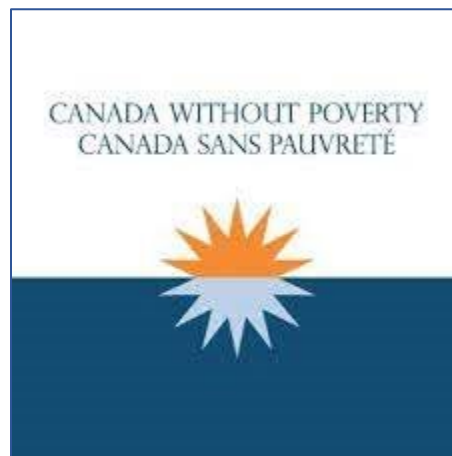




CANADA WITHOUT POVERTY ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020





MISSION STATEMENT

Canada Without Poverty seeks to eradicate poverty in Canada for the benefit of all by educating Canadians about the human and financial cost of poverty, and by identifying public policy solutions.

A Note from CWP's former Executive Director

The last year has been a tumultuous one for CWP in many ways. Staff changeovers, funding insecurity, and the pandemic all colliding. That being said, as is often the case with this mighty little organization, CWP is not only weathering the storm, but it continues to make important contributions to addressing poverty in Canada.

In terms of Staff changes at CWP – there have been plenty. In the course of approximately 18 months, Michele Biss who was such a strong advocate and force within the organization left CWP to manage a new right to housing network. Alexandra Zannis, a student who had worked at CWP, moved into a fund development role also left. Caitlin Sears then joined us in a financial and funds management role and left, and I stepped down as Executive Director to become a legal advisor to the organization.

Now we are incredibly lucky to have Emily Renaud at the helm in the National Coordinator position, assisted by Zayneb Ragheai our articling student! Emily has come on board at a stressful time, in the middle of a pandemic, when our funding situation is precarious, but has managed to steer this ship with a steady hand and continues to ensure poverty issues are front and centre on the advocacy agenda in Canada.

A Note from CWP's new National Coordinator

Prior to joining CWP, I had just completed my Master's in Public Administration. I was working for minimum wage at Value Village just to pay the bills and help support my family while applying frantically for any government job I could find. Like many millennials in their 20s with student debt, Canada's competitive job market and high costs of living had me feeling defeated before my career even started. I worried that I would never break from my family's cycle of poverty.

After being introduced to Leilani last summer I was hired as the National Coordinator in August of 2020, and my gratitude for this organization has grown everyday since. For the first time in my life, my lived experience in poverty feels valuable. I have learned so much in these past few months and have [virtually] met so many amazing social justice and human rights advocates in CWP's network.

I would like to thank all CWP's previous staff and Board of Directors members who have grown this organization over the past 50 years, I am dedicated to continuing this work and advancing our mission. We may be a smaller team these days, but our passion is as strong as ever.



Current Staff and Volunteers

Leilani Farha, Legal Advisor
Emily Renaud, National Coordinator
James Casey, Fund Development and Finance Coordinator
Zayneb Ragheai, Articling Student

2019-2020 Staff and Volunteers

Caitlin Sears
Vanessa Poirier
Leila Edwards
Michele Biss
Alexandra Zannis

Current Board of Directors

Bonnie Morton, President (SK)
George Lessard, Vice-President (AB)
Laura Cattari (ON)
Shane Pelletier, Treasurer (SK)
Kate Mechan, Secretary (YT)
Regina Younker (PEI)
Derek Cook (AB)
Wayne MacNaughton (NS)

Honorary Board

The Right Honourable Charles Joseph ("Joe") Clark, PC, CC, AOE
The Hon. Louise Arbour
The Hon. Monique Bégin, PC, OC, FRSC
The Hon. Ed Broadbent, PC, CC, PhD
Ovide Mercredi, OM



Our Work

Winner of Broadbent Institute Progress Prize

On March 29th, 2019, CWP and Leilani Farha were honoured with the 2018 Jack Layton Progress Prize. This high-profile prize is awarded annually to an individual or organization who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to a campaign that executes progressive/social democratic values and movement.

The Broadbent Institute recognized Leilani for her human rights work on poverty related issues and commended CWP for leadership in bringing forward a Charter challenge to Canada’s charities laws under the *Federal Income Tax Act*.

Chew on This! 2019

Building off of the momentum of the 2018 Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy (CPRS), CWP co-coordinated the seventh annual Chew On This! Campaign, along with Citizens for Public Justice. On October 17th, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the campaign mobilized people across the country to engage in collective action around the staggering rates of food insecurity and poverty. For #ChewOnThis 2019, the call to action was clear: it’s time to show the millions of people in Canada living in poverty that their government cares about them.

Consisting of over 100 events with representation in every territory and province, the campaign reached new heights. Campaigners talked to their neighbours about solutions to poverty, took direct action by calling and sending postcards to politicians ahead of the federal election, and multiplied our efforts on social media, sharing important reports and figures as to why we need a comprehensive strategy that will truly end poverty.



MBM Advocacy

CWP continues to advocate to ensure official poverty measures genuinely reflect the experiences of poverty in Canada. Although the market-basket measure (MBM) is Canada’s official poverty line, CWP has continued to bring visibility to the limitations of the measure. Along with partners Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty, CWP has presented to government committees and mobilized anti-poverty advocates to build momentum towards more accurate and holistic poverty measures, necessary to meet Canada’s 2030 commitments.

CWP welcomes Statistics Canada’s willingness to conduct a systematic review of the methodological and substantive gaps of the MBM as a result of tireless advocacy, however, our work is not over. Better data is essential because, without an accurate picture of poverty, our policies, laws, and programs will not have the necessary means to eradicate it.



