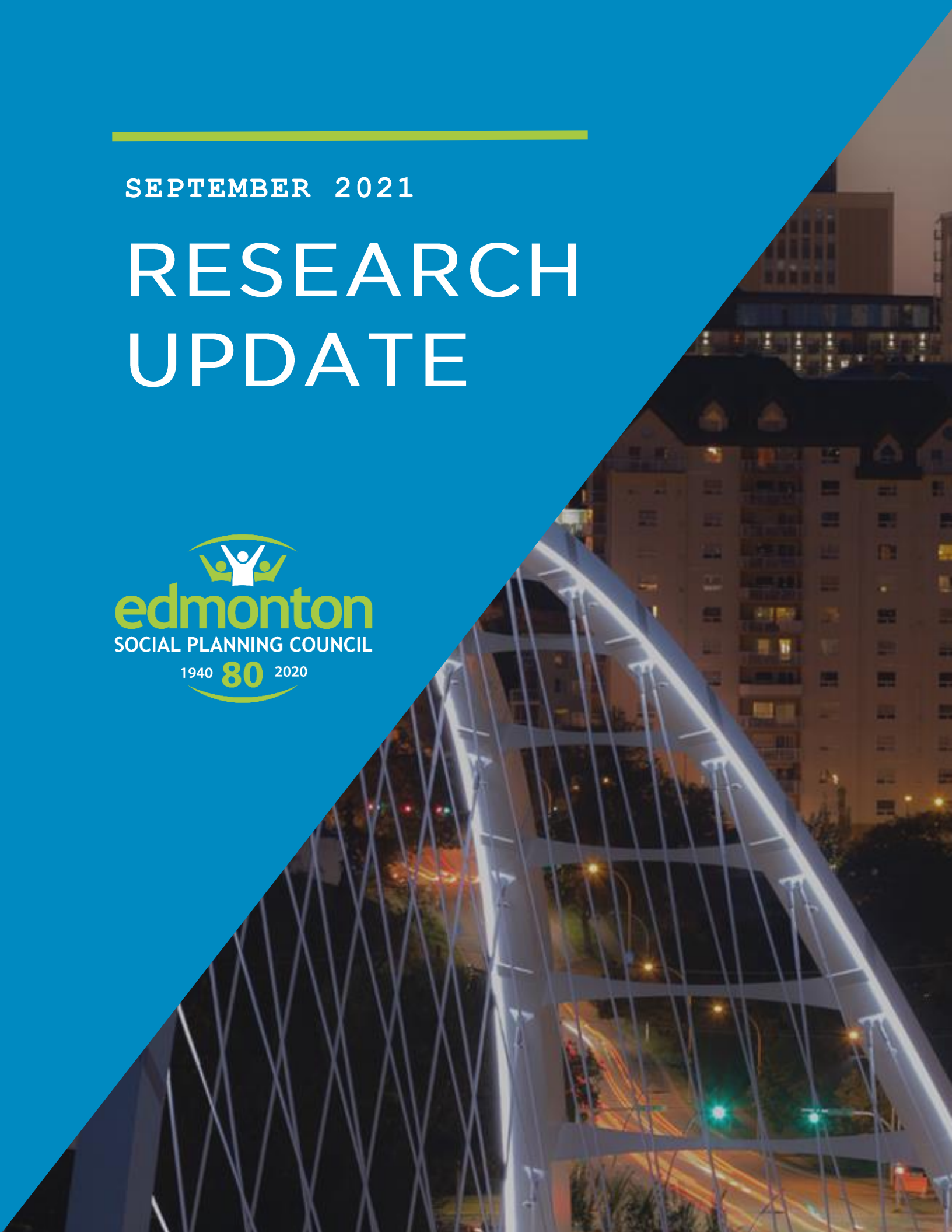

SEPTEMBER 2021

RESEARCH UPDATE





**RESEARCH
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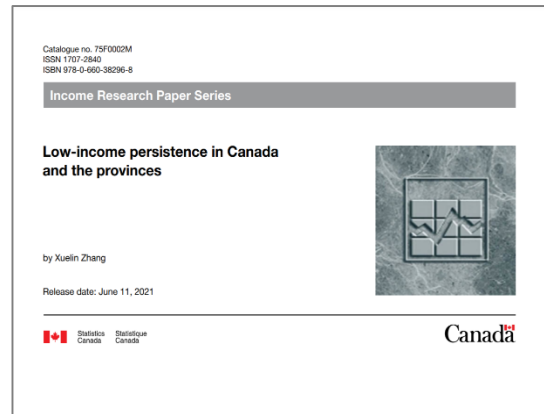
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Research Update is a volunteer-driven publication that
strives to provide stakeholders and community members
with up-to-date reviews on recently published social
research reports and publications.

LOW-INCOME PERSISTENCE IN ALBERTA

A review by Besindone Dumi-Leslie

In *Low-Income Persistence in Canada and the Provinces*, a Statistics Canada publication by Xuelin Zhang, the author describes and summarizes the persistence of low-income status in Canada. Low-income has been on the decline in recent years in this country. The commonly used Market Basket Measure (MBM) poverty rate fell 3.5 percentage points from 2015 to 2018, and an alternate low-income rate, the Low-Income Measure (LIM), dropped 1.9 points within that same period (p. 5). These statistics are helpful, but exclude an essential dimension: the persistence of low-income. Low-income rates tell us what proportion of the population lives in poverty but low-income persistence rates show the length of low-income spells. Both of these aspects are necessary to understand poverty dynamics.



Immobility rates measure the probability that tax filers in poverty will remain in poverty. The author calculates income immobility rates using data from a random sample of tax filers. Using these numbers to indicate low-income persistence, Zhang finds that Alberta experiences lower rates of low-income persistence than the national average and all other provinces. Using two-year periods, the average immobility rate between 1992 and 2018 is 61.1% in Alberta, while the national average is 70.1% (p. 7). This suggests that low-income Albertans on average had a 38.9% chance of exiting low-income, but for Canadians, on average, that probability is only 29.9% (p. 7). Alberta also differs from the national trend, particularly since the early 2000s. Between 2002 and 2012, the national immobility rate followed an increasing trend, but Alberta saw the rates declining. However, after 2012, the national rate began to decrease while Alberta's rose (p. 7).

In long-term low-income persistence Alberta outperformed all other provinces with the lowest immobility rates. Without restricting the analysis to successive years of poverty, long-term low-income persistence had a consistent upward trend at the national level but steadily declined in Alberta. However, sporadic experiences of low-income will differ greatly from extended periods of low-income. For example, an individual who has one five-year-long poverty spell will have a different experience from somebody who has five year-long low-income periods. But even accounting for low-income spells with long durations, Alberta's persistence was still lower than those in all other provinces, though there is no longer a clear decreasing trend. The contrasting findings suggest that low-income in Alberta is characterized by more frequent transitions into and out of low-income rather than remaining in or out of poverty.

The impacts of being in poverty for many years will differ significantly from the impacts of a single year of low-income or even infrequent and sporadic poverty. Persistent low-income can permanently change an individual's life path, even that of their children, while transitory low-income may not be as consequential. Finally, policy solutions will be different. Short-term income support may be adequate to moderate the impacts of temporary low-income,

usually resulting from short-term unemployment and economic shocks. Meanwhile, persistent poverty is associated with structural problems such as inadequate education, and different tools will be necessary. Although eight-year rates were presented at the national level, the author restricted detailed analysis of long-term low-income persistence to periods of at least three or four years. Those extended periods are worth closer examination.

Understanding extended low-income persistence would be helpful for policy-makers who want to focus on the dynamics of low-income households that require more structural transformation. Measures of low-income persistence can indicate the difficulty of exiting and remaining out of poverty and provide valuable insight for policy-makers.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

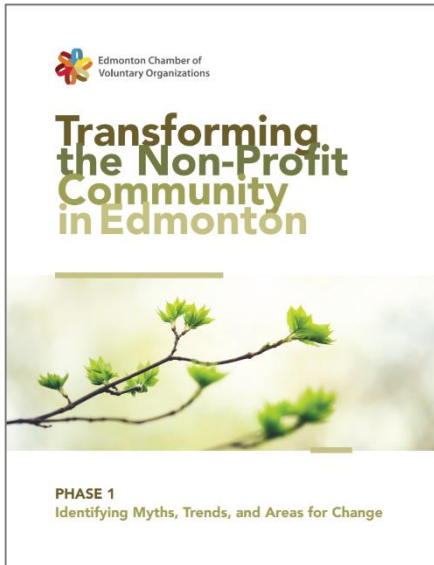
Zhang, X. (2021). *Low-income persistence in Canada and the provinces*. Statistics Canada.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2021004-eng.pdf>

GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Besindone Dumi-Leslie is a student at the University of Alberta. She believes in the importance of rigorous research in effecting social change. Her mission is to help narrow the opportunity gaps between young people from wealthy countries and those from poor ones. In her leisure, she enjoys baking and hiking.

THE FUTURE OF NON-PROFITS IN EDMONTON

A review by Rebecca Jansen



Calls to change how the non-profit community functions have existed at the fringes of the sector for decades. However, COVID-19 has rapidly revealed historical injustices within the sector, bringing calls for change to the forefront. In response, many leaders have answered these emerging needs by spearheading transformative initiatives. One such example is this report, taken on by the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO). The report, *Transforming the Non-Profit Community in Edmonton*, is described by the ECVO as the first phase on a long road to bring to life “a reimagining of non-profits” within a local Edmonton context (p. 1). The report captures historical injustices magnified by COVID-19 while harnessing their impacts to imagine a desired future that transcends the current status quo. The report opens with a review of the non-profit sector—past and present, includes surveys,

myths, and trends, and introduces a model for change. The information is based on 24 individual and five group conversations held with 82 Edmonton-based knowledge holders (p. 13). The collaborative approach aimed to increase critical reflection, system-wide connectivity, and community accountability by creating opportunities for engagement and generous critique for/by those working first-hand in the sector.

Three main categories were brought to the forefront during the reporting process: myths, trends, and a model for change. As seen by sector insiders, myths are widely held yet largely inaccurate beliefs that often create barriers in practice and policy. Myths highlighted include:

- The non-profit sector is truly voluntary,
- Non-profit organizations are flexible and responsive,
- Non-profit organizations operate as representatives of the community,
- The non-profit sector is apolitical,
- non-profit programs are fully data-driven and evidence-based, and
- The non-profit sector is truly altruistic. (p. 14)

In tandem with myths, trends—or general patterns—often emerge from neoliberalism and have also marked how the sector operates. Trends emphasized in the report include:

- Short-term, contract-based funding,
- Venture philanthropy,
- “Business-like” practices,
- The organization as the primary unit of analysis,
- Outdated board structures, and
- Individualized programming of subsectors. (p. 20)

Using these myths and trends as guideposts, ECVO present a model for change that encapsulates a more socially just future for the non-profit sector. Inspired by the Miami Workers Center, ECVO's model for change offers four pillars of action: service, power, consciousness, and policy (p. 24). At first glance, the pillars appear ambiguous and broad. However, each pillar is broken down to address explicit concerns. Some examples include:

- Switching from a 3- to 5-year planning cycle to a 50- to 100-year vision,
- De-centring organization,
- Hiring those directly impacted by systemic harms,
- Building social justice competencies,
- Building new knowledge systems into decision-making processes, and
- Funding more significant advocacy efforts. (p. 25–37)

While each pillar is thorough and specific in its mandates, as a whole, the model begs questions of infrastructure. In any such work, how does one “devise methods of participation and decision-making, build and sustain leadership, create shared political analysis, and generate and manage resources to feed the work”? (p. 38)

ECVO preface their work by stating it is not prescriptive, nor complete. They emphasize that they do not support or oppose political parties but instead focus on how past practices and policies have shaped current operations. This non-partisan approach, along with the ECVO's innovative, collective, and collaborative process, seems to be both reflective and flexible. As stressed in the report, this is merely phase one. As the process unfolds, more insight is gleaned and new learnings emerge and so priorities may shift. But for now, the ECVO report appears to be a comprehensive and critical step for a more socially just future for the sector. As such, they encourage readers to take their report and “use it to build new forms and methods of participation, decision making, leadership, and resource distribution. It is by altering our everyday processes that we can build new infrastructure and in doing so, construct alternative futures” (p. 38).

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Tink, L. N., & Kingsley, B. C. (2021). *Transforming the non-profit community in Edmonton: Phase 1—identifying myths, trends, and areas for change*. Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. <https://ecvo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECVO-Transformation-FINAL-highres.pdf>

GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Rebecca Jansen is currently a graduate student at the University of Alberta studying educational policy specializing in Adult, Community and Higher Education. With over ten years of experience as an adult and community educator, her primary research focus is on embodied learning, indigenization, and policy reform to realign power imbalances within social institutions that impact local communities.

WELFARE IN CANADA

A review by Sung Min (Amy) Jo

The report *Welfare in Canada, 2019* analyzes the total welfare income of Canadians in 2019. The report defines welfare income as the total income from all government transfers, tax credits, child benefits, and social assistance payments. The authors analyze eligibility criteria for social assistance, income differences across Canada, components of welfare incomes, long-term changes in welfare income, and the adequacy of welfare income compared to low-income thresholds (p. 4).

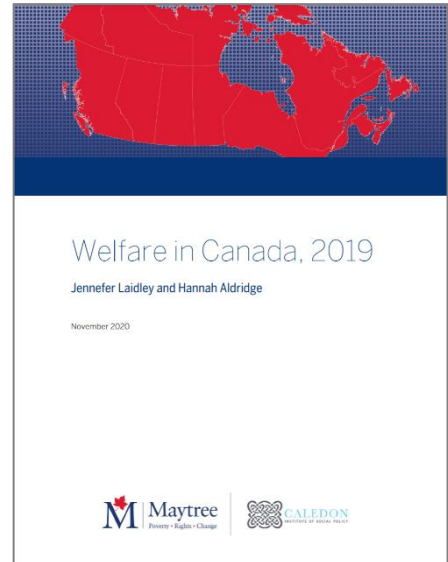
The *Welfare in Canada* series was established by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy to maintain data originally published by the National Council of Welfare from 1989 to 2009. Since its original publication, Maytree—a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing systemic solutions relevant to poverty, human rights, and positive change—has assumed responsibility for the continuation of the series. Adapting methodology from the original report, three measures of low-income are used to determine welfare income in proportion to cost of living across provinces and territories:

- the Market Basket Measure (MBM), used to represent a basic standard of living;
- the Low Income Measure (LIM), identifying households whose income is less than half of median income of society; and
- the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), identifying households likely to spend a disproportionately large share of their income on basic necessities (p. 6).

For the purpose of relevance, this research review will focus on the section for Alberta, though the report provides a thorough analysis of welfare incomes for each province and territory.

In Alberta, the 2019 welfare incomes for all five example household types (single person considered employable, single person with a disability, single person living on AISH, single parent with one child, and a couple with two children) were significantly below the threshold for each low-income measure, indicating that the standard of living is consistently subpar. Though trend lines show that welfare incomes have been increasing since 1989, and taking into consideration individual disability, employability in the workforce, and dependent children in the household, welfare income in 2019 remained insufficient to meet the rising costs of living.

This report has many limitations, as the authors make many assumptions in order to replicate methodology from the original series. However, the method to determine eligibility for social assistance programs is flawed. Asset tests used to calculate eligibility only consider a household's liquid assets and exclude fixed assets. Barriers to eligibility such as this will perpetuate a vicious cycle of poverty, as any attempts to increase income will make Albertans ineligible for many social assistance programs. Though this may seem like the



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intended goal of current social assistance programs, it creates a high-risk environment for Albertans who are attempting to break that cycle.

While there is great historical value from the original *Welfare in Canada* report, the methodology requires modernization in order to adjust to increasing living costs and inflation.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Laidley, J., & Aldridge, H. (2020). *Welfare in Canada, 2019*. Maytree. https://maytree.com/wp-content/uploads/Welfare_in_Canada_2019.pdf

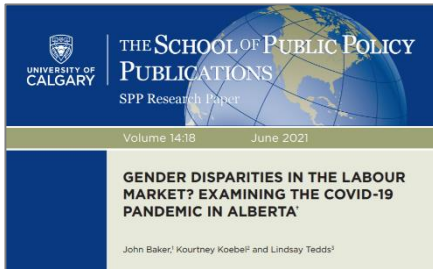


GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Sung Min (Amy) Jo is a nursing student at the University of Alberta. Following previous work experience with community non-profits, she is excited to pursue a career in public health pertaining to policy and program development in response to barriers experienced by vulnerable/marginalized communities. She is currently working with ESPC in a student placement through Canada Summer Jobs.

“SHE-CESSION” OR PARENTAL PROBLEMS: DISPARITIES IN THE ALBERTA LABOUR MARKET FROM COVID-19

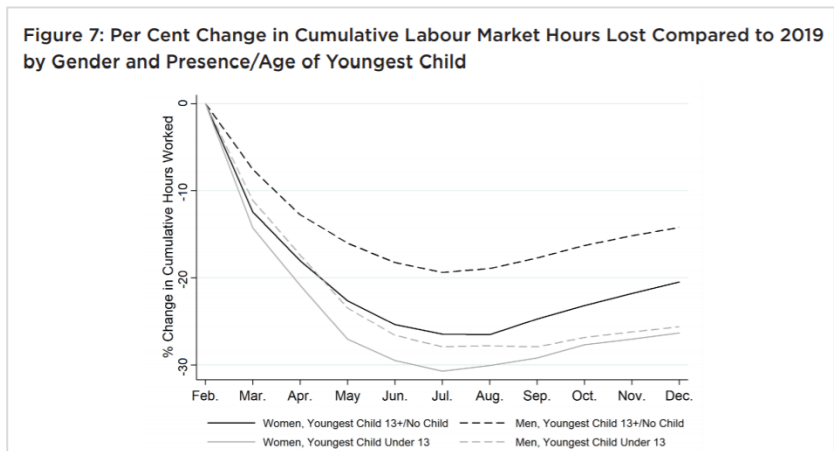
A review by Dharma Johnston



The research report *Gender Disparities in the Labour Market? Examining the COVID-19 Pandemic in Alberta* explores the impact COVID-19 has had on men and women within the labour force. Authors John Baker, Kourtney Koebel, and Lindsay Tedds all come from an academic background, with a focus in economics and industrial relations. This report was published by the School of Public Policy Publications housed at the University of Calgary.

The primary focus of this report is to examine the impact COVID-19 had on the labour market in Alberta. Special attention is given to economic differences between men and women, as well as parents and non-parents. As defined within the report, a parent is an individual with one or more children under the age of 13 (p. 6). Additionally, the report examines the significance of the age of the child on the hours worked and employment status of the parents.

Arguably, the most notable finding from the report suggests that any labour disparities that existed between men and women during the first wave of COVID-19 failed to continue as the pandemic persisted. Therefore, as the pandemic continued beyond the first wave, similar employment rates and hours are shown between men and women. In fact, from July to December, 2020, employment levels for men and women were essentially equal (p. 13). Although no differences were found between men and women, labour disparities were discovered between parents and non-parents. The results of the report propose that “the COVID-19 pandemic [was] a crisis of parental care” (p. 5). Individuals with children worked an average of two to four hours less per week than non-parents (p. 17). This difference most



likely occurred as a result of educational transitions to online learning and closures of child care. The research suggests that parents of younger children between the ages of zero and five experienced the largest decrease in employment and hours worked. In May, 2020, parents with young children worked approximately 10 hours less per week than their non-parent counterparts (p. 18).

The report results are relevant to current political policies and recovery benefits for COVID-19. Some political parties have argued for gender-based policies, whereas the authors of this

report strongly recommend policy-makers focus on parental status rather than gender. Based on current research, a decrease in hours worked has been observed for both mothers and fathers, by approximately equal amounts. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest a focus on parental support rather than gender.

All participants included in this research were men and women who were working before the pandemic occurred. The authors of this report excluded individuals who had yet to enter the workforce, who provided unpaid support to family, or who had not worked in over a year. This excludes stay-at-home parents, parents on parental leave, and unemployed individuals. Although the focus of this research was on the workforce in Alberta as a result of COVID-19, the statistics involved may be influenced by the exclusion of others.

The primary findings of this research clearly establish the importance of providing parents with relief benefits for COVID-19. Although most Albertans experienced a decrease in economic security as a result of the pandemic, parents with young children felt an extreme threat. In summary, no evidence was found to suggest a 'she-cession,' but, rather, supported the notion of a parental problem.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Baker, J., Koebel, K., & Tedds, L. (2021). *Gender disparities in the labour market? Examining the COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta*. The School of Public Policy Publications, 14(18), 1-35.
https://www.policyschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/TEG88_Gender-Disparities-Labour-Market_Baker-et-al.pdf



GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Dharma Johnston is a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Alberta. She is very passionate about helping others and creating positive impact in her community. In her free time, Dharma enjoys cooking, photography, and long walks with her dog.

SHOW ME THE MONEY? CASH-FOR-CARE BENEFITS TO SUPPORT AGING AT HOME IN CANADA

A review by Shawna Ladouceur

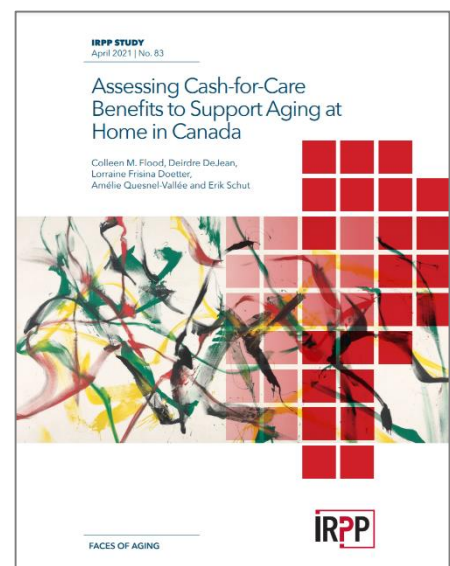
The ongoing pandemic has brought to the fore the abysmal state of institutional long-term care (LTC) in Canada. As evidenced by the devastation, the existing system will not suffice and will certainly not hold against the advancing wave of aging Canadians. While a complete overhaul of institutional care is necessary, increasing support for both formal homecare and informal caregiving could facilitate the preference for aging-in-place at home. At present, however, with limited access to a fragmented and often confusing home care system, insufficient alternatives can lead to inappropriate institutionalization. The report *Assessing Cash-for-Care Benefits to Support Aging at Home in Canada*, based on a study conducted by the Institute for Public Policy as a part of their Faces of Aging research program, examines popular cash-for-care benefit programs in Germany and the Netherlands as a possible solution for expanding care options to better support aging at home in Canada.

While several Canadian provinces have self-managed home care programs, most restrict choice by precluding informal caregiving arrangements. This negates important advantages of cash-for-care benefit programs like those currently operating in both Germany and the Netherlands. Cash benefits can increase autonomy by allowing financial compensation to informal caregivers, decreasing cost by substituting for institutional care, and redistributing the burden on informal caregivers by affording the means to engage supplemental care. Though an appealing option with demonstrable successes, a deeper examination also reveals shortcomings to consider.

Lessons from both Germany and the Netherlands must be contemplated if a Canadian cash-for-care program is meant to alleviate cost of the more expensive formal and institutional systems. Flexibility of programs in both Germany and the Netherlands have resulted in higher uptake and hence greater public spending as a result of payment to informal caregivers, such as family members, for the same previously uncompensated work. Since this mounting financial cost has not significantly increased quality or provision of care, both countries have instituted more restrictive measures, including significantly lower payment amounts offered for informal care than formal care.

At the same time, establishing a Canadian cash-benefits policy would require acknowledgement of persistent societal norms regarding gender and caregiving, which continue to disadvantage women. Unpaid informal caregiving responsibilities exhibit a detrimental effect on work hours and earning capacity. Cash-benefit considerations must include financial support such as vacation time and pension contributions to properly alleviate the long-term, and often life-long consequences that still disproportionately affect female caregivers.

The German program has given rise to a large, unregulated, and untrained “grey market”—with families using cash benefits to hire migrant workers to provide 24-hour care



that would not otherwise be possible or affordable. Ungoverned by social or labour regulations, studies have revealed exploitative practices and intolerable working conditions (p. 17). In the Netherlands, on the other hand, program constraints and well-funded formal home care services paid for with universal, mandatory LTC insurance plans have instead led to a highly regulated care market. Canada's own Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) would likely become more popular if cash benefits were introduced. Already having required changes to combat similar issues, the LCP program would necessitate further restructuring to protect vulnerable workers.

With a rising reliance on informal care, quality is at issue. Monitoring is difficult and enforcing standards, disciplining, or terminating informal caregivers—especially relatives—is nearly impossible. Instead, to prevent the potential for senior abuse and ensure quality and safety, cash benefits must be tied to a minimum level of training, with clear delineation of tasks appropriate to informal caregivers or to care professionals.

With an estimated 120% increase of older adults requiring LTC supports by 2050 (p. 7), in addition to an immediate overhaul of the current system, capacity building strategies to enable older adults to remain in the home must be urgently pursued. While some success has been recognized with cash-for-care benefit programs in Germany and the Netherlands, Canada can learn from both. The failure of either program to reduce costs, alongside difficulties ensuring quality of care and struggles to overcome long-term consequences for women and exploitation of grey market caregivers, demonstrate the need for a strong, formal caregiving system and proper supports for informal caregivers. Especially when considering a Canadian version of a cash-for-benefits program.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

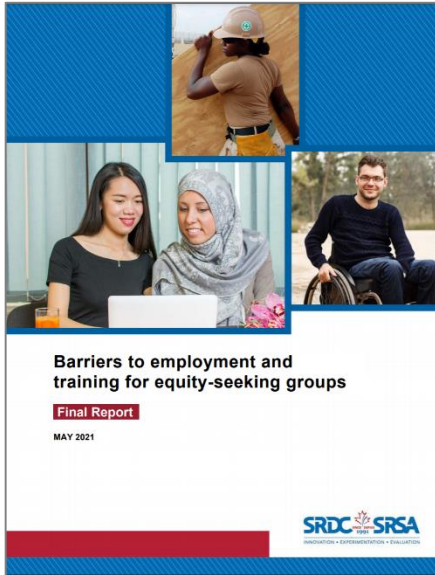
Flood, C. M., DeJean, D., Frisina Doetter, L., Quesnel-Vallée, A., & Schut, E. (2021). *Assessing cash-for-care benefits to support aging at home in Canada*, (No. 83). Institute for Research on Public Policy. <https://irpp.org/research-studies/assessing-cash-for-care-benefits-to-support-aging-at-home-in-canada/>

GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Shawna Ladouceur is a Registered Nurse who sees the impacts of the social determinants of health in ways that demand action. She has extensive experience working directly with vulnerable populations in the inner city. Her personal interests include skiing, hiking, biking, running, reading, and travelling.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST TRAINING

A review by Lexia Simmons



Basia Pakula and Heather Smith Fowler wrote the report *Barriers to Employment and Training for Equity-Seeking Groups* on behalf of the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC). SRDC developed this report for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Their goal is to analyze systematic barriers, skills gaps, and learning needs of equity-seeking groups who access and benefit from the varying skills training and employment supports available across the country.

SRDC's report highlights the overarching barriers that equity-seeking groups face, including explicit and implicit forms of discrimination and racism. The authors also delve into the additional barriers faced by people who identify with multiple equity-seeking groups. They then analyze how

these barriers impact the social structures and environments that perpetuate the problem. Suggestions to improve employment and training include reduced siloed training groups and training to help the “whole” person, including services like transportation, child care, housing supports, etc. The authors also argue for diversification in staffing and the expansion of how success is defined and measured. The report ends with the idea that inclusion drives diversity.

The authors argue that solutions for the obstacles faced by equity-seeking groups in the workforce can be found by changing the environment. They understand the labour market is an environment that naturally excludes and discriminates. Therefore, friendly workforce training programs can be developed by improving the participants' environment and soft skills. The report highlights that for many equity-seeking groups, the hard skills (e.g., typing speed, academic degrees, presentation experience) are already present. Despite this, environment can make it difficult for these groups to enter the labour force. One point worth pondering is, whose responsibility is it to ensure equity-seeking groups enter into the labour force? Is it the group itself who needs to learn to manoeuvre the barriers that the broader community erects, or is it the community that must work on removing the barriers it has created?

Finally, the report highlights general learning supports needed, such as developing an approach to teaching skills while recognizing the diversified learning needs of different equity-seeking groups (e.g., distance or readiness). It also highlights additional needs that are not part of traditional training, based around community support that would make skill development more accessible. Additionally, the authors take a more targeted look at learning support needs for youth, newcomers, and Indigenous peoples.

The report indicates that it was built as a tool for ESDC. I believe the report did what was expected, however, it is my opinion their methodology was not rigorous. Focus groups and interview participants for this project were internal SRDC staff. I take issue with using staff instead of hearing directly from the equity-seeking groups because it gives the impression that their staff are considered the experts of others' experiences. Moreover, the authors used prior SRDC research documents as the primary source for their literature review, which means that the literature review may be biased and incomplete. It is worth noting the report did attempt to augment the research found using search engines, including Google Search and Google Scholar. Nonetheless, there is no mention of further diversified research such as peer review articles or other research reports. All this gave the impression that the authors were not looking at the question critically and may have simply compiled completed projects and repackaged it under a different heading.

Despite this critique, I believe the report brings up critical points. I support the ideas to improve training for equity-seeking groups and ensure the labour market is more welcoming for individuals. I also appreciated that the report highlights the fact that intersectionality can have complex impacts on employment and training. In my experience as a visible minority woman, I see that barriers placed on intersectional marginalized groups have a more significant effect due to issues of belonging. Therefore, trying to attain resources or attend training can be an awkward experience. Some individuals may feel that some parts of their identity don't make them vulnerable enough, or their multitude of identities make them too vulnerable. I, therefore, agree with the report's programming insights: training should be developed with an intersectional lens that considers the multiple identities a person carries. In addition, I agree with a program that is "structured around a 'whole' person, to allow for different needs or life events to be recognized and supported" (p. 29). I am also a firm believer in programs having "diverse staff who share and/or have training to better understand participants' identities, experiences, and backgrounds" (p. 30). A favourable result occurs when a training program considers intersectionality and life choices, and provides resources to help a person navigate the institutions at organizational and interpersonal levels.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Pakula, B. & Fowler H.S. (2021). *Barriers to employment and training for equity-seeking groups*. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. <https://www.srdc.org/publications/Barriers-to-employment-and-training-for-equity-seeking-groups-Final-Report-details.aspx>

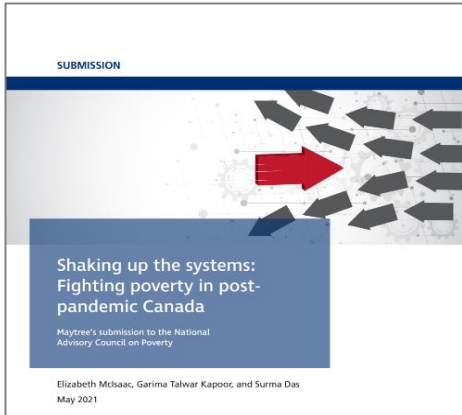
GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:



Lexia Simmons is a certified educator with a passion for social issues. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts and Education and worked for non-profit, government offices, schools, and EdTech companies. Lexia aspires to use her educational background to help break down complicated policy issues into easy-to-understand parts.

CHANGING CANADA'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET

A review by Jennifer Smyth



This article by McIsaac, Kapoor, and Das is a submission to the National Advisory Council on Poverty (NACP) on behalf of Maytree, an organization that supports non-profit groups and governments across Canada to find solutions to poverty. All three authors work for Maytree and focus on policy and research. The report is based on an NACP consultation meeting to discuss how Canada's federal government should change the system in order to create a more equitable post-pandemic recovery.

The report focuses on the idea that every person in Canada has “the fundamental human right to live in dignity . . . Economic and social rights—especially the human right to an adequate standard of living—provide us with the principles we need to transform our social safety net” (p. 1). Based on this foundational argument, the authors build on recommendations put forward by NACP, suggesting further efforts to:

- Base future policies on a human rights-based approach, including investment in public services like housing and pharmacare.
- Collaborate with Indigenous communities and providing the resources and data required to find lasting solutions to poverty.
- Create a new data strategy that will centralize the community's needs, ensuring data is publicly available within the shortest time frame.
- Use evidence based policy decision-making that is rooted in supportive data.
- Increase provincial and territorial social assistance programs by providing more funding to the [Canada Social Transfer](#).

The report goes into detail for each of the above points to explore how the federal government has succeeded in moving toward each recommendation and how it could go further to advance these goals. For example, the authors highlight the benefits of the housing announcements in Budget 2021 which included the Rapid Housing Initiative and the Affordable Housing Innovation fund. However, they are critical that this funding does not go far enough to address housing affordability across Canada. Specifically, the authors point to the lack of distinction-based housing strategies for Indigenous Peoples in Canada that was promised in the National Housing Strategy but was not delivered in Budget 2021.

The authors offer additional recommendations to the NACP's report that are founded on the central argument that changes to Canada's social safety net must be based on economic and social rights. Maytree's recommendations are quite general in what they suggest and are not focused solely on post-pandemic recovery but explore more overarching change to social services in Canada. The authors present the five high-level recommendations listed above as ideas to improve the future of Canada's social safety net. Overall the report demonstrates a willingness for Maytree to continue its work with NACP in order to influence future federal policy changes. Maytree provided some innovative recommendations in the

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report; it would be beneficial for NACP to consider these suggestions and continue to engage with Maytree in building a more equitable social safety net.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Mclsaac, E., Kapoor, T. G. & Das, S. (2021). *Shaking up the systems: Fighting poverty in post-pandemic Canada*. Maytree. <https://maytree.com/wp-content/uploads/Shaking-up-the-systems.pdf>

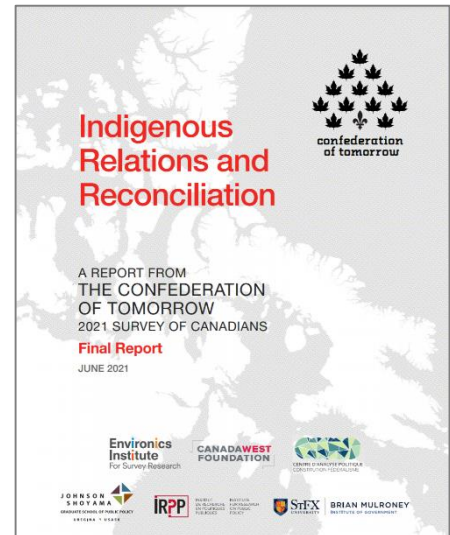
GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Jenn Smyth has a master's degree in urban planning and works for the City of Edmonton. She wants to see positive social change in her community and better social policy. When not working, Jenn enjoys travelling to exciting places, reading good books, and cooking great food.

“OH KANATA!”: INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS VIEWS ON NATIONAL IDENTITY, LEADERSHIP, AND RECONCILIATION IN CANADA

A review by Laurel Van De Keere

The report *Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation* arises from the Confederation of Tomorrow annual survey conducted in 2021 by the Environics Institute for Survey Research in partnership with other public policy organizations. Data was gathered in early 2021 through online and telephone surveys that reached 5,814 Canadian adults, including 775 Indigenous Peoples self-identifying as First Nations (332), Métis (323), Inuit (91), or other Indigenous identities (29). Findings are presented in four themes: attachment to nations and communities, leadership and representation, Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations, and progress towards reconciliation.



Attachment to nations and communities

Most Indigenous (88%) and non-Indigenous (86%) people in Canada feel very or somewhat attached to the country. Seven in ten Indigenous Peoples also feel attached to their Indigenous nation or community. Younger Indigenous Peoples (aged 18-40) are more likely to feel attachment towards their nation or community (43%), whereas older Indigenous Peoples (aged 41+) are more likely to feel attachment towards Canada (66%). Two-thirds of Indigenous Peoples feel attachment towards both.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada are equally likely to feel attachment towards their province or territory, while non-Indigenous people are more likely to feel attachment towards their city, town, or region.

Leadership and representation

Confidence in leaders and institutions differs between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. While both groups show low confidence in political leaders (32% and 40%, respectively), Indigenous Peoples show higher confidence in Indigenous organizations (66% versus 45%) and lower confidence in governments (42% versus 53%). Indigenous Peoples are more likely than non-Indigenous people to trust environmental group leaders (59% versus 52%) than journalists (42% versus 58%).

Views about the level of government that best represents an individual's interests are also divided among people in Canada. Non-Indigenous people tend to choose the provincial/territorial government (36%) over the federal (15%) or municipal (13%) governments. Indigenous Peoples tend to choose provincial/territorial (23%) or Indigenous (19%) governments over the municipal (10%) or federal (15%) ones.

In Nunavut, where the territorial government is largely Inuit, residents have high confidence in their territorial government (54%), with only 2% preferring the federal government.

Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations

Half (48%) of the people living in Canada describe Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations as somewhat or very negative, whereas 37% describe them positively. Relations were viewed more positively in early 2020, prior to disputes over Wet'suwet'en land rights in British Columbia and Mi'kmaq fishery rights in Nova Scotia that sparked nationwide protests.

Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations are most likely to be described positively in the North and negatively in the Prairies, with Indigenous Peoples more likely to view relations positively than non-Indigenous people (47% versus 37%). Youth (aged 18-24) and recent immigrants have the most positive outlooks.

Disputes between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous governments frequently centre on control over resources. However, seven in ten people living in Canada agree that development on Indigenous land should not proceed without Indigenous consent.

Progress towards reconciliation

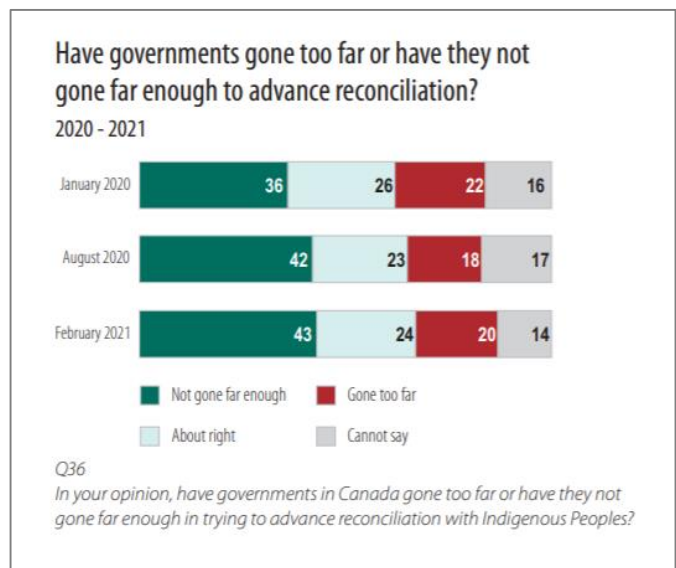
Indigenous (60%) and non-Indigenous (43%) people in Canada agree that governments must do more to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Most (70%) also feel that individual Canadians should play a role in reconciliation. These sentiments increased throughout 2020, possibly driven by widespread pro-Indigenous and anti-racism movements.

Most of the people living in Canada (60%) say they are familiar with the history of residential schools in Canada, with Indigenous Peoples (77%), youth (aged 18-24) (74%), and university degree holders (67%) feeling the most familiar. Non-Indigenous Canadians more familiar with this history are more likely to support individual involvement in reconciliation efforts and Indigenous consent for resource development projects.

More than half of Indigenous (55%) and non-Indigenous (53%) people in Canada believe that Canada will make meaningful progress toward reconciliation within the next decade.

Discussion

While *Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation* serves well as a brief snapshot of Indigenous and non-Indigenous sentiment towards select Canada-specific topics, the inclusion of



additional details on employment status, income, religion, and other intersectional identity factors would enrich the report.

Additionally, while the study divides some responses by gender and Indigenous identity, it rarely includes response reasoning. For example, it would be interesting to know why older Indigenous Peoples feel a stronger sense of attachment towards Canada than towards their Indigenous nations or communities, given the impacts of the Sixties Scoop and the residential school system within this particular generation.

The report acknowledges that results are taken from a survey conducted prior to the first discovery of unmarked graves at former residential school sites across Canada in the spring of 2021. It is likely these tragic discoveries will shape responses in upcoming surveys.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

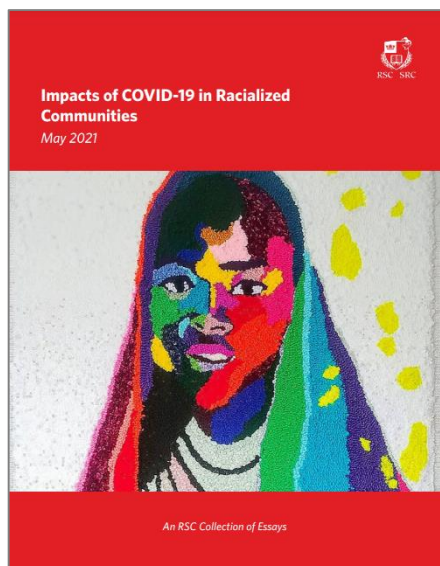
Confederation of Tomorrow. (2021). *Indigenous relations and reconciliation: A report from the Confederation of Tomorrow 2021 survey of Canadians*. <https://centre.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/09/CoT-2021-Report-4-Indigenous-Relations-and-Reconciliation.pdf>

GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Laurel Van De Keere holds a Master of Arts degree in International Development Studies and has spent the last decade developing strategic policy for the provincial and federal governments. She is passionate about personal wellness and human rights, and supports various global and local initiatives related to these causes.

THE NUMBERS GAME: HOW LACK OF RACE-BASED DATA COLLECTION DURING COVID-19 IN CANADA HAS HIGHLIGHTED SYSTEMIC RACISM

A review by Jayme Wong



The Royal Society of Canada established its Task Force on COVID-19 in April 2020 to “provide evidence-informed perspectives on major scientific challenges in response to and recovery from COVID-19” (p. 2). The result of the task force’s findings is *Impacts of COVID-19 in Racialized Communities*, a collection of eleven essays published in May 2021.

Racism existed before COVID-19. The pandemic simply created conditions in which racism became more apparent. The attitudes, policies, and practices created and reinforced by individual, systemic, and cultural racism resulted in disparities that could no longer be ignored by mainstream society. In the anthology’s introductory essay, “The Background to Racism in Canadian Society,” author Frances Henry explains: “It is the racism that existed in settler

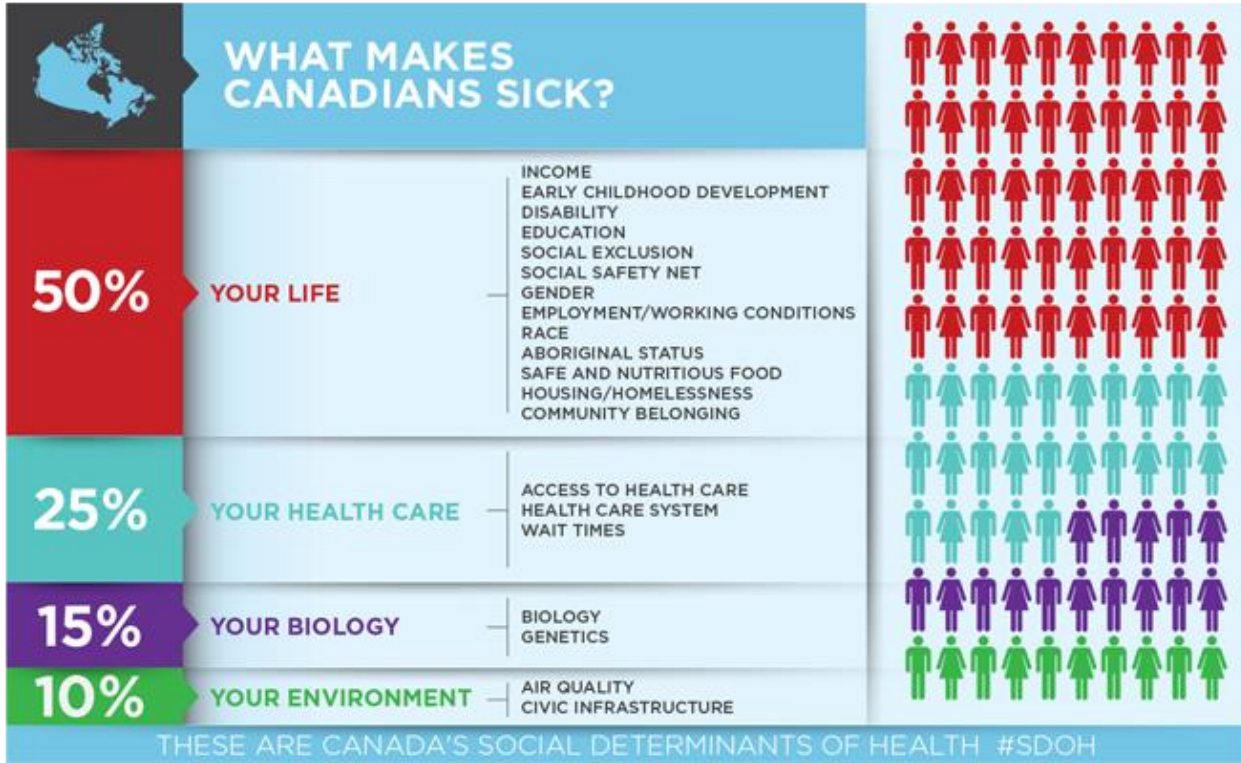
societies, the racism that led to the subjugation of people through colonialism and the expansion of Europeans into far off places in the world, which created the conditions that exist today” (p. 14). COVID-19 became a racial issue when the historical roots of racism, colonialism, and imperialism created unequal conditions among people living in Canada.

Canada has never really collected race-based data related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain provinces, such as Manitoba and Ontario, started to collect this data recently—though only in clusters (p. 25). The result is that Canadians cannot accurately determine the impact that COVID-19 has had on different racial communities. However, just because we cannot determine *how* people of colour were affected does *not* negate the irrefutable fact that visible minorities were far more affected by the virus than white communities.

Take, for example, the data that the City of Toronto gathered throughout the pandemic: “In the Greater Toronto Area, whites account for 48 per cent of the population and 17 per cent of COVID-19 cases. This is in contrast to the situation with Black people who account for 9 per cent of the population and 21 per cent of cases” (p. 19). This data supports emerging statistics from the United States, which project that 1 in 1,125 Black Americans have died from COVID-19 compared to 1 in 2,450 White Americans (p. 25). Similar numbers collected from the United Kingdom also highlight the stark differences between rates for people of colour who are affected and dying from COVID-19 in comparison to white populations in the same areas.

The virus does not discriminate. Poor conditions grounded in centuries of systemic racism have worsened the impact of COVID-19 on certain groups. In addition to sickness, racialized communities have also had to deal with economic and social factors that cause uncertainty and instability in an already turbulent time. In the essay “Racial Inequality, COVID-19 and the

Education of Black and Other Marginalized Students,” Carl E. James identifies the factors that contribute to inequality as access—or lack thereof—to nutrition, academic supports, mental health, and online learning (p. 30). People who face multiple barriers when accessing these resources are more likely impacted by the long-term health and social effects of COVID-19.



Source: [The Canadian Medical Association](https://www.cma.ca/en/health-care/clinical-practice/2020/05/12/what-makes-canadians-sick)

Health care experts have criticized the federal government’s decision not to collect race-based data during COVID-19. Many consider this decision a failure to provide support for marginalized communities and indicative of a flawed system built upon colonialism. In the essay “Race and Ethnicity Collection During COVID-19 in Canada: If You Are Not Counted You Cannot Count on the Pandemic Response,” Kwame McKenzie goes so far as to say that “seeing significant disparities and doing nothing active to deal with them is a form of systemic racism” (p. 67). The federal government’s silence on the issue does not hide the obvious harm that has already been inflicted by centuries of colonial policies that have prevented visible minorities from accessing necessary health and education resources or inhabiting clean, socially distanced spaces that increase quality of life.

Overall, the report’s primary recommendation is to begin collecting race-based data and to involve racialized communities in the collection and dissemination of the information. While this solution does not amend all of the damage that COVID-19, and other health crises, have already done, it is a step forward into a post-COVID and, more importantly, post-colonial nation. Having diverse voices at the table means that government decisions would no longer be made based on archaic legislation that—either intentionally or unintentionally—excluded and discriminated against minorities.

Edmonton Social Planning Council

Although rebuilding in a post-COVID landscape is uncertain, it is also an opportunity to lay a new foundation that is informed by the mistakes made in the past. Re-examining the systems, institutions, and attitudes that have created unequal access to health care and other resources means people living in Canada can prevent history from repeating and begin a precedent for neighbouring nations.

PUBLICATION SOURCE:

Henry, F., James, C., Allen, U., Collins, T., Dei, G. J. S., Ibrahim, A., Jean-Pierre, J., Kobayashi, A., Lewis, K., Mawani, R., McKenzie, K., Owusu-Bempah, A., Walcott, R., & Wane, N. N. (2021). *Impacts of COVID-19 in racialized communities*. Royal Society of Canada. https://rsc-src.ca/en/research-and-reports/end-life-decision-making-policy-and-statutory-progress/covid-19-policy-briefing?mc_cid=41ac70285f&mc_eid=4a6bf13a01



GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEER:

Jayme Wong graduated from the University of Lethbridge in 2014 with a BA in English and Philosophy, and more recently graduated from the University of Alberta in 2020 with an MA in English and Film Studies. She currently works at a local non-profit, the Learning Centre Literacy Association.

Through our research, analysis, and engagement, we hope to create a community in which all people are full and valued participants.

ABOUT

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization. Our focus is social research, particularly in the areas of low-income and poverty.

We are dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations who are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them on a daily basis.

OUR STAFF

Susan Morrissey, Executive Director

Jenn Rossiter, Research Services & Capacity Building Coordinator / Volunteer Coordinator

Sydney Sheloff, Research Officer

Brett Lambert, Community Engagement Coordinator

Justine Basilan, Executive Assistant

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