**Poverty in Canada (Updated September 2014)**

**The Topic**

Poverty in Canada: hunger, homelessness, social determinants of health, living wage, basic services for remote and indigenous communities

**Commission members who connect**

Frankly, not much connection to the topic in an organized fashion. Some members have participated in the summits organized as part of the Dignity for All campaign. The September 11 2014 Consultation will be a first opportunity in a few years to have a focused conversation among CJP members on the topic.

**Partner or lead agency/organization**

This is a collaborative venture with a working group including at least the Canadian Council of Churches Commission on Justice and Peace, the Canadian interfaith conversation, and Citizens for Public Justice. Citizens for Public Justice is the lead organization.

* Canadian interfaith conversation: led the organization of the 2011 Interfaith Forum on Faith and Poverty, the related visits between leaders of faith communities and leaders of political parties, and the Interfaith Declaration on Poverty in Canada.
* Citizens for Public Justice: plays a leading role in the Dignity for All campaign, co-organized the 2011 Interfaith Forum on Faith and Poverty, and published Living Justice: A Gospel Response to Poverty.
* In addition, the CCC is a long-time supporter of Campaign 2000 and continues to follow developments there, participating from time to time.

**Key objectives and opportunities**

* Develop and circulate annual October 17 Eradication of Poverty Day education and worship materials including prayer and bulletin inserts.
* Encourage all CCC member churches to endorse the Dignity for All campaign (compare endorsers with CCC member church list).
* Co-organize three important policy summits, the first one on food security in the Spring 2012.
* Monitor MPs private bill member’s bill coming in
* Monitor UN Periodic review process and the indigenous people’s connection
* Promote lent readings related to the Living Justice publication
* Continue to advocate for a Federal Anti-Poverty Strategy

**So what: desired impact**

* The Canadian government adopts a Federal Anti-Poverty Strategy
* People of faith are resourced and connected to others working on the issue of poverty
* There is a broad and deeper Evangelical Ecumenical Interfaith policy platform all agree on, support and advocate from

**Communications or engagement strategies**

Annual October 17 materials are featured, promoted and circulated widely both through CCC networks, Cic networks, member church networks, and beyond (email, website and social media)

Dignity for All endorsement invitations are targeted and promoted (personal connections)

Policy summits are advertised and promoted (email and social media)

The Dignity for All report is presented and supported by member churches and The Canadian Council of Churches, with many members addressing the issue afresh as a result.

**Relevant record of previous work**

* Interfaith Declaration on Poverty in Canada: <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/en/news-view.cfm?newsID=139>
* Dignity for All endorsement (Nov. 2009): The Canadian Council of Churches, together with its partners in the Dignity for All campaign, wants 1) A federal plan for poverty elimination that compliments provincial and territorial plans, 2) federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability, and 3) Sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians
* The Federal Contribution to Reducing Poverty in Canada: <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/documents/social_justice/Brief_FederalContributionEndingPoverty.pdf>
* Letter to Prime Minister Harper on Ending Poverty in Canada (Nov 2007): <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/documents/social_justice/PovertyLetterHarper.pdf>
* Vision to Action - A Faith-Based Movement for a Canada without Poverty: <http://www.councilofchurches.ca/documents/social_justice/VisionToAction.pdf>

**Main policy positions**

We call on all parties and all candidates for public office to make poverty reduction a priority, and all people of faith and good will to raise the issue of poverty with politicians and candidates for office.

We call on the federal government to give leadership and develop a federal poverty reduction plan that coordinates federal initiatives with existing and emerging provincial and territorial plans; to enact legislation to ensure federal commitment and accountability to poverty reduction goals; to develop a national housing strategy; and for all levels of government to ensure sufficient investment in social security for all Canadians.

As faith communities we commit to launching a national conversation about poverty, to deepen our commitments and multiply our activities that alleviate poverty, and to collaborate with others of good will to address the immediate needs of our neighbours.

And we call on all Canadians to consider how each of us, individually, as families, as communities and as a nation manifest in our lives together a common affirmation that all deserve to be treated with dignity and respect; to be part of a community; to experience the reality of home; and to know what it means to have enough and be assured of the basic necessities of life.

**Finance and budget considerations**

None