



Poverty Mythbusters

Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, City of New Westminster

Wednesday April 24, 2019

1:00 – 2:00 pm ET

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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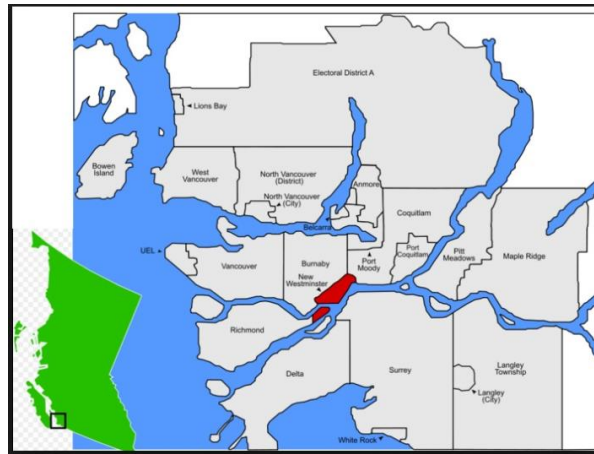
New Westminster's Poverty Mythbusters



Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst
April 2019

Context: About New Westminster

1. City within Metro Vancouver
2. City of ~71,000 people
3. Moderate poverty rates (based on LIM-AT)
4. Big issues: housing and traffic
5. Socially-involved City council historically and today



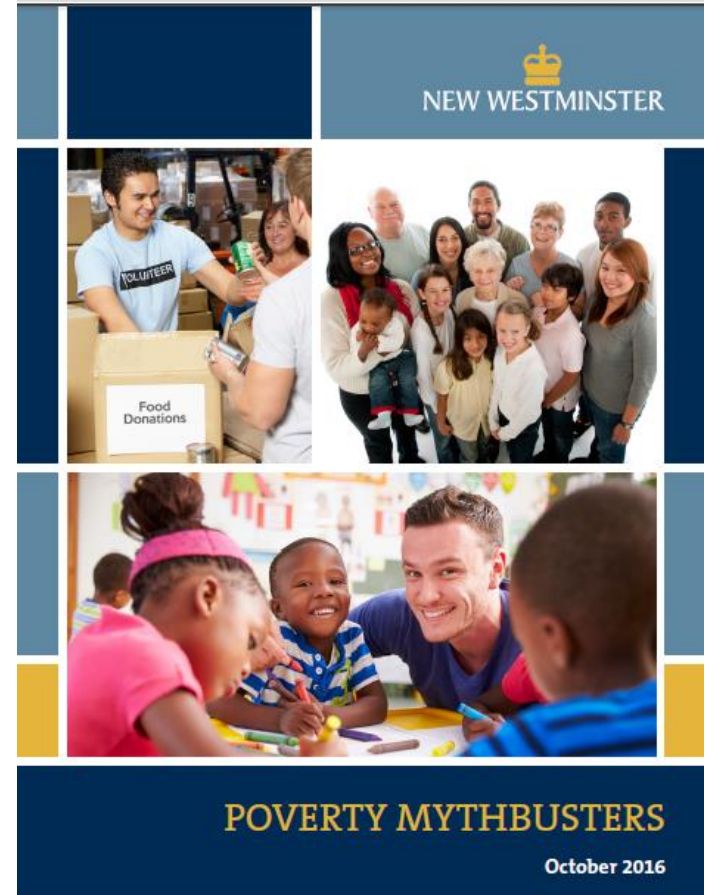
What are the Poverty Mythbusters?

1. Comm Pov Red Initiative

2. Busting myths

3. Short and punchy

4. Commonly held myths



Why did we do the Mythbusters?

1. To bring attention to the issue of poverty.
2. Stigma is a big issue for people living in poverty
3. Make people think about what they say



The process

1. Coming up with the idea: early 2015
2. Research
3. Consultation (limited)
4. Finally, document completed in Fall 2016.
5. Promotion



Research – looking for what?

1. Commonly held poverty stereotypes
2. Important issues
3. Examples of how to refute stereotypes
4. Which facts to use?



Research – looking where?

