

# LESSONS FROM COALITION- BUILDING AROUND CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY



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END CHILD & FAMILY  
POVERTY

ONTARIO  
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FAMILY SERVICE TORONTO  
For People. For Change.

# AGENDA

- Creating Basic Income Principles in Coalition
- Reality Check: A Parent's Perspective
- Reflections on Coalition Building
- Critical Role of Non-profits in Advocacy

About  
Us

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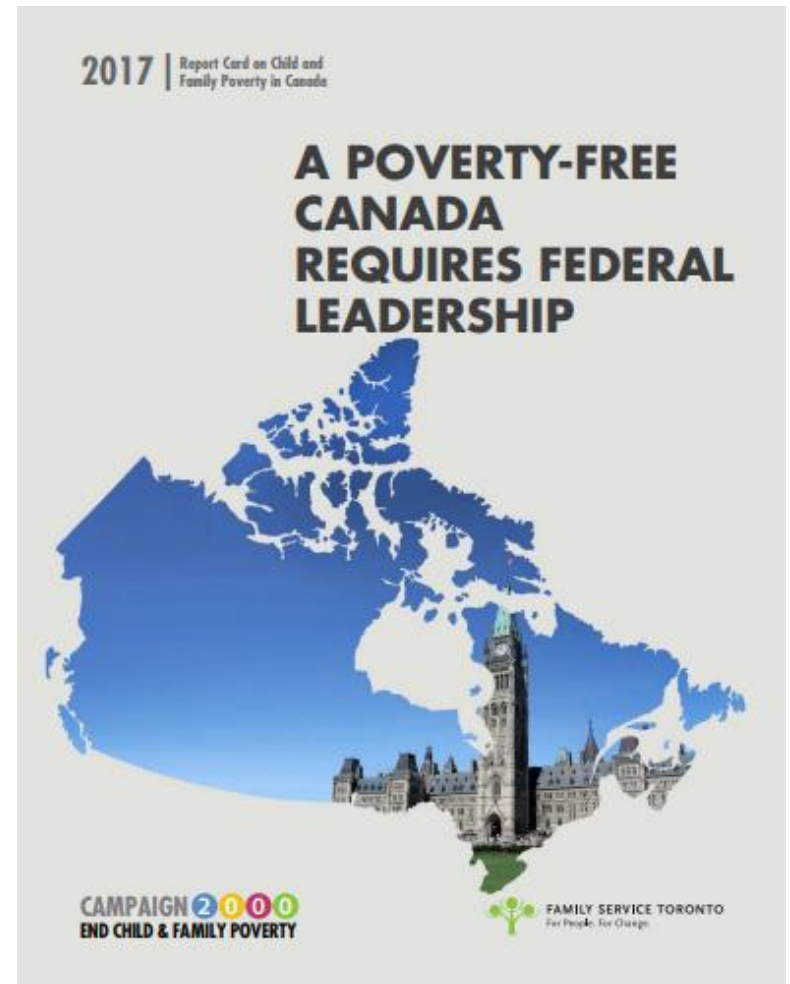
# Our Start

- In 1989, the House of Commons committed to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000
- In 1991, **CAMPAIGN 2000** was launched to hold government accountable for its commitment

**CAMPAIGN 2000**  
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# CAMPAIGN 2000

- Non-partisan coalition of 120+ national, provincial and community partners
- Focus on public education & social policy change
- Annual national report card on child and family poverty
- 8 Provincial report cards & extensive media work



# National Context

- One of few national anti-poverty groups remaining
- Regarded as authority on child poverty in Canada
- Introduce new policy ideas with traction

## Raising the National Child Benefit to \$5,400 Will Reduce Child Poverty

In 2012 Campaign 2000 commissioned a simulation to model the impact of a maximum child benefit of \$5,400 paid to low and modest-income families with children across Canada currently receiving the NCB. <sup>21</sup>

### The simulation estimated the following impacts:

- ✚ An enhanced child benefit of a maximum \$5,400 would bring the child poverty rate down by 15% and lift 174,000 children out of poverty
- ✚ The decline in family poverty is greatest in families with incomes between \$20,000 and \$35,000.
- ✚ The data suggest the importance of building solid family incomes through access to full-time work throughout the year at decent wages.



# What we do

- Research - report cards & policy proposals
- Public education - presentations, media work, etc.
- Non-partisan advocacy for social policy change
- Advise government on policy change - submissions, presentations, meetings

News • GTA

thestar.com

## Sober child poverty stats should prompt action, advocates say

The child poverty rate has jumped from 15.8 per cent a generation ago to 18.3 per cent today.



# Our Structure

- Three paid staff, many volunteers, students, parents
- Guided by a national steering committee
- Members represent regional agencies, coalitions
- Convened by teleconference and Skype



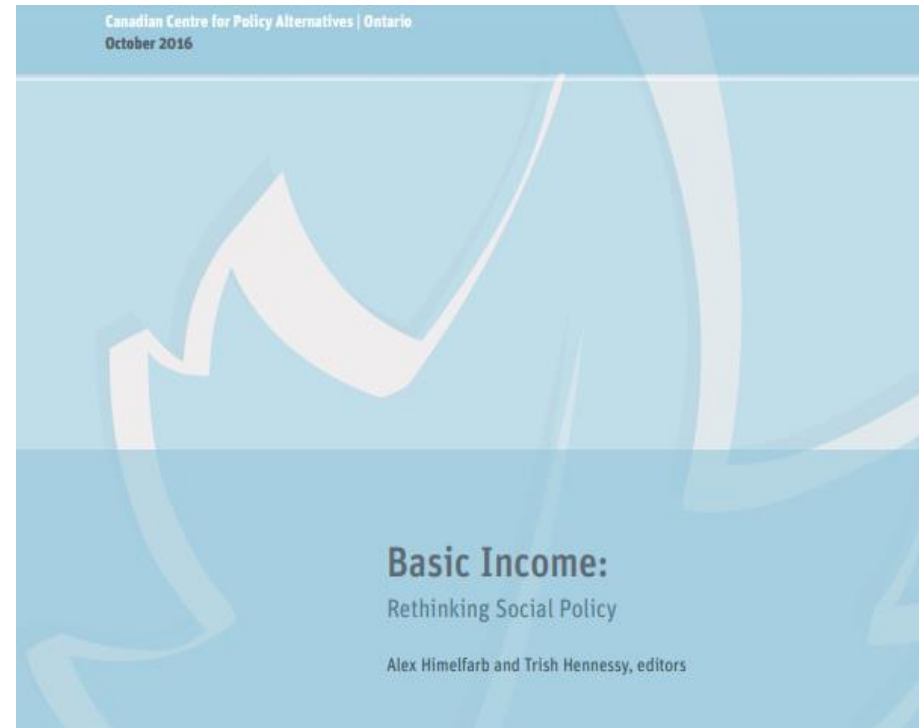


# What about Basic Income

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# Full Spectrum on Basic Income

- Campaign 2000 invited to contribute to CCPA Ontario compendium
- Found the full spectrum of opinions of basic income on the steering committee



# Finding a Way Forward

- Formed a Basic Income sub-committee
- Difficult to reach consensus position
- Decided to develop principles for evaluating basic income from an anti-poverty perspective - an area of full agreement
- Landed on six principles

# In principle: Basic income...

1. Must be designed to eradicate poverty and contribute to reducing income inequality;
2. Must fill the adequacy gap of current income security programs; bring individuals and families at least 10% above the poverty line;
3. Should not replace existing programs that meet extraordinary needs or programs required to strengthen our social safety net;

# In principle: Basic income...

4. Should not lead to the marketization of public services or an expectation of individuals to purchase social services;
5. Not a panacea for structural and systemic inequality;
6. A basic income should not act as a subsidy for employers who pay low wages, nor should it be an excuse for reducing employment.

# Lessons Learned

- Emerged united because coalition's core goal of eradicating poverty meaningful to all members
- Members circulated the principles across the country: a measure of success



# Reality Check: A Parent's Perspective



# Parent Advocacy

- Inspired to Act
- On Basic Income
- Important coalition experiences



# Inspired to Act



# On Basic Income

- Essential that rates reflect actual costs of living and are indexed to inflation
- Must reflect greater costs associated with living with disability
- Must not replace medical and disability device supports (canes, wheelchairs, scooters), and other supports such as physiotherapy, dental and pharma care
- Must not stop the creation of good paying jobs

# Important Coalition Experiences



# Words of Wisdom

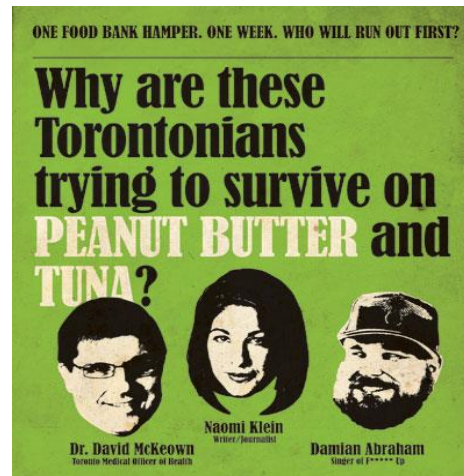
**IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE.**

**IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER**

**African Proverb**



# Coalition Experiences



# Bringing in Women's Voices



# Child Support Campaign

**TORONTO STAR**

News • GTA


## Province urged to allow women on welfare to keep child support

By **LAURIE MONSEBRAATEN** Social Justice Reporter  
Wed., April 16, 2014

f t e ...

When she couldn't find work after completing a social work diploma last spring, Jennifer Gray and her 7-year-old daughter reluctantly moved into a homeless shelter.

But the 39-year-old Toronto single mom refuses to go on welfare because she doesn't want to lose the \$300 child support payment she receives from her daughter's father every month.



Single mother Jennifer Gray chooses not to go on welfare because she doesn't want the government to take the \$300 her daughter's father is paying in child support. (CARLOS OSORIO / TORONTO STAR)

**TORONTO STAR**

News • Queen's Park

## Ontario to end clawback of child support for parents on welfare

By **LAURIE MONSEBRAATEN** Social Justice reporter  
Thu., Feb. 25, 2016

f t e ...

About 18,600 single parents in Ontario who rely on both social assistance and child support payments will see their incomes rise under rule changes to be introduced early next year, according to Thursday's [provincial budget](#).

Currently, every penny of the average \$280 monthly child support payment to families on social assistance is clawed back by the government, meaning children are "no better off" and the parent responsible for paying may feel little incentive to do so, the budget notes.



Damaris Bueno, with her daughter Mia, 4, welcomes plans to allow single parents on social assistance to keep more of their child support income. (DAMARIS BUENO PHOTO)



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# Building a Strong National Coalition

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# Leading the Way for Change

- Built national consciousness of child & family poverty as a problem within Canada
- Negotiating the particularities of federalism

## Examples of Policy Influence:

- Canada Child Benefit (CCB)
- National Early Learning and Child Care framework
- National Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)



# Political & Cultural Context

Our narrative of government responsibility for child poverty part of media and political culture

CBC News Posted: Nov 25, 2015 7:00 AM ET | Last Updated: Nov 25, 2015 1:09 PM ET



CBC exclusive: Justin Trudeau 1 on 1 23:44

# Building & Sustaining the Coalition

1991 - 1996 Getting the issue on the public radar screen and the political agenda

1997 - 2003 Monitoring policy development and implementation: NCBS; provincial clawbacks

2004 - 2006 Proposing enhanced child benefit, affordable housing, high quality child care.  
Prepared discussion papers to highlight the ideas and support advocacy

# Building & Sustaining the Coalition

2006 -2014 Closer work with Opposition parties; private members bill to create PRS, national child care. Opposed bad policy (UCCB) and proposed re-allocation and re-design

2015 New government elected; policy shift to Canada Child Benefit

# Leading the Way for Change

## Highlights of Policy Influence:

- National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS)
- Provincial/Territorial anti-poverty strategies - everywhere except B.C.
- Over 40 municipal PRS, including Toronto

# Lessons Learned

- Successful coalitions survive as a result of effective relationships that wrestle with and develop policy and advocacy strategies
- Stick to your raison d'être and don't stray too far or you'll lose partners/members
- Be nimble and prepared to respond to new developments while not losing sight of your basic principles

# The Critical Role of Non- Profits in Advocacy



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# Agency Context

- FST became C2000's home in 1991
- Within the Social Action and Community Building Unit (SACB)
- SACB includes GUHD, TNR and Lawrence Heights work



Social Action and Community Building

# Sectoral Context

- Build and bolster sectoral capacity to respond to timely issues and opportunities
- Child Poverty Action Group
- 25in5 Network for Poverty Reduction
- June Callwood - Keep the Promise



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# What is a Theory of Change?

- Starts with impact desired.
- Identifies the strategic path to get there.
- Questioning assumptions, learning, seeing complexity.
- Clarity and surprising new understanding.

# Theory of Change

## Family Service Toronto

### Ultimate Impact Statement

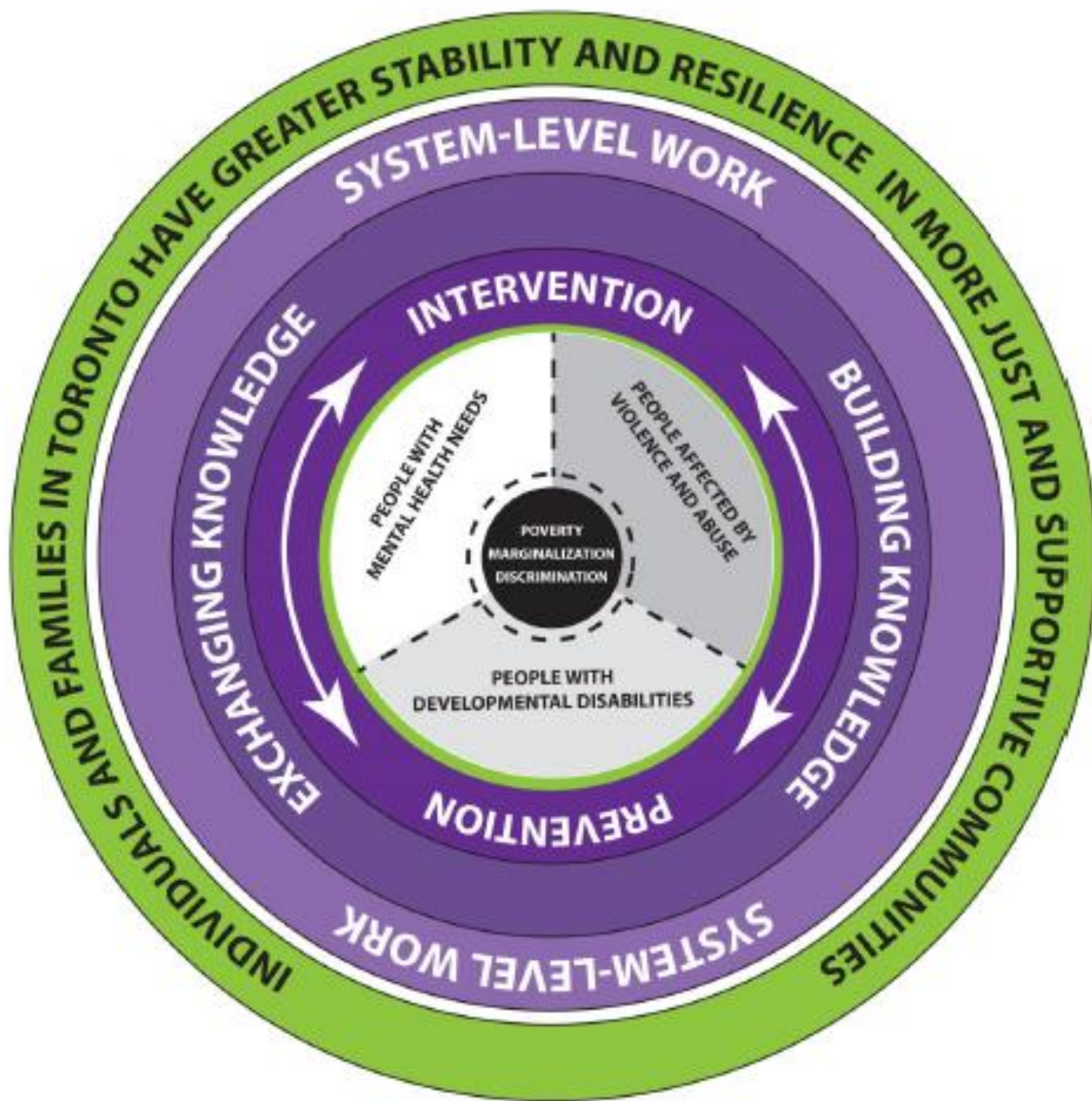
*(ambitious, lofty, immeasurable)*

A city in which individuals, families and communities are resilient and thriving.

### Intended Impact

By 2020, as the result of FST's work, individuals and families in Toronto, destabilized by precarious mental health and/or socioeconomic circumstances, will have achieved greater stability and resilience in more just and supportive communities.





# Measuring Our Impact



# Measuring Advocacy?

- Difficult to track impact
- Efforts influenced by factors beyond our control, ex: government in power, economic downturns, etc.
- Last independent evaluation of Campaign 2000 was in 2007



# FST Indicators

- Number of Unregistered Participants
- Service Hours
- Number of FTEs
- Volunteer Hours

# Campaign 2000 Indicators

- Website traffic
- Media stories
- Social Media
- Report Card Distribution

# Web Traffic

Websites	2017-2018
Campaign 2000 and  Ontario Campaign 2000	Over 25,000 visits  Over 4,000 Downloads

# Media Appearances

National &  
Ontario  
Campaign  
2000

April 2016-  
March 2017

April 2017-  
March 2018

Number of  
Media Hits



160



376



# Social Media

Social Media Platform	April 2017-March 2018
	Followers: 1530
	National Reach: 13,776
	Ontario Reach: 2200

# Report Card Distribution

- Nine report cards released annually: national along with 8 provincial reports
- Online, with limited print run for the public and decision makers
- National report card mailed to each MP and Senator with a meeting invitation
- Findings also disseminated in summary infographics, fact sheets, etc.



# Other Possible Indicators

- References by influential politicians
- Invitations to advise government or community processes
- Recognition as key stakeholders
- Periodic partner surveys

# Non-Profits Can Lead the Way for Change

- Engaging in advocacy is essential for non-profits to achieve our mandates
- Agencies can and must do this work to effect positive social change

# THANK YOU!

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