

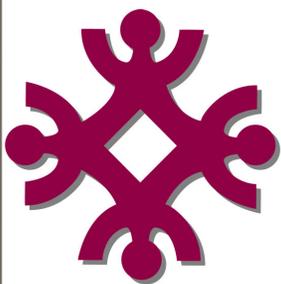
# Where's the Data?

## 2013 New Brunswick Child Poverty "Report Card"

More than two decades ago the House of Commons adopted a unanimous resolution "to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000."

Four years ago the House of Commons voted to "develop an immediate plan to end poverty for all in Canada." Neither the promised poverty elimination nor the plan have materialized.

*- House of Commons' unanimous resolutions, 1989 & 2009*



**Human Development Council**





# WHERE'S THE DATA?

“When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind...” -Lord Kelvin

It has always been a challenge to report child poverty rates in New Brunswick. Our small population means that sampling techniques used by Statistics Canada result in rates that often are not statistically reliable. Over the years we have used the poverty measure – whether the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) before or after tax, the Market Basket Measure (MBM) or the Low Income Measure (LIM) - which offers the most dependable number. Last year, for example, we reported the LIM; the year before it was LICO.

	LICO-AT	Data Quality	LICO-BT	Data Quality	LIM-AT	Data Quality	MBM	Data Quality
Canada								
Newfoundland and Labrador								
Prince Edward Island								
New Scotia								
<b>New Brunswick</b>	6.2	<b>E</b>	4.0	<b>E</b>	4.2	<b>E</b>	2.7	<b>E</b>
Quebec								
Ontario								
Manitoba								
Saskatchewan								
Alberta								
British Columbia								

**This year we are unable to offer any number. All of the poverty measures available from Statistics Canada’s Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics for New Brunswick are accompanied by an “E”, which is the lowest grade, and indicates a warning to “use with caution”.**

Our ability to relay reliable data was further eroded with the 2011 switch from a mandatory long form census questionnaire to a voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). The non response rate for the NHS was significantly higher than that of the previous long form census. At the national level, the global non

response rate (GNR) was 26.1 % compared to 6.5% with the 2006 long form census. The GNR for New Brunswick was 28.6%. A higher non response rate implies low data quality.

In the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), for example, 13 of its 47 census tracts had a GNR that exceeded 50% and their data was suppressed. There are gaping holes in our map of social conditions. As predicted, these census tracts covered many of the poorer neighbourhoods in the province’s largest city.

At the national level it is estimated that in 2011 more than 967,000 children—1 in 7—lived in poverty.

The New Brunswick report is a complement to the national effort. In this year’s report we have chosen to highlight recent findings related to gender, food security and skills. The report also touches on the affordability of post secondary education and the deplorable conditions faced by many First Nations children.

*New Brunswick has a poverty reduction strategy; we need to evaluate its policies and programs to see if they are making a difference. Reliable statistics, including child poverty rates, are critical for measuring our progress.*

# FOOD SECURITY

*The Canadian Medical Association recommends "that a national food security program be established to ensure equitable access to safe and nutritious food for all Canadians regardless of neighbourhood or income."*

- Health Care in Canada: What Makes Us Sick? (2013)

Having enough nutritious food to eat is essential for survival and has a huge impact on a person's well-being—it is also a human right. In its 2013 report *Health Care in Canada: What Makes Us Sick?*, the Canadian Medical Association found that there are four major social determinants of health, one of which is nutrition and food security. In March of 2013, 19,989 New Brunswickers were helped by food banks—a 27.8% increase since 2008. One third of those helped were under the age of 18; 43.5% of households that accessed a food bank in New Brunswick in 2013 have children. In 2013, 79% of people assisted by a food bank in NB received government assistance (EI, Social Assistance, or disability related support) as their primary source of income.

KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	19,989	19,524
% Change, 2003-2013		
% Change, 2008-2013		
% Change, 2012-2013	2.4%	
% Food banks reporting an increase	59.6%	51.9%
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	33.2%	32.0%
Households assisted by food banks	9,376	8,975
% Households assisted for the first time	7.4%	9.0%
% Provincial population assisted	2.65%	2.58%

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All
% Job income	9.7
% Employment Insurance	4.6
% Social assistance	69.3
% Disability-related income support	4.9
% Pension	5.8
% Student loans/scholarships	0.5
% No income	2.6
% Other	2.5
Number of food banks reporting	34

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All
% Single-parent families	23.0
% Two-parent families	20.5
% Couples with no children	12.6
% Single people	43.8
Number of food banks reporting	38

HOUSING TYPE	All
% Homeowners	19.4
% Rental market tenants	60.8
% Social housing tenants	14.2
% Band-owned housing	2.7
% Shelter or group home	0.0
% Living on the street	0.1
% Living with family or friends	2.8
Number of food banks reporting	31

**New Brunswick placed 8th out of 10 in the percentage of household income (11.6%) spent on food.** (source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 203-0021)

# Only 42% of youth grades 6-12 reported eating breakfast daily

(source: Government of New Brunswick, Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport, *Student Wellness Survey Grade to 12*,

This year's Hunger Count Report featured a Community Profile of Saint John. The profile noted that the unemployment rate in New Brunswick is substantially higher than the national rate and that there has been a "staggering increase in food bank use in the city: Saint John food banks are now helping 68% more people each month than they were in 2008." In September 2013, the unemployment rate in New Brunswick was 10.7% compared to 6.9% nationally (source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 282-0087).

"Recent research in Canada has shown that the experience of hunger leaves an indelible mark on children's physical and mental health, manifesting in greater likelihood of such conditions as depression and asthma in adolescence and early adulthood."

(Source: Tarasuk, V, Mitchell, A, Dachner, N. Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). (2013). Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2011.)

Some of the findings from the Household Food Insecurity in Canada report are:

- In 2011, 1.6 million Canadian households, or slightly more than 12%, experienced some level of food insecurity. This amounts to nearly one in eight households, and 3.9 million individuals, including 1.1 million children;
- There were 450,000 more Canadians living in households affected by food insecurity in 2011 than in 2008;
- The highest percentage of food insecurity was in Nunavut, where 30% of households were food insecure. Food insecurity rates also exceeded 15% in the Maritimes, Yukon and NWT;
- Nunavut, PEI and NB had the highest percentage of children living in food insecure households at 57%, 27% and 25% respectively.

*"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." –Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*



# GENDER INEQUALITY

Canada falls from 14th in 2006 to 20th in this year's Global Gender Gap Report; Women remain underrepresented among decision makers at the local, provincial and national levels.

## Gender gap index 2013 rankings

1	Iceland
2	Finland
3	Norway
4	Sweden
5	Philippines
6	Ireland
7	New Zealand
8	Denmark
9	Switzerland
10	Nicaragua
11	Belgium
12	Latvia
13	Netherlands
14	Germany
15	Cuba
16	Lesotho
17	South Africa
18	United Kingdom
19	Austria
20	Canada

## Canada placed 20<sup>th</sup> in this year's Global Gender Gap Report.

Since 2006 the World Economic Forum has been quantifying the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. The 2013 report covers 136 countries representing over 90% of the world's population – one more than last year and 26 more than the inaugural report in 2006.

Iceland was named the country with the narrowest gender gap in the world for the fifth consecutive year. Other Nordic countries – Finland, Norway and Sweden – finished second, third and fourth respectively.

Of the 110 countries that have been involved every year since 2006, 95 (86%) have improved their performance over the last four years, while 15 (14%) have shown widening gaps. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups, and over time. (source: World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*).

### The Gender Gap Index has four pillars :

#### Educational Attainment

In this subindex, the gap is captured through ratios of women to men enrolled in education, along with the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate.

Almost 93% of the gap has been closed (25 countries, including Canada, have fully closed the gap)

#### Political Empowerment

This subindex measures the ratio of women to men in minister-level positions and in parliamentary positions, along with the ratio of women to men in years in executive office (prime minister or president) for the last 50 years.

Only 21% of the gap has been closed. No country has closed the gap completely. Iceland scored highest (75%); Brunei Darussalam and Qatar have closed none of the gap. Canada ranked 42nd in this subindex.

#### Economic Participation & Opportunity

This subindex is captured through gaps in participation, remuneration and advancement.

Only 60 % of the gap has been closed globally. No country had completely closed the gap. Norway scored highest (84%); Syria lowest (25%). Canada ranked 9th in this category.

#### Health and Survival

This subindex uses two indicators: the sex ratio at birth, which aims specifically to capture the phenomenon of “missing women” prevalent in many countries with a strong son preference. Second, the gap between women's and men's healthy life expectancy.

Almost 96% of the gap has been closed (33 countries have fully closed the gap). Canada was tied with Germany at 49th place.

In the four sub-indices, Canada ranked 49th on Health and Survival; 42nd on Political Empowerment; 9th on Economic Participation & Opportunity; and 1st on Educational Attainment (tied with 24 other countries who also had a perfect score).

With more women than men now participating in post-secondary education, Canada had a perfect score on the educational attainment indicator. Regrettably, this has not translated into equality in the other core pillar areas—in Canada or New Brunswick. On the Political Empowerment index Canada was ranked 42nd, based on indicators concerning the ratio of women to men in parliament and ministerial positions, and the number of years (over the past 50) with a female head of government. In the Canadian House of Commons, 76 of the 308 seats are filled by women—this is a record high as it is the first time in Canadian history that women make up 25% of the House of Commons. Only 27% of ministerial positions are held by women and Canada has only had a female head of government for a period of approximately four months.

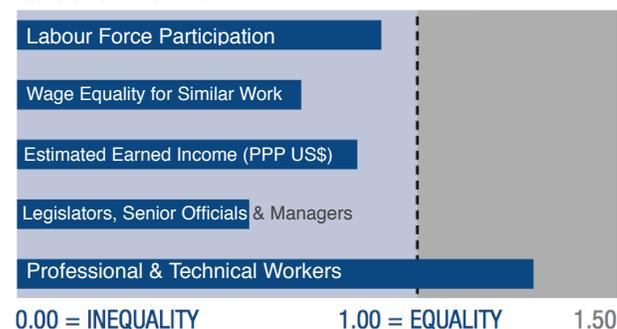
The state of women's political empowerment in New Brunswick is even worse; of the 55 elected MLAs that make up the Legislative Assembly only 7 are women (12.7%). What is perhaps even more startling is that New Brunswick has had only 33 women elected as MLAs ever.

Canada ranked 9th on Economic Participation & Opportunity, however the chart on the right shows that we still have significant ground to cover when it comes to wage equity, earned income and senior positions held by women.

In 2011 New Brunswick's total employed population was close to 50% female, however, women earned on average 88.3% of what men did - a wage gap of 11.7%. The province is currently ranked fourth among provinces for its gender wage gap. Almost one quarter of employed women work part time—compared to 10% of men; women make up 70% of those employed part time in New Brunswick.

#### Economic Participation & Opportunity Subindex

##### Female-to-male ratio



**In 2011, 12.2% of all female employees (and 7.1% of all male employees) were earning minimum wage. This is the highest provincial rate in Canada for women.** (source: Women's Issues Branch, Executive Council Office, Province of New Brunswick: Equality Profile: Women in New Brunswick, 2012.)

### New Brunswick's Pay Equity Act

In 2009 the provincial government introduced the Pay Equity Act. It came into force the following year with the goal of implementing pay equity in the Public Service. Progress has been uneven and some deadlines have been missed. The provincial government also announced that five groups from the private sector would receive pay equity adjustments:

- ▶ nursing home workers - received increases in recent collective agreements;
- ▶ child-care workers - received 1/5 of their adjustments earlier this year;
- ▶ home support workers - received 1/5 of their adjustments earlier this year, although a portion of that was offered to employers to cover mandatory employer related costs.
- ▶ transition home workers – full adjustments have been made
- ▶ community residence workers – pay equity exercise is incomplete for the province's group home workers

*"A country's competitiveness depends on its human talent—the skills, education and productivity of its workforce. Because women account for one-half of a country's potential talent base, a nation's competitiveness in the long term depends significantly on whether and how it educates and utilizes its women."*

– The Global Gender Gap Report 2013

# ESSENTIAL SKILLS

## Canada Scores Poorly - New Brunswick Scores Worse

The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is the most comprehensive study on adult skills since 2003. Its findings should guide policy and investment decisions for many years to come. It provides measures of three skills that are essential to processing information - literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology rich environments (PS-TRE).

Canada is one of 24 countries that participated in the first round of PIAAC between August 2011 and June 2012. In addition to surveying the entire country (27,285 respondents), data was collected for every province and territory (1460 surveys were completed in New Brunswick).

While Canada ranks above the OECD average in PS-TRE, our national score is at the OECD average in literacy and below the OECD average in numeracy. New Brunswick never breaks out of the bottom four of our thirteen provinces and territories.

## Literacy

*Literacy is defined as "understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential"*

The population of adults aged 16-to-65 was assessed over a continuum of ability in literacy using a measurement scale ranging from 0 to 500. Canada scored at the OECD average of 273 points in literacy. Two Canadian provinces – Alberta and Ontario – scored above the OECD average in literacy. Six Canadian jurisdictions score at the OECD average, and five are below the average. New Brunswick placed 10th in Canada.

### **Canada has a higher proportion of its population at the highest and lowest levels in literacy**

LITERACY RANK (N=35)	
Rank	Country/Province
1st	Japan
18th	Canada
	OECD Average
24th	United States
28th	New Brunswick
35th	Nunavut

Fourteen percent of Canadians score at Level 4 or 5. This places Canada above the OECD average of 12%. Ten percent of New Brunswickers score at Level 4 or 5. At the other end of the scale, 17% of Canadians score at Level 1 or below. Nineteen percent of New Brunswickers score at Level 1 or below

## Levels of Literacy

### **Level 1—Very poor literacy skills**

An individual at this level may, for example, be unable to determine from a package label the correct amount of medicine to give a child.

### **Level 2—A capacity to deal only with simple, clear material involving uncomplicated tasks**

People at this level may develop everyday coping skills, but their poor literacy skills make it hard to conquer challenges such as learning new job skills.

### **Level 3—Adequate to cope with the demands of everyday life and work in an advanced society**

This roughly denotes the skill level required for successful high school completion and college entry.

### **Levels 4 and 5—Strong skills**

Individuals at these levels can process information of a complex and demanding nature.

## Numeracy

Numeracy is defined as “the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas, in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life”. The population of adults aged 16 to 65 was assessed over a continuum of ability in numeracy using a measurement scale ranging from 0 to 500.

**Numeracy refers to an individual's ability to understand and use mathematical information at school, at work, and in everyday life; for example, handling money and budgets, using measurements for cooking, or reading a map.**

**Numeracy is a foundational skill for individuals and is important for society. High levels of numeracy are associated with better opportunities for life-long learning, as well as success at work.**

Canada’s average score of 265 places it below the OECD average of 269. In Canada, all 13 provinces and territories scored either at or below the OECD average. New Brunswick placed 10th out of 13 jurisdictions.

**Canada matches the OECD average at the high levels, and exceeds it at the lowest levels**

Adult numeracy is assessed as part of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALLS) and is measured on a scale from one to five. Level 1 is the lowest level and Level 4/5 is the most advanced level. Level 3 is considered the level at which individuals demonstrate skills and knowledge associated with the ability to function well in Canadian society.

Thirteen percent of Canadians score at Level 4 or 5 in numeracy proficiency. In New Brunswick the number is 8 percent. At the other end of the scale, 23% of Canadians and 28 percent of New Brunswickers score at Level 1 or below.

### NUMERACY RANK (N=35)

Rank	Country/Province
1st	Japan
	OECD Average
19th	Canada
28th	New Brunswick
30th	United States
35th	Nunavut

## Problem Solving in Technology Rich Environments (PS-TRE)

PS-TRE is defined as “using digital technology, communication tools, and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others, and perform practical tasks.” It represents the intersection of what are sometimes described as “computer literacy” skills (i.e., the capacity to use computer-based tools and applications) and the cognitive skills required to solve problems.

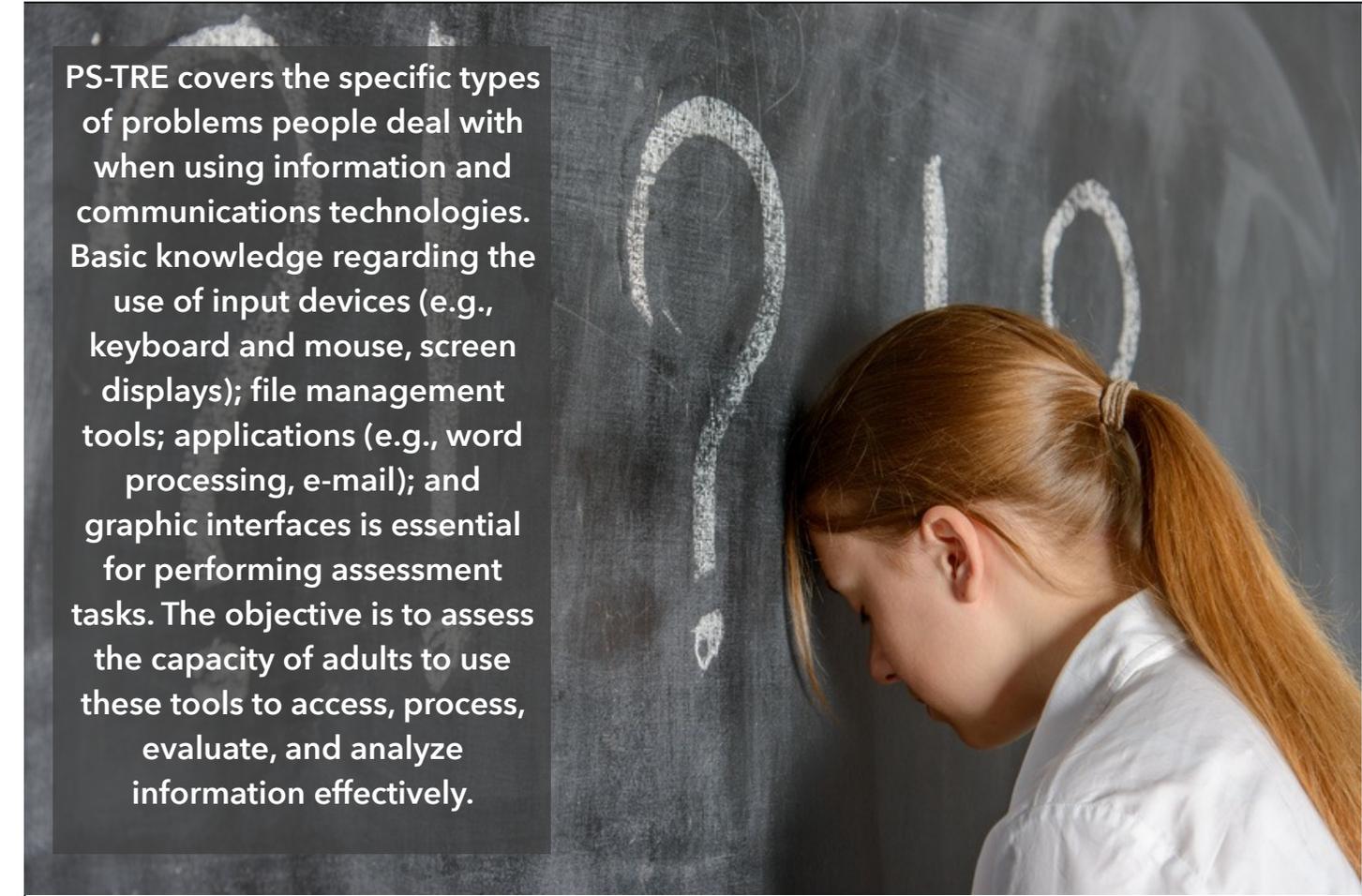
The presentation of results focuses on the proportions of the population scoring at Levels 2 and 3. They are combined to determine a country’s position relative to the OECD average.

*Canada has a higher proportion of its population at the highest and lowest levels in PS-TRE*

Seven percent of Canadians perform at Level 3 (the highest level). At this level, Canada is above the OECD average of 6%. Five percent of New Brunswickers performed at Level 3. On the other hand, 15% of Canadians and New Brunswickers are categorized as “below Level 1,” which is more than the OECD average of 12%.

### PS-TRE N=32

Rank	Country/Province	Numbers
1st	Sweden	44.0+1.4
11th	Canada	36.6+1.1
	OECD Average	34.0+1.6
23rd	New Brunswick	30.3+3.6
25th	United States	31.1+2.0
32nd	Nunavut	10.9+3.0



PS-TRE covers the specific types of problems people deal with when using information and communications technologies. Basic knowledge regarding the use of input devices (e.g., keyboard and mouse, screen displays); file management tools; applications (e.g., word processing, e-mail); and graphic interfaces is essential for performing assessment tasks. The objective is to assess the capacity of adults to use these tools to access, process, evaluate, and analyze information effectively.

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### Official-language minority scores

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In New Brunswick, Francophones make up 32 percent of the population. They have lower average literacy scores (259) than Anglophones (274). The proportion of Francophones at Level 4 or 5 is lower (7%) than the proportion of Anglophones who score at these levels (12%), while the proportion scoring at Level 1 or below is higher, 24% for Francophones and 16% for Anglophones.

Similarly, Francophones have lower numeracy proficiency than Anglophones, but the 10-point difference in score is narrower than it is for literacy.

A higher proportion of Anglophones score at Level 2 or 3 in PS-TRE than their Francophone counterparts. There are no differences between the proportion of Anglophones and Francophones scoring at Level 1 or below.

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### Other findings: Skill Levels and Distributions within Canada

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- There are notable variations in scores across provinces and territories, in all three domains.
- Literacy and numeracy scores are highest at ages 25 to 34, and are lower among the older age groups.
- Individuals aged 16 to 34 are found to be the most proficient in PS-TRE. Despite higher levels of proficiency in PS-TRE among youth (16 to 24), 9% display proficiency at the lowest level in PS-TRE.
- Men have higher numeracy skills than women across the entire PIAAC age spectrum, while, in general, both genders display similar proficiencies in literacy and in PS-TRE.
- Higher education is associated with greater literacy, numeracy and PS-TRE skills, particularly for those with postsecondary education—bachelor's degree or higher.

# MINIMUM WAGE/LIVING WAGE

*It's time for a Living Wage!*



## Current Minimum Wage Rates by Province

Nunavut	\$11
Yukon	\$10.54
Manitoba	\$10.45
Nova Scotia	\$10.30
British Columbia	\$10.25
Ontario	\$10.25
Quebec	\$10.15
New Brunswick	\$10
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$10
Northwest Territories	\$10
Prince Edward Island	\$10
Saskatchewan	\$10
Alberta	\$9.95

As part of the provincial poverty reduction plan, the government committed to: “Raise the minimum wage to the Atlantic average by September 1st, 2011 and adjust for inflation annually thereafter.”<sup>1</sup> On April 1st, 2012 the minimum wage in NB was increased to \$10.00.

At this time, the NB rate is not indexed or adjusted for inflation.

<sup>1</sup> Source: *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan.*

A Living Wage is different from the minimum wage, which is the legislated minimum set by the provincial government.

A living wage is based on actual expenses. It considers what level of pay families need to be able to afford basic everyday things. A living wage isn't extravagant. It doesn't allow families to save for retirement, to save for their children's education or to service their debt. But it does reflect the cost of affording the basics of life – something the minimum wage doesn't do.

# POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

“Education Shouldn’t Be a Debt Sentence!” – Canadian Federation of Students

Federal funding cuts to post-secondary education during the 1990’s resulted in hefty tuition fee increases in almost every province.

In October the provincial government announced that it will provide a two per cent increase to university operating budgets for each of the next two years. It also set an annual tuition increase cap of no more than three per cent for the next three years for all public universities.

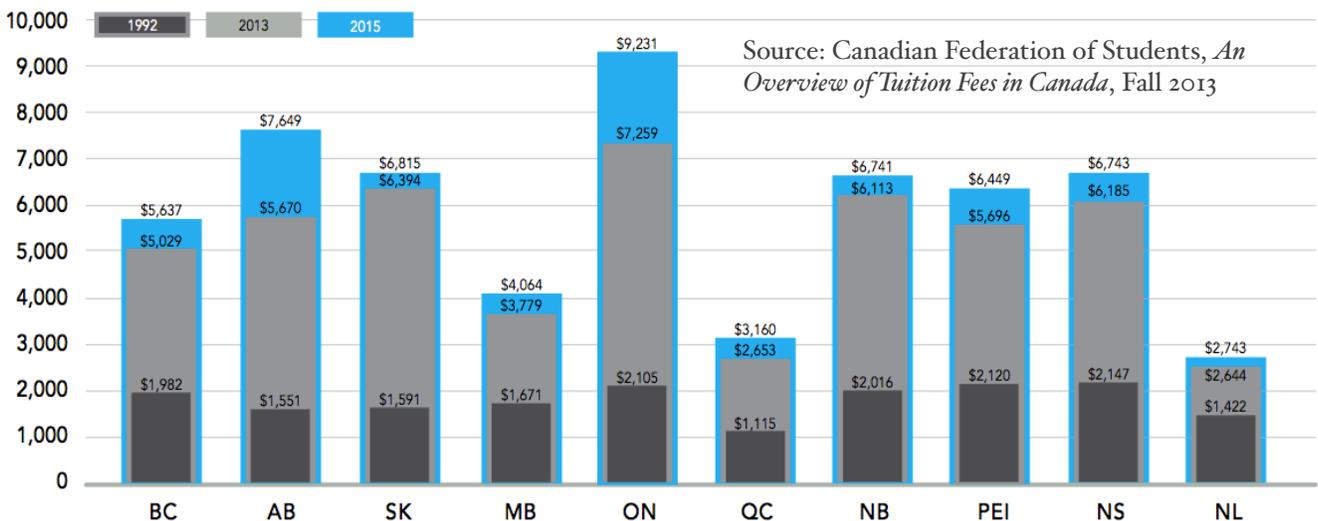
## High Tuition Fees aren’t the only problem...



In addition to being faced with raising tuition fees, Community Foundations of Canada notes in their report *Generation Flux* that “the predictable trajectory that guided the lives of the current generation’s parents is gone. Canada’s youth are growing up in an era of complexity and uncertainty that has delayed, or even destroyed, the landmarks that once signalled a transition from one phase of life to another.”

Whereas their parents followed a straight forward, linear path (go to school; get a job, then a career; get married; buy a house; start a family; get involved in the community; retire.) this generation is faced with mounting uncertainty. As the cost of post-secondary education rises, the likelihood of a job at the other end declines.

TUITION FEE LEVELS, 1992 TO 2015, IN CURRENT DOLLARS



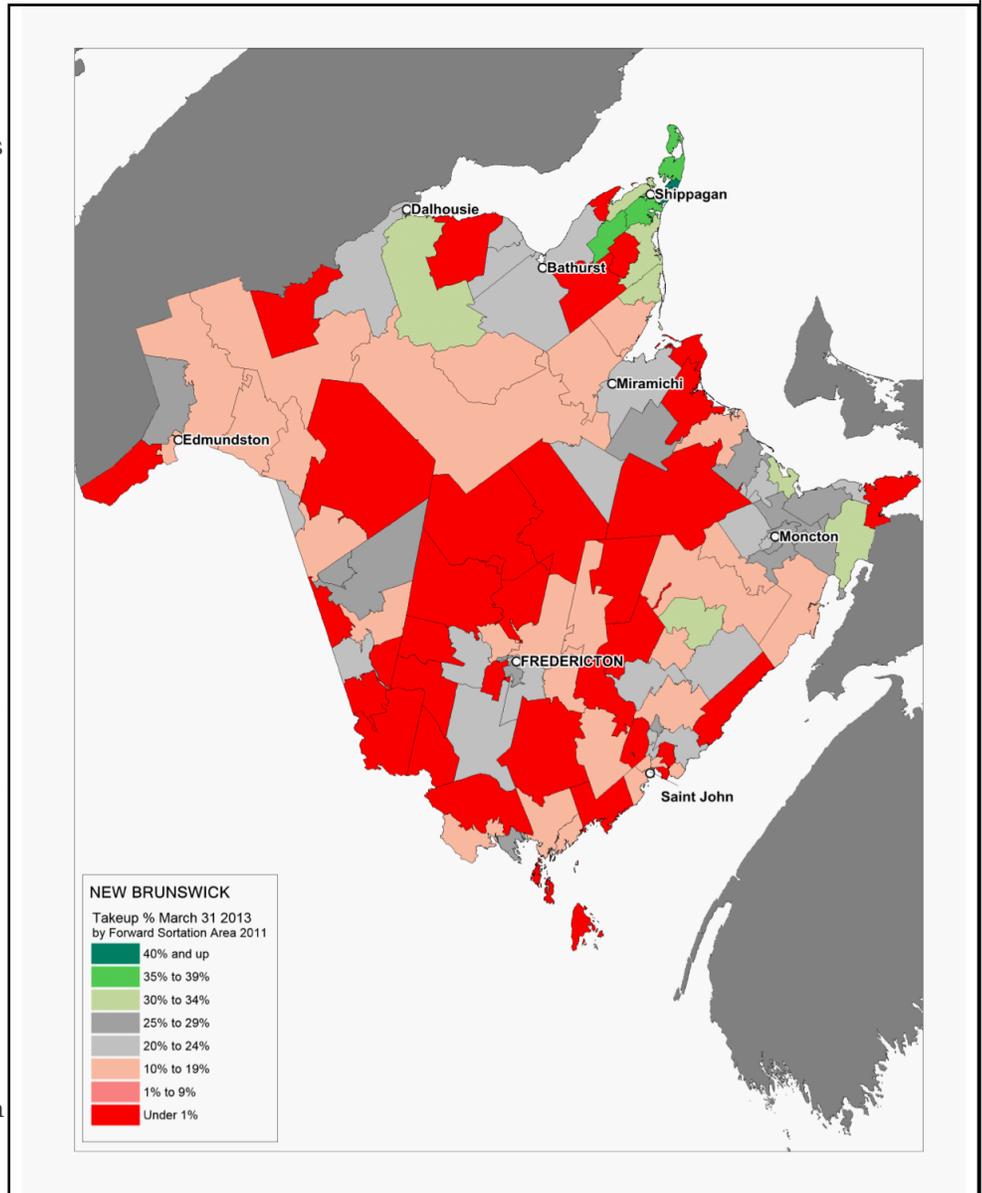
Source: Canadian Federation of Students, *An Overview of Tuition Fees in Canada*, Fall 2013

Note: tuition fees for 2015 based on provincial government policy announcements, and current legislation.

## Access to post-secondary education remains elusive for many low-income families

The federal government devotes significant amounts of money to education-related tax-credits and savings schemes, including:

- The Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP). This is an investment vehicle that allows a contributor to save for a child's postsecondary education. Under the current rules, one can contribute **up to a limit of \$50,000**. Contributions can be made for 31 years and the plan must be closed after 35 years.
- The Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG). The federal government also offers a direct grant to anyone who is investing in an RESP. Each year, the government tops up the first \$2,000 in RESP contributions for each eligible beneficiary with a grant called the CESG. The grant can be as much as \$500 a year for each beneficiary, **to a lifetime maximum of \$7,200**. It goes without saying that those parents who cannot afford to save receive no benefit from the program.
- The Canada Learning Bond. Children from low-income families are eligible for \$500 when they open an RESP account, plus \$100 for every subsequent year the child's family qualifies as low income (family net income must be less than \$43,561) **up to a maximum of \$2,000**.



These measures are proving inadequate to the scope of the problem and higher education remains out of reach for too many low-income families. As the accompanying chart illustrates, the “take up” of eligible New Brunswickers for the Canada Learning Bond is very low—areas highlighted in red have a take up rate of less than 1%.

According to the Canadian Federation of Students, students with financial need would be better served if the money currently spent on the RESP and CESG programs were reallocated into needs-based grants.

*“The federal government will spend an estimated \$767 million on the CESG and RESP in 2011. This is almost double the amount that the federal government gives in direct student grants and approximately what it would cost to convert one-third of the loans given by the Canada Student Loan Program into non-repayable grants.”* – For more information, see [www.cfs-fcee.ca](http://www.cfs-fcee.ca)

# INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

## *Welfare of First Nations Children in New Brunswick*

**“...despite positive steps, daunting challenges remain. From all I have learned, I can only conclude that Canada faces a crisis when it comes to the situation of indigenous peoples of the country. The well-being gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada has not narrowed over the last several years, treaty and aboriginals claims remain persistently unresolved, and overall there appear to be high levels of distrust among aboriginal peoples toward government at both the federal and provincial levels.”**

— *United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya’s Statement upon conclusion of the visit to Canada, 15 October, 2013.*

**Only 32% of Aboriginal youth grades 6-12 reported eating breakfast daily**

(Source: Government of New Brunswick, Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport, *Student Wellness Survey Grade to 12, 2012-13.*)

## **FIRST NATIONS IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

In New Brunswick, there are 15 First Nations communities, six Maliseet (or Wolastoqiyik) communities along the Saint John River and nine Mi’kmaq communities along the eastern and northern coasts. According to the Indian Register System from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), as of December 31, 2011, there were approximately 13,948 First Nations people living in New Brunswick, 8,931 on reserve and 5,017 off reserve

- Status First Nations children living in poverty are three times more likely to live in a house that requires major repairs compared to the non-Indigenous children of families with similar income levels and five times more likely to live in an overcrowded house.
- More than half of all water systems on First Nations reserves pose a risk to those using them.
- Many indigenous children face nutritional challenges due not only to a lack of income, but also due to the loss of traditional foodstuffs and the high cost of imported foods in remote and northern communities. One of the effects of this circumstance is an age-adjusted rate of diabetes 3 to 5 times higher for First Nations than for the general population;
- First Nations youth suffer suicide rates that are five to seven times higher than those for non-aboriginals.

## First Nations Children Experience Poverty at Much Higher Rates Than General Population

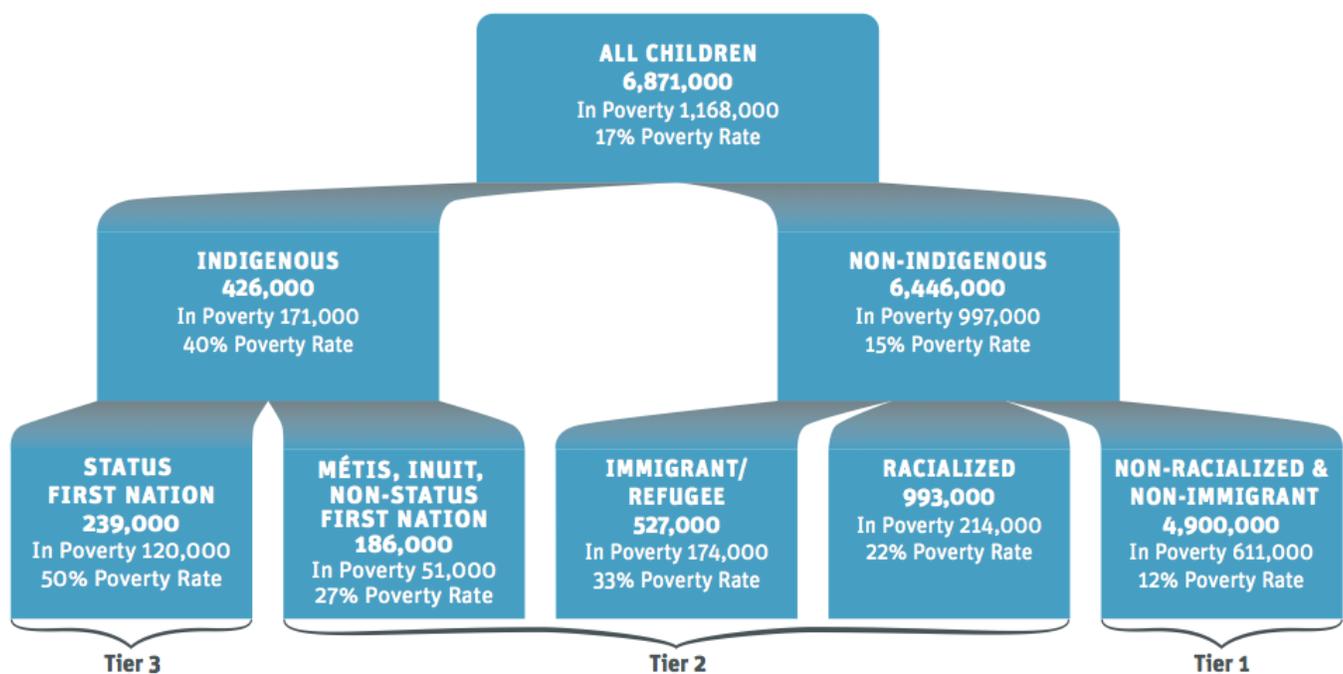
First Nations, Métis and Inuit children trail the rest of Canada's children on practically every measure of wellbeing: family income, educational attainment, crowding and homelessness, poor water quality, infant mortality, health and suicide.

Among children living in poverty in Canada, three distinct tiers exist:

- The first tier, with a poverty rate of 12%, excludes Indigenous, racialized and immigrant children. This is three to four times the rate of the best-performing OECD countries.
- The second tier of child poverty includes racialized children who suffer a poverty rate of 22%, immigrant children whose poverty rate is 33%, and Métis, Inuit and non-status First Nations children at 27%.
- The third tier is most shocking—fully half (50%) of status First Nations children live below the poverty line. This number grows to 62% in Manitoba and 64% in Saskatchewan.

The three tiers are illustrated below in a chart from the 2013 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives & Save the Children report, *Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada*.

**FIGURE 1** Child Poverty Among “Disadvantaged” Groups in Canada



Source 2006 Census Individual Public Use Microdata file (PUMF) AT-LIM

# MOVING FORWARD

*recommendations for real change...*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- introduce a federal action plan to reduce and eradicate poverty in consultation with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments and organizations, non- governmental organizations and people living in poverty.
- Enhanced child benefit for low-income families to a maximum of \$5,400 per child (in 2011 dollars and indexed to inflation).
- establish a public system of high-quality early childhood education and child care services that is affordable and available to all children (0–12 years).
- restore and expand eligibility for Employment Insurance.
- develop a poverty eradication strategy in coordination with First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities which begins with immediate increases to funding for First Nations child welfare services, education and community health services and Aboriginal friendship centres.
- provide adequate public funding for post-secondary education including increased availability of needs-based grants for students from low- and middle-income.

### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- provide sustained funding for poverty reduction programs in order to achieve the targets set out in the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*.
- respond favourably and quickly to the recommendations in *Restoring Hope for First Nations: A Plan to Break the Cycle of Poverty in New Brunswick's First Nations Communities*.
- bring the minimum wage up to a *living wage*. Start by indexing the minimum wage.
- increase the childcare subsidy so that it covers the true cost of care.
- implement a prescription drug plan for uninsured New Brunswickers.

### READER

- help your elected representatives realize that investments in poverty reduction are essential (especially during tough economic times) and that these investments will generate a number of economic and social benefits.
- volunteer with, or donate to, a nonprofit organization that is working towards poverty reduction in your neighborhood. Search our database, [www.nbinfo.ca](http://www.nbinfo.ca).

# CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD

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## New Brunswick • November 2013

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Human Development Council

[www.sjhdc.ca](http://www.sjhdc.ca) (under *Products & Services*)

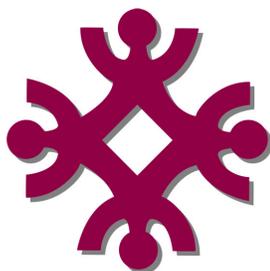
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Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working to end child poverty in Canada. See [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca) for further information on actions you can take to help end child poverty.



**Human Development Council**

