

CANADA WITHOUT POVERTY



Canada Without Poverty is an Ottawa-based, federally incorporated, charitable and non-partisan organization, founded in 1971 as the National Anti-Poverty Organization. Our name expresses the end that we seek – a Canada in which no person need suffer what Gandhi called “the worst form of violence.” Our logo symbolizes rising above one’s poverty line towards a brighter future.

Canada Without Poverty (charity registration #13091 6638 RR001)

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Brief Introduction:

Canada Without Poverty (CWP) was originally founded in 1971 under the name National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). In the more than 40 years since then, CWP/NAPO has been a charity with the purpose of eliminating poverty in Canada. CWP's focus has been on using a human rights framework to approach poverty elimination. This has been made more challenging since 2008 when CWP, along with many other non-profit organizations, lost all government funding. Since then, CWP has been operating exclusively on the basis of donations from generous individuals and organizations.

Human rights are at the crux of CWP's current mission because we fundamentally believe that poverty is a violation of human rights and that the Government of Canada is legally obligated to enact policies to end poverty. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has [declared](#) that “[a]nti-poverty policies are more likely to be effective, sustainable, inclusive, equitable and meaningful to those living in poverty if they are based upon international human rights.” CWP supports this notion entirely and strives to bring Canada in line with its obligations under international law.

The lived experiences of those in poverty are at the forefront of all our decisions. CWP is led by a Board of Directors made up entirely of individuals who have a personal, lived experience of poverty. This is important to CWP because we believe that empowering individuals who are experiencing or have experienced poverty is crucial to ending poverty once and for all. CWP also is also proud to receive the guidance and insight from our Honorary Directors; Honorary Directors lend their names to the organization, with the expectation that each will contribute at least once annually to the success of a fundraising event. The five current Honorary Directors are well-known Canadians who excel in the realm of human rights. They include a former Prime Minister, a former UN Commissioner on Human Rights and leading policy-makers in poverty elimination.

As for day-to-day work, CWP is a small organization that operates out of an office in Ottawa. There are currently four full-time employees, with additional work being done by volunteers, placement students, and several contract workers. Many people are shocked to learn that CWP is so small and yet has such a large impact on the poverty and human rights discussion in Canada — many national media outlets consider CWP to be a go-to authority (examples include: the Globe and Mail, CBC, CTV, CBC Radio, Toronto Star, and Huffington Post).

Charitable Objects:

The objects of Canada Without Poverty are as follows:

1. To relieve poverty in Canada by:
 - Advancing the knowledge of, and the study of, poverty in Canada by organizing conferences and workshops on topics related to poverty;
 - Undertaking and supporting research into factors that contribute to poverty and the most appropriate ways to mitigate these;

- Producing and disseminating articles, commentary and reports on topics related to relieving poverty;
 - Providing information to government officials, and the public to increase knowledge of poverty related issues and how to more effectively relieve poverty;
 - Working with food banks, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, social housing providers and other social agencies to relieve poverty while promoting respect for the human rights of people living in poverty;
 - Directing people to the government programs and offices by which people may access benefits to which they may be entitled;
2. To uphold and ensure compliance with international human rights law as it relates to the relief of poverty, including, among others, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 3. To receive and maintain a fund or funds and to apply all or part of the principal and income therefrom, from time to time, to charitable organizations that are also registered charities under the Income Tax Act (Canada);
 4. To do all things incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the above objects.

Poverty in Canada

Poverty is incredibly complex, with many different causes and manifestations which makes it challenging to define specifically. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights offers the following definition:

“[A] human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. While acknowledging that there is no universally accepted definition, the Committee endorses this multi-dimensional understanding of poverty.”

It is crucial to understand that poverty is not simply being in the position of lacking money; it is a direct violation of the human rights that are inherent to every human being. The notion of not having an adequate standard of living encompasses many of the major issues associated with poverty, such as hunger/food insecurity, inadequate or precarious housing, and poor mental and physical health.

Poverty is a reality for far too many people in a country as prosperous as Canada. Although it is difficult to calculate exactly how many individuals are living in poverty, there are some statistics available and they are troubling. Estimates place the overall number of people across Canada living in poverty to be 4.8 million people, 546,000 of which are children. 3.3 million households in Canada are precariously housed (living in unaffordable, below standards, and/or overcrowded housing conditions) and at least 235,000 individuals are homeless in Canada each year. Roughly

1 in 10 people in Canada cannot afford to fill their medical prescriptions while 1 in 8 households struggle to put food on the table, a number that jumps to 2 in 5 in Northern Canada.

There are some groups that are more susceptible to poverty in Canada than others; at particular risk are single mothers and their children, people living with disabilities, refugees and recent immigrants, racialized individuals, and the elderly.

Short History of CWP/NAPO

CWP was founded under the name “National Anti-Poverty Organization” (NAPO) in 1971 in the aftermath of the *Poor People’s Conference* in Toronto. From its inception, NAPO was concerned with supporting the dignity and human rights of individuals experiencing poverty in Canada.

During the 1970s, NAPO assisted thousands of impoverished Canadians with accessing money and programs from the federal government, advocated against Bell Telephone’s proposed increase in rates and won the retention of the 10-cent pay phone. NAPO became recognized as (1) the coordinating national umbrella organization for poverty and low income groups in Canada; and (2) the mechanism through which its constituents could approach the federal level of government for discussion and action on issues of concern to those living in poverty.

NAPO’s parliamentary submissions in the 1980s addressed issues on health care, housing, unemployment insurance, job training, the tax system, pensions, family benefits, financial services and phone rates. The Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and constitutional change introduced new issues that extended through the decade. NAPO embarked on a research project in 1989 to examine the strengths and weaknesses of job training programs from the perspective of social assistance recipients.

In 1993, NAPO made history as the first non-governmental organization to appear before the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to advise the Committee on Canada’s performance with regards to economic and social rights. NAPO returned to present to the Committee in 1995 and 1998 to comment on national standards of welfare and the government’s cutting of the Canada Assistance Plan. Also in 1995, NAPO was instrumental in bringing Canadian delegates to the World Summit for Social Development; in 1996 NAPO participated in Habitat 2 (a UN event regarding homelessness).

NAPO turned to research in the early 2000s, publishing a major report in 2004 regarding the special circumstances of homeless women (*Voices: Women, Poverty, and Homelessness in Canada*). 2009 was a major year for the organization, as it adopted the new organization name Canada Without Poverty (CWP) as well as launching *Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-free Canada* with its partner Citizens for Public Justice.

In September 2012, Leilani Farha joined CWP as the Executive Director. Ms. Farha is an experienced human rights law, economic, and social rights expert with a particular focus on adequate housing. Under her leadership, CWP has become more focused on the connection between poverty and human rights. In May 2014, Leilani Farha was appointed as the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing for the United Nations in addition to her role as ED for CWP.

Initiatives Requiring Support

CWP is actively involved in many different projects at any given time. Currently, we are focused on the Dignity for All Campaign, the launch of our new Human Rights Guide and our online course on Economic and Social Rights.

The Dignity for All (DfA) campaign was launched in May 2009 along with co-founder Citizens for Public Justice with a vision of making Canada as a whole poverty-free, socially secure and cohesive by the year 2020. The DfA Campaign has three fundamental objectives: to create a federal plan for poverty elimination that complements provincial and territorial plans; to achieve a federal anti-poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results; and sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians. The Campaign fundamentally believes that everyone has the right to a life of dignity as detailed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Universal Declaration of Rights and Freedoms, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Campaign has recently launched a model anti-poverty plan that was developed in coordination with individuals and organizations from coast-to-coast-to-coast and began a series of cross-Canada trips to promote awareness about poverty in Canada and the DfA objectives.

Over the last year, CWP has been in the process of creating a Human Rights Guide that is aimed at frontline employees and government officials with the intent of educating people on international human rights, Canada's legal obligations to uphold human rights, and how human rights can be protected at all levels of government. The Human Rights Guide is currently in the final phase of receiving feedback from Canadian human rights experts and CWP is greatly looking forward to its general distribution later this year.

One of CWP's biggest focuses is on the education of Canadians about human rights, specifically economic and social rights. Therefore, we offer a series of online courses throughout each year (starting in 2012 and continuing to the present day) that offer a comprehensive look into what economic and social rights are, how they relate to international and domestic legislation, and what must be done to protect them. The course creates a virtual classroom atmosphere where participants and guest human rights experts interact in guided dialogue.

Human rights education is also available through the CWP website which is currently undergoing a makeover to make it more accessible and up-to-date. The resources section in particular is an excellent place to learn more about poverty and human rights. Additionally, CWP leads in-person workshops throughout the country (past examples include Vancouver, Ottawa and Calgary) on economic and social rights on a request-only basis.

Our Board of Directors

Canada Without Poverty is governed by a Board of Directors of 16 voting members — one per province and territory, plus several Directors-at-Large (not all of these seats are full at the present). Each member of the Board has a personal, lived experience of poverty which gives them unique perspectives on how to end poverty in Canada.

Harriett McLachlan - President (Montreal, QC) has a Masters in Social Work from Carleton University and has been working in the field for over 20 years. She applies an anti-oppressive structural analysis to community development that focuses on poverty and inequality at the ground level with the lived experiences of people's lives. Her early life of childhood violence and sexual abuse, and subsequent 33 years of poverty, including 17 years as a single parent, have inspired her to effect positive change within the community sector. Harriett is the President of the Board of Directors.

Laura Cattari – Vice President (Hamilton, ON) is a member of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction's Operational Steering Committee and Chair of its Social Assistance Reform Work Group. Her promising career in technology came to an end in 2003 with the advent of life-long chronic illness. The challenges of illness and subsequent poverty have shaped her outlook and passion for social justice today. She works diligently to affect public policy change that empowers. Laura utilizes community engagement, television and radio appearances and program development reaching tens of thousands; locally, provincially and nationally. It was her great honour to be nominated in 2013 as a Woman of Distinction in Hamilton. Laura currently acts as the Vice President for CWP's Board of Directors.

Wayne MacNaughton – Treasurer (Halifax, NS) has had personal experience trying to make ends meet on social assistance. A firm believer in the motto of the disability rights movement – “nothing about us without us” – Wayne recognizes that solutions to poverty require engagement of the low income population. He has shared his message over the past few years as a Volunteer Inspirational Speaker with the United Way of Halifax Regional Municipality. Wayne is a bilingual community activist. He is a member of the Community Advocates Network in Nova Scotia, a founding member of the Community Society to End Poverty in Nova Scotia, and has been involved with the human rights network ATD Fourth World. Wayne is currently acting as Treasurer for the Board.

Derek Cook (Calgary, AB) grew up in a poor household in rural Ontario and experienced first-hand the impacts of exclusion that results from a lack of access to the resources of society. Learning of the value of social justice, Derek has dedicated the past 20 years to social change – including assisting in the creation of local living wage policies and organizing the group Poverty Talks which engaged over 500 low-income Calgarians in the development of a local poverty strategy. Derek is currently the Executive Director of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative, a community-based strategy to reduce poverty in the municipality.

Joleen Didyk (SK) is a member of the Board.

George Lessard (Yellowknife, NT) is a communication and media specialist that has travelled the world helping others learn how to use both traditional mass media and the new digital media. George grew up in a working class family in Montreal, and since then has lived in some of the poorest & remote parts of Canada following his studies in journalism. He has also trained many of the founding members of the first wave of community radio in Quebec. Currently, he distributes relevant information on social and environmental justice in the Circumpolar Regions

via Northern Clips. Experiencing poverty first hand has taught him that there are many ways to survive and many wonderful successes to not only learn about, but to help others learn about.

Kate Mechan (YK) is a member of the Board.

Brenda Thompson (Annapolis Royal, NS) experienced life on welfare as a single mother resolving to be resourceful and stand up for herself. This experience led to the publication of the book *The Single Mothers Survival Guide* in 1988, and the article “*The Violence of Welfare and Single Mothers on Social Assistance in Nova Scotia.*” Brenda has a BA in Women’s Studies and MA in Sociology. She has spent the past six years as the Chair of the Board of The Women’s Place Resource Centre, and is currently helping others find jobs in a high unemployment area of Nova Scotia.

Catherine Wirt (Winnipeg, MB) has in her past survived on low paying jobs, student loans, unemployment insurance, and income assistance. Only in the last few years has she enjoyed the security of medical benefits, insurance and retirement savings. She has worked with Winnipeg Harvest since 2003. As Referrals Coordinator, she leads a team that refers clients to food banks and other community resources, as well as provides information, mediation and advocacy. Catherine is the Secretary for the Board.

Our Honorary Directors

Canada Without Poverty appointed Honorary Directors starting in the summer of 2009. Honorary Directors lend their names to the organization, with the expectation that each will contribute at least once annually to the success of a fundraising event. The following prominent Canadians are the first five Honorary Directors:

The Right Honourable Charles Joseph (“Joe”) Clark: Mr. Clark has led a life of achievement as a student, politician, statesman, businessman and professor. He became active in politics while in university where he earned Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in political science. First elected as a Member of Parliament in 1972, representing a largely rural western Alberta riding, Mr. Clark won the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party in 1976, becoming, at age 36, the youngest leader of any major federal political party in Canada’s history.

Three years later, on June 4, 1979, Mr. Clark also became the youngest Prime Minister in Canada’s history, leading the Progressive Conservative Party to a minority government victory over the Liberal Party, then led by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. His minority government was soon after defeated on a motion of non-confidence and, in the 1980 federal election, the Liberal Party regained the government. Mr. Clark served with distinction, prominently in foreign affairs, as a senior Cabinet minister in the Progressive Conservative government of 1983 to 1993, under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. After a period from 1993 to 1997 out of political office, he made a comeback in 1998 to once again lead the Progressive Conservative Party before its eventual dissolution, serving a final term in Parliament from 2000 to 2004. Since 2004 Mr. Clark has been a scholar, university professor, president of his own consulting firm and a widely travelled and highly respected statesman.

Honourable Louise Arbour: Ms. Arbour has, since July 2009, been the President and CEO of the International Crisis Group, headquartered in Brussels. Crisis Group "is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict." Prior to joining Crisis Group, Ms. Arbour blazed a distinguished career as a lawyer, academic, judge and diplomat. Her career has included being Associate Professor and Associate Dean at Osgoode Hall Law School of York University; a Supreme Court of Ontario Justice; a Court of Appeal for Ontario Justice; and a Supreme Court of Canada Justice (1999 to 2004). In addition, she has served as a Commissioner to conduct an inquiry into the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario; as the United Nations' Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda; and, from 2004 to 2008, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the latter capacity, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day 2006 Ms. Arbour stated that:

Today, poverty prevails as the gravest human rights challenge in the world. Combatting poverty, deprivation and exclusion is not a matter of charity, and it does not depend on how rich a country is. By tackling poverty as a matter of human rights obligation, the world will have a better chance of abolishing this scourge in our lifetime. Poverty eradication is an achievable goal.

Ms. Arbour has received honorary doctorates from some thirty universities, along with numerous medals and awards, recently including the Colombian Order of National Merit, Grand Cross class. In 2008, she was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and Companion of the Order of Canada. In June 2009, she became Grande Officière de l'Ordre national du Québec and in 2010, she was named Commander of the French Legion of Honour.

Honourable Monique Bégin: Hon. Monique Bégin is a distinguished former Member of Parliament and a leading Canadian expert on poverty as a social determinant of health. Dr. Bégin earned a Master's in sociology from the Université de Montréal and undertook doctoral studies in social sciences at the Sorbonne (University of Paris), before serving as Executive Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967-70).

Dr. Bégin became one of the first women from Québec ever elected to the House of Commons in 1972. Re-elected three times, she was twice appointed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau as Minister of National Health and Welfare. In 1978 she created the Refundable Child Tax Credit (now the Canada Child Tax Benefit), but remains best known for the Canada Health Act (1984). Following elected office, Dr. Bégin joined the University of Ottawa and Carleton University in 1986 as the first joint Ottawa-Carleton Chair of Women's Studies. From 1990 to 1997, she was the University of Ottawa's Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. She has continued to teach at this university as a Professor Emeritus. Dr. Bégin also co-chaired the 1993-1995 Royal Commission on Learning of Ontario. She served on the International Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life.

Her academic and political career included distinguished service, over 2005-2008, as a member of the international Commission on Social Determinants of Health, convened by the World

Health Organization to give support in tackling the social causes of poor health and avoidable health inequities. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Dr. Bégin has received several honorary doctorates in recognition of her contribution to human rights and to public policies. In 1997, she was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. She is currently serving as Vice-Chair of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing Advisory Board.

Honourable Ed Broadbent: Ed Broadbent's distinguished career has spanned academia, civil society and politics. Born in Oshawa in 1936, Mr. Broadbent graduated first in his class in philosophy at the University of Toronto in 1959, undertook postgraduate studies at the London School of Economics, and obtained his doctorate in political science at the University of Toronto in 1966. As an undergraduate at the U of T, he obtained his commission as a member of the RCAF reserve. He has lectured at, and/or been a Fellow of, many universities including McGill, Harvard and Oxford, is currently a Fellow in the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University, and is the recipient of a number of honorary degrees.

First elected to Parliament in 1968, Mr. Broadbent became Leader of the federal NDP in 1975. Under his leadership through 1989, the NDP reached record party popularity and a record number (for the party) of seats in the 1988 federal election. Following a 14-year absence from elected office, Mr. Broadbent returned to Parliament in 2004-2006 for the riding of Ottawa Centre. An expert on economic and social rights, Mr. Broadbent was the founding President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (now Rights and Democracy). He was made a member of the Privy Council in 1982, an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993 and a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2002.

Ovide Mercredi: Ovide Mercredi is a Cree who currently serves as the Chief of Misipawistik Cree Nation in northern Manitoba, the community of his birth in January 1946. Chief Mercredi received a law degree from the University of Manitoba and practiced criminal law, later specializing in constitutional law as an advisor to Manitoba Chiefs. He has received honorary degrees from Bishops University, St Mary's University, The University of Lethbridge and Athabasca University. He has worked tirelessly for the rights of First Nations people throughout Canada. He is known as a First Nations leader that speaks eloquently with great passion and clarity.

In 1989, he was elected Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for Manitoba. He became a key strategist for the Assembly during the time of the Meech Lake Accord constitutional reform discussions had a strong leadership role in helping to resolve the Oka Crisis in 1990. Chief Mercredi was elected as National Chief for the Assembly of First Nations in 1991 and served until 1997. He addressed the United Nations in Geneva and New York. He led a human rights delegation of Canadians to the troubled area of the Mexican state of Chiapas. In addition to serving as a lawyer and politician, in 1993 he co-authored, with Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, *In the Rapids: Navigating the Future of First Nations*. He has contributed articles to other publications.

Chief Mercredi is an advocate of non-violent methods for change and travelled to India when he was nominated for the Gandhi Peace Prize. In 2007 he was appointed Chancellor of The

University College of the North in Manitoba. Chief Mercredi is also the National Spokesperson for Treaties 1 to 11, having been chosen in a traditional and customary manner in the summer of 2006. As National Chief he worked closely with Elders from all regions of Canada. As a Treaty Spokesperson, he has continued his practice of seeking the advice and support of traditional Elders. Chief Mercredi is a strong believer in a positive future for all First Nations communities and recognizes the inherent strength and talents of First Nations people.

Meet Our Staff

CWP currently has four full-time employees. The rest of the staff is comprised of volunteers, student interns and articling law students whose efforts are greatly appreciated.

Leilani Farha, Executive Director is a leading expert and advocate on economic and social human rights, especially for women. She has a long history promoting the right to adequate housing, equality and non-discrimination in housing in Canada and internationally. Prior to joining Canada Without Poverty, Leilani was the Executive Director of the [Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation](#) for 12 years. She has extensive experience addressing homelessness, poverty and inequality in Canada through advocacy, casework, litigation, research and community-based work. She has been at the forefront of applying international human rights law to anti-poverty issues in Canada and is known internationally for her work on housing rights and women's economic and social rights.

Megan Hooft, Director, Education & Outreach began work with Canada Without Poverty in February 2010 and is based in Vancouver. She has responsibility for our online communications, project management and for outreach and action in British Columbia. Megan holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master of Arts in Human Security and Peacebuilding. While completing her Master's, Megan founded the Jabu Bags Project, a social enterprise that supported an income-generating project in the rural areas of Swaziland. A social justice advocate, she has long been interested in human rights, poverty alleviation and women's issues. Megan also blogs on behalf of CWP for the [Huffington Post Canada](#) website.

Michèle Biss, Legal Education and Outreach Coordinator holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts with a specialization in Religious studies and a minor in English as well as a Law degree from the faculty of Law, both at University of Ottawa. She has extensive professional experience working for marginalized groups through casework, research and community legal education. Her particular areas of interest include support for women, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and persons living in poverty. She is a human rights lawyer and was called to the Ontario bar in 2014.

James Armbruster, Development and Communications Coordinator began work at Canada Without Poverty in February of 2015. Before joining CWP, James worked with up and coming young leaders as the Executive Assistant at the Carleton University Students' Association. He has a growing background in fundraising and social advocacy from his work as the Co-Chair of Carleton University's Relay for Life and as a Policy Consultant with the Campaign to Control Cancer. He currently serves as the Alumni Advisor to Carleton University's Philanthropy

Council. James grew up in Ottawa and graduated from Carleton University with a Bachelor's degree in Human Rights and Law.

Where to Find Us

CWP's head office is located in downtown Ottawa as part of the 25One Bank Street community, an open-space style office building which houses many other non-governmental organizations and charities. It is an ideal situation for CWP because of its proximity to other human rights-focused organizations and it allows us to keep abreast of the relevant government policies and programs regarding poverty elimination.

CWP can be reached online at cwp-csp.ca or over the telephone at (613) 789-0096 or 1 (800) 810-1076. Email inquiries can be directed to info@cwp-csp.ca.

Funding Picture

Canada Without Poverty lost all government funding in 2008 and has not received any support since. As a result, CWP operates off of donations from generous individuals, groups and organizations.

Currently, CWP has three main avenues for individuals to contribute:

- 1) Make a one-time donation – Our small team at CWP will use this contribution to positively engage community leaders, politicians and decision makers at every level to help eradicate poverty in Canada.
- 2) Take the Pledge to End Poverty - The Pledge to End Poverty is our monthly giving program and for as little as 3 dollars a month you are helping Canada Without Poverty continue to develop and produce dynamic and influential programs, research and advocacy.
- 3) Make helping eliminate poverty your legacy - Making a planned or legacy gift is a wonderful way to support things you care about the most. Through planned giving you can have a real impact on the future of ending poverty in Canada.

Financial Transparency

CWP conducts yearly financial audits to stay in line with CRA regulations and to ensure transparency for donors. To review our CRA submissions, simply follow this [link](#).