (MBM). This measurement prices out, for a specific location, goods and services that Provincial, Territorial, and Federal governments have agreed to be essential, and sets an income line based on it. In 2009, the MBM for Winnipeg for a family with two adults and two children was \$29,333.

**Market Basket Measures,
Two adult, Two child Family, 2009**

Location*	
Winnipeg	\$29,333
Manitoba, rural	\$28,745
Manitoba, place with a population under 30,000	\$30,327
Brandon	\$28,884

*Does not include reserves, isolated, and/or northern areas

In 2009 in Manitoba, people living in material deprivation (below the MBM) included:

Age	Number	Percent of Population
Children (Under 18)	29,000	11.6%
Adults (18-64)	76,000	10.6%
Seniors	Unknown	Unknown

*Data for the MBM comes from Statistics Canada's Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), whereas data for the LIM is from Statistics Canada's Tax Filer Data File. These two data sets define family slightly differently, leading to some differences in measurements. Statistics Canada is currently working on a research document to determine how to make the data sets comparable.

Another common and useful measure is the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). Using this measurement, people who spend 20% more than the average family on food, shelter and clothing are said to be living in poverty. The Social Planning Council has used this measure in a number of reports because it considers both relative poverty and the amount a family spends on basic needs.

Poverty rates are higher for different segments of the population, which can be attributed to their social exclusion and marginalization. Single mothers, racialized groups, Aboriginal peoples, newcomers to Canada, single seniors, and persons with a disability are more likely to experience poverty than other groups. Across all populations, women are more likely than men to live in poverty. Previous reports by the Social Planning Council have included the following statistics:

- Children with at least one parent who is a recent immigrant are more than twice as likely as average Manitoban children to experience povertyⁱ
- The unemployment rate for recent immigrants is almost three times higher than that of people born in Canadaⁱⁱ
- Almost half (49%) of on-reserve First Nations people in Manitoba do not have money to buy food when food ran outⁱⁱⁱ
- Almost ¼ (24%) of on-reserve First Nation parents had children who were not eating enough because the family could not afford food^{iv}
- Children in single parent families are almost three times more likely to live in poverty than children of two parent families^v.

We know, from these statistics and many other reports, that poverty is different for different people.

Young people have higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of participation in the job market and therefore require different strategies to address their levels of poverty than people in older stages of life. It is impossible to discuss poverty for Aboriginal peoples without attention to colonialism and the ways it continues to impact the lives of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the province. Reducing poverty for single mothers requires attention to women's inequality. A poverty reduction strategy that does not take into account these differences and needs will not substantively effect change.

b. Social Inclusion and Exclusion

Social exclusion is inseparable from poverty. People who live in poverty tend to be excluded from many mainstream social activities and people who are excluded from society tend to live in poverty.

Social exclusion affects individuals and families in a variety of ways. When people are excluded, it is more difficult to find employment, access housing, gain higher education, participate in social opportunities, and obtain appropriate health care. When there is discrimination and stigmatization, there is less integration into society. In *The New Europe: Economy, Society and Environment* (1998)^{vi}, Professor Paul White identified four processes that lead to social exclusion in societies:

- 1) Economic change ie. reduced employment and job security
- 2) Demographic change ie. aging population, increasing numbers of single parent families
- 3) Changes to welfare programs
- 4) Segregation and separation ie. stigmatization and marginalization of particular groups in society

Richard Wilkinson aptly worded what social exclusion really means for people on an individual level:

To feel depressed, cheated, bitter, desperate, vulnerable, frightened, angry, worried about debts or job and housing insecurity; to feel devalued, useless, helpless, uncared for, hopeless, isolated, anxious and a failure: these feelings can dominate people's whole experiences of life...the material environment is merely the indelible mark and a constant reminder of the oppressive fact of one's failure, of the atrophy of any sense of having a place in a community, and of one's social exclusion and devaluation as a human being (Wilkinson, 1996, p.215)^{vii}.

Canadian social scientists Myriam Fortin and Joel Gauthier (2011)^{viii} created a matrix as an example of how to measure social exclusion. They identified seven dimensions of exclusion, all of which are interconnected and work together to create what they termed "cumulative disadvantage" (p.126). The dimensions they consider are income, work force attachment, education, health, material deprivation, social support and quality of life. These dimensions point to areas of consideration for any poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy.

c. Equality and Inequality

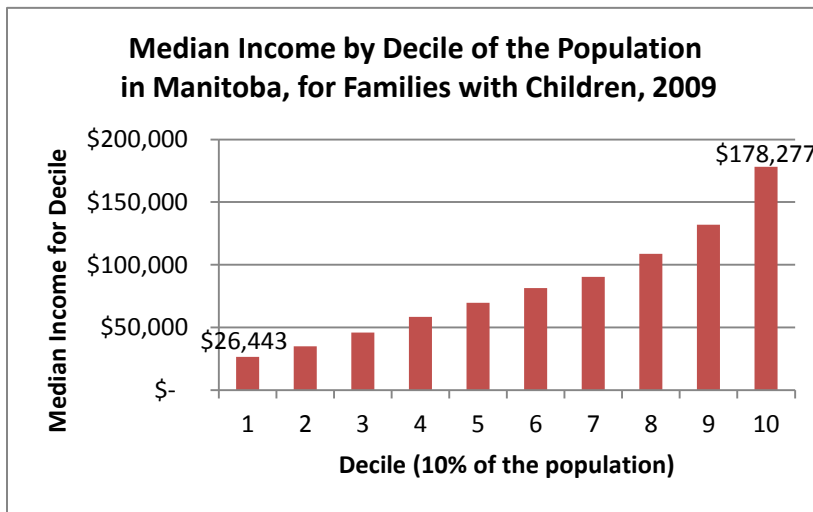
In the last few years another perspective on poverty is emerging that focuses on the income equality or inequality of a society, and therefore how different sectors of society enjoy their quality of life as

compared to others in their society. We now know that more equal societies tend to be healthier and stronger, while societies with a higher income inequality tend to have more social problems.

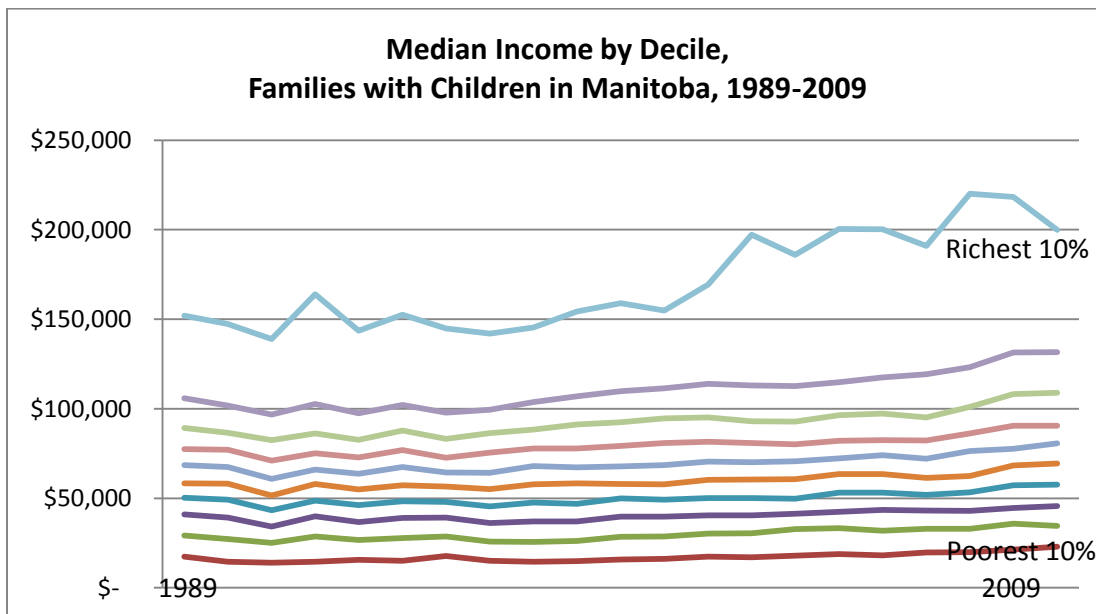
A study by Michael Förster for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development^{ix} (OECD) highlighted research showing why a society should be concerned about income inequality: “A number of authors provide evidence that a poor distribution of income might ultimately negatively affect economic growth, through the channels of education, access to capital markets, as well as political and economic mechanisms.”

The Conference Board of Canada recently released a report looking at inequality in Canada. They found

inequality has been increasing despite our previous economic growth. This trend is similar for Manitoba.



The chart shows that the richest 10% of Manitoban families have incomes almost seven times higher than the poorest 10%. From 1989 to 2009, only the poorest 10% and richest 20% of the population of Manitoba saw their share of income rise, while middle income groups had a smaller income share.



Incomes for most of the population in Manitoba have changed little over the past 20 years, except for those in the highest income group (the richest 10%). There are a number of factors contributing to this, including tax changes, wages, reduced rates of unionization, and global economic influences.

d. Implications for Society

“If the benefit Canada seeks is to enable people to survive in poverty, then we have achieved a measure of success. This, however, is achieved at great societal expense. If success means ending poverty and its costly consequences, a different approach is necessary” (National Council of Welfare, 2011, p.11).

Researchers have focused on three main implications for societies when trying to put a ‘cost’ on poverty and social exclusion. Cost in this sense may sometimes be quantified, but some things cannot be put into numbers and dollars. These include:

- 1) lost productivity of people who are excluded from employment and other areas of community life;
- 2) direct financial costs related to providing social services, social housing, and other programs designed to address exclusion and poverty; and
- 3) indirect social and financial costs such as private security, use of the criminal justice system to deal with the effects of poverty and exclusion, and increased use of the healthcare system.

Health disparities caused by poverty and social exclusion have been extensively researched. There is a wealth of evidence that, even in Canada, where universal health care exists, people with lower incomes have poorer health outcomes. In Manitoba, there is a significant gap between the highest income quintile and the lowest income quintile in rates of child mortality, diabetes, mental illnesses, and a variety of other illnesses. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy has costed healthcare use for a number of chronic diseases, and it is clear that preventing chronic disease through poverty reduction can reduce provincial health care expenditures^x. A report on the health of people who are homeless in Winnipeg found that people who were homeless were eight times as likely to have epilepsy, three times as likely to have had a heart attack and diabetes, and twice as likely to have arthritis and asthma as the general population^{xi}.

In *The Spirit Level* (2009)^{xii}, authors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett show how countries with large income disparities have more health and social problems. In their international comparisons they point out the societies with less income disparities have higher levels of life expectancy and democratic participation. They demonstrate that key indicators in determining a healthy society - violence, education, drug abuse, obesity, social mobility, mental and physical health, household and government debt, imprisonment, child well-being, obesity, teenage pregnancies, and trust and community life - are affected by inequality. Inequality creates a need for bigger government, increases costs to those who are wealthy and to those who are not, and effects social relations, economic activity, and democratic behaviour. The Nordic countries stand as evidence that reducing inequality through tax measures, labour practices, and overall social policy improve the health and well-being of everyone in a nation, and are actually a benefit to economic growth.

3. Poverty Reduction Strategies

a. Canadian Trends and Efforts

In 1989, the Parliament of Canada unanimously resolved to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. While the national, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments all contribute in various ways to poverty reduction, it took a number of years and a great deal of public pressure for governments to begin to take concentrated, strategic action.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities submitted a report on a Federal Poverty Reduction Plan to The House of Commons in November, 2010. The report included studies of European countries and Canadian provinces with poverty reduction strategies. The committee recommended that the federal government “immediately commit to a federal action plan to reduce poverty in Canada.” The action plan, it noted, should incorporate a human rights framework and provide for consultation with provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments, the public and private sector, and people living in poverty.

Throughout the past 10 years a number of provincial and territorial governments have launched poverty reduction strategies to better focus their efforts. Generally, strategies have involved ensuring basic needs are met; strengthening support, particularly for marginalized populations; and specific efforts at coordination.

Currently, six provinces and three territories have poverty reduction and social inclusion strategies in place. The province of PEI is in the process of developing a PRS and has had a number of public consultations, while Alberta has a strategy focusing specifically on homelessness rather than poverty and social exclusion generally. Most of these poverty reduction and social inclusion strategies are recent, and as poverty reduction and social inclusion are long-term goals, the results of them have yet to be seen.

The longest-running strategies are those of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. Each are analysed in more detail with an eye to how Manitoba’s strategy compares.

Quebec

In 2002 Quebec was the first province to launch a poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy. The strategy includes 1) a focus on employment, 2) improving the social safety net, 3) increasing social inclusion and 4) consistent and coherent intervention. In 2009 the Centre D’étude sur la Pauvre et L’exclusion (CEPE) recommended indicators of progress for the strategy, including measurements of absolute and relative poverty. Critically, CEPE suggested looking at the Gini-Coefficient, a statistical measurement of inequality¹, and developing indicators of social inclusion.

¹ The Gini-Coefficient measures income inequality and distribution in a particular area, usually by country or province. Though it focuses on income and not wealth, it is a useful measure in making international comparisons.

Main areas of Quebec's strategy are noted in the chart, attached (Attachment c.). Quebec's poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy has a number of mechanisms for implementation and monitoring, including an new and independent research body, recognition and formal involvement of Quebec's anti-poverty community/communities in the strategy, and a fund dedicated to local poverty reduction and social inclusion initiatives.

Quebec's National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion met initial successes. The number of people on social assistance decreased by 6% from 404,360 in 2003 to 379,694 in 2007 and the percent of the population living below the Market Basket Measure was cut almost in half (10.7% in 2002 down to 5.8% in 2007). Quebec has a strong focus on childcare and has implemented a child assistance program, targeting low income families with children. Due to these measures, along with its strong social safety net, Quebec has the lowest rate of child poverty in Canada, and is the only province with less than 50% of children with lone-parent families living in poverty. The strategy has been met with some criticism, including: 1) income security is too limited for those considered able to work 2) there is a focus on employment as a solution without looking at struggles of working poor ie. there are limited improvements to minimum wage and working conditions, and 3) there is a lack of commitments to labour market measures. With minimal new investments and the economic recession leading to more unemployment and part-time employment, the population living in material deprivation rose dramatically in 2008.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Formal consultation throughout 2005 in Newfoundland and Labrador led to their PRS being enacted in 2006. Some of the key objectives of their PRS include: 1) access to and coordination of services 2) a stronger safety net 3) improved earned incomes 4) increased emphasis on early childhood development and 4) a better educated population. The long and short term goals, focused on both prevention and reduction of poverty has led to a number of successes. In particular, the government focused on meeting basic needs by immediately raising and indexing social assistance rates. In three years, individual and family benefits were raised, on average, 11.6%. In the first year of the PRS, the percent of the population in material deprivation (below the MBM) dropped by seven percentage points. Reports for the PRS evaluate whether or not incomes have been raised for various family types, ensuring everyone in poverty actually benefits from changes to social assistance and tax benefit programs.

