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LIFE IN BC SNAPSHOT

The FCSSBC is a group of community-based social services organizations that influence decision-making to improve the wellbeing of communities.

We believe that:

- Healthy supported communities make good economic sense.
- For our families to succeed, all families must succeed.
- For jobs to be the answer to social inclusion other conditions must exist

We have scoured the literature and research to take a snapshot of Life in BC that captures some aspects of the economy that traditionally get overlooked and we will use these markers to determine how good life in BC really is. Below are some of the key facts that stood out for us.

We are challenging the traditional notion of "economy" and we want to make visible people who are often ignored when we look at the economic health of our province. BC is not a great province for everybody and we are going to shine a light on those for whom it is not...because they are often ignored when we talk about economic health.

The current corporate and punitive perception of social care is dangerous and will impact the health of future generations. For many in our communities, access to the basic necessities like housing and food is a struggle. When we talk about the economic wealth of our province we need to think about all our community members.

WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY

VOL.1 ISSUE 1

ECONOMY & INCLUSION

CASE STUDY



Harpreet is a mother of 4 school-aged children. She works 2 jobs and feels fortunate that her elderly mother is able to live with her and help her with childcare when her children are not in school. After leaving an abusive relationship 7 years ago Harpreet is proud of the fact that she is able to keep her kids safe and that they are doing well in school. She rents a 2 bed-room basement suite for her family; because she has access to her local food bank and a clothing swap at her local neighbourhood house she is able to pay her rent and utilities each month. Sometimes her hours are cut at work if business is slow and she must pay for her groceries on her credit card. She pays the minimum balance each month but worries about the mounting debt she is acquiring to feed her family.

WHAT WE KNOW



Half of BC seniors live on \$24,000¹ a year or less, and more than 50,000 (35%) are living on \$20,000 or less. 36% of seniors with household incomes less than \$30,000 believe they will need to move in the future due to affordability.²

Canada-wide one in five households helped by food banks rely on disability related benefits as their main source of income.³ Income assistance and disability benefits have not kept pace with the increasing cost of living.⁴



1 in 4 queer and trans youth in BC are forced out of their homes due to severe family conflict. Among homeless youth in BC, 1 in 3 females and 1 in 10 males self-identify as queer, trans or questioning.⁷

Since 2008 food bank use across Canada has increase nearly 25%.⁸



The average rent plus utilities in BC is \$988.00.⁵ The affordability gap for a family of three relying on income assistance falls between \$125 per month in Prince George to \$438 per month in Kelowna.⁶



^{1,2} Office of the Seniors' Advocate. (May 2015) Seniors Housing in BC: Affordable. Appropriate. Available. Retrieved from <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/05/Seniors-Housing-in-B.C.-Affordable-Appropriate-Available.pdf>.

³ Food banks Canada. (2014) Hunger count 2014, A comprehensive report on hunger and food bank use in Canada and recommendations for change. Retrieved from http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount_2014_EN_HR.pdf.aspx.

⁴ Disability without Poverty Network (July 2012) Overdue: The case for increasing the Persons with Disability Benefit in BC. Retrieved from http://www.cmha.bc.ca/files/overdueincreasepwd_1.pdf.

⁵ BC Non-Profit Housing Rental Housing Index. <http://bcnpha.ca/rhi/> (accessed August 20, 2015)

⁶ Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). (2014) Family Homelessness in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo Final Report - September 2014. Accessed from <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/> August 26, 2015

⁷ BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. (2013) Poverty is a Queer and Trans. Retrieved from http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2013_prc-lgbqt-poverty-factsheet.pdf.

⁸ Food banks Canada. (2014) Hunger count 2014, A comprehensive report on hunger and food bank use in Canada and recommendations for change. Retrieved from http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/76907192-263c-4022-8561-73a16c06dd2f/HungerCount_2014_EN_HR.pdf.aspx.

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"Individuals may derive a sense of purpose and accomplishment from their work. At a societal level, the work of individuals generates efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness in the Canadian economy".¹

Jobs offer an opportunity for social and economic inclusion; however many community members face additional barriers to secure employment and may need support. Job creation is important but it is not the full answer to community well-being.

WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY

VOL.1
ISSUE 2

JOBS

CASE STUDY



Chad is a single father of two children under the age of five. He is currently unemployed, but has just been offered a job that pays above minimum wage and has the potential to be long-time. After searching for months Chad is really excited to think about working again. He loves being with his kids but thinks they will also benefit from being with other kids during the day. He remembers growing up surrounded by his cousins and wants something similar for his boys. In order to accept the job Chad plans on walking his kids to daycare at 7:15 and then catching the bus to start work at 8:30. However, he is now struggling to find affordable daycare in his neighbourhood. With no extended family in the city, Chad may have to turn down the employment offer and remain on income assistance.