1. Music videos and TV shows
2. Media articles and on-line comment section
3. Videos and reports by persons with lived experience
4. Our own focus groups and survey
5. Other mythbusters
6. Canada (mostly)



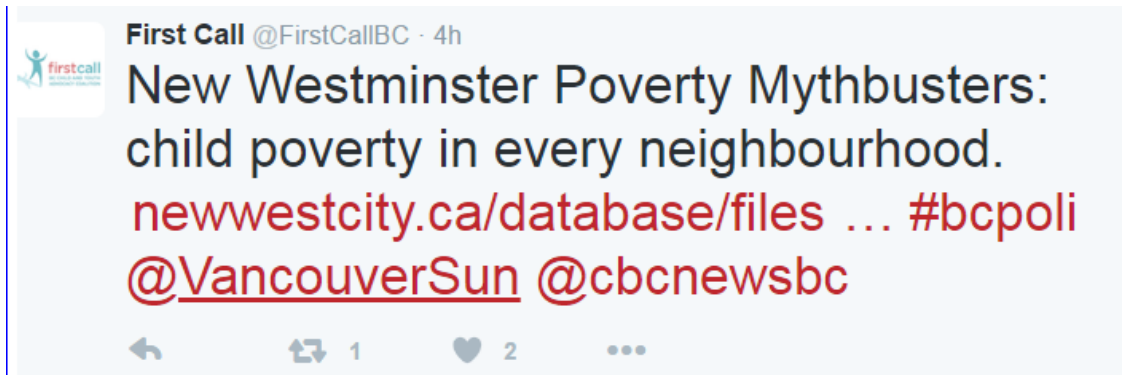
Consultation

1. Community Social Issues Committee
2. Community Poverty Reduction Initiative



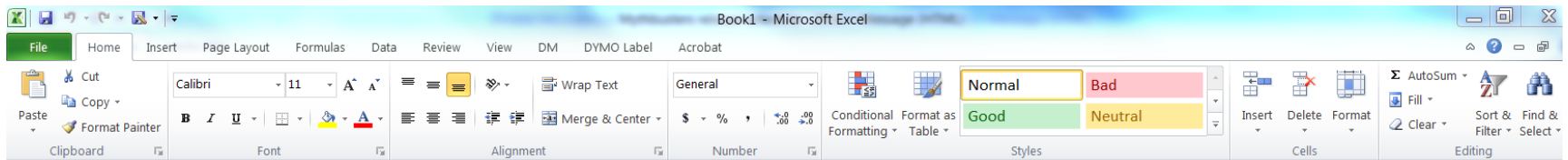
Promotion

1. Newspaper ad – new myth every week
2. City-page online
3. Poverty reduction website
4. Social media
5. Timing



Stats

1. Census
2. Taxfiler data
3. Government studies
4. Use local, most recent data if possible
5. Community data program
6. Excel is your friend.



The Myths

1. Myth at the top

Myth: If you work hard, you won't be poor.

2. Reality

Reality:

Working full-time hours for a whole year is not a guarantee against poverty. In 2010, there were 745 New Westminster residents who worked full-time (30+ hours/week), full-year (49+ weeks of the year) and were still poor.¹

3. Did you know?

Did you know?

In 2010, the median before-tax employment income among New Westminster's low-income full-time, full-year workers was \$12,220.²

4. e.g., if you work hard, you won't be poor

The Myths

Myth	Stats used to refute
If you work hard you won't be poor	# of poor full-time, full-year workers; median before-tax income among poor workers
Poor people are lazy and don't want to work	% of core working age low-income residents in the labour force, % of low-income labour force that is unemployed
All jobs pay enough to keep people out of poverty	# of occupations with median full-time, full-year before-tax employment incomes below \$30,000/year, # of people working in these occupations, examples of what people in these occupations do.
There is no child poverty in my neighbourhood/area, there is only child poverty in poor neighbourhoods/areas	# of census tracts with at least 10% child poverty, # of census tracts with at least 100 poor children

The Myths

Myth	Stats used to refute
Child poverty only occurs in single parent families	# of children and youth (0-17 years old) in poor two parent families, % of poor children and youth in two parent families, child poverty rates for children in single parent and couple families
Poor people are the cause of their own poverty, it's their fault	Example stories of how people may fall into poverty, # and % of low-income residents with a disability
Poor people are uneducated, they should just go to school and gain some skills	% of poor residents with a post-secondary education, # of students using the food bank, % of recent immigrant men and women with university degrees working in low-end jobs.
There is nothing that I can do about poverty in our community	Provide examples of volunteer, charity, listening actions to help prevent, alleviate, and reduce poverty. Child poverty rates in other countries, # of certified living wage employers

The myths we didn't get to dispel in our document

1. Visible Minority/Aboriginal/Immigrant stereotypes
2. Substance use
3. Criminality
4. Homelessness

Maple Ridge mayor says addicts 'raping and pillaging' community



Mayor makes explosive comments about homeless



A controversial message from a Metro Vancouver mayor was sparked by a bitter battle over housing the homeless in Maple Ridge.

Mayor says addicts 'raping and pillaging' city



Maple Ridge Mayor Mike Morden is under fire for saying drug users are "raping and pillaging" the community.

What we did well

1. Research

2. Stats

3. Initial promotion



What we could have done better

1. Continued promotion
2. Better “lived experience” consultation
3. Maybe more interactive



Next steps – awareness of poverty

1. Sub-committee on public awareness and education
2. Poverty simulation
3. Exhibit/art on poverty

This is the poverty line.

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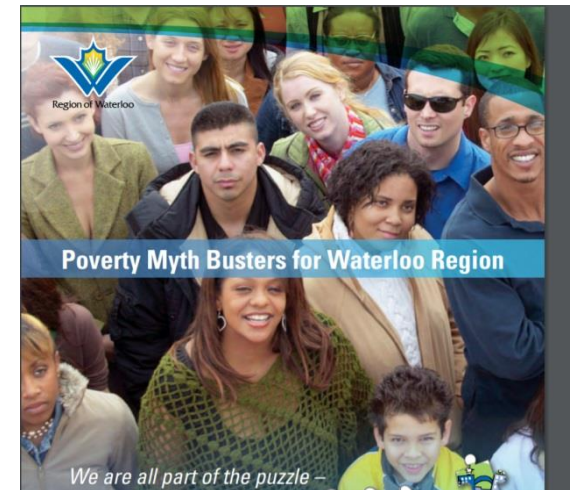


Recommendations – if you want to do mythbusters

1. Involve persons with lived experience
2. Use local, recent data whenever possible
3. Context counts
4. Promotion strategy

Other examples of mythbusters

1. Region of Waterloo – Poverty Mythbusters
2. Salvation Army – the Dignity Project
3. World Vision – U.S. Poverty Myths
4. Save the Children UK - Challenging 12 Myths and Stereotypes about Low Income Families and Social Security Spending



Thank you! Any questions?



Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst
April 2019

Upcoming Online Events

Webinar:

Financial Empowerment Ecosystem Model | Guest: Marlene Chiarotto | May 23 1-2 pm ET

Marlene Chiarotto, Director of Program Delivery and Integration with Prosper Canada, will discuss the Financial Empowerment ecosystem model, how it is being used to boost poverty reduction efforts within cities and communities and help you think through the possibilities for your own community.

Convenor Calls:

East – Thursday May 9, 12-1 pm ET (1 pm AT)

West – Thursday May 9, 12-1 pm PT (1 pm MT, 2 pm CT)

Resource

TEN: A Guide for Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience

Informed by the 10 Lived/Living Experience Advisory Committee, this guide was written to support poverty-reduction groups to meaningfully engage people with lived/living experience. It celebrates the potential that can be unlocked when these individuals are included and empowered to drive antipoverty work.

<http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/ten-2019>



CITIZENS AT THE CENTRE

A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THOUGHT-LEADER SERIES

Halifax, NS | May 1, 2019
Ottawa, ON | May 2, 2019
Toronto, ON | May 3, 2019
Calgary, AB | May 6, 2019
Vancouver, BC | May 7, 2019

Max Hardy, a leading voice on the use of deliberative democracy in community change work, will be joining us all the way from Australia to share his insights and experience to help you develop your Community Engagement toolkit while taking a people-first approach.

Registration and Event Info:
<https://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/citizens-at-the-centre-community-engagement>



ABCD: HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOODS, HEALTHY CITIES

May 28-30, 2019
Edmonton, AB

This workshop will gather together over 250 community and neighbourhood development practitioners to explore the use of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and explore leading neighbourhood revitalizing techniques.

Registration and Event Info:

<https://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/abcd>

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Toronto, showing a river, a suspension bridge, and a large Gothic cathedral with a prominent spire. The city buildings and greenery are visible in the background.

Thank you!

Please send questions, comments, and feedback
about this webinar to:

alison@tamarackcommunity.ca