Newfoundland and Labrador's PRS is overseen by a Ministerial Committee with broad based involvement from everyone who touches on poverty issues, including Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development, Finance, Education, Justice, and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The province also created a Poverty Reduction Division to promote dialogue between government departments and ensure coordination. It has developed tools for analysis of the impacts of all programs and policies of the government on low income people, including tax implications. Newfoundland is one of two provinces in Canada that has seen the proportion of people in families below the Low Income Measure decline consistently from 2004-2009.

b. Manitoba Legislation

In early 2009, the government of Manitoba launched All Aboard, its poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy. This strategy provides a “framework and vision to move forward, coordinating and strengthening poverty reduction and social inclusion work across the provincial government.” In addition, ALL Aboard is a vehicle to build partnerships with federal and municipal governments, community organizations, businesses, and citizens.

According to ALL Aboard: Manitoba’s Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy, the government of Manitoba envisions a future where people are socially included, connected to their communities, participating in the economy and contributing to our province. Poverty is identified as complex and goes beyond having enough money to live each day. A poverty reduction strategy should create the conditions that allow people to participate fully in society as valued, respected and contributing members. Everyone benefits from a society that helps all individuals prosper. The government is therefore putting resources into four areas of action to reduce poverty and promote prosperity:

- safe, affordable housing in supportive communities
- education, jobs and income support
- strong, healthy families
- accessible, co-ordinated services

(see attachments a. and b. for a summary of the Government’s strategy).

In June of 2011, the government put its strategy before the legislature and passed *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, as part of a larger budget legislation (note attachment b. for a summary of the Act). This legislation puts real teeth into the government’s strategy to reduce poverty, as it creates the bureaucratic and financial means to make sure the government does more and does better what it has been saying for the last few years.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act establishes in law what the government will do to reduce poverty. In particular, it creates a monitoring committee of government ministers and community members to review and advise on the strategy. The *Act* requires government to take the poverty reduction into account when preparing annual budgets, to prepare a yearly statement, and to develop indicators to measure progress of the strategy.

4. Programs, Policies and Practice

a. Provincial Government

The Government of Manitoba has a number of programs and policies that seek to reduce poverty and the effects of social exclusion. Some of Manitoba’s poverty reduction programs are named directly in the poverty reduction strategy, while others are indirectly connected through the four pillars of the strategy.

Areas of the strategy are, and should be, interconnected and have various areas of overlap. Below, to provide some description of what is being done in the province to reduce poverty, we summarize the main actions the Province of Manitoba is taking in the areas of housing, employment, childcare, and community development.

1. Housing

Program/Policy	Description/Areas
HOMEWorks! Low income housing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,500 additional households with rent-geared-to-income housing (a 5% increase in social housing in 5 years) along with 1,500 affordable rental units • Upgrades to social and affordable housing; includes converting bachelors, improving accessibility • Improving MB Housing administration; includes better application and tenant management • Capping MB Housing rents to allow people in social housing to save and adding incentive to improve their incomes • Manitoba shelter benefit enhancement, 628 rent supplements • Rent Supplement program (private and public; 1348 ppl, average of \$327 in 2010/11) • Homeless strategy with a focus on mental-health housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase in funding to emergency shelters ○ Emergency shelter standards (optional) ○ Salvation Army Project (to transition residents) ○ Homeless outreach team (6 in Winnipeg, 2 for rural) ○ Project Breakaway (3 staff) ○ Housing First units, total of 285 new units some through MB Housing, others include Siloam’s Madison bldg. (88 units) and Bell Hotel (42 units) ○ Portable housing benefit up to \$200 for 600 people with mental health issues (381 in 2010/11) • Homeownership initiatives; including community infill housing projects, in partnership with Neighbourhoods Resource Centres and Habitat for Humanity, grants to 861 households for renovations • Downtown Winnipeg Residential Development Grant program
Rental Housing Roundtable Secondary suites initiative	To seek solutions to increase supply of affordable housing in Winnipeg.
Changes to Landlord and Tenancy Act	Increased notice period for condo conversion and renovation; allows pet deposit; more requirements to qualify for rent increases
Changes to The Condominium Act	Gave municipalities the power to limit condo conversion
The Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act	
Secondary Suites Initiative	Grants to develop secondary suites

Indicators Used by the Government on Housing Strategy:

Target or Vision	Performance Measure	Indicator
Renovate 13,500 social housing units by 2011	Sustaining and improving existing social housing	Number of units being renovated each year
1,500 new affordable housing units in next 5 years	Increased supply of affordable housing stock	New affordable units built
n/a	Improving housing affordability through RGI housing	Number of new RGI units built, number of people receiving portable housing subsidy
n/a	Maintain supply of private housing	Number of private housing units renovated
n/a	Supporting community led revitalization efforts in distressed neighbourhoods	Number of housing renewal and NA! projects funded, the amount of funding each year
n/a	Households in core housing need	Percent of Manitoban households in core housing need vs. previous census data

2. Employment

Program/Policy	Description/Areas
Increase to minimum wage	\$10/hour as of Nov. 2011 (full time worker would earn \$19,500/year)
Updates to employment standards	Updates
Changes in workplace health and safety	Updates to rules
Changes to workers' compensation	Covering more industries now
Fairness commissioner	For credential recognition for newcomers
Rewarding Work Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba Child Benefit for working parents • Increased earnings exemption (\$200 + 30%) • Rebound: retrain and support those affected by the recession, to get more Manitobans off welfare; with an innovative approach to help 500 people move from welfare to work. • Opening Doors Disability strategy • <i>Rewarding Work Health Plan</i> provides non-insured health benefit coverage, including drug, dental and optical benefits up to two years for single parents and persons with disabilities who leave EIA for employment. • JobConnections: comprehensive assessments and service plans; include counselling, links to resources, financial planning, crisis management

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seekers’ allowance + rewarding work allowance for person with disabilities • Get Started! Benefit of \$175-\$325 to help get ready for work • Get Ready! Up to two year training program • Manitoba Works: minimum wage subsidy for municipalities and non-profits, and other employers, to hire and train people on EIA (not sure if this ends up with permanent job) • Exempt registered disability savings plan; persons with disabilities can receive up to \$500/month from their family members (does not include child maintenance) • Volunteers supports of \$100/month for people on EIA who volunteer at least 8x/month
B.U.I.L.D.	Hiring and training tenants of social housing and inner city residents to work on construction and renovation projects
Consolidating employment and income assistance offices with Employment Manitoba offices	
Funding for SEED Winnipeg	To help low-income individuals, groups and communities start their own businesses.
MarketAbilities Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund which supports innovative employment partnerships for persons with disabilities in rural and northern regions • Team which is composed of specialized staff that help move EIA participants with disabilities into employment (5 staff) • PACE (personal attendant community education program); 5 week training to be an independent living attendant • multi-media campaign to create an awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities to promote and support their employability • The Rewarding Volunteers benefit that provides persons with disabilities with an additional monthly allowance for volunteering regularly • The <i>Stages of Change</i> pilot project which is an innovative, six-step approach to help persons with disabilities get ready to work and find good jobs. • Better access to the new communication devices program which rents electronic communications devices to adults with severely impaired speech to help communicate, and which will also assist with finding work, going to school and socializing
Manitoba Training Strategy and College Expansion Initiative	Goals of each connected to poverty reduction: 1) Build a skilled workforce aligned with labour market needs and emerging opportunities 2) Expand access to relevant learning opportunities for all Manitobans

	<p>3) Pay particular attention to the needs of under-served groups</p> <p>4) Enhance youth participation rates</p> <p>Programs include a recognition of the unique training needs in rural Manitoba and the North as well as in Aboriginal communities</p>
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Indicators Used by MB Government on Employment Strategy:

Target/Vision	Performance Measure	Indicator
n/a	Dependency on income assistance	Percent of the population receiving employment and income assistance vs. the year before
n/a	Supported living supports	Number of people receiving supported living supports

3. Childcare

Program/Policy	Description/Areas
Family Choices 5 Year Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6500 more childcare spaces by 2013 • Nursery school spaces; now \$5/session, subsidy for more parents • Building Fund • Workforce Stability Strategy: increased wages (\$15.50 for ECEs, \$12.25 for assistants in training); training for low-income, newcomer, and Aboriginal people; pension plan; tuition replacement grant; more training grants • Increase parent participation; training for boards • Enhanced curriculum; resource material and workshops • Child Safety Charter • Online registry • Lowest fees outside Quebec • Inclusion support for children with special needs • Regulation to ensure quality

Indicators Used by MB Government on Childcare Strategy:

Target/Vision	Performance Measure	Indicator
n/a	Availability of childcare	Percent of population under 6 and under 12 years old in Manitoba with access to regulated childcare

	Number of newly funded spaces Number of sites Program capacity (spaces) Ratio of regulated centres to non-regulated centres
Affordable childcare	Number of newly funded spaces Maximum daily childcare fees; number of children receiving subsidized child care Parent fees as a percentage of annual revenue
Quality childcare	Proportion of staff with particular training levels (ECE II or III) Numbers of staff Changes in wages and income for care homes Number of facilities participating in, and children served under, the Inclusion Support Program

4. Community Development

Program/Policy	Description/Areas
Neighbourhoods Alive!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community initiatives • Neighbourhood renewal fund • Neighbourhood renewal corporations • Lighthouses • LIFT program to fund neighbourhoods outside “Neighbourhood Improvement Zones” • School resource officer • Community youth recreation • Urban arts centres
Community Places Program	
Co-operative Development	To support, evaluate, provide assistance/information for cooperative development To encourage new cooperative development
Community Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money to community agencies including volunteer Manitoba and United Way • Grants for Community Development
Tenant advisory committees and tenant associations in MB Housing	Funding for community development activities in Manitoba Housing complexes

Indicators of MB Government on Community Development:

Target/Vision	Performance Measure	Indicator
n/a	Supporting community-led revitalization efforts in selected distressed neighbourhoods and communities in Manitoba Housing	Number of projects assisted through Housing Development and Rehabilitation Fund and Neighbourhoods Alive!

b. Municipal Government

Municipalities have direct and indirect roles to play in poverty reduction and social inclusion. While municipalities often lack financial resources to directly engage in large-scale poverty reduction, some municipalities have had a leading role in strategic, collaborative efforts. For example, The City of Calgary has developed a community plan to end homelessness. New Westminster, British Columbia, adopted Living Wage legislation, ensuring all workers directly and indirectly hired by the city are paid wages above the poverty line, and Hamilton's Roundtable on Poverty Reduction brought together stakeholders and community leaders to develop and implement a local strategy on poverty reduction.

In Winnipeg, poverty reduction can be somewhat connected to the City's programs around economic development, justice, neighbourhood development, libraries, recreation and housing. The Winnipeg Partnership Agreement was a \$25 million commitment to share in supporting community development and increase support to Aboriginal people living in Winnipeg. It contains a Youth Strategy with employment projects and training opportunities for Aboriginal youth in the city, addressing their economic situations and building future leadership. This is an example of a proactive crime and poverty reduction strategy designed in partnership with Aboriginal groups.

Winnipeg's Housing Programs include the Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Program, Winnipeg Aboriginal Housing Program, Minimum Home Repair Program, Development Cost Offset Program, Neighbourhood Housing Plans and Advocacy Program, Winnipeg Housing Renewal Corporation and the Downtown Housing Program, which combined provide \$17.5m of investments over 5 years. Though affordable housing continues to be a great need in Winnipeg, the city has recognized that it has a role to play and has continued its commitments.

c. Community Groups

Manitoba and specifically Winnipeg has an engaged and active citizenry when it comes to poverty reduction initiatives. Community groups in the form of foundations, not-for-profits, service delivery agencies and coalitions are active in poverty reduction in various ways.

The United Way raises charitable contributions to distribute to organizations in the community that are providing supports that help people cope with poverty or get out of the constraints of poverty. It distributes funds based on local priorities as determined by a board of trustees. Focusing on education,

income and health, The United Way of Winnipeg has a mission to “improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.” An array of organizations are funded by The United Way, some to deal with the effects of poverty (eg. Main Street Project), some to coordinate efforts to provide services to people in poverty (eg. Coalition of Community Based Youth Serving Agencies), and many to increase opportunities for those living in poverty to improve their lives (eg. Boys and Girls Club). Many of the organizations funded also engage in educating the public and governments about poverty, as well as where there are service gaps for those living in poverty.

The Winnipeg Foundation also works to manage funds, particularly large endowment funds, and distribute them to community organizations or projects in Winnipeg. The organizations funded by The Winnipeg Foundation increase opportunities for individual, particularly children, living in poverty in the city. The Centennial Neighbourhood Project was an example of strategic and long-term neighbourhood investment from a community-development perspective. This project initiated the Central Neighbourhood Development Corporation and worked to increase community capacity in a lasting way.

Community Coalitions of citizens and organizations are active in advocacy and public education efforts. Currently in Manitoba, coalitions like Right to Housing, the Just Income Coalition, Make Poverty History Manitoba, and the Manitoba Child Care Coalition bring community stakeholders together to promote change, particularly in government policy. These coalitions are assets to the province and are responsible for much of the existing progressive policy.

Make Poverty History Manitoba brought together a number of organizations from various sectors working with people who experience poverty and consulted on what a “Poverty Reduction Plan” should include. The final document, *The View from Here*, with proposals endorsed by seventy community organizations, set out a framework for the province’s eventual ALL Aboard! Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. It is difficult to say whether the province would have a strategy without the encouragement of this committed coalition, but clearly the coalition was able to raise the issues and provide the substance to the logic underlying the PRS. However, there is a concern among some coalition members that the province has not recognized and utilized the strengths, assets, and abilities of Make Poverty History Manitoba and its members. Manitoba is the only province that did not formally consult prior to their Poverty Reduction Strategy, and there is no identification of how future consultations required in the legislation will be implemented.

5. Implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Putting the All Aboard: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy into legislation is an important initiative on the part of the government of Manitoba. The government has a mechanism for costing and reporting on its allocations for addressing key needs for people living in poverty. Anti-poverty activists now have a way of monitoring government action in its “long term strategy to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion across Manitoba.”

There are a number of strengths to Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy that we have identified. Manitoba is one of few provinces to recognize and support the role of community development approaches, like Neighbourhoods Alive, in reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion, for example.