WHAT WE KNOW



BC has fewer permanent jobs today than before the 2008 recession.²

Most of the jobs created since 2010 have been seasonal, casual or part-time (almost two-thirds)³ This type of work is considered unstable; typically lower paying; and requires people to manage uncertain working hours into their daily lives.



Some British Columbians face additional barriers to participating in the workforce. For example, the lack of affordable and accessible childcare is a critical barrier to job and

career prosperity affecting mostly women and immigrant people find that their credentials are not recognized.⁶

Supportive programs can make a difference. For example, individualized support for people with serious mental health problems and illnesses increases their successful job search by three times that of those who did not receive support.⁷



Income gap between unstable and stable jobs is between \$11,600 and \$18,000.⁴

The Aboriginal unemployment rate still remains nearly double that of the non-Aboriginal population- 14.6 percent.⁵



¹ Employment and Social Development Canada website. Retrieved from <http://well-being.esdc.gc.ca/misme-iowb/d.4m.1.3n@-eng.jsp?did=3>.

^{2,3} Ivanova, Igluka. (2014) BC Jobs Plan Reality Check, The First Two Years, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Retrieved from: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/2014/01/CCPA-BC-Jobs-Plan-Reality-Check.pdf>.

⁴ TD Bank. (2015) Precarious Employment in Canada: Does the evidence square with the antidotes? Retrieved from <http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/PrecariousEmployment.pdf>.

⁵ First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2014) British Columbia Child Poverty Report Card. Retrieved from <http://stillin5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/First-Call-Coalition-Report-Card-2014-FINAL-WEB.pdf>.

⁶ BC Stats Government of BC (2011) Recent Trends in the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Labour Force Participation. Retrieved from <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/AboriginalPeoples/LabourCharacteristics.aspx>.

⁷ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (Feb 2013) Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada: 1 in 5 people in Canada lives with a mental illness each year. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/Investing_in_Mental_Health_FINAL_Version_ENG.pdf.

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"Good mental health is much more than the absence of mental illness – it enables people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative, productive members of society".¹

People living with mental health and/or substance use issues have to navigate a complex helping system. Continued efforts to improve coordination between health and social service systems, and continued investment in services from prevention and early-intervention to community and hospital based intensive services is required if we are to create truly healthy communities for all.

WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY

**VOL.1
ISSUE 3**

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

CASE STUDY

WHAT WE KNOW



Less than 10% of the health authority budgets were directed toward mental health and substance use services outside of hospital services in 2011/2012.²

Mental illness is the second leading reason for hospital stays for people between 15 and 34 in Canada and the third reason for people aged 35-44.³



When people don't get the help they need, they end up in jail, in a shelter or on the street. Between 8,000-15,000 individuals living with mental illness and/or addiction are living on streets,⁴ with an estimated 26,500 at imminent risk of homelessness.⁵



Costs the BC economy an estimated \$6.6 billion per year in services and lost productivity.⁶ Action costs less than inaction.⁷

Home visits involving childhood education with parents who are living with anxiety and depression can produce a rate of return ranging from \$1.80-\$17.07 for each dollar invested.⁸



Ontario study found that having support programs that included peer support for people leaving hospitals after a mental health-related stay resulted in savings of \$12 million.⁹



Amanda is 17 years old and living in a small remote community. Amanda is struggling with depression and on average, misses two to three days a week of school. After a year of waiting she is now seeing a counsellor once a week. Amanda's parents are worried about her current health, and about what kinds of help she may need in the future. They are also concerned that she won't finish high-school and be able to find good work as an adult. With 4 younger children in the family they also worry about not paying them enough attention. Amanda's mom spends her lunch break at work looking for resources or reading about how she can help her daughter, but doesn't want anyone at work to find out because she is scared of how people will react.

^{1,6} Government of British Columbia. (2010) Healthy Minds, Healthy People A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2010/healthy_minds_healthy_people.pdf.

^{2,7} Canadian Mental Health Association British Columbia. (2014) Community-based Supports for Mental Health and Substance Use Care: 2015 budget consultation. Retrieved from <http://www.cmha.bc.ca/files/2015BudgetConsultation.pdf>.

