

ISSUE 1: INCOME & EMPLOYMENT DISPARITIES AND RACIALIZATION OF POVERTY

Relevant Facts:

- By 2017, one in four Canadians will be racialized (Indigenous or people of colour).
- With a few exceptions, most recent immigrants experienced higher unemployment rates and lower employment rates than their Canadian-born counterparts, including those who had postsecondary education. The immigrants' birthplace – a proxy for ethnicity – has the strongest influence over the immigrants' earnings.
- While immigrant women represented nearly half of university-educated very recent immigrants, their participation in the labour force was significantly lower.
- Everything else being equal, the annual earnings of young visible minority men born in Canada are significantly lower than those of young men with native-born parents. Canadian born members of racialized communities, who have even higher levels of education than other Canadians in the same age group are faring the worst.
- In 2006, “visible minority” Canadian workers earned 81.4 cents for every dollar paid to their Caucasian counterparts. Earnings by male newcomers from visible minorities were just 68.7 per cent of those who were white males. Such a colour code persisted for second-generation Canadians with similar education and age, with visible minority women making 56.5 cents for every dollar white men earned, while minority men in the same cohort earned 75.6 cents.
- Poverty has become racialized, with members of racialized communities being at least two to four times more likely to live in poverty.
- Between 1981 and 2000, the poverty rate among non-racialized communities in Toronto (the largest city in Canada) **dropped** by 28%, whereas over the same time period, poverty rate among racialized communities **increased** by 361%.

Relevant Laws and Policies:

- The Canadian Government introduced the *Employment Equity Act (EEA)* in 1986 to level the playing field for under-represented groups. Until recently, the *EEA* applies with equal force to Federal public institutions as well as Federal Contractors. Changes were made to the *EEA* in 2012 rendering the compliance with *EEA* voluntary for Federal Contractors. The number of Contract Compliance Officers - whose job is to monitor the compliance by Federal Contractors - was reduced.
- The Canadian Government cancelled the long form census in 2011, and the new mandatory short form census does not contain any questions regarding disability, national or ethnic origin, race or Aboriginal ancestry. The exclusion of these questions impairs the ability of both governments and civic society to collect relevant data, on a disaggregated basis, about these populations in Canada.

ISSUE 2: CUTS TO SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Relevant Facts:

- Significant cuts have been introduced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada over the last couple of years, with the greatest cuts being brought to Ontario. In December, 2010, the Federal government cut \$53 million in funding from settlement agencies and programs across Canada, excluding Quebec. Ontario, the province receiving the largest number of immigrants, bore more than \$43 million of the cuts, forcing the closure of some agencies and resulting in job losses across the sector.
- The cuts come at a time when the immigrant and refugee serving sector had managed to turn the corner after years of under-funding and had established a level of stability in the sector. They also came at a time when more complex interventions are needed to facilitate labour market participation by new Canadians and to address complicated social and health issues of government-sponsored refugees.
- Apart from the destabilizing effects of the cuts in general, there is concern about whether the current investment is sufficient to address the many systemic barriers that immigrants, especially racialized immigrants face in the settlement process. Some of these barriers are increasing as a result of recent policy changes that have created administrative and systemic barriers to Citizenship, and make women immigrants more vulnerable by introducing a conditional period of permanent residency and conditions mentioned earlier such as barriers to labour market access and growing income disparities.