However, there are major structural and operational weaknesses in both the strategy and the legislation. As a strategy, the government has, at best, laid out what it will do to coordinate services, prioritize high risk populations and formalize its commitments (in budgets and annual reports). As a framework for monitoring government action, All Aboard and the legislation is fine. The legislation does not, however, present a comprehensive public strategy for reducing poverty in Manitoba and it provides virtually no direction on how to "increase social inclusion."

In the "View from Here: Manitobans call for a poverty reduction plan" (2009), a consultation of community organizations defined the basic elements of a poverty reduction plan;

- Comprehensive and coordinate approach
- Consult meaningfully with citizens
- Targets and timelines
- Collaboration across government departments, and
- Evaluation and reporting on progress.

While the government has incorporated some measures that follow the above elements, there is not enough in the Act to assure comprehensive implementation and results. The Act is not comprehensive, there was virtually no consultation on it, there are no timelines, there may have been some internal efforts for inter-departmental collaboration and there is no evaluation mechanism. Of course, these factors could be part of the accompanying regulations, but the Act does not lead one to think that the regulations will necessarily address these elements.

In October last year, about 40 community based agency representatives got together to discuss priorities and action in response to the PRS Act ("Time to Talk Strategy", RaY, October 31). Their recommendations for what needs attention now to reduce poverty included;

1. "Long term strategy and action
 - a. Address structural causes of poverty
 - b. Consider the global dimensions of local poverty
 - c. Engage the public on a continuous basis

2. Short term strategy and action
 - a. Build the organizational capacity of coalitions
 - b. Address specific government program changes/improvements
 - c. Respond to Poverty Reduction Strategy Act
 - d. Present to the Provincial Pre-Budget consultation".

A study of poverty reduction strategies for the federal government (2007) identified essential elements of a comprehensive poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy. (Note attachment d.)

Sherri Torjman of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy writes in her book *Shared Space: The Communities Agenda* that communities must work in four activity clusters to achieve healthy communities and therefore seriously address poverty.

1. Sustenance – provide for people’s material needs;
 - a. Basic needs
 - b. Decent affordable housing
 - c. Income security
2. Adaptation – develop basic coping skills to survive in a complex world;
 - a. Early childhood development
 - b. Social networks – to help build self-esteem, empathy and problem solving capacity
 - c. Literacy
3. Engagement – assist individuals to have a sense of belonging and to be active agents in their lives;
 - a. Cultural expression
 - b. Empowerment
 - c. Meaningful participation in the arts, recreation and decision making
4. Opportunity – create economic and income resources;
 - a. Employment
 - b. Job creation
 - c. Asset building
 - d. Ownership

While the Government of Manitoba has begun to work on many of the areas noted in this research, there are still aspects that the government has only started and many that are not sufficient to meet the actual public needs in the province. To assist in the implementation of the governments PRS, we offer these observations:

a. Structural Weaknesses

Currently the Strategy has some basic design weaknesses.

- i. There is no clear definition of what poverty is and what social exclusion is, their source and nature in the province. Such a statement should recognize that poverty and social exclusion are experienced by different groups (Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and refugees, racialized groups, people with disabilities, women, the young, single parents, seniors) in different ways and that there a numerous dimensions to both (economic, social and cultural).
- ii. A statement on the essential approach to be used to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion, pointing to what the government identifies as the underlying causes of poverty, is missing. Creating greater income equality should figure prominently in this approach, as income inequality is inseparable from poverty and social exclusion. An effective strategy is based on a clearly identified and commonly held perspective of what dynamics create and maintain poverty conditions.

- iii. All the players that should be involved in reducing poverty are not included. The provincial government cannot reduce poverty alone – it will take a collaborative effort with the private sector, non-governmental organisations, the public, other levels of government and those people facing poverty and exclusion daily.
 - iv. There is no identification of the resources available and information on how the government will make the hard budget choices to assure the commitments to reducing poverty are realized. Resource commitments are essential for policy, program and planning purposes.
 - v. Neither specific nor general methods to address social exclusion are apparent in the PRS. The Act seems to assume that social inclusion is a logical spin off from increased income – which is somewhat true – but there is more that can and should be done to increase social inclusion. Countries like Australia have set up formal mechanism to address social inclusion and other governments have set out formal plans to address exclusion.
- b. Operational Weaknesses

Even if we take the legislation as a starting point for the implementation of action, there are also operational weaknesses that should be addressed to make the PRS effective. For example:

- i. There is no formalised opportunity for input of pro-equity/anti-poverty communities or people experiencing poverty. The people who know the most about poverty are not given a formally recognized role and responsibility for helping implement the strategy. The designation of a seat on the All Aboard Committee is not enough. The assumption that consultation with the public would take place is insufficient to demonstrate how the government plans to implement its PRS.
- ii. The All Aboard Committee itself is not given any directive or monitoring authority and therefore is not going to have the ability to seriously advise or assist the government in its strategy implementation. Members of this Committee should be actively engaged in dealing with poverty practically and they should have some clout in assuring the implementation of the strategy is as serious as the government says it is.
- iii. The provision of regulations to accompany the act should be obligatory and mandatory, not optional. To leave this important practical element of the PRS and its legislation out means there may only be incidental means provided to address poverty.
- iv. There are no targets and timelines in the PRS nor are they called for in the regulations, which are essential for an effective implementation. While there are legitimate cautions about setting targets and timelines for a process with numerous uncontrolled inputs, targets and timelines provide practical benchmarks for evaluation and readjustment.

The government could set very practical targets in terms of assisting key populations. For example, women across all populations are more likely than their male counterparts to experience poverty. Considering the importance of women's determining roles in families, communities and the economy, it is critical to identify if and how women are benefitting from employment or social programs. (Note the brief presented to the Federal Government during the 2011 pre-budget consultations, by the SPCW.)

- vi. All the government departments that have a role to play in reducing poverty are not explicitly included. The Departments of Family Services and Consumers, and Housing and Community Development are not exclusive to a PRS. For the strategy to address the broad level causes of and solutions to poverty, there must be involvement from those responsible for health, healthy living, education, finance, justice, Aboriginal and Northern affairs, local government, agriculture, food and rural initiatives, and labour and immigration. As women across all demographics are more likely than men to experience poverty, The Manitoba Women's Advisory Council should also have a clear role to play. And, as poverty can only be addressed in a coordinated and multidimensional manner, the PRS should be integrated into all aspects of government programming.

c. Recommendations

We at the SPCW are going to work with the government to reduce poverty and implement its PRS. To assist the government, we suggest the following actions that we think will enhance the government's ability to implement the PRS legislation and to reduce poverty. We recommend that the two departments responsible for the legislation:

- i. Define poverty and social exclusion and their causes in a simple statement. A vision of poverty and social exclusion is a means of attracting support and collaboration. In this regard we believe the statement made earlier in this report should be endorsed: *Poverty is linked to inequity and inequality. Poverty is the consistent lack of resources, choices, opportunities and power that people need to live fully in their community. People living in poverty know the constant threat of always 'being a little behind', of running out and never catching up, of making hard choices between one need and another.*
- ii. Formally involve or invite other players to be part of implementing a strategy that includes more than government agencies and actions alone. There is a large community of social agencies, faith groups, non-profits and service organizations that are ready and able to address issues related to poverty (70 organizations endorsed the Make Poverty History report on a poverty reduction plan). There are business, professional groups, women's organizations, and other government departments that are allies in community development. All should be part of the Strategy.



- iii. Change government approach to poverty reduction by recognizing that people living in poverty are the most critical ally in reducing poverty. Working with them in changing their circumstances is another means of building our national and provincial economies, and all citizens are an asset in our economy and society.