MMIWG Advocacy

In 2019, CWP served on a coalition, made up of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and Dr Pamela Palmater, Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, that was granted standing at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Later that year, CWP also co-hosted a panel discussion at the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) National Conference on the systemic origins of MMIWG. Together, these opportunities provided a platform to centre poverty and structural inequality at the root of the issue of MMIWG and call for a national poverty strategy that acts upon this and many other findings from the national inquiry.

Other Notable Achievements:

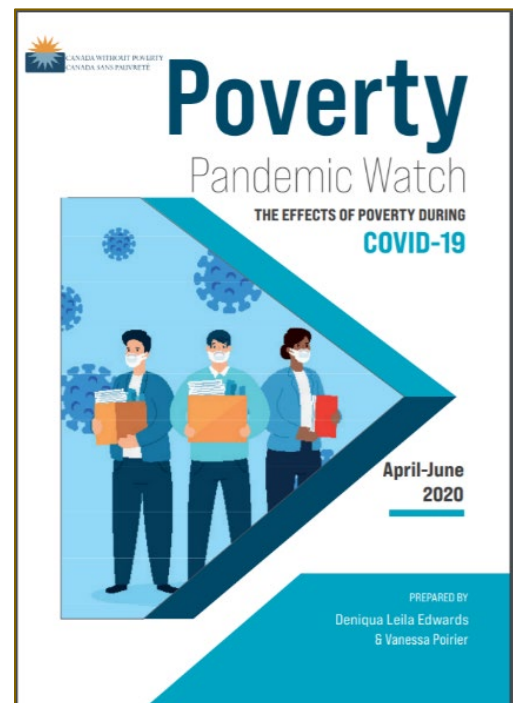
- CWP hosts exclusive screening of PUSH: a documentary about the global housing crisis
- CWP collaborative work to secure the National Housing Strategy Act with the Legislature the Right to Housing Campaign in June 2019, which became the National Right to Housing Network in 2020

Looking Forward

Poverty Pandemic Watch Project

In order to gain first-hand knowledge of what was happening in vulnerable communities across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, CWP hosted two National Roundtables in Spring and Fall of 2020, featuring anti-poverty advocates and people with lived experience who spoke to the impact of the pandemic on housing, income, and food security.

From these Roundtables, CWP published the “Poverty Pandemic Watch Report: The Effects of Poverty During the Pandemic” which brought light to lived experiences and the efficacy and gaps of pandemic policies.





CWP Intervention at SCC: *Colucci vs Colucci*

Colucci v Colucci is a family law matter centred on the applicable test for retroactive rescission of child support arrears under section 17 of the *Divorce Act*. We strongly feel that the outcome of this case can either help or hinder the fight against child and family poverty in Canada.

Among other things, CWP is arguing that incentivizing payors to avoid their parental responsibilities is a violation of Canada’s international law obligations to children, under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, and the *2007 Hague Convention*. Further, we will also show the societal costs of child support arrears, one being the devastating impacts on rates of child and family poverty.

Parliamentary Committee Work



In Fall 2020, National Coordinator Emily Renaud was invited to appear as a witness for The House of Commons’ Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to speak about barriers to voters in poverty in a pandemic election.

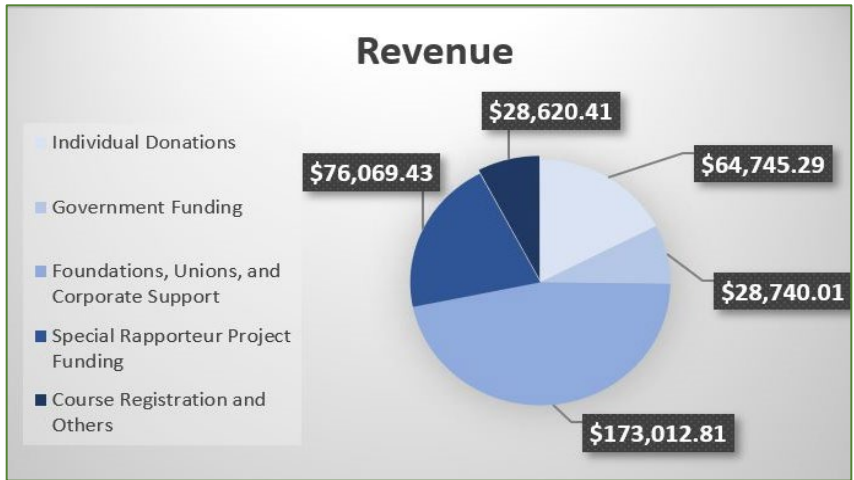
Bridging existing barriers to exercising the right to vote, and the exacerbating barriers and challenges the pandemic will bring to a federal election, CWP provided comprehensive recommendations to the committee to increase voter participation and engage communities in poverty in Canada’s democratic process.

Other Notable Achievements:

- Participation in #ChewOnThis! 2020
- Contributed to the Campaign 2000, 2020 National Report Card chapter on “Housing for All”
- Work on advocacy through the All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus



Financial Snapshot



Thanking Our Supporters

CWP is only able to do this work because of the generous contributions from our supporters across Canada. You have stepped up during a global pandemic, when anti-poverty advocacy has never been more crucial, and for that we thank you. With an average donation of \$30, our diverse community of supporters have stood by us through trying times and are once again ensuring that the experience of living in poverty is at the forefront of the national conversation. Our work with the national movement to eradicate poverty for nearly 5 million people living in Canada is only possible because of our dedicated supporters.

Through your donations, we have reached more people living in Canada with our research, advocacy campaigns, policy proposals, and educational programs. With the support of individuals, all our partners in the labour movement, foundations, and faith-based groups, we will ensure that the human rights of those living in poverty are respected.