Disability lens evaluation of four provincial poverty reduction strategies: Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

TABLE OF TABLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the purpose of facilitating discussion, this report reviews the poverty reduction strategies (PRS) of Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia with respect to supporting persons with disabilities. Table 1 (below) summarizes the main focus points of each provincial PRS and provides a sense of how services and initiatives are being grouped within the PRS framework. At a glance it is possible to see that each area of intervention potentially interacts with the needs, concerns and issues of persons with disabilities . Readers are encouraged to consider and identify potential opportunities for boosting advocacy and influencing policy and emerging programs.

Province	Main Areas of Intervention
MA **Manitoba**	* Safe affordable housing in supportive communities. * Education, jobs and income support. * Strong healthy families. * Accessible coordinated services.
NB **New Brunswick**	* Meeting basic needs. * Life-long learning and skills acquisition. * Community participation (Community Inclusion Networks) * Transform rules based social assistance system to outcome based system.
NL **Newfoundland and Labrador**	* Improve access and coordination of services for those living on low incomes. * Establish a stronger social safety net. * Improve earned incomes. * Increase emphasis on early childhood development. * Achieve a better-educated population
NS **Nova Scotia**	* Enable and reward work. * Improve supports for those in need. * Focus on our children. * Collaborate and coordinate.

Table 1 Poverty Reduction Strategies Main Areas of Intervention (FD01, p. 71)

As six of Canada's provinces (the four in this report plus Quebec and Ontario) move forward with poverty reduction and social inclusion strategies, it might be said that a national poverty reduction strategy of sorts is starting to patch itself together. How the current Canadian government will respond to this movement and ongoing calls for federal intervention remains to be seen and in the meantime, each provincial initiative grows with its own distinct

profile and priorities. While it is debatable if the federal government should intervene in the formation of provincial poverty reduction strategies – or initiate a federal one, this report will show that some form of federal intervention to support people with disabilities is desirable.

In order for this report to explore how the needs and lives of persons with disabilities are being taken up in PRS, a disability lens was constructed and applied to the source materials for this report. These materials are government generated action plans, status reports, government and agency websites, House of Assembly proceedings and strategies related to poverty and disability initiatives. Additionally, white papers, newspaper articles and press releases from non-government organizations have also been referenced. For convenience, all references are listed, by province, at the end of the report.

Since these four PRS are new, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador, concrete results are not yet available. Consequently, this report does not attempt to explore or compare PRS effectiveness, instead it examines provincial intentions – how these strategies are being funded, assembled, and delivered. Throughout this exploration it is evident that while each province receives federal money earmarked for supporting persons with disabilities and recognizes the value of accessibility in general, how each province specifically connects accessibility with housing, employment, health, education, income support and system accountability is not consistent. In turn, this lack of consistency invisibilizes and marginalizes persons with disabilities because it puts process before rights.

Perhaps with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador, PRS seem to largely be a means of reframing of social services funded through Canada Social Transfer initiatives and Labour Market Agreements. The following list highlights the major features of this reframing:

- Explicit responsibilizing of the non-profit sector and in the case of New Brunswick, the creation of new community-based non-profit organizations to support government initiatives.
- Reinforcement of connection between employment and supports for persons with disabilities but with a (re)newed emphasis on addressing barriers to employment.
- Ever increasing emphasis on youth and education including the need to address barriers to education for persons with disabilities – this is one key area that may actually be receiving new funding.
- Explicitly funded initiatives to re-coordinate social services across government silos (housing, employment, health, education, income support) including reviews of tax-credits and eligibility thresholds that counteract each other.

- The packaging of poverty reduction with social inclusion.

The implications and details of these features will be discussed at length in the following sections of this report.

Even as a repackaging of existing supports, there are potential opportunities being created by these changes insomuch that times of change themselves can create opportunities. Some opportunities might be:

- Possible support from provincial governments for developing a federally-driven support system for persons with disabilities.
- The shift to approach poverty reduction by integrating services across silos improves the environment for recognizing the universal and intersectional location of persons with disabilities.
- More space for community-based input into policy creation and implementation.
- Accelerate recognition of disability rights and potentially extract disability from the provincial poverty policy regime.

The project to downsize government and responsiblize communities continues with the aspirations of provincial governments to address poverty more "holistically" by engaging communities and across silos of service. Within this changing environment advocates who want to maintain and build success will, like governments, need to continually adopt new strategies.

The relationship between poverty and disability is complicated. Within the framework of provincial PRS, disability issues are explicitly addressed vis-à-vis housing, employment, health, education, income support as well as through policy instruments including taxation, exemption adjustments and accessibility. Examples of how disability and associated issues are being approached in each province with legislation, programming, funding and policy reform are available in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report. These appendices are presented in table form to facilitate easy reference and with the intent of mobilizing knowledge in a way that allows advocates and allies to draw insight and conclusions from different perspectives.

Throughout the report a number of question arise that will benefit from the multiple perspectives of persons with disabilities, their advocates and allies. These questions are listed below, as they emerge from the report and again at the end of the report.

- ***Are we still reinforcing silos of impairment and contributing to the creation of hierarchies of who deserves what care?***

- ***What opportunities emerge from the process of offloading social service provision from government to third sector organizations?***

- ***What are the implications of social inclusion being explicitly bound with poverty reduction in public policy implementation?***

- ***What poverty reduction progress measures are missing when it comes to persons with disabilities?***

- ***If the recommendation to create a federal-provincial poverty reduction funding transfer gets taken up, how will that impact efforts to establish federally regulated support for persons with disabilities?***

- ***Can advocates for federally coordinated disability support leverage capacity from the existing practice of federal coordination with regards to public housing?***

- ***What, if any, are the connecting points in PRS initiatives that persons with disabilities and their allies can use for advocacy?***

INTRODUCTION

Although Newfoundland and Labrador's poverty reduction strategy (PRS) took root in 2003, it was not until 2006 that the province launched its strategy, which makes it the oldest one of the four evaluated in this report. The other three provinces, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia all initiated their PRS in 2009 which begs the question: why the sudden trend? Although it is probably impossible to accurately map and weigh all the forces and pressures acting nationally and internationally in the last ten years, it is valuable to have a rough understanding of the context out of which this PRS surge emerged.

In 2008-2009, the stumbling global economy sent a shockwave around the world but well before that, concern about poverty was growing in Canada. Some examples are: in 2002, the Tamarak Institute, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, and the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation launched a pan-Canadian poverty reduction initiative called Vibrant Communities. In February 2005, when Newfoundland and Labrador's PRS was beginning to take shape, the national Make Poverty History campaign was launched as part of an international initiative called Global Call to Action Against Poverty. Then, in February 2008 the federal government's Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities initiated a study on the role of the federal government in reducing poverty in Canada (FED01, p. 1). Evidence and influences of these initiatives can be found in a number of the documents reviewed for this report.

By late 2009, Newfoundland and Labrador's PRS was in full swing and Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia's PRS were all in the process of being rolled out and at the same time, a report entitled *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness* was tabled by the Canadian federal Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs. This report called for "the coordination of a nationwide federal-provincial initiative on early childhood education; the development of a national housing and homelessness strategy; and the creation of a basic income floor for all Canadians who are severely disabled"(FED03, p. 1). Although not coordinated in the sense recommended by the Senate's report, a national strategy is in some ways patching itself together as six of Canada's provinces move forward with poverty reduction initiatives that address employment, education, health, housing, child care and the needs of vulnerable citizens. How the current Canadian government will respond

to the growing pressure for a federal intervention remains to be seen and in the meantime, each provincial initiative grows with its own distinct profile and priorities.

With regards to needs, this provincially-lead initiatives in poverty reduction leaves Canadians with disabilities, a heterogeneous group that experiences an above average vulnerability to poverty (FED01, p. 32), largely dependent on provincial definitions and sensibilities for recognition and support. To better understand the history of the development of these different approaches to addressing the intersection of poverty and the needs of people with disabilities, one place to start is with the 1998 federal-provincial framework document entitled "In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues". This report highlighted three key income issues:

- Persons with disabilities rely more on government transfers and less on employment earnings than do people without disabilities;
- Persons with disabilities tend to have lower incomes and more dependence on government income support programs than their counterparts without disabilities; and
- Employed persons with disabilities have lower earnings than those without disabilities. (IU, Executive Summary)

Both New Brunswick and Manitoba reference "In Unison" in their respective strategies for supporting persons with disabilities so even though provinces are taking separate approaches, they are following some common principles (NB02, p. 2; MA07, p. 2). Another uniting action took place in March of 2007 when Canada signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was then ratified in March 2010, and this action has been taken up by some provinces to fortify initiatives as well. Yet, while these federal level influences are present, they are not consistently applied.

One way of evaluating the approach of each province is by using the UN's definition of disability as a benchmark and then comparing it to the definitions of being put into action by provinces. Ranging from archaic to progressive, the diversity of definitions is one indicator that while it is debatable if the federal government should intervene in the formation of provincial PRS, some form of federal intervention to support people with disabilities is desirable.

REPORT OUTLINE

For the purpose of facilitating discussion, this report reviews the poverty reduction strategies (PRS) of Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia with respect to supporting persons with disabilities. After building a "disability lens" and discussing definitions, the first section of this report reviews highlights of PRS legislation, goals, measures, funding and infrastructure (space limits a thorough discussion of each province's PRS so notable approaches and recent developments are described and Appendix 1 and 2 which include comparative tables of selected structures, processes and initiatives). The second section will highlight the dimensions of each province's strategy that intersect with disability such as employment, housing and education as well as policy instruments including taxation and exemption adjustments. In the final section of this report, interconnections will be explored and list of questions that emerge from this report are listed to facilitate further discussion.

SOURCE MATERIALS

The documents referenced by this report fall into the category known as "grey literature" and are predominantly government generated action plans, status reports, and strategies related to poverty and disability initiatives. To create some balance, white papers, newspaper articles and press releases from non-government organizations have also been referenced. In addition to these sources, government and agency websites have been consulted as well as House of Assembly proceedings. All references are listed, by province, at the end of the report.

1.0 BUILDING A DISABILITY LENS

1.1 Lens explanation

Five key ingredients found in all four provincial PRS will be used to build a lens for analyzing PRS with respect to persons with disabilities . First, the fluid nature of the definition of disability will be realized. Second, third and fourth, the conceptualization of "full citizenship" will be examined in relation to the idea of barriers and social inclusion. Finally, the notion of intersectionality will be integrated – which includes both a cross-disability outlook and a wider

interest with how other social attributes interrelate. Common throughout all four PRS (either implicitly or explicitly) are: the shifting definitions of disability, problematic approaches to framing barriers to citizenship and social inclusion, and the unique intersectional nature of disability as a social policy issue. As a result, each theme contributes to focusing the lens on how poverty reduction strategies and the lives of persons with disabilities interact.

1.2 Defining disability

In Canada there are definitions of disability employed for different purposes and processes such as PALS (federal Participation and Activity Limitation Survey), the Canadian Human Rights Code and qualifying for CPP Disability income support. Each provincial human rights act also has its own definition of disability. During the July 22, 2010 sitting of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislative Assembly, a discussion of that province's definition of disability took place that demonstrates the necessary futility, or perhaps futile necessity of society's attempt to define and segregate its citizens.

During this debate regarding the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission, MHA Felix Collins, PC (Placentia – St. Mary's) and MHA Lorraine Michael, NDP (Signal Hill – Quidi Vidi) discuss a revision of the definition of disability:

> MICHAEL: Mr. Speaker, the United Nations adopted a new definition of disability which Canada recognized when we signed a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2007. This new model recognizes that a disability is not something that resides in the individual as the result of some impairment but should be seen as the result of the interaction between a person and his or her environment.
> Mr. Speaker, the minister knows this. He knows that is in the UN declaration, yet decided not to include this more modern, inclusive definition in the code.
> So I ask the minister: Why wouldn't the government adopt this new definition?
>
> COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, the department took its direction on the issue of disability from the disability office of this government, which is the proper place to take that direction.
>
> Mr. Speaker, it took the form of several discussions back and forth with the disability office. We looked at a number of jurisdictions. After a lot of consultation and a lot of toing and froing, the consensus of opinion was that the definition of disability that we now have in the act was the best one to go with, and that is the one we did.
> MICHAEL: I am so glad we are better than the United Nations. (NL HA01)

The Newfoundland and Labrador *Human Rights Act* defines disability as follows:

> (c) "disability" means one or more of the following conditions:
> (i) a degree of physical disability,
> (ii) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
> (iii) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or language, and
> (iv) a mental disorder; (NL HRA, Ch. H-13.1.)

The UN takes the following stance:

> The term persons with disabilities is used to apply to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. However, this minimum list of persons who may claim protection under the Convention does not exhaust the categories of the disabilities which fall within it nor intend to undermine or stand in the way of wider definition of disabilities under national law (such as persons with short-term disabilities).
>
> It is also important to note that a person with disabilities may be regarded as a person with a disability in one society or setting, but not in another, depending on the role that the person is assumed to take in his or her community. The perception and reality of disability also depend on the technologies, assistance and services available, as well as on cultural considerations.
>
> The drafters of this Convention were clear that disability should be seen as the result of the interaction between a person and his or her environment. Disability is not something that resides in the individual as the result of some impairment. (UN01)

In its recently passed *Accessibility Advisory Council Act,* the province of Manitoba has used language from the UN definition verbatim for defining barriers: "for a person who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, a barrier is anything that interacts with that impairment in a way that may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis" (MA14).

So, while a definition of disability may seem to be an obvious component in developing a lens for examining poverty reduction strategies, it is the difficulty and diversity of defining disability that is even more relevant. This definition, as it moves from the past into the future, is motivated by social change, human rights reform, education reform, labour reform and uncountable hours of advocacy conducted by people within and supporting the disability rights movement. At the end of the day, the challenge is to create a definition that constructs without

marginalizing and, as the UN asserts and Manitoba has agreed: *describes disability as the result of the interaction between a person and his or her environment*.

The social policy documents reviewed for this report approach disability in ways that range all along the continuum between the UN's "interaction" definition and Newfoundland and Labrador's "individual problem" definition. In general, the former tends to be more aspirational and the latter, functional. The UN Convention recognizes that "disability is an evolving concept and that legislation may adapt to reflect positive changes within society" (UN01)…To function, contemporary social policy depends on framing a given human need as a problem and then measuring it. As definitions of disability transition from the past to the future it seems Canadian provinces are moving away from framing disability as an "individual's problem" and moving toward framing it as an "interaction"; a collective problem.

While MHAs and their counterparts in other provinces may discuss the ideal way to define disability, it might be said that the real definitions can be easily found in the process of qualifying for income support. Regardless of the UN Convention, Service Canada bases CPP Disability eligibility decisions on "the limitations that a disease or condition imposes on a person's ability to work and earn an income on a regular basis" (FED04). For many persons with disabilities, the social service culture created by employability-based definitions is a root cause of poverty.

1.3 Barriers and "full citizenship"

The environment in which we all live is full of barriers to living a full citizenship. It is these barriers, and not an individual's capacity to overcome them, that must become the focus of policymakers. Citizens and/or those who support them need to be compensated by the state for barriers that cannot be lowered far enough for everyone to transcend. Privilege is, among other things, a barrier-free path to living a full citizenship. For those who experience barriers, being collected into a category defined by that experience is to be marginalized and made vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and oppression vis-à-vis an essentialized identity. It may be arguable that full citizenship, as it is conceptualized in Canada at this time, is in itself a barrier – but that discussion extends beyond the scope of this report. Suffice to say that this lens will

assist with analyzing both provincial efforts to lower barriers and the sufficiency of the means provided to citizens for living with barriers that cannot be overcome.

Before it is ready to be applied to poverty reduction strategies, the notion of citizenship needs to be added to this lens. In 2001 the Manitoba government released a white paper called: *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability* that identified four building blocks to citizenship: "income supports; access to government; disability supports and, employment" (MA07, p. 4). The paper explains that the:

> Manitoba government recognizes that in each of the areas identified [above] it is being challenged to make changes that remove the barriers to full citizenship. This White Paper will set out an Action Plan that continues the work of extending full citizenship to Manitobans with disabilities (MA07, p. 4).

In seeking to define what it is to live as a full citizen, the statement above potentially reveals a contradiction in the experience of people with disabilities who are Canadian citizens. Both individual citizens and the government recognize there are barriers to full citizenship, yet the Manitoba government apparently believes it is something to be "extended" while the individual may assume their citizenship – once established – is inherent. For example, *before* qualifying for disability supports, most provinces require an individual to not only meet need criteria but also to be "a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant" (NS01, p. 5). What this double-standard reveals could be called paternalism as well as an assumption of a passivity of people with disabilities. For the purpose of building a lens for analyzing poverty reduction strategies, this report assumes that Canadians with disabilities are full citizens, but citizens who face material and immaterial barriers to living their full citizenship.

1.4 Social inclusion

Accompanying the slippery notion of citizenship is the popular concept of social inclusion that now contributes to the foundation of both PRS and disability frameworks in Canada. In a report prepared for the Canadian government by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Person with Disabilities, the concept of social (and financial) inclusion is discussed throughout. In fact, legislation of social inclusion is recommended:

Many witnesses suggested that the Government of Canada should establish a federal action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion that would include clear poverty reduction targets and timelines, accountability mechanisms, as well as an institutional framework and a funding mechanism; and some organizations recommended that this action plan should be incorporated in legislation (FED01, p. 102).

As this recommendation demonstrates, the concept of social inclusion has gained traction in Canada relatively quickly. Most of the documents reviewed for this report assume the reader understands the concept of social inclusion yet it was only a few years ago that it emerged from social policy research. In 2004 the Pan-Canadian Community Development Network released a literature review entitled *Social Inclusion and Community Economic Development*. Funded by the Community Development and Partnerships Directorate of Social Development Canada and authored by Michael Toye and Jennifer Infanti, the review was the first major publication in a three year project designed to "facilitate peer learning and develop evidence-based research to strengthen integrated models of service delivery that build assets, skills, learning, social development and economic self-sufficiency opportunities relevant to local community conditions" (p. 1). Toye and Infanti's discussion of social inclusion draws on different academic and government perspectives and emphasizes something that is perhaps getting lost in translation – Toye and Infanti write:

It is important to specify that inclusion does not mean assimilation or conformity. It makes participation in society accessible to excluded individuals and groups and supports them in their efforts to be included. It provides all members of society with the possibility of inclusion. Some individual and groups may choose, for a variety of reasons, to remain outside of mainstream Canadian culture (e.g. Aboriginal culture, deaf culture) (Freiler, 2001). Inclusion fosters difference and diversity by increasing freedom (Toye and Infanti, 2004, p. 19).

Quoting the Laidlaw Foundation, the authors develop a definition of social inclusion that "is about making sure that all people participate as valued members of society, rather than just bringing people on the outside 'in'" (Toye and Infanti, 2004, p. 17). This definition also asserts "a transformative agenda that points to the changes that are necessary in public policies, attitudes and institutional practices" (Toye and Infanti, 2004, p. 17). Another way of thinking about social inclusion is using the notion of democratic citizenship (rather than formal citizenship) which emphasizes the entitlements and rights an individual has by virtue of "being

a part of the polity" rather than a result of formal status granted by the state (Toye and Infanti, 2004, p. 18). In order to evaluate PRS in Canada with a disability lens it is valuable to keep in mind that social inclusion is; (a) both a process and a goal; (b) not equal to conformity; and (c) emphasizes democratic citizenship rather than formal citizenship (Toye and Infanti, 2004, p. 18).

1.5 Intersectionality

The notion of social inclusion leads naturally to the concept of intersectionality. The ubiquitous Canadian list of marginalized people generally includes the term 'disability' alongside 'women, Aboriginal people and members of visible minorities'. Yet, like the 'category' known as 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual' (LGBT), disability can apply to anyone in the list – and membership in this category may fluctuate during an individual's lifetime. Because of this pan-applicability and also the diversity within the category itself, developing a disability lens requires recognition of the intersectionality within the group known as "persons with disabilities".

Intersectionality, as a concept, recognizes the array of identities individuals have and the relationships between those identities in different contexts. In each of the four PRS reviewed in this report, strategies are described both by function and by whom they may benefit. In some cases, these benefits are directly connected to persons with disabilities and in others, strategies are specific to groups such as (but not limited to) children, seniors, unattached adults, immigrants, women and Aboriginal people. Analysis of poverty statistics are grouped similarly and in both cases this lens reveals that any member of any group may also be a person with a disability. This means, for example, that since unattached women who live alone are at greater risk of living in poverty (FED01, p. 16), then the same person with a disability will be at an even greater risk.

And finally, within the community known as "persons with disabilities" there is also diversity. Who is a person with a disability? This question brings us back to the beginning of this section of the report and the idea of definitions. Disability has many forms and descriptors such as hidden, invisible, learning and physical. Disability includes mental health, injury, short and long-term disease, allergies and descriptors such as deaf, blind, amputee and cancer survivor.

Provincial PRS and disability documents sometimes refer to people "with severe disabilities" to describe individuals who are unemployable, have minimal self-sufficiency and require life-long support. A person with a disability is also someone who qualifies, based on provincial criteria, for various supports such as funding to renovate their home to make it wheelchair accessible, refunds for pharmacare or skills training designed for persons with learning disabilities. A person with a disability may never seek support from social service or require income supports. In other words, developing an understanding about who persons with disabilities are requires checking assumptions.

Policy makers and governments naturally create silos and categories and it is strategic to be mindful that whenever a category is created to include someone or something, it is generally excluding something – or someone – else.

Question: Are we still reinforcing silos of impairment and contributing to the creation of hierarchies of who deserves what care?

2.0 DEFINING, LEGISLATING, STRUCTURING AND FUNDING POVERTY REDUCTION

2.1 Defining and measuring poverty

There is no internationally agreed upon qualitative or quantitative definition of poverty, nor is there a nationally agreed upon definition in Canada. When they do formally define it, all four provinces qualitatively define poverty in terms of social inclusion. Manitoba PRS framework states that "…poverty is complex and goes beyond having enough money to live each day. A [PRS] should create the conditions that allow people to participate fully in society as valued, respected and contributing members" (MA01, p.2). In one of its early PRS white papers released in 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador draws on the United Nations definition of poverty and adds that "the term 'poverty' is used not only to reflect a lack of adequate financial resources, but also the lack of social inclusion which is both a consequence and a cause of poverty" (NF02, p. 1).

Although poverty is not defined in their PRS, New Brunswick conducted a three-phase community engagement process in 2008 and 2009 in order to "engage participants… and to talk about what poverty means to them" (NB07, p. 4). The results of this process are captured in a

report called *A Choir of Voices* which provides two pages of devastating reflections on poverty including:

> Poverty means being emotionally impoverished, not only financially poor. It results in mental health issues and addictions and other health issues. When living in poverty it takes a lot of energy to just do the day-to-day tasks. It's emotionally draining, so you have a lack of energy and motivation to get yourself out of it (NB07, p. 23).

Participants were also asked to talk about the causes of poverty and one of the reoccurring themes related to the causes of poverty is New Brunswick's social assistance system:

> Of great concern to many New Brunswickers who spoke out on the social assistance system was the issue of the rate for persons with disabilities. There are many people who feel that persons with disabilities should not actually be receiving social assistance, but should be receiving a guaranteed income supplement like that received by seniors. (NB07, p. 11)

New Brunswick's First Nations communities agree that poverty is caused by, among other things, a lack of support programs for "disabled individuals" and also by the erosion of their traditional way of life, lack of self-sufficiency and high dependency on social assistance" (NB07, p. 17-18). Using data from community dialogues such as this can ideally help provincial governments develop qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring the progress of their PRS. It can also support the argument for federally-driven income security for persons with disabilities.

Before looking at some of the goals and measures developed by the four provinces it is worth noting that each province approaches community engagement differently. For example, since it was released in 2009, Manitoba's PRS does not appear to have benefited from a formal community consultation process nor does it include explicit indicators. However, the Summer 2011 PRS Progress Report *AllAboard* states that "we will continue to ask people for their thoughts and ideas about how we can best reach our goals" – although there is no indication of where or how that will take place (MA02, p. 1). It is also interesting that after the first progress report in 2010, the tagline of Manitoba's AllABoard PRS strategy changed from "poverty reduction strategy" to "poverty reduction *and social inclusion* strategy."

QUESTION: What are the implications of social inclusion being explicitly bound with poverty reduction in public policy implementation?

Comparing the NLMBM to Traditional Measures of Low Income in Canada		
Common Measures of Low Income	**Data Gathering Method**	**Data Gathering in Detail**
Low Income Cutoffs (LICO)	Survey Sampling	Samples a small per cent of the population then extrapolates results to provide an estimate of the overall population
Low Income Measure (LIM)	Survey Sampling	
Market Basket Measure (MBM)	Survey Sampling	
Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure (NLMBM)	Tax-filer & other data sources	Provides data for approximately 100 per cent of the population.

Figure 1 Comparing existing income measures to Newfoundland and Labrador MBM (NL01, p. 60)

Currently there is no Canadian standard for quantitatively measuring poverty although income measures such as "Low Income Cutoffs (LICO)" and "Market Basket Measure (MBM)" are often combined to create a statistical profile and benchmarks. At the time of writing this report, only Newfoundland and Labrador have developed criteria for PRS reporting purposes -- but Manitoba is beginning to develop a process and so is New Brunswick. Figure 1 above shows Newfoundland and Labrador's regionally sensitive system for measuring poverty, called "Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure (NLMBM) " (NL01, p. 60), compared to the standard measures. Developed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, the NLMBM is the first of its kind in Canada:

> An adaptation of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Market Basket Measure, it incorporates modifications that make it more specific to the realities of this province. Like HRSDC's MBM, it compares the incomes of families to the cost of a basket of goods and services necessary to live a productive and socially inclusive life. Unlike the MBM and traditional measures that use surveys to estimate low income levels, the NLMBM uses tax-filer data and other sources to provide more accurate income and expense information. This allows for the reporting of low-income levels in communities and neighbourhoods as well as other groups. (NL01, p. 60)

In terms of qualitatively reporting progress, Newfoundland and Labrador's "progress wheel" (see Figure 2) is well-designed visual reporting tool. It collects quantitative measures into three areas and provides an easy visualization of its PRS outcomes.

The Progress Wheel: Gauging Success at a Glance

Interpreting this graph:

The dashed inner circle represents performance levels of each indicator in 2003, and the spokes radiating from the centre represent most recent performance values.

Spokes that extend outside the dashed circle indicate improved outcomes. The further from the dashed circle, the greater the improvement.
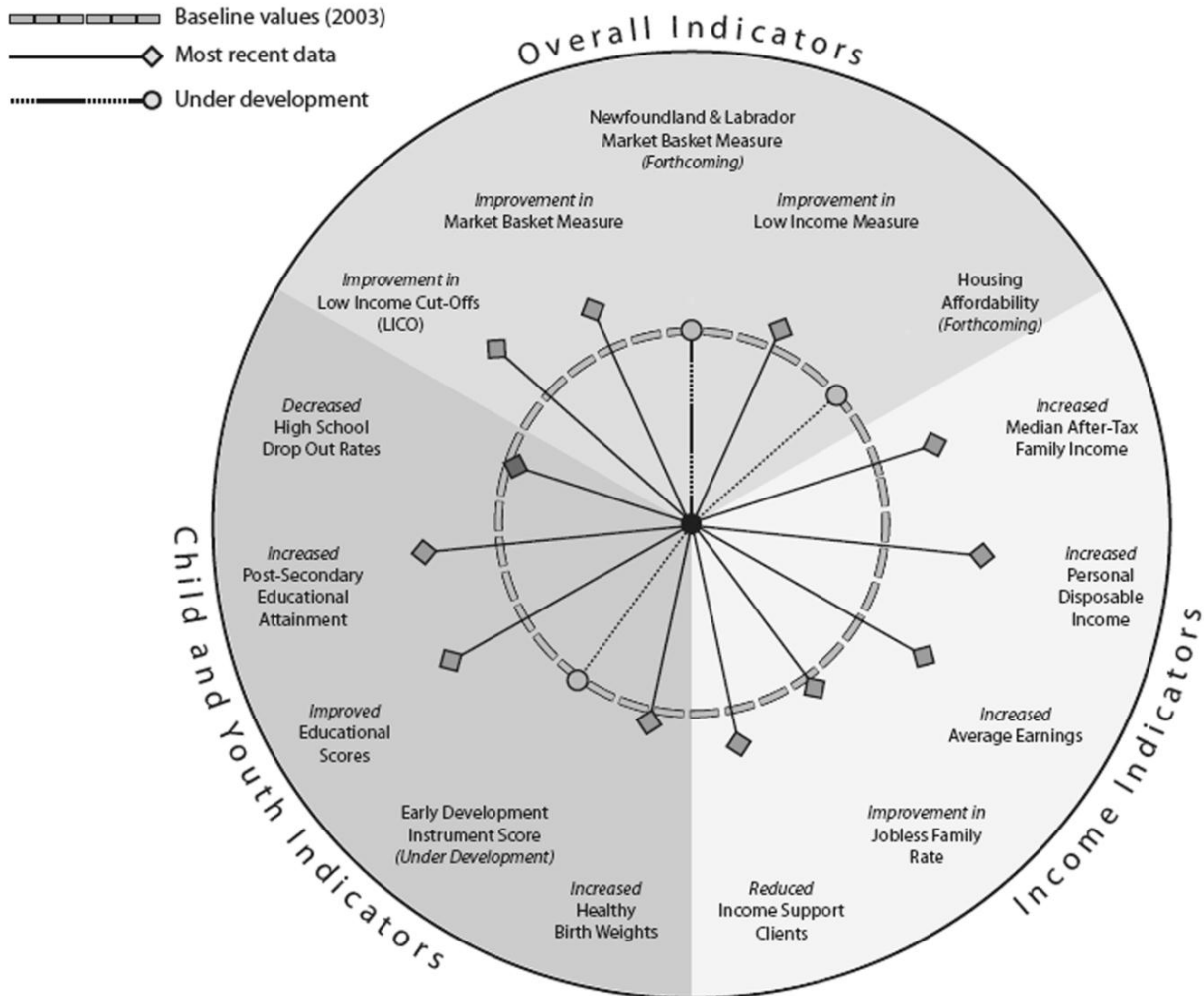

Figure 2 Newfoundland and Labrador PRS "Progress Wheel" (NL01, P. 59)

With the recent passing of Manitoba's *Poverty Reduction Act* (which will be discussed later in this report) that province acknowledges that: "based on advice from our stakeholders, the Act also requires a set of measures to determine the progress of AllAboard [PRS]" (MA02, p. 1). New Brunswick's Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation hired a private consulting company to develop their measures which they have reported will include: "school readiness among four-year olds, participation rate in post-secondary education and percentage of New Brunswickers in core housing need" (NB03, p. 11). While provincial initiatives to better measure poverty reduction progress are valuable, the impact of this lack of consistency remains to be seen.

QUESTION: What poverty reduction progress measures are missing when it comes to persons with disabilities?

2.2 Legislation and structures

Manitoba's new *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* was announced June 9, 2011 and according to the press release, includes a commitment to "working with other provinces and the federal government to establish a national basic income support plan to get those with no reasonable expectation of earned income, due to disability, to get off welfare" (MA09). The new *Act* includes Sec 2(2), the "Strategy to address multiple areas of need" that "recognizes that poverty has multiple causes, and be designed to address various needs:

> (a) quality, accessible education that develops knowledge and skills;
> (b) training that prepares persons for employment;
> (c) employment opportunities;
> (d) income supports for persons who are unable to fully participate in the labour market;
> (e) affordable housing;
> (f) supportive and safe communities; and
> (g) supports for strong and healthy families (MA11)

Dennis Howlett, National Co-ordinatior for *Make Poverty History* responded on his organization's blog with this comment:

> The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* establishes in law what the government will do to reduce poverty. In particular, it creates a monitoring committee of government ministers and community members, to review and advise on the strategy... While this is an important administrative mechanism for government, it does not have the

power to actually define programs or to hold government accountable if it does not implement programs. Also, there is still a need for external monitoring of government progress, which could be more comprehensive and critical (MA10).

In the face of this commentary, Newfoundland and Labrador's *Transparency and Accountability Act (2006)* might be seen as an essential PRS building block. It is perhaps this *Act* that has contributed to the exceptional and sophisticated PRS reporting demonstrated by Newfoundland and Labrador to date. Indeed, legislation is only as good as the accountability built into it!

Accountability processes can make or break the implementation of good policy and this is the concern expressed by the non-profit group Barrier-Free Manitoba in response to Manitoba's new *Accessibility Advisory Council Act* (Bill 47) passed in June 2011. According to Barrier-Free Manitoba's spokesperson Dale Kendel, "requiring that the future government tends to the important but unfinished business of making Manitoba truly inclusive is a good thing. Having had the government fulfill its decade-old commitments before heading into a general election would have been a much, much better thing. That is why this Bill is so disappointing" (MA12). That said, the *Act* has laid out a clear process for appointment Council members and ensuring attendance at regularly scheduled meetings (MA14).

In April 2010 New Brunswick passed its *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* which initiated the creation of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) and Fund. Among other things, the fund distributes monies to "community inclusion networks" (CIN). Eight CIN host organizations were established in January 2011 including the United Way of Greater Moncton and southeastern NB, two youth centres, two freshly formed organizations and Vibrant Communities in St. John. Interestingly, Vibrant Communities is the result of a partnership initiative with Tamarak Institute – an organization that has partnered with communities all across Canada to build capacity for social inclusion.

The creation of CINs is unique to New Brunswick. These organizations are being:

developed through a collaborative process in each region. These networks will work collaboratively to develop regional plans that deliver regional solutions to regional needs. The Social and Economic Inclusion corporation will support the work of each CIN in a variety of different ways. The CIN members are groups and individuals from all sectors who have an interest in promoting socio-economic inclusion (NB03, p. 2).

This strategy suggests that New Brunswick is interested in building third sector capacity and at the same time relying on non-profit organizations to coordinate its PRS. The outcome of New Brunswick's distinct approach is unknown but Jean-Claude Basque, a local journalist, sees it as a reinscription of historic problems:

> … the new [Social and Economic Inclusion] Corporation will operate at arm's-length from government, but all of its 22 members will be nominated by government. This board will be responsible to administer the funds going to the [community inclusion] networks. It will be interesting to monitor the political lobbying that will be going on in order to get the right person on the board and on the networks, so as to be in a better position to get the money. We have, in fact, politicized the allocation of funds which will deal with poverty reduction.
>
> We are creating an administrative monster that will devour funds but will not help reduce poverty significantly. We are creating 15 new small administrative kingdoms that will answer to themselves and deliver programs as they see fit. We are creating differences in program accessibility, depending on the region you live in, and we have politicized the allocation of funds. We are creating a new system which is no longer based upon the principles of accessibility, equality, consistency and universality but one which could, instead, be based on privileges rather than rights. (NB08)

By legislating more layers of bureaucracy, New Brunswick is taking a different approach to better coordinate government services compared to the other three provinces that are focusing on streamlining coordination between existing structures.

2.3 Funding and budgets

The sources of funding for PRS are difficult to trace. Although not always openly disclosed, it appears that a significant amount of PRS funding comes from federal-provincial Labour Market Agreements (LMA) (which includes Labour Market Agreements for People with Disabilities - LMAPD). In its primary PRS document, Newfoundland and Labrador states that "a new Labour Market Agreement (LMA) has been negotiated that will provide federal funds to support vulnerable individuals in our province" (NL01, p. 19) and Nova Scotia's PRS credits the federal government with contributing "almost $100 million in employment training and opportunities… through two significant federal-provincial agreements" (NS03, p. 21). Additionally, 2010 Manitoba's 2010 PRS progress newsletter acknowledges $2.75 million in federal funding for an initiative called "Ready to work North" (MA2/1, p. 6).

Table 2 shows how much funding each province received from the federal government in 2009-2010 and how much it itself contributed to programs designed to support employment of persons with disabilities. While each province is obligated to report spending, there are no consistent labels for expenditure categories or how to quantify participants. For example,

Labour Market Agreements for People with Disabilities (LMAPD) 2009-2010 Annual Report Totals				
	Provincial Contribution	Federal Contribution	Total	Participants	Document Reference
New Brunswick	12,140,570	5,950,848	18,091,481	no overall total provided	NB06
Manitoba	20,629,100	8,964,900	29,594,000	3744 (p. 16)	MA06
Nova Scotia	23,460,357	8,290,346	31,750,703	11,217 (p. 33)	NS05
Newfoundland and Labrador	18,200,000	4,600,000	22,800,000	6171 (p. 1)	NL05

Table 2 Labour Market Agreement for People with Disabilities (LMAPD):
Federal-Provincial contribution amounts

reviewing the LMAPD expenditure summaries in each province's annual report showed significant differences in spending on addiction services. While Nova Scotia spent $11.2 million, New Brunswick -- $7 million, and Manitoba -- $5.4 million, Newfoundland and Labrador only reports spending $187,000. With regards to the number of participants, it is difficult to understand why Nova Scotia is able to serve over three times as many people as Manitoba with only an additional $3 million in funding. Of special note is Newfoundland and Labrador's $4.2 million in expenditures for an Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities mandated to increase the number of person with disabilities employed in the Public Service. For better or worse, these examples illustrate how consistently transferred federal funding is inconsistently delivered by provincial services.

Along with the LMA, the Canada Social Transfer (CST) provides funding for PRS but it is not easy to discover how. Figure 3 below shows how the $10 billion CST will be distributed in 2011-2012 and according to witnesses who spoke to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the CST transfer process lacks accountability mechanisms. For example, "some witnesses maintained that provincial …governments need to be more transparent and should be able to demonstrate that federal funds have been spent as intended" (FED01, p. 99). Interestingly, to address this

and other issues, the Standing Committee recommended the development of a new federal poverty reduction transfer along with a framework for a federal action plan to reduce poverty and measure efforts (FED01, p. 201).
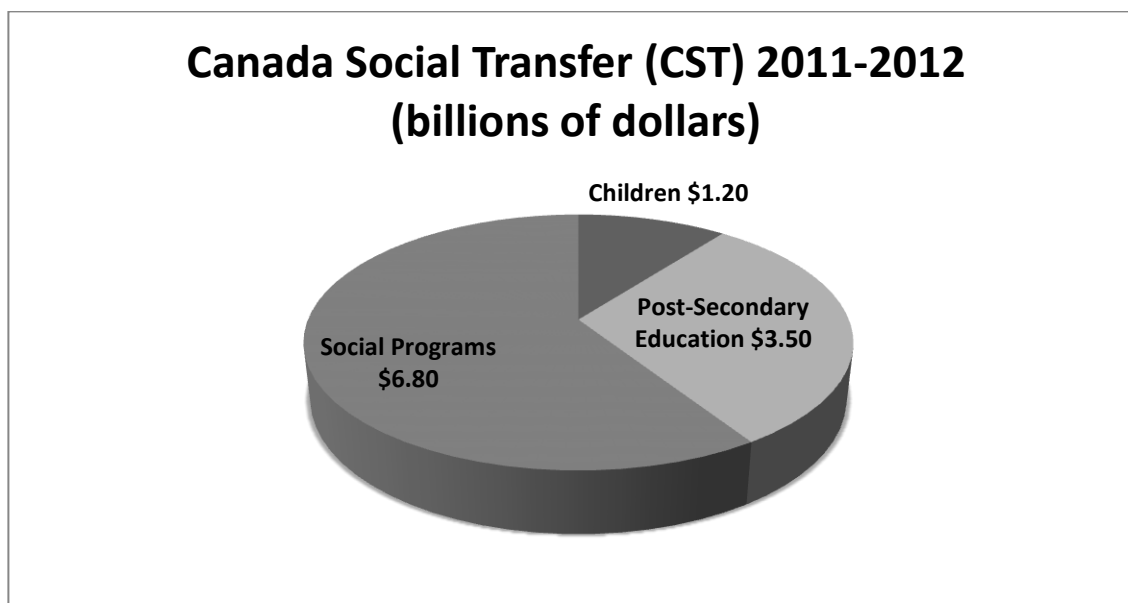
Canada Social Transfer (CST) 2011-2012 (billions of dollars)

Children $1.20

Post-Secondary Education $3.50

Social Programs $6.80

Figure 3 Breakdown of Canada Social Transfer expenditures (FED02)

QUESTION: If the recommendation to create a federal-provincial poverty reduction funding transfer gets taken up, how will that impact efforts to establish federally regulated support for persons with disabilities?

For more information on each province's PRS funding please see Appendix 1: Selected PRS Fundamentals – which outlines the names, goals and objectives, legislation changes, structure and budget highlights of each of the four strategies.

3.0 DISABILITY DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES (PRS)

3.1 Intersectionality and social inclusion

Anyone can be a person with a disability. The needs of people from this "group" often conflate with the needs of other groups. In order to better consider the disability dimensions of these four provincial PRS, this section begins with a list of ways that disability intersects with poverty across the Canadian population:

- In 2006, 4.4 million Canadians, or 14.3%, had some form of "activity limitation" and more than half were women (FED01, p. 32).

- Canadians age 65 and over had a disability rate of 43.4% in 2006 (FED01, p. 131).
- Working-age people with disabilities are less likely to have completed higher levels of education and more likely to earn low wages (FED01, p. 131).
- The working poor are likely to be young, single (separated or divorced), to have a work-limiting disability and have a *strong attachment to the labour force* (FED01, p. 37).
- The lower a person's income, the worse his or her health (FED01, p. 39).
- Aboriginal people and recent immigrants are more likely than non-Aboriginal people to have a low income. (FED01, pp. 29, 34)
- Aboriginal people are twice as likely to have a disability as non-Aboriginal people (MA07, p. 28).
- Living in poverty as a child is linked to experiencing mental health as an adult (NL01, p. 22)

3.2 Employment and income security

A significant confluence of mechanisms and processes with regards to disability and poverty takes place with the implementation each province's Labour Market Agreement for People with Disabilities (LMAPD) discussed in section 2.3 above. While the number of social assistance benefits people can qualify for is growing, accessing these benefits still often depends on being employed in the first place. Employment barriers faced by persons with disabilities such as the requirement for workplace accommodation (FED01, p. 33) are well documented, but barriers to accessing employment programs are not.

For example, as employment support programming becomes more and more influenced by outcome-based processes, case workers may turn away potential clients that they deem are unlikely to find employment and therefore negatively impact overall program outcomes. Additionally, sometimes acceptance into a program is conditional on stabilizing mental health but often it is the structure and hope offered by enrollment in such a program that assists mental health stabilization. In this way, provincially-driven outcome-based programming (noted by New Brunswick as a primary PRS objective) becomes a barrier for persons with disabilities.

In the following quote from Nova Scotia's PRS it is possible to see the policy tension between supporting those who are "work-ready" and those who are not:

> The review will build on the successes of the ESIA [Employment Support and Income Assistance] program by examining ways to help more people become financially self-sufficient and better address the needs of persons less able to work because of disabilities, addictions, or mental health issues. As such, the project will focus on

improving supports and services for disabled clients while streamlining supports and services for individuals who can participate in training or employment opportunities. We want to remove barriers to independence and ensure the menu of services available is flexible to meet the varied needs of all clients. (NS03, p. 22)

In attempting to address the systemic discrimination against persons with disabilities that takes the form of suggesting individuals who cannot work are a "burden to society" it is important to remember that the more supports and care a person requires, the more employment opportunities they generate.

In 2006, 44% of persons with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 64 were not in the labour force (FED01, p. 33) but that does not mean they are unable to work or are unwilling to work. Yet, in some cases it does mean people are unable to work or unwilling to work in substandard working conditions. Newfoundland and Labrador has the most comprehensive suite of income supports for persons with disabilities that are *not* employment dependent. For example, since its PRS was implemented, funding for adults with disabilities living with family members increased by up to $362 per month and as of March 2009, 1,700 individuals benefited from this change (NL01, p. 10). Additionally, access to the Special Child Welfare Allowance Program which helps families with extra costs associated with caring for children with disabilities, was increased (NL01, p. 10). On the other hand, one of New Brunswick's most significant changes to its income support process – the elimination of the "interim rate program" effective January 1, 2010 – only benefits those eligible for employment insurance (NB03, p. 5).

This emphasis on employment-dependent support is evident in this statement by Manitoba's Community Development Minister: "The best route out of poverty is a decent job. It is encouraging that in 2010 there were 78,000 more Manitobans employed than in 1999. More importantly, more than 62,000 of these people were working in full-time jobs." (MAN09). This emphasis makes those who cannot work, and the working poor, mostly invisible. Figure 4 from Nova Scotia's LMAPD 2009-2010 annual report shows fairly stable proportional sources of income reported by persons living with disabilities across time. Unless there are dramatic changes to workplace culture and even capitalism itself, it is hard to imagine that provincial
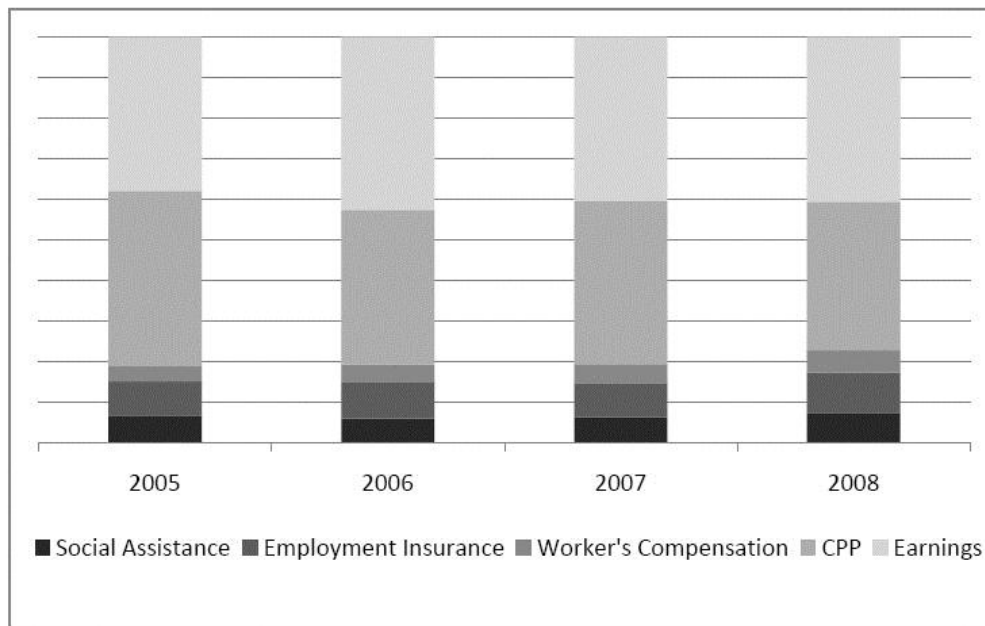
Figure 4 Proportional sources of income for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia (NS01, p. 42)

strategies for removing barriers to employment will dramatically change the need for secure income assistance for persons with disabilities.

One of the unspoken truths of employment as a poverty reduction strategy is the tendency for persons with disabilities to be working in unsatisfactory employment. It has been established that persons with disabilities are more likely to withdraw from formal education which naturally translates into having less earning power (NS01, p. 19). So, while making the assumption that minimum-wage and near minimum-wage work has a tendency to lack fulfillment and is more likely to expose employees to sub-standard working conditions is risky, it is important to raise the issue in this context. The reason it is important is because little attention seems to be paid to people once they have completed employment support programs and this may be of particular concern for persons with disabilities.

3.3 Housing

Discussing affordable housing in Canada requires an understanding of the term "core housing need". This term is used to describe "a situation where a household occupies a dwelling that does not meet affordability, adequacy, and/or suitability standards, and cannot obtain acceptable, alternative housing" (FED01, p. 54). Affordability refers to housing that costs more than 30% of before-tax income – an amount established by the Canada Mortgage and

29

Housing Corporation (FED01, p. 54). Although statistics for persons with disabilities are not available it has been reported that Aboriginal peoples experience higher rates of disability and in 2006, "over 20% of off-reserve Aboriginal dwellings across Canada required major repairs" (FED01, p. 55). And while the number of Canadians living in core housing need dropped 1% from 2001 to 2006 to 12.7%, homelessness is growing and in 2006 there were an estimated 300,000 people living without shelter (FED01, p. 195). People most likely to experience core housing need and homelessness include (but are not limited to) single adults, lone-parent families and people with disabilities.

Although provinces have primary jurisdiction over housing, this is one area where the federal government's ongoing involvement is made evident (FED01, p. 202). A potentially positive side-effect of this may be the opportunity to coordinate nation-wide initiatives such as the implementation of the "Housing First approach" to assist individuals experiencing homelessness (FED01, p. 201). The Housing First model is "based on the belief that housing is a basic right and offers clients immediate access to stable accommodation in conjunction with treatment and support services" (FED01, p. 201). New Brunswick's PRS includes a demonstration project of this model lead by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in Moncton (FED01, p. 201; NB05, p. 33). The success of this project demonstrates not only the value of the philosophy that stable housing is fundamental to social inclusion, it foregrounds the importance of federally coordinated programming that included $110 million in federal funding in 2008 alone (FED01, p. 201).

Nova Scotia states in its 2009 PRS "next steps" that the federal government will make $59 million available for affordable housing over the next three years. One of Nova Scotia's objectives for spending this money will be the creation of more housing for the people who "have the hardest time accessing adequate, affordable housing—single, often disabled adults" (NS03, p. 27). Nova Scotia also claims it will match federal funding and use the combined amount to:

- create rental housing for seniors and disabled persons around the province
- repair and upgrade public housing
- repair and provide energy upgrades to co-ops and non-profit housing
- preserve and create affordable homes and rentals (NS03, p. 27)

Timelines for these goals are not listed however, in 2009 Nova Scotia reported creating over 1,100 affordable housing units since 2003 (NS03, p. 25). No further housing initiative outcomes are offered on Nova Scotia's PRS update website, only initiatives and investments – including $34 million into "existing public housing stock" in 2009-2010 and $50 million "to create new affordable homes… and repair thousands of units" in 2010-2011 (NS08). At this point the impact of these initiatives may only be realized in an increase of employment opportunities.

Consistently, Newfoundland and Labrador offer the most concrete PRS outcomes and housing is no exception. In the 2009 progress report, the province notes that 225 rent supplement units with an average value of $360 per month were made available between April 2008 and March 2009 (NL01, p. 12). This province also identifies $550,000 earmarked specifically for constructing social housing units for persons with disabilities (NL01, p. 12). Additionally, $2.7 million has been invested to increase Income Support's additional assistance for shelter rate that provides support on a case-by-case basis for clients with specific needs, such as disability (NL01, p. 12).

Housing and accommodation is not just about physical structures – how these structures are defined in policy is also important. New Brunswick's Disability Action Plan discusses recommendations to address definitions of terms such as "basic needs" (NB02, p. 17). Additionally, new terms such as "universal design" and "barrier-free" are being added to the building code (NB02, p. 47). Interestingly, New Brunswick cites Nova Scotia's building code as a model for this change – suggesting again the value of pan-provincially coordinated approaches to supporting persons with disabilities (NB02, p. 47).

QUESTION: Can advocates for federally coordinated disability support leverage capacity from the existing practice of federal coordination with regards to public housing?

3.4 Education: Spotlight on Nova Scotia

In 2007 the Canadian Council on Learning and the Nova Scotia Department of Education represented by the Post-Secondary Disability Division began a collaborative five-year study on "student success, employment related outcomes and life's experiences of graduating and non-graduating students with disabilities" (NS01, p. 10). Findings from this research are reported in Nova Scotia's LMAPD annual report 2009-2010. In total, 266 surveys were completed out of

population of 608 which provides a margin of error of 4.5% using a 95% confidence interval (NS01, p12). The ultimate purpose of the study was to discover relationships between education and labour force participation. Students who participated self identified as persons with a disability and attended either university or college.

Nova Scotia reports that the number of students self-identifying has risen to 3,124 in 2009/2010 – which represents an increase of 95.3% since 2003/2004 (NS01, p. 9). Additionally, an increase in persons with disabilities attending school translates into a 100% increase in the number of students with disabilities graduating (NS01, p. 9). This is significant because "several studies in Canada and the U.S. in recent years have demonstrated dramatic improvements in employment outcomes for adults with disabilities who have completed a post secondary credential" (NS01, p. 11). Furthermore, "educational attainment is a key determinant of …societal and individual health in Canada" (NS01, p. 10). In Nova Scotia, students with disabilities are assisted by Post-Secondary Disabilities Services which includes the reduction or removal of "educational-related barriers through the provision of grants, goods, and services" (NS01, p. 9). Of the survey respondents, 87% said they would recommend their institution to others which may suggest that efforts to remove educational barriers are effective (NS01, p. 11).

However, bias in findings of this research is caused by a large number of withdrawals from educational programs (NS01, p. 12). Of the survey population, 45% had withdrawn from their programs and withdrawn students did not respond to the survey. So, while employment outcomes for those who completed programs are positive it is also important to identify what factors contributed to high withdrawal rates. Although this was not explicitly explored, of all the factors impacting learning experience participants were asked to rate, evaluators identify the connection between disability and student interaction as most significant with almost 50% agreeing with the statement "my disability affected socializing and studying with other students" (NS01, p. 22). What this survey question and its analysis also reveals is the evaluators' underlying assumption that an individual's disability *negatively* effects socializing. In other words, who knows what students who "strongly agreed" with this statement meant? Until systemic discrimination such as this is addressed, attending post-secondary education will likely continue to be a daunting endeavour for some individuals with disabilities.

3.5 Education – other provinces

All four provincial PRS reviewed for this report are taking steps to make education more accessible to persons with disabilities. Interventions range from Manitoba's commitment of $3 million toward structural accessibility in schools (MA05, p. 8) to funding for developing services for students with learning and physical disabilities in New Brunswick (NB03, p. 11). Nova Scotia acknowledges that "many issues face the education system and the role education plays in the fight against poverty cannot be addressed by one department alone" (NS03, p. 32). As a result, Nova Scotia's Education department is being involved in that province's "learning disabilities strategy" (NS03, p. 32).

Manitoba is also continuing with its Youth Build program which is a more direct approach to linking education with employment. Participants in this program, described as "at risk of becoming a serious challenge to themselves and their communities," are given the opportunity to prepare for jobs in the construction industry, secure apprenticeships and upgrade in order to graduate from high school (MA02/2, p. 5). While all four provinces make connections between completing education, employment and social inclusion, the focus on the outcome of this process rather than the process itself may leave attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities unchallenged.

3.5 Disincentives and dignity

Disincentives are conflicts in bureaucracy that have little to do with individuals seeking social assistance. However, to deflect the responsibility for creating a situation where an individual has more earning power collecting CPPD and associated benefits than working, provinces are using this term. Although all four provinces include a goal of better coordinated services and regulations in their PRS, to date Newfoundland and Labrador has made the most comprehensive strides in this direction:

> In the case of clients who leave Income Support for work, an analysis of the combined impact of income tax rules and the rules that govern eligibility for various benefits led to a series of program changes. A family such as John and Yvonne's… where both adults went to work, now continues to receive benefits that reduce their day-to-day costs on necessities by about $5,350 annually. In 2003 they would not have been eligible for these benefits if they had gone to work. Access to these

benefits, combined with other changes, means that their net income (after costs) from working increased from $22,206 in 2003 to $29,712 in 2009. This means they are now over $7,500 better off (constant 2009 dollars to control for inflation) (NL01, p. 7).

What is implicit in these changes is recognition that making ends meet with low-income work is challenging and stressful. By reducing penalties for earning income through employment, Newfoundland and Labrador has restored some dignity to the lives of those who may already face exceptional daily challenges.

The importance of coordinating services is not just an issue at the provincial level, it is also an issue across Canada. After conducting its own research and hearing from witnesses, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities made the following recommendation:

Recommendation 4.2.1.

Given the lack of consistency in the definitions of disability and eligibility criteria across federal disability programs, the Committee recommends that the federal government ensure that those who qualify for the Canada Pension Plan Disability automatically qualify for the Disability Tax Credit. The Committee further recommends that the federal government initiate discussions with the provincial and territorial governments to bring some consistency and coherence to the definitions of disability used by programs in all jurisdictions (FED01 p. 136).

What these inconsistencies demonstrate, among other things, is the power of social service processes to dehumanize persons with disabilities. This scattered approach to defining eligibility is reminiscent of the paternal notion of "extending" citizenship discussed at the beginning of this report – there is an underlying sense of uncertainty regarding an individual's inherent right to deserve support. This, combined with inconsistent eligibility criteria puts people seeking support on ever-shifting ground that not only adds unnecessary stress but undermines their dignity as well.

4.0 SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Poverty, disability and health

It remains a subject of debate in Canada whether poverty directly impacts health however research shows "the lower a person's income, the worse his or her health" (FED01, p.

38). Additionally, there seems to be a specific positive correlation between poverty and mental health. For example, research indicates that "the prevalence of depression among low-income individuals is 60% higher than the Canadian average" (FED01, p. 40). People with low incomes are also more likely to have multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes (FED01, p. 42). What this draws attention to is the complex interconnections between health, disability and poverty. For persons with disabilities who, as a group are more likely to experience health issues and less likely to work, it could be stated that poverty imposed by assistance income creates a situation of unacceptable risk.

QUESTION: What, if any, are the connecting points in PRS initiatives that persons with disabilities and their allies can use for advocacy?

4.2 Are poverty reduction strategies making a difference now?

It is still too early in the PRS roll-out process with these four provinces to determine if there are positive differences in the lives of persons with disabilities who experience poverty. Although progress reports have been released by Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba and New Brunswick -- and Nova Scotia has a website entitled "Poverty Reduction Actions and Initiatives" – only Newfoundland's report includes empirical data. The other three provinces are reporting on investments, process changes, initiatives and occasionally -- a personal "good news" story – or sometimes participation statistics in a specific program are included. The infancy of provincial PRS is well illustrated by the fact that one of the in-progress items reported by both Manitoba and New Brunswick is the development of indicators for reporting PRS progress. For examples of initiatives and investments being reported by all four provinces, please see Appendix 2 of this report.

In terms of tangible results, one significant achievement reported by Newfoundland and Labrador and Manitoba is the establishment of a provincial disability policy office along with a provincial advisory council having a general mandate to ensure inclusion at the policy development level (NL01, pp. 10-11). Another Newfoundland and Labrador PRS outcome that may be significant for persons with disabilities is the one percent decrease in the number of people experiencing "persistent poverty". Persistent poverty is measured as the number of people whose income is below Low Income Cut Off (LICA). Between 1996 and 2001, three

percent of the population was in this category and that decreased to two percent between 2002 and 2007 (NL01, p. 28). This is significant because it is statistically demonstrated that persons with disabilities are more at risk for "persistent poverty" (FED01, p. 133).

4.3 Will Poverty Reduction Strategies make a difference in the future?

By looking at how provincial PRS are being constructed, it is possible to see that a dramatic reframing of poverty – at the provincial level – is taking place across Canada. Figure 5 outlines the goals of Nova Scotia's PRS and it is also fairly representative of New Brunswick's and Manitoba's PRS. In general, it appears that public policy implementation for housing, education and training, income security and institutionalized care are being collected into a suite of social inclusion and poverty reduction interventions. With regards to actual poverty reduction and increased social inclusion, early results from Newfoundland and Labrador indicate strategies can be effective but the overall sense that PRS are a repackaging of existing services is not encouraging.

Although not discussed at length in this report, this reframing also includes explicit engagement with the third sector and in the case of New Brunswick, the creation of new

Nova Scotia Poverty Reduction Strategy			
1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Enable and reward work	**Improve support for those in need**	**Focus on our children**	**Collaborate and coordinate**
Promote work experience. Remove disincentives to work. Prepare for the future through training and education. Create employment opportunities.	Improve supports and access to necessities. Enable greater participation in society.	Strengthen support for children and families. Break the cycle of poverty.	Increase capacity for coordination and integration. Increase public awareness. Develop avoidance-based policy and programs Strengthen horizontal governance.

Figure 5 Nova Scotia poverty reduction strategy goals (NS03, p 18)

community-based organizations. At this stage it is difficult to determine if this is just a method for offloading responsibility or if it will create opportunities for more voices at the decision-making table and more accessible services – or both. Since the 1990s, the third sector has picked up a great deal of social service work and many non-profit organizations now compete annually for government funding to provide services that used to be provided by the government itself. Although there might be benefits in this, it also seems to result in service providers getting paid less for the same work, more part-time and precarious work and even volunteers being engaged in providing care that was once the domain of professionals. However, even though lower wages and job insecurity will likely impact the quality of service provided for people with disabilities, this shift moves the social service culture away from the sometimes paternal and definitely bureaucratic approach of governments to service providers that may be more grounded and integrated into the community.

With regards to employment, this reframing seems to continue reinforcing the exclusionary practice of providing and associating social support with employment eligibility however, this is accompanied by a (re)emergent emphasis on addressing barriers to employment and education – which could be indicative of positive change. Moreover, education does seem to be receiving a great deal of attention in all four PRS and this may reflect widely accepted research that indicates supporting children and young adults significantly reduces the need for ongoing social service interventions in adulthood. No doubt children and youth with disabilities will benefit from this shift and associated funding.

Another potentially positive outcome of this reframing process may result from the focus on improving cross-department coordination of social services and reviewing tax credit structures – an initiative that is explicitly being funded in at least two of these provinces. Indeed, as demonstrated by Newfoundland and Labrador, governments are realizing that silos of health, education, welfare and employment are the cause of so called "wicked problems" and that the individuals and communities caught in these issues can offer valuable input toward making changes that work. It is perhaps in acknowledgement of this, among other things, that all four provinces are also foregrounding "social inclusion" as a primary and integrated component of the reframing process.

If provincial governments are indeed beginning to redesign their approach to social issues in order to work across silos then this will benefit persons with disabilities who are themselves potentially engaged in an unlimited number of social service silos. Although poverty reduction strategies themselves are limited in how they can address all the needs of persons with disabilities, the shift in social policy framing may create an opportunity into which advocates and allies may step. For, just as lack of income is only one issue faced by people living in poverty so too is poverty only one issue faced by persons with disabilities. That said, if there is positive change it will, in the estimation of this report, have to be driven from the bottom up.

4.4 Opportunities

PRS will make a difference in the future but it is difficult to be optimistic about any real changes in the status quo – especially for persons with disabilities. Yet, it is possible that by offloading responsibilities to the third sector, the government is creating new opportunities for community-based input into policy and implementation. Moreover, if provincial governments release their grip on service provision for persons with disabilities, an opportunity for extracting disability from the provincial poverty policy regime may become apparent. As time passes, efficiency-focused provincial governments will likely support advocates and allies of persons with a disability seeking to reform federal policy for income supports. Ultimately, while persons with disabilities are vulnerable to poverty, and living in poverty is positively correlated with disability, it is not recommended that these two issues to become completely entwined. Disability is a universal issue that deserves federal regulation and its own distinct policy and supports that connect, as needed, to employment, health, education, housing and inclusion.

4.5 Discussion

The following questions emerge at different locations throughout the document and are listed or repeated below for convenience.

- ***Are we still reinforcing silos of impairment and contributing to the creation of hierarchies of who deserves what care?***

- ***What opportunities emerge from the process of offloading social service provision from government to third sector organizations?***

- *What are the implications of social inclusion being explicitly bound with poverty reduction in public policy implementation?*

- *What poverty reduction progress measures are missing when it comes to persons with disabilities?*

- *If the recommendation to create a federal-provincial poverty reduction funding transfer gets taken up, how will that impact efforts to establish federally regulated support for persons with disabilities?*

- *Can advocates for federally coordinated disability support leverage capacity from the existing practice of federal coordination with regards to public housing?*

- *What, if any, are the connecting points in PRS initiatives that persons with disabilities and their allies can use for advocacy?*

Appendix 1 Selected PRS Fundamentals				
Provincial Political Context and PRS Theme	Legislation	Goals + Objectives	Structure + Consultation	Money
Manitoba Greg Selinger New Democratic Party Became Premier in 2009 when Gary Doer resigned. ***All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy***	*Social Inclusion and Anti-Poverty Act* (Bill 201) introduced by Liberal Party in 2010 was not supported by NDP government. In June 2011 *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* was passed. Arts and cultural activity tax credit for child with disability. *Accessibility Advisory Council Act* (Bill 47) June 16, 2011. *One of the most important elements of Bill 47 is its restatement that the responsibility for the prevention and removal of barriers in the general systems of society does not lie with individuals who have disabilities* (MA13).	*To be continuously reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion.* **4 Pillars of the Strategy:** (1) Safe, Affordable Housing in Supportive Communities (2) Education, Jobs and Income Support (3) Strong, Healthy Families (4) Accessible, Co-ordinated Services 285 more mental health housing units with supports.	All Aboard Committee on poverty reduction and social inclusion comprised of members appointed by Lieutenant Governor in Council. To include ministers, member of Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship and 3 additional persons based on recommendations from United Way of Winnipeg. Responsibilities include poverty and social inclusion indicators, and monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Consultation activities are vague. For example: "Over the coming months, a variety of stakeholders will be consulted to ensure this strategy makes sense" (MAN01, p. 8)	When PRS announced Manitoba said: $744 million including $212 million new funding (MA08, p. 1) 2009 Budget: $327 Million into social housing over 2 years (which includes $100 million from Feds) (MA08, p. 1) Some funding for Rebound initiative through Federal "Canada Skills and Transition Strategy" (MA08, p. 3) $30 million "down payment" (including fed contributions) for more accessible housing and enhanced access to public buildings, assistance for children with disability in child care, etc. (MA08, p. 4)

Appendix 1 Selected PRS Fundamentals				
Provincial Political Context and PRS Theme	Legislation	Goals + Objectives	Structure + Consultation	Money
New Brunswick David Alward Progressive Conservative ***Overcoming Poverty Together: the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*** *"Being Becoming Belonging"*	*Economic and Social Inclusion Act* Apr 16 2010 *Residential Tenancies Act* changes 2011 Amendments to *Proceedings Against the Crown Act* and *Public Service Labour Act* -- changing definitions to include "economic and social inclusion" the ability of a person to participate fully in the economic and social activities of society Developing new *Early Learning and Child Care Act* (NB03, p.8)	By 2015 NB will have reduced poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50%. **Change Occurring in 4 Major Areas:** (1) Policies (2) Programs (3) Service Delivery (4) Shared Responsibility	Establishment of Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. Corporation Board is governed by business sector, non-profit, government and a person who has lived in poverty. Economic and Social Inclusion Fund distributes $ to "community inclusion networks" for purposes of implement objectives of the Provincial Plan. 3 Phases of consultations Phase 1 Jan to Apr 2009 included 2,500 people participating in 16 face-to-face facilitated dialogue session. Also surveys. Result: *A Choir of Voices: What Was Said report (NB07).* Phase 2 round table June to Sep 2009 30 participants - developed options - created *Summary of Options.* Phase 3 was forum with 47 NB leaders.	Lack of transparency in how NB presents budget. Most recent budget was focused on deficit reduction. Highlights from 2011 Budget: Economic and Social Inclusion Corp received $1.8 million (no change from 2010). Housing Services reduced from to $92.8 from $98,7 million; $30 million allocated to Northern NB job creation fund (contributions and loans) and $7.1 million to Mirimichi Regional job creation fund. Income security up from $231.5 to $254.7 million. Long term care decreased and Child Welfare increased $130.7 million. Budget speech talks about: (a) Initial funding for *An Action Plan for Mental Health*. (b) Increasing targeted bursaries to help students from low income families. (c) Increasing funding for school supplies for low-income families from $50 to $100 (NS03 p. 25)

Appendix 1 Selected PRS Fundamentals				
Provincial Political Context and PRS Theme	**Legislation**	**Goals + Objectives**	**Structure + Consultation**	**Money**
Newfoundland and Labrador Kathy Dunderdale Became premier in Dec 2010 when Danny Williams retired. Progressive Conservative ***Empowering People Engaging Community Enabling Success***	*Transparency and accountability Act* 2006 *Income Tax Act* amended 2011 to include child tax credit.	Province with lowest poverty levels by 2014. **5 goals:** (1) Improved access to and coordination of services for peole with low income (2) Stronger social safety net (3) Increased emphasis on early childhood development (4) Better educated population	The Poverty Reduction Division works to ensure that people living in poverty are considered in the development of new policies and programs across government. The strategy is overseen by a committee of 12 Ministers, a Deputy Ministers' Committee, and an Interdepartmental Working Group. The Ministers' Committee provides leadership to ensure that comprehensive solutions are funded and implemented. The Division helps departments analyze the impact of their policy and program decisions on individuals and families with low-income and advises on solutions to potential problems. In 2010 completed 2nd round of extensive community consultation.	Budget 2006 committed over $30.5 million for the year to reduce poverty, and $64 million annually thereafter. Budget 2007 promised an additional $28.9 million for the poverty reduction strategy, for a total annual investment of over $91 million. Altogether, over 100 million was invested between 2006 and 2008. In 2009 $132.2 million was invested and $134 million in 2010. This year, 2011, the amount was $140 million. For 2011 Budget highlights: http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2010/highlights/default.htmlights:

Appendix 1 Selected PRS Fundamentals				
Provincial Political Context and PRS Theme	**Legislation**	**Goals + Objectives**	**Structure + Consultation**	**Money**
Nova Scotia Darrell Dexter First New Democratic Party elected in Atlantic Canada *Preventing Poverty. Promoting Prosperity. Nova Scotia's Poverty Reduction Strategy*	2006 Private Members Bill 74 *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act* Bill 94 2007: *An Act to Establish a Poverty Reduction Working Group* passed by House of Assembly April 2010 Changes to *Sales Tax Act* and *Income Tax Act* and *Financial Measures Act*. (Changes include funding the Pension Plan for Jan 1 2011; tax measures to assist low-income Nova Scotians, seniors, small business including "affordable living tax credit" and "poverty reduction tax credit") 2011: *The Protection of Persons in Care Act* expanded to include small options homes, meaning that those residents, their families, and staff have an avenue to report alleged cases of abuse. (NS06) Amendments to *Homes for Special Care Act* to extend licensing to small homes.	By 2020 break the cycle of poverty by creating opportunities for all Nova Scotians to participate in the prosperity of the province and enjoy a better standard of living. **Goals:** (1) Enable and reward work (2) Improve supports for those in need (3) Focus on our children (4) Collaborate and coordinate	New position: Coordinator of Poverty Reduction + ministers from 9 departments (NS03, p. 7) Housed in Community Services | Labour and Workforce Development Poverty Reduction Working Group (PRWG) represented NGOs, business, labour, visible minorities, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, etc. They also saw presentations for different people and organizations. Met between Jan to Jun 2008. (NS04, p. 6-7) PRWG reviewed PRS in "other jurisdictions" including Quebec, NL, Ireland/Scotland (NS04, p. 11) Drew on info from past consultations in province as well.	In 2009 Budget: $155 million for PRS (building on $200 mil in past 3 years) (NS03, p. 2). This includes $81 million from feds for use by Employment NS. And $7 million targeted toward recommendations from Poverty Reduction Working Group. $400,000 dedicated to removing disincentives to work and $59 million to housing in next 3 years (from 2009). **Currently, three partnerships exist with the federal government:** (1) Under the Affordable Housing Program Agreement, $56.2 million was invested across the province with $9 million set aside to be used over a 10-year period to subsidize rents. (2) Under the $23-million Affordable Housing Trust, the provincial government is constructing and preserving housing units. (3) As part of the $7.8-million Aboriginal Off-Reserve Trust, the province is working with Aboriginal off-reserve community to create affordable housing solutions. Community Services also provides more than $10 million annually in funding to emergency shelters, recovery houses, and transition houses.

Table 3 Appendix 1: Selected PRS Fundamentals

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Other strategies launched in tandem with PRS	*All Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy Newsletter* (3 issues) 2010-11. (MA02/1-3) HomeWorks! Investing in communities: A two-year plan. Our increased commitment. Spring 2010.(MA04) Opening Doors: Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities. A Discussion Paper 2009 (MA05)	*Action Plan for Mental Health 2011-18* (NB04). Hope is a Home - New Brunswick's Housing Strategy (NB05)	*Government of Newfoundland and Lbrador Programs and Services for Individuals and Families (An Initiative of the Poverty Reduction Strategy).* (NL04) Developed for the purpose of making government services more accessible and understandable. This is the 2nd edition. Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities: Activity Plan. Fiscal Year 2010/11 (NL03)	In 2011 launched a Mental Health and Addiction Strategy project: Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF), and the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Advisory Committee are working to develop a mental health and addiction strategy to better meet the needs of Nova Scotians. (NS07)
Housing Initiatives	Up to $200/month rent subsidy for 600 low-income Manitobans who have mental-health issues and an unstable housing situation (MA05, p. 12)	Federal/Provincial Repair Program for Disabled Persons – Provides assistance for the modifications of existing homeowner or rental units to improve the accessibility of the dwelling for disabled occupants (NB05, p. 28) Ongoing work with office of the provincial Rentalsman to determine how to track progress after amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act on April 2, 2010. Amendments to ensure roomers and boarders have the same rights as tenants of other rental units. (NB03, p. 6)	Funding for the eight Community Centres in Newfoundland Labrador Housing (NL Housing) neighbourhoods has been increased by $592,000 from Budget 2006 to Budget 2009. The Community Centres provide NL Housing tenants with opportunities to engage in social, educational, recreational, employment, career development, and health and wellness programs. In addition to connecting tenants with existing programs, they develop new ones to meet the needs of their communities. (NL01, p. 7)	2011 -- $825,000 to expanding Independent Living ; $400,000 for supportive housing initiative (homelessness/mental health) (NS06)

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Housing Initiatives Continued	As a stopgap until more affordable housing is available, RendAid will provide $60/month extra assistance to Employment Income Assistance recipients renting in the private market. This program was formally called the Manitoba Shelter Benefit and this amount represents an increase of $120/year. Persons with disabilities are cited as eligible. (MA02/3, p. 2)	Since the launch of the province's homelessness framework, Hope is a Home, provisional funding has been provided to six of the homeless shelters for programming to end chronic homelessness. A total of $225,182 in additional funding has been allocated and work is currently underway to develop a long term funding formula for emergency shelters. (NB03)	The NL Housing's rent-geared-to-income (RGI) formula was changed for social housing tenants with employment earnings. In 2006 rent was reduced by changing the base from gross to net income, and in 2009 it was further reduced by going from a sliding scale of between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of income to a flat 25 per cent of income. (Nl01, p. 12)	2010-2011 Changed co-habitation policy within income assistance to enable families to form stable relationships without losing support. (NS08)

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Removing Disincentives	"Rewarding Work" program: Get Started! One-time payment for people who no longer need income assistance as a result of finding a job. Payments range from $175 for non-disabled single adults and couples with and without children, $250 for single parents and $325 for people with disabilities. Money is intended to help meet unexpected on-the-job expenses. This amount is in addition to funds for employment-related needs such as work clothing and transportation that people on EIA get when they start a new job. (MA02/2, p. 4) EIA participants can apply for the Canada Student Grant for Students from Low-Income Families, offering up to $3,000 per year of study (MA02/3, p. 4)	Advisory Committee on Social Assistant Reform is gaining in-depth knowledge of the current social assistance system, marginal tax rates, interdependencies and worldwide best practices so that it is better able to provide feedback on the proposed changes that are brought forward, in accordance with the Overcoming Poverty Together plan. The Committee will be focusing on jurisdictional review & marginal tax rates at meetings in March and April and in May the committee will commence the evaluations of the redesign options. (NB03, p. 4)	A family such as John and Yvonne's (highlighted in the "Profiles" section on page 33 of this report) where both adults went to work, now continues to receive benefits that reduce their day-to-day costs on necessities by about $5,350 annually. In 2003 they would not have been eligible for these benefits if they had gone to work. Access to these benefits, combined with other changes, means that their net income (after costs) from working increased from $22,206 in 2003 to $29,712 in 2009. This means they are now over $7,500 better off (constant 2009 dollars to control for inflation). (NL01, p. 7) As of March 31, 2009, the expansion of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program is providing coverage to more than 32,000 additional people. This supports people working for lower wages as well as removes a major financial disincentive for Income Support clients to work. (NL01, p. 14)	As of July 2011 Disabled Income Assistance recipients in supportive employment will keep the first $300, double the current rate, plus 30 per cent of the remaining earnings. (NS04) Employment Support and Income Assistance program now exempts Working Income Tax Benefit and federal Registered Disability Savings Plan (NS03 p. 24)

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Income Security	2006 - Northern Allowance for people in designated remote locations amounting to $92.28/year for a single person with a disability. This program is complimented by Northern Healthy Foods Initiative and Northern Energy Cost Benefit (NECB): $25/month to assist with basics in the face of rising energy costs (MA02/3, p. 3)	With the elimination of the Interim Rate, all of the people on the previous interim caseload are now receiving more money each month, and a larger number of people - particularly single employable people - now qualify for social assistance. (NB03, p. 5)	..The Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement is a monthly financial benefit for low-income pregnant women and for families with children under 12 months old. It is intended to help with the cost of nutritious food during and after pregnancy. Through the PRS, the monthly supplement was increased by $15 for a total of $60 a month, along with a one-time payment of $90 during the month of the child's birth. On average, 1,200 families received the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement per month in 2008-09. (NL01, p. 24)	July 1, 2011: $15 per month increase in the Income Assistance personal allowance to help more than 31,000 adults better provide for themselves and their families. (NS04)
Education Initiatives	Rewarding Work in Education is a $314,000 community internship program that will support up to 120 people in culturally appropriate, community-based training to become certified education assistants or child care assistants. The program will help more low-income, newcomer and Aboriginal people get the training they need to work in important jobs in schools and child care centres. (MA02/3, p.5)	In 2011-12, funding for improving access to post-secondary education for families with lower incomes was increased to $1.5 million. Will assists post-secondary education institutions in developing pilot projects such support programs for students with learning and physical disabilities. (NB03, p. 11)	Similarly, a high school incentive allowance was put in place for youth on Income Support who turn 18 while still in school, both those living independently and in a family. Through the Income Support program, this allowance replaces the federal and provincial child benefits that are discontinued when a young person turns 18, thereby reducing pressure to join the labour force without completing high school. (NL01, p. 25)	2011: Invested more than $400,000 through the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning, resulting in 100 new Continuing Care Assistants certified and working. (NS08)

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Training and/or Employment Initiatives	The Westbran Centre Job Club story: For one man on Employment and Income Assistance, a little support was all he needed to make key choices that changed his life. He had been fired from his last two jobs, was depressed and had low self-esteem. He had been jobless for over a year; couldn't present himself successfully to employers, and stumbled during interviews. Using the resources of the job club (established in 2010), he got a full-time job at a personal care home and credits the club with the support he needed to succeed. (MA02/2, p. 6)	April 1, 2011: minimum wage increased to $9.50/hour. (NB03,p. 5)	The Bridging the Gap: From Education to Employment Program, led by the Random North Development Association, is currently being expanded through PRS funding. This program provides skills development, employment readiness, customized training and an opportunity for continued employment. Bridging the Gap helps participants develop practical workplace and personal skills by bringing them together with expanding employers in a facilitated, learner-focused environment. Seven businesses have been selected to train and employ up to 40 local participants this year. (NL01, p. 18)	Minimum wage to increase to $10/hour in 2011-2012. (NS08)

Appendix 2 Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives				
	Manitoba	**New Brunswick**	**Newfoundland and Labrador**	**Nova Scotia**
Other Sample Initiatives	2009: province invested DisAbled Women's Network of Manitoba (DAWN). (MA05, p. 22) The EIA Program has developed a series of plain language brochures for single parents, persons with disabilities, adults without children and two-parent families. The brochures include general information about EIA benefits, including how to apply, the rights and responsibilities of program participants and benefits available to them when they get jobs. (MA02/3, p. 2)	$110 million from feds to CMHC to help homeless with mental health issues. Moncton Research Demonstration Project as of March 7, 2011: 180 participants and 96 have homes (NB05, p. 33 and CHMC website). Nov 10, 2010 launched: "Everybody's Project" to share ideas on how the province's learning culture may improved. The process will lead to a provincial forum held in early 2012. At that time, an action plan will be adopted by citizens from all sectors of New Brunswick. (NB03, p. 10)	As of March 31, 2009, the expansion of the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program is providing coverage to more than 32,000 additional people. This supports people working for lower wages as well as removes a major financial disincentive for Income Support clients to work. (NL01, p. 14)	2010-2011: A service agreement template has been developed and will be rolled out to all service providers. Service Agreements will make sure that what are often informal arrangements are formalized. Having more formal agreements in place means that everyone clearly understands their roles and responsibilities. (NS06) Opened Mental Health Court in 2009. (NS08)

Table 4 Appendix 2: Selected PRS Activities and Initiatives

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