³ Conference Board of Canada. (2015) Self-Reported Mental Health, Provincial and Territorial Ranking. Retrieved from: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/provincial/health/mental.aspx>.

^{4,5} BC Alliance for Mental Health and Addiction. (2010) A blueprint for results updated: book 1 Retrieved from <http://www.bcalliance.org/Portals/bcalliance/book1.pdf>.

^{8,9} Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2013) Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada: 1 in 5 people in Canada lives with a mental illness each year. Retrieved from: http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/system/files/private/document/Investing_in_Mental_Health_FINAL_Version_ENG.pdf.

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"...effective public policy must reach beyond formal schooling to address the life cycles of both adults and their children. "Thinking" governments advance a life-long approach to learning understanding that success in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education, as well as in the workplace--gets a good start or not, depending on early experiences".¹

For over a decade the Ministry responsible for the care and well-being of children and families has seen no real growth in investment, and when cost-of living is included this translates to a cut. We must act to invest in supports to families and children.

WHAT
WE
HAVE
TO
SAY

VOL.1
ISSUE 4

CHILDREN & YOUTH

CASE
STUDY

WHAT
WE
KNOW



Mo is a single mom of a three year old boy named Zander. Mo grew up in care and is still in touch with her foster mother. When Mo became pregnant while at university her foster mom got her connected to her local community centre. There Mo was able to attend family programs, where she met other parents and learned inexpensive activities to do with her busy son, songs that he loves to sing with her, and tips for dealing with his tantrums. When Mo went back to school she enrolled her son in the community centre day care and they continue to attend activities together on the weekends.



While most youth are doing well, children and youth in government care and Aboriginal children and youth are not.²

Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing demographic.³
One in five children in BC live in poverty.⁴



Aboriginal youth are over-represented in foster care and the criminal justice system.⁸

The rate of youth suicide has increased since 2009, with youth in care⁹ and Aboriginal youth more at risk.¹⁰



Children and youth in government care experience multiple moves, and the number of moves increases the longer they remain in care. Evidence suggests that permanency is key to improving the outcomes for a child in care.¹¹



Despite efforts to address school readiness⁵ we have seen an increase in the number of children who are starting kindergarten develop mentally vulnerable.⁶

Youth in care and Aboriginal youth are over-represented in the street/homeless youth population.⁷



¹ McCain, M.N., Mustard, J. F & Shanker, S. (2007) Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action. Council for Early Child Development. Retrieved from http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/guestid/humandevlopment/UserFiles/File/early_years_study_2.pdf.

² Representative for Children & Youth, Public Health Office, Growing up in BC- 2015. (2015) Retrieved from https://www.rcybc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/reports_publications/guabc-2015-finalforweb_0.pdf.

³ Representative for Children & Youth, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, Growing up in BC- 2015. (2015) Retrieved from https://www.rcybc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/reports_publications/guabc-2015-finalforweb_0.pdf.

⁴ First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2014) British Columbia Child Poverty Report Card. Retrieved from <http://stillin5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/First-Call-Coalition-Report-Card-2014-FINAL-WEB.pdf>.

⁵ Human Early Learning Partnership. (2013) EDI Mapping Wave 4, British Columbia School Districts. Retrieved from http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/mapsets/w4/bc_w4_edimapset.pdf.

⁶ Kershaw, P., Anderson, L., Warburton, B., Hertzman, C. (2009) 15 by 15: A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC. Human Early Learning Partnership. Retrieved from <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publications/15by15-full-report.pdf>.

⁷ McCreary Centre Society. (2015) Our Communities Our Youth: The health of homeless and street involved youth. Retrieved from http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/Our_Communities_Our_Youth.pdf.

⁸ McCreary Centre Society. (2015) Our Communities Our Youth: The health of homeless and street involved youth. Retrieved from http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/Our_Communities_Our_Youth.pdf.

⁹ Representative for Children & Youth, Public Health Office, Growing up in BC- 2015. (2015) Retrieved from https://www.rcybc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/reports_publications/guabc-2015-finalforweb_0.pdf.

¹⁰ Report to the Chief Coroner of British Columbia. (2013) BC Coroners Service Child Death Review panel: A Review of Child and Youth Suicides 2008-2012. Retrieved from <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/shreddocs/death-review-panel-2008-2012.pdf>.

¹¹ McCreary Centre Society. (2014) From Hastings Street to Haida Gwaii: Provincial results of the 2013 adolescent health survey. Retrieved from http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/From_Hastings_Street_To_Haida_Gwaii.pdf.