During the development of Manitoba's ALL Aboard Strategy, people living in poverty were not consulted on what they want/need. There is no formal involvement by those most affected by strategy at all. New Brunswick, through their Community Inclusion Networks, and Quebec, through their Advisory Committee, have formal and guaranteed roles for people who have or are currently living in poverty. Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy Act includes a task of the advisory committee as "facilitating community involvement" but does not state that it must include people living in poverty.

This level of inclusion will also assist the government in segmenting poverty reduction actions so that different populations (temporary unemployed, Aboriginal, youth, women, seniors, etc.) can be more effectively supported.

- iv. Make the All Aboard Committee authoritative in implementing, evaluating, and altering the strategy, not just an advisory body. The Ministers responsible for the legislation should include members on the committee who have an operational understanding of poverty, ability to work with communities of interest and a demonstrated commitment to eradicating poverty, not merely to mitigating its effects.
- v. Plan an annual consultation with community representatives and organizations on implementing and monitoring the Strategy, with a clearly identified process for using feedback to adjust the strategy. An open and inclusive discussion is needed to define how poverty can be addressed and how governmental action can be improved. Collaboration and coordination are essential aspects of any strategy as poverty is too huge a problem for one level of government to tackle alone.

The process leading to the recommendations in *The View from Here: Manitobans Call for a Poverty Reduction Plan* should be a basis for any follow up and planning for the implementation of the Act. This document encompassed a number of issues and concerns that relate to poverty eradication, and was endorsed by 70 local agencies that are involved in serving Winnipeggers. More on evaluation and monitoring is described in recommendation viii.

- vi. Develop regulations that include targets and timelines to accompany the legislation before the next provincial budget. There is time to develop basic regulatory requirements to help implement the aspects of the Strategy dealing with employment, childcare, housing and education.



Targets are necessary to set priorities for a PRS and to have a real, measurable impact on the lives of people living in poverty. *The View from Here* provides some of the essential targets that the government should be considering and there will be an update on the 2009 recommendations coming soon from the Make Poverty History Coalition.

- vii. Plan and announce key policy and operational changes the government will make to its current income assistance, housing and employment training programs, which will help implement a Strategy.

To maintain popular support and have a long-term and wide-reaching impact, poverty reduction efforts should put attention and resources toward education and good (ie. secure, well paying) employment for everyone. It is also critical, though often a lower priority, to end the deepest forms of poverty and ensure there are resources for meeting basic needs. Sherri Torjman and Eric Leviten-Reid noted:

It is almost impossible for individuals to learn new skills or look for work when they are worried about where their next meal will come from or about an impending eviction notice. It is equally difficult to concentrate on employability enhancement if physical security is imperilled by actual or threatened violence. Basic needs must first be met^{xiii}.

Anti-poverty/Pro-equity groups in Quebec argued that their poverty reduction strategy, with its focus on increasing employment, has been least effective in improving incomes for the poorest and services for those who are the most excluded. Similarly, while Manitoba has many innovative programs and supports for community economic development, the areas of income assistance, employment training and housing are where Manitoba can and should improve. Below are some recommendations we see as priorities which could be further explored in an ALL Aboard Strategy consultation.

Income Assistance

The Manitoba Ombudsman developed 68 recommendations for Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance program. While the government has addressed some of the recommendations, many are still relevant and need to be implemented. For example, some of the recommendations in the Report include:

- Institute a formal, documented process for reviewing and making recommendations for periodically updating basic and shelter rates, income and asset exemptions, and other income assistance allowances in a logical and equitable manner; this process should be documented and available to the public
- Include bus, phone and some recreation in basic needs items
- While a time frame on common-law unions was developed, policy continues to require consideration of only two rather than three factors of financial interdependence, familial interdependence and residency. This policy continues to disproportionately affect women.

Many programs through EIA are only available to people once they are in a state of crisis or have been dependent on social assistance for a period of time. While we recognize the desire to prevent further dependence, we have seen that many of these requirements cause people to become more desperate and have an increase of social and physical consequences (eg. addictions, mental health symptoms, trauma, forced to live in unsafe situations) prior to receiving any forms of support.

Housing

A shortage of affordable housing, in particular rental housing, is relatively new to Manitoba though it is common to most municipalities across Canada. As the most expensive basic need, increasing housing costs and a reduction of rental properties in Manitoba has negatively impacted those with the lowest incomes. The Government of Manitoba has recognized that housing is a critical aspect of poverty reduction, and is working with groups like the Right to Housing Coalition in this regard. There is more that we believe can be done, including:

- Raise the rent allowance of EIA to median rental costs, and index it to the rent regulation guideline
- Require EIA caseworkers give out conditions reports with the rent forms and give basic information about renting with the EIA Pre-intake Orientation
- Continue to support innovative housing projects developed by Neighbourhood Development/Community Renewal Corporations; provide sustainable funding so successful pilot projects can continue and be built upon
- Ensure affordable housing projects supported by provincial funding have a mechanism to remain affordable in the long-term

Employment Training

Employment is vital to reducing poverty, but continual insecure, low paying employment can trap people in poverty rather than end it. Training can help people to become more employable, fills labour market needs, and can build the economy of the province. The Province of Manitoba has strong community-based training initiatives and high quality, affordable post-secondary programs. These can and should be explicitly linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy. We would also prioritize the following recommendations in regard to employment training:

- Connect Manitoba's Labour Market, Training, and Poverty Reduction strategies so they work together
- Evaluate training programs developed in connection with EIA to ensure training actually leads to meaningful employment
- Recognize individual circumstances when making decisions about ongoing training for people receiving EIA. Some previous training programs were unsuccessful at providing people skills that led to employment, and sometimes people who received training in the past develop different circumstances (different disabilities, for example) which mean they need to change employment paths. Limiting future training leads to further dependency.



- viii. Develop evaluation tools to measure if the strategy is effective at reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. This evaluation must include the views of people who experience poverty.

The provincial government has, understandably, been hesitant about setting particular poverty reduction targets because of the complex nature of poverty. Many of the outcomes of a poverty reduction strategy are not entirely within the control of the provincial government. This should not, however, prevent efforts to evaluate and monitor this very important strategy in a meaningful way. Without targets, it is impossible to know what the government is working towards, and therefore impossible to say whether or not they are going the right direction.

In the paper *Learning and Evaluation for Poverty Reduction*, which reviewed Vibrant Communities' poverty reduction efforts, Sherri Torjman and Eric Leviten-Reid argued that evaluation of long-term, strategic efforts should focus on learning, building upon successes, changing those things that have been ineffective, and reconsidering in an ongoing way how to achieve better results. Using the term *Learning for Excellence*, Vibrant Communities suggested evaluation should focus on continual improvement and learning from mistakes rather than pretending evaluation can be done in a simplistic, after-the-fact manner.

The World Bank has a number of reports on national Poverty Reduction Strategies, which are expected to be monitored and evaluated to gain funding. The World Bank, in their presentation *Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation for Poverty Reduction Strategies*, stated that components of a monitoring and evaluation strategy for poverty reduction include:

- a. Outcome-based monitoring system
- b. Systematic impact evaluation
- c. Creating a feedback process
- d. Building capacity for monitoring and evaluation
- e. Promoting participation^{xiv}

Many of the indicators used by the Manitoba government measure outputs (number of affordable housing units built, or projects funded, for example). Outputs are important for accountability so taxpayers know what their money is going towards. They are not, however, indicators of a successful strategy (outcomes). Some outputs may in the long term actually be signs of an unsuccessful strategy. For example, increasing rates of people accessing RentAid means more people, specifically employed people, need government assistance to afford their housing. While necessary for short-term basic needs, if long term poverty reduction is successful fewer people will need such assistance to maintain their housing.

In the end, any program or policy to end poverty should be having a positive effect on the lives of people who are experiencing poverty. The only way to know this is to have people with lived experience providing input in an independent and practical evaluation. The seven dimensions of exclusion, described on page 6, provide long-term outcome measures that can determine whether or not the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy is working for all populations.

Despite the structural and operational weaknesses in both the strategy and the legislation, there is a lot to work with. The existence of legislation shows the government's willingness to consider action on poverty reduction. As a strategy, the government has, at best, laid out what it will do to coordinate services, prioritize high risk populations and formalize its commitments. It is now up to the community of service agencies and their partners to get the government to do more.

We at the SPCW are going to work with the government to reduce poverty and implement its PRS. We think there are ways to enhance the government's implementation of the PRS legislation and to develop the mechanisms to concretely reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. Collaboration among organizations working to reduce poverty will be essential to advance these mechanisms, and we are confident that this will happen.

Attachment A.

ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy

In Manitoba, we believe that all people deserve a high quality of life and the opportunity to realize their potential. Taking action to reduce poverty is the right thing to do. In this time of economic uncertainty, we have an opportunity to merge our goals of stimulating the economy, supporting the workforce and tackling poverty. Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that people are supported to succeed in life.

Over the past twelve years Manitoba has achieved significant success in reducing poverty. Given the current global economic challenges, it makes sense to review this work and reconfirm our commitment to poverty reduction. With ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy, the province can more effectively build on this success and strengthen the programs and initiatives currently in place.

Reducing Poverty Helps All Manitobans Prosper

A 2008 study found that 40 per cent of Manitobans felt they were always one or two paycheques away from being poor. Because poverty prevents people from reaching their full potential, we must collectively work towards reducing the effects and eliminating the causes of poverty. By creating economic conditions for all people to flourish, we ensure a strong future for our province that includes a strong labour market, less crime and better health. To be effective, our poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy must focus on education and training, early childhood development, healthy families and communities, and the labour market. We must ensure our plan supports individuals and Manitoba as a whole, including individuals in urban centres, rural areas, and northern Manitoba.

ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy is both a strong poverty reduction plan and a strong economic plan. We must work together to accomplish our goal of continuously reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion.

Framework and Vision

ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy envisions a future where people are socially included, connected to their communities, participating in the economy and contributing to our province. Poverty is complex and goes beyond having enough money to live each day. A poverty reduction strategy should create the conditions that allow people to participate fully in society as valued, respected and contributing members. Everyone benefits from a society that helps all individuals prosper. We believe that there are four pillars to reduce poverty and promote prosperity:

- safe, affordable housing in supportive communities
- education, jobs and income support
- strong, healthy families
- accessible, co-ordinated services

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/allaboard/>

Attachment B.

THE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ACT (summarized)

1 The following definitions apply in this Act.

"committee" means the committee on poverty reduction and social inclusion established in section 3. (« comité »)

"minister", except in clause 3(1)(a), means the minister appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to administer this Act. (« ministre »)

2(1) The government must

(a) implement a long-term strategy to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion across Manitoba;

(b) establish or adopt poverty and social inclusion indicators to be used in measuring the progress of the strategy; and

(c) provide annual reports to the public on the progress of the strategy in accordance with subsection 5(4).

2(2) The strategy must recognize that poverty has multiple causes, and be designed to address various needs, including the need for

(a) quality, accessible education that develops knowledge and skills;

(b) training that prepares persons for employment;

(c) employment opportunities;

(d) income supports for persons who are unable to fully participate in the labour market;

(e) affordable housing;

(f) supportive and safe communities; and

(g) supports for strong and healthy families.

2(3) The strategy must

(a) recognize that certain groups face a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion; and

(b) ensure that programs and initiatives to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion are accessible to all persons who require them.

2(4) The strategy must be designed to ensure that programs and initiatives to implement the strategy are co-ordinated across the government.

2(5) The strategy must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

2(6) The minister must ensure that a detailed description of the strategy is published on a government website.

3(1) A committee on poverty reduction and social inclusion, which may be referred to as the "**All Aboard Committee**", is hereby established, and is to consist of

(a) those ministers who are responsible for policies, programs or services that affect poverty reduction and social inclusion, as determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council;

(b) one member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from the members of the Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship; and

(c) three additional persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, based on recommendations from the minister after consulting with the United Way of Winnipeg and any other groups that the minister considers appropriate for this purpose.



3(2) The **responsibilities** of the committee include

(a) reviewing and providing advice to the Executive Council on

(i) the content of the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy,

(ii) poverty and social inclusion indicators, and

(iii) proposed programs, policies or initiatives;

(b) monitoring the implementation of the strategy;

(c) ensuring that programs, policies and initiatives of the government to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion are co-ordinated and consistent with the strategy; and

(d) facilitating community involvement in the development and implementation of the strategy.

3(3) The Lieutenant Governor in Council is to designate two members of the committee as its co-chairs.

3(4) The committee is to meet at least four times each year, at the call of the co-chairs.

4 For each fiscal year, the government must

(a) take the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy into account when preparing the budget for that fiscal year;

(b) prepare a statement that

(i) summarizes the strategy and sets out the budget measures that are designed to implement the strategy, and

(ii) sets out the poverty reduction and social inclusion indicators prescribed by regulation that will be used to measure

the progress of the strategy; and

(c) table the statement referred to in clause

(d) in the Legislative Assembly at the time of tabling the budget for that fiscal year.

5(1) Within six months after the end of each fiscal year, the minister, in consultation with the committee, must **prepare a report** that

(a) reviews the implementation of the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy for that year; and

(b) evaluates the progress of the strategy using the poverty reduction and social inclusion indicators prescribed by regulation.

5(2) The minister must table the report in the Legislative Assembly upon completing the report or, if the Assembly is not sitting at that time, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

5(3) When the report is tabled in the Assembly, it stands referred to the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Social and Economic Development. The committee must begin considering the report within 60 days after it is tabled in the Assembly.

5(4) When the report has been tabled in the Assembly, the minister must ensure that the report is published on the website on which the description of the strategy is published under subsection 2(6).

6 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make **regulations**

(a) prescribing indicators of poverty reduction and social inclusion for the purposes of this Act;

(b) respecting any matter necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

7 This Act may be referred to as chapter P94.7 of the *Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba*.

8 This Act **comes into force** on the day it receives royal assent.



Attachment C.

	Newfoundland & Labrador	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba
Title	Reducing poverty: An Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador	Preventing Poverty. Promoting Prosperity. Nova Scotia's Poverty Reduction Strategy	Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan	The Will to Act, The Strength to Succeed. National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion	Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy	All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy
	2006	2009	2009	2002	2008	2009
Consultation Process	<p>Initial: Workshops, focus group sessions as well as telephone and e-mail input</p> <p>Ongoing: Commitment to consult every two years, with focus groups, round table sessions, and public consultation sessions</p>	<p>Initial: "Poverty Reduction Working Group" was composed of various ministries and interest groups. A public survey was also conducted;</p> <p>Ongoing: None identified</p>	<p>Initial: Dialogue sessions, roundtable sessions and a final forum</p> <p>Ongoing: community inclusion networks. Public engagement process for new strategies</p>	<p>Initial: Parliamentary Committee of individuals, groups and organizations; met representatives of 1000 groups; discussion forums</p> <p>Ongoing: Advisory committee with members from many sectors; Action research</p>	<p>Initial: Website, roundtable sessions, letters, meetings, phone conversations</p> <p>Ongoing: Engagement half-way through 5 year plan; requirement for engagement in developing new plan</p>	<p>Initial: None</p> <p>Ongoing: The Committee on Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion will be responsible for consulting with the United Way of Winnipeg and other groups deemed appropriate</p>
Legislative basis	n/a	<p>Poverty Reduction Working Group Act Created a working group to make recommendations on poverty reduction strategy</p>	<p>Economic and Social Inclusion Act -definition of poverty -vision for NB and target Established a corporation to implement and evaluate provincial plan, and develop and adopt future ones. Created Economic and Social Inclusion Fund Defines Social Inclusion Networks</p>	<p>Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion -target and goals -definition of poverty Government must make a plan with activities and targets, must give annual report. Established an advisory committee, research centre and a fund for special initiatives</p>	<p>Poverty Reduction Act -purpose and principles Each 5 year strategy must set a specific target, include initiatives and have indicators to measure success including income, education, health, housing and standard of living. Requires consultation with specific groups</p>	<p>Poverty Reduction Act Must develop strategy, considered in each budget, which includes indicators, addresses a variety of needs, is targeted, co-ordinated, publically available, and reviewed every 5 years. Creates Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee.</p>
Objectives	<p>Target: To transform from the province with the most poverty to the one with the least, in ten years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Service access/coordination -Earned incomes -Social safety net -Education and early child development 	<p>Vision: To break the cycle of poverty by creating opportunities for all to participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enable and reward work -Improve support -Focus on children -Collaborate and Coordinate 	<p>Target: By 2015 reduce poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50%, and make significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Basic needs -Education and training -Community participation 	<p>To make Québec, by 2013, one of the industrialized nations with the least number of persons living in poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prevention -Social safety net -Employment -Involvement of society -Consistent and coherent intervention 	<p>Target: To reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25 per cent over the next five years (2015).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children and families -Strong, healthy communities -Opportunities -Smarter Government 	<p>Continuously reduce poverty and increase social inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, affordable housing -Education, jobs and income support -Strong, healthy families -Accessible, coordinated services

	Newfoundland & Labrador	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba
Areas of Intervention	Aboriginal programs Justice system supports Housing Income security Employment programs and assistance Early child development Education	Employment training Review of Income Assistance Income security Early child development Service coordination	Income assistance Education Employment Health benefits Housing and shelters Early learning and childcare Literacy Social enterprise	Early child development Family programs Training and employment Housing Income security Social integration Place-based initiatives	Early child development Family programs Housing Training and employment Review of social assistance Place-based initiatives	Family programs Housing Training and employment Income support Service coordination
Mechanisms to Ensure Implementation	A Ministerial Committee of at least 8 ministers will guide the work of strategy implementation.	A Ministerial Committee of at least 8 ministers, supported by senior officials will be formed to guide and direct the strategy implementation. Coordinator of Poverty Reduction: acts on the direction of the Committee	Development of an Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation to lead and co-ordinate implementation Community inclusion networks which must represent governments, business, community non-profit, and persons who have experienced poverty Economic and social inclusion fund	Advisory Committee of 15 members appointed by the Government; 5 from anti-poverty groups, 3 who live in poverty, and 10 from the management, organized labour, municipal, community and other sectors Research Centre: is to propose indicators to evaluate progress Fund: to finance initiatives	Cabinet-level committee to implement the strategy, supported by a secretariat, complete annual reporting on progress, and ongoing consultations with stakeholders. Social Policy Institute: Independent institute to evaluate social policy, identify best practices, Work with international experts	Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee of 3 ministers, member appointed by Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship, and 3 recommended by minister to review strategy, indicators, programs, policies, initiatives; monitor and ensure co-ordination and consistency; facilitate community involvement
Mechanisms to Coordinate	Poverty Reduction Division to promote dialogue between departments, agencies, and the community and help departments analyze impact of policies	Social Prosperity Framework	Community inclusion networks who must create a community plan every two years	The minister responsible for the law shall advise other ministers on measures that could have a significant impact on people living in poverty.	None identified	Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Committee is responsible for ensuring co-ordination and consistency of strategy
Measurements or Indicators Used	-Poverty measurements (relative and absolute) -Income and employment statistics -Child and youth indicators including education indicators	-Poverty measurements (relative and poverty gap) -Uptake of benefits -% of the population informed about the causes and consequences of poverty.	-Education indicators -% of New Brunswickers in core housing need -Other poverty indicators not identified	-Poverty measurements (relative and absolute) -Measurements of inequality and of social inclusion	-Poverty measurements (relative and absolute) -Education indicators -Ontario housing measure	-Poverty measure (MBM) -Participation in programs -Employment statistics -Education indicators -Availability of child care - # of affordable housing units built and renovated -Teen pregnancy rates
Funds	\$133 million budgeted in 2010 (\$260 per capita)	\$155 million for strategy (\$164 per capita)	\$15 million for implementation 2010-11; Strategy cost n/a	\$4.5 billion over past 6 years (\$94 per capita per year)	\$1.4 billion (doesn't specify how much is new) (\$105 per capita)	\$212 million (new investments) (\$170 per capita)

Attachment D. Measures to Combat Social Exclusion and Poverty

1. Macro-stabilization and framework measures

- macro-fiscal and monetary policy, tax benefits and credits, asset policies, pensions, etc.;
- universal child-care benefits;
- measures, such as citizenship education, that promote social cohesion and solidarity; and
- framework legislation establishing rights and freedoms.

2. Protective measures aimed at maintaining a safety net

- targeted transfers, social assistance, employment insurance, social housing, in-kind support, means-tested income supplements, etc.; and
- rights-based remedies (to enable claims by individuals and non-governmental agents on their behalf).

3. Measures to promote work incentives and to support labour market entry and participation

- provision of information and active counselling measures;
- education, skills training, literacy and numeracy training, language training, orientation and settlement, information technology training; and
- to enhance work incentives, (work income supplementation and asset-based policies)

4. Measures aimed at creating/expanding/maintaining economic opportunity

- job creation, employer job subsidy measures;
- support for self-employment; and
- measures to promote the social economy.

5. Area-based measures targeting local economies and neighbourhood quality

- measures targeting community social and economic development, community development corporations, neighbourhood renewal, rural sustainability, safe communities, etc.;
- local support for culture, sports and recreation; and
- social capital measures.

6. Measures to reform and open up institutions

- measures to promote better access to public and private programs (including access to health services, educational services, training facilities, financial institutions, and so on); and
- adaptations focusing on where services are located, transportation, cultural training for staff, availability of translators, outreach, etc.

7. Measures promoting quality of life, well-being and personal development

- investments in health, including measures to address drug issues, teen pregnancy, and mental health;
- investments in quality of housing and education.

8. Measures aimed at enhancing receptivity by the community at large

- anti-discrimination measures, etc.; and
- that promote solidarity, including citizenship education, cross-cultural sensitivity, education, etc.

Taken from "Combatting the Social Exclusion of At-Risk Groups", Research Paper, November 2005 by Meyer Burstein, PRI Project: New Approaches for Addressing Poverty and Exclusion.

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