



Bridging the Gap:  
A Poverty Reduction Plan for  
Charlotte County  
April 2012 – March 2015  
- Directional Plan -



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## Background

In 2006, Fundy Community Foundation (FCF) hosted a community dialogue on poverty in Charlotte County, involving over 75 community members. As a result, the Moving Forward Together (MFT) committee was formed with representatives of non-profit organizations, businesses, churches, and community members, including those with experience of living in poverty, to consider ways of addressing the challenges/gaps that were identified.

The MFT committee organized a survey of low-income individuals, asking them to comment on their greatest challenges in moving out of poverty, what would help the most in doing so and what actions they would like to be able to take. Over thirty responses provided a rich source of information on the perspectives of the target group and the lived experience of poverty in the region.

In 2009, the MFT committee came together to identify and record the many accomplishments related to poverty reduction in the region since 2006 and to identify priority areas to work on. Housing, and Food Security emerged as priorities and a working group was formed for each. These working groups continued to network and partner to develop solutions to specific challenges, but limited resources constrained the progress that they were able to make.

In 2010, Government of New Brunswick (GNB) published *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*, and the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) was established to lead and co-ordinate the implementation of that plan. The vision and objectives laid out in the provincial plan are as follows:

***Vision: Through the collaboration of governments, business and non profit sectors, people living in poverty and individual citizens, all men, women and children in New Brunswick shall have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs and to live with dignity, security and good health. Furthermore all New Brunswickers shall be included as full citizens through opportunities for employment, personal development and community engagement.***

***Objectives: By 2015, New Brunswick will have reduced income poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50% and will have made significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion.***

In 2011, ESIC established and provided coordination funding for 12 regional Community Inclusion Networks (CIN) across the province to provide an inclusive forum to co-ordinate poverty reduction efforts at the local level, and to support the vision and goals of the provincial plan.

Each CIN is required to have representation from all four sectors – community (including those with experience of living in poverty), non-profit organizations, businesses, and government, and is charged with developing a regional plan for poverty reduction.

FCF was chosen as the host organization for region 8 - Charlotte County, the Charlotte County Community Inclusion Network (CCCIN) was formed and a Coordinator engaged late September, 2011. For Charlotte County, the target date for the directional plan is Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and the detailed plan, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

## Charlotte County Profile

Charlotte County is a rural area in South West NB. It is made up of a number of mainland communities - Saint Stephen, Saint George, Saint Andrews, Blacks Harbour and Beaver Harbour, and three island communities – Deer Island, Grand Manan and Campobello. It is characterized by its coastal nature and relies largely on fishing, aquaculture, tