



Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition

a coalition of concerned citizens and organizations who are dedicated to addressing the causes and effects of poverty.

Phone: 955-5095

Email: antipoverty@sasktel.net

nothing about us without us.

a social inclusion declaration and guidelines for discussing full participation of those with lived experience

The poor cannot wait for the rich to issue the call for justice. We need to get poor people involved in the changes themselves.

-Jeffrey Sacks-

Because those of us who live in poverty:

- ✓ suffer from social exclusion and are regularly excluded from the decisions that affect our lives and those of our brothers and sisters
- ✓ have the right to meaningfully participate in decision making on issues affecting us
- ✓ have unique expertise and experiences and have a vital role to play in defining the health, social, legal, and research policies that affect us

We must:

- Be supported when demonized and attacked in the media and by the community because of who we are
- Be supported in fighting the fear, shame and stigma that keep us from fully participating in our communities
- Be supported to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be good peer educators and advocates
- Be valid and valued participants in consultative processes, as well as in decision making or policymaking bodies and advisory structures dealing with issues affecting us
- Be involved in research that affects us, through community review committees and community consent processes.

Poverty is not just about income, but is also about access to safe and affordable housing and other aspects of human life which are so important to human dignity. Any program that merely meets the physical needs of a poor person, or even provides a job, is not by itself a true development program unless it leads to the unfolding of his or her creative energy and personal development.

We call our civic, provincial, and federal governments to take action so that our health and human rights are respected, protected and promoted, and we are involved in all decisions that affect our lives.

Organizational representatives come from: Riverbend Inner City Ministry, Saskatoon Health Region (Public Health and Primary Health), Canadian Red Cross, Elizabeth Fry, Child Hunger and Education Program (CHEP), Quint Development Corporation, Equal Justice for All, Saskatoon Housing Coalition, Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, Canada Without Poverty, Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, Saskatoon United Way, Saskatoon Community Clinic, Rainbow Community Centre, Poverty Free Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Multi-faith Social Justice Circle, Saskatoon Friendship Inn, and Saskatoon Faith Churches/communities.



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“DOES” guideposts

A Checklist for Participating with and Engaging Poverty’s First Voice:

In both poor and rich countries, poverty is more than a lack of money. In 2001 the World Bank interviewed 60,000 people in 47 countries about what relief of poverty meant to them. The answers were: *Dignity, Opportunity, Empowerment, and Security (DOES)*. Poverty means not participating fully in society and having limits on leading the life one values.

We, the members of the Saskatoon Anti Poverty Coalition, believe that people with experience of poverty have a particular contribution to make to poverty discussions and anti-poverty action. At the same time, we are not saying that only those living on low incomes have something to say about poverty, or that they alone have a right to talk and/or write about it. Instead we want to stress the importance of an inclusive approach to poverty, which recognizes the validity of all voices seeking to challenge poverty.

The following checklist provides six (6) ‘DOES’ guideposts which should be regarded as essential to communicate when engaging people with low income (poverty’s first voice) in any poverty reduction initiative or project:

Guidepost #1

Identify how people get involved:

- What participation options are available e.g. committee member, focus group, survey / written input, public speaking, or leadership?
- Are there options which require a smaller time commitment? Are there options which allow for one time participation and other options for ongoing participation?
- Identify how all participants will feel their contribution is equally valued, regardless of their income.
 - ✓ Are people with experience living on limited low income given equal opportunity to take leadership?
 - ✓ Who, if anyone, are “poor” participants expected to represent?

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Guidepost #2

Identify support(s) that value people's time and reduce barriers to inclusion and participation

- Is there a budget for transportation (bus, mileage, and parking) and child care?
- Are there wages or honoraria for participation?
- Will healthy food be provided, either snacks or a meal?
- Are all of these items advertised to all potential participants?

Guidepost #3

Acknowledge labelling and maintain dignity and safety of all participants

- Are participants asked to identify their income level or experience, either privately to receive compensation or publicly through story telling or media work? If so, is this necessary?
- Are participants asked to use the word "poor", or any similar word, to describe themselves? Is there a discussion about how and why people are identified as "poor"?
- Are participation options provided that allow people to avoid being labelled, such as opportunities with no income barriers?

Guidepost #4

Identify how participants make a difference

- Is the initiative open to a change in direction based on the input of all participants?
- What decision-making power, and responsibilities, if any, do participants living on limited low income have?

Guidepost #5

Identify ratio of those with limited low income and others

- Are there enough people with experience living on low income participating to make their participation comfortable and for a broad range of voices to be heard?

Guidepost #6

Identify relationships

- Do paid and unpaid participants have opportunities to develop relationships with each other?