

Strengthening Institutions And Prioritizing Financing Are Critical To Addressing Poverty

#CSW68



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Parallel Event: Sixty-Eighth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women



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Agenda

- What does poverty look like in Canada?
- Opportunities from the board room
- The role institutions can play in addressing poverty



2nd Best Country to Live in the World 2023

Population: 38,929,902

2nd in the world for racial equity

4th in the world for education

6th in the world for women equality

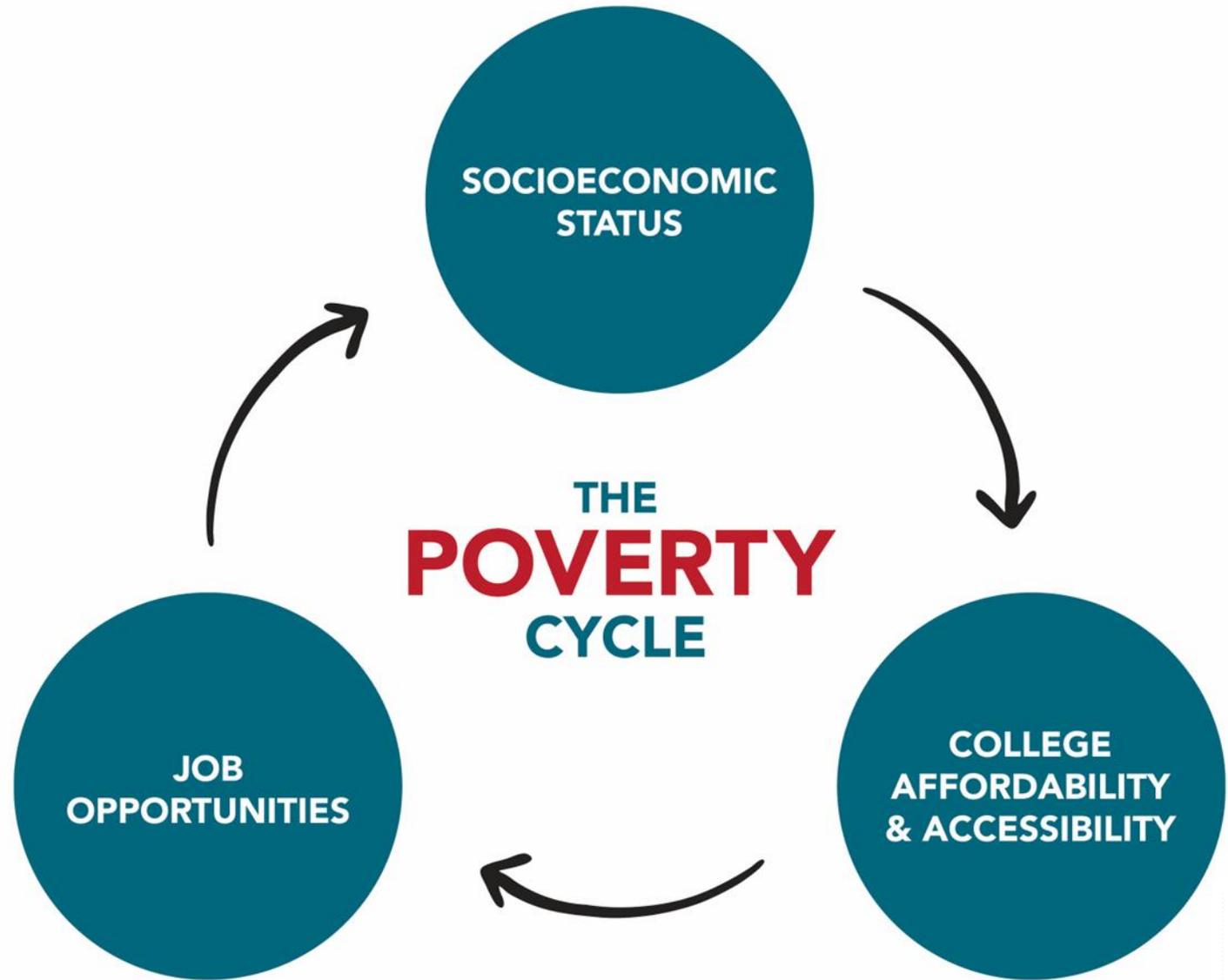


2nd Best Country to Live in the World

- Praised for Multiculturalism & Diversity
- **2nd in the world for racial equity:** as a result of colonialism, racism, marginalization, sexism and many other types of exclusion Canadas' poorest individuals are women, people of colour and those with disabilities.
- Women who are racialized and have a disability have the highest rate of poverty .
- **4th in the world for education:** the number one way to lift people out of poverty is through education, and high school dropout rates average 5–14% but increase to as high as 50% or more in low-income communities.
- **6th in the world for women equality;** for every \$1 a man makes on average women make \$.89 and that gap only gets wider as women age in the workforce.
- Global Gender Gap Index Canada ranks 24th out of 156 countries.



The cycle of poverty is multi-generational, chances are you grow up poor you will stay poor.



Those who live in Poverty

- Poverty annual income > \$26,000.00
- 1 Million live in “deep” poverty with an average annual income of \$11,700.
- 13.9% of all Indigenous people 16+
- 15.8% of Chinese people
- 12.4% of Black people
- 10.8% of South Asian people
- Recently landed up to 41.8%
- 31.3% of single mothers with a 5 year old child or younger



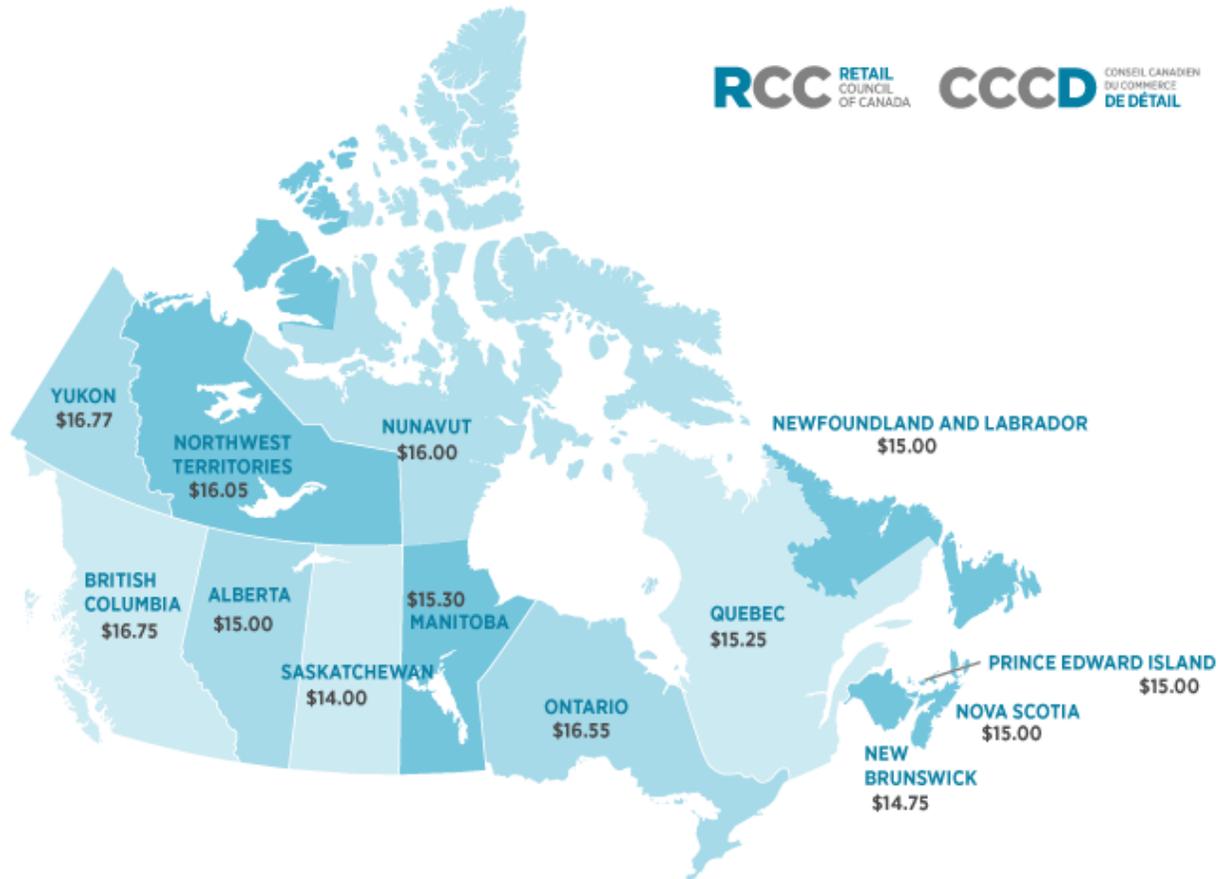
1 in 6 Canadians live in Poverty

- 40% of racialized and gendered people compared to 20% nationally, report low employment earnings.
- 50% of Indigenous people earn a low wage.
- Despite being more likely to have a post-secondly degree, racialized Canadians are less likely to find jobs that pay well and offer benefits at the start of their careers.



Canada's Working Poor

RCC RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA CCCD CONSEIL CANADIEN DU COMMERCE DE DÉTAIL



- 61.5% of Canadians are employed
- 1.6 Million Canadians work for minimum wage
- 58% are female

MINIMUM HOURLY WAGE RATES AS OF OCT. 1, 2023

RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA

RetailCouncil.org



One Solution: Food Banks



Food Banks have existed over 35 years in Canada, hoping to fill a short term gap, they are no woven into the fabric of our society.

- 2M visits in the month of March 2023
- Increase 78.5% since 2019
- 43.8% food bank users are single adult households
- 33% food bank users are children (who make up 22% of the National population)
- 1 in 6 food bank users are employed
- Increased food and operational costs and decreasing donations are threatening their livelihood.
- The Global Foodbanking Network operates in 50 countries and supports over 32Million people worldwide



Systemic challenges

- Racialized women, women with disabilities, female single parent households have the highest rate of poverty in Canada.
- Lack of National childcare program.
- Even with education, women are being underpaid and underrepresented in certain workforce sectors, senior leadership, and in the board room.
- Female University graduates on average make 18% less than males.



What can **we** do to support women trapped in this cycle?



Train women in lower paying jobs for other higher paying roles



Lobby for a **living wage**



Connect businesses with women looking for work

Institutional Solutions

- Federal and Provincial payments; not keeping pace with the cost of living
- Food banks: have seen at least 30% increase post pandemic (Globally)
- Supports for new comers
- Subsidized daycare programs: but not enough MB alone needs over 15000 spots.
- The introduction of a living wage; make it mandatory across Canada



Support Organizations Making a Difference



My Perspective: From the Board Room

- A total of 4,333 seats on boards of directors were occupied by women in 2019, representing 19.2% of all director positions (22,605)
- Women on boards is up 2.5% annually since 2016



Discussions in the Boardroom...

- “Climate change, diversity of thought, inclusiveness, wealth disparities, and more are no longer issues that live outside of the boardroom.” *ICD*
- “The demand for inclusive capitalism continues to grow with greater demands for inclusion, diversity, equality and social and racial justice.”

Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance July 27, 2021 Martin Lipton



New Thoughts in the Boardroom

Environmental Social Governance (ESG)

- Is a framework used to evaluate a company's sustainability and ethical impact.
- Regulators are creating new standards around ESG governance frameworks to ensure companies comply.
- Customer expectations for transparency and ethical partnerships are mounting.



From the Boardroom

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DEI)

Is an organizational framework which seeks to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly groups who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination on the basis of identity or disability.



From the Boardroom

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)



Is a strategy undertaken by companies to not just grow profits, but also to take an active and positive social role in the world around them.



A New Type of Leadership is Needed for the Future...



“Leadership must first and foremost meet the needs of others. Good leaders must first become good servants.” *Robert Greenleaf*

“The best leaders are clear. They light the way, and in the process, let each person know what they do makes a difference.” *Robert Greenleaf*

What Can We Do?

With the shifting priorities and demands placed on Boards of Directors, there is a great opportunity at hand.

- Acknowledge companies committed to Truth and Reconciliation, CSR, ESG and/or DEI Approach.
- Lobby for food recovery programs, over 1/3 of all food produced is wasted
- Grow programs focused on public school education and school meal programs.
- Grow work readiness programs for those without a high school education.
- Promote programs that offer placements for those who have completed work readiness programs.



Thank You!!



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And Prioritizing Financing
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Addressing Poverty



“I want to be remembered as someone who used what talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability. And to help repair tears in her society, to make things a little better through the use of whatever ability she has.” *Ruth Bader Ginsberg*