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"Violence against women is a serious public health and safety issue, a grave human rights violation and an important criminal justice matter, and a pressing public health concern".¹

Gender-based violence costs us all personally, socially and economically. A coordinated and sustainability funded system to prevent and address intimate partner violence and to keep people safe must be a priority for everyone in BC.

WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY

**VOL.1
ISSUE 5**

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

CASE STUDY

WHAT WE KNOW



Shannon is a 45 year old trans woman. She was assaulted by someone she had been dating for a couple of months. At first Shannon did not know who to talk to and for several months experienced feelings of shame, fear, powerlessness and sadness, causing her to miss several days of work. Shannon's sister encouraged her to seek support at her local sexual assault centre. There she was supported to contact the police, and she also attended counselling sessions and was able to connect with other people who shared a similar experience. Shannon now volunteers at the centre providing peer support to other trans people; and also developed a program for high school students.



Domestic violence claimed the lives of 113 women in BC between 2004 and 2014.²

It is estimated that the 3,200 police reports of sexual assault represent only 10% of actual sexual assaults in BC in 2013.³



Aboriginal women are almost three times more likely to experience spousal abuse than non-Aboriginal women,⁸ an issue that can be traced to colonialism and residential school experiences.⁹



Marginalized and minority women are more vulnerable to gender-based violence and face additional and unique barriers to services.¹⁰

Counselling for men can reduce the chance of violence that escalates into murder and/or suicide.¹¹

Investing in legal services (supportive legal information through women's social services) leads to "significant" reductions in intimate partner violence.¹²



The impact of witnessing domestic violence on children can be as harmful as direct abuse.⁴

Costs to Canadians financially: estimations of between \$6.9⁵ and 7.4⁶ billion dollars a year.

Women are increasingly unable to access transition houses and counselling services because of lack of space.⁷



¹ Rossiter, K., Yercich, S., & Jackson, M. (2014) Assessing the Complexities and Implications of Anti-violence Service Delivery in British Columbia. Report prepared for the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC). Retrieved from http://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Complexities-of-AV-service-delivery-FREDA_lowres.pdf.

² Coroners Service of BC. Intimate Partner Violence 2004-2014 YTD. Retrieved from: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/reports/docs/IntimatePartnerViolence.pdf>.

³ BC Government Media Release, Fact Sheet Feb 6 2015. Retrieved from https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Newsroom/downloads/violence_free_bc.pdf.

⁴ FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. Infographic on the Impacts and Costs of Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence for Children and Youth. Retrieved from <http://fredacentre.com/2015/01/16/infographic-on-the-impacts-and-costs-of-exposure-to-intimate-partner-violence-for-children-and-youth/>.

⁵ Justice Institute of British Columbia. (2011) Domestic Violence Prevention and Reduction in British Columbia. Retrieved from: http://www.jibc.ca/sites/default/files/research/pdf/Domestic-violence-prevention-reduction_REPORT.pdf.

⁶ Zhang, T., Hoddenbagh, J., McDonald, S. & Scrim, K. (2012) An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada, 2009. Justice Canada. Retrieved from http://justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf.

⁷ Rossiter, K., Yercich, S., & Jackson, M. (2014) Assessing the Complexities and Implications of Anti-violence Service Delivery in British Columbia. Report prepared for the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC). Retrieved from http://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Complexities-of-AV-service-delivery-FREDA_lowres.pdf.

⁸ BC Government Media Release, Fact Sheet: Action on Violence Against Women in BC. (2015) Retrieved from https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Newsroom/downloads/violence_free_bc.pdf.

⁹ Justice Institute of British Columbia. (2011,2013) Domestic Violence Prevention and Reduction in British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.jibc.ca/sites/default/files/research/pdf/Domestic-violence-prevention-reduction_REPORT.pdf.

¹⁰ Rossiter, K., Yercich, S., & Jackson, M. (2014) Assessing the Complexities and Implications of Anti-violence Service Delivery in British Columbia. Report prepared for the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC). Retrieved from http://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Complexities-of-AV-service-delivery-FREDA_lowres.pdf.

¹¹ Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA), Media Release Backgrounder, September 2014. Retrieved from http://endingviolence.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/02/3_Backgrounder_for-Sept3_vF.pdf.

¹² Rosenberg, J. S. & Grab, D. A. (2015) Supporting Survivors: The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence. The Institute for Policy Integrity. Retrieved from <http://policyintegrity.org/files/publications/SupportingSurvivors.pdf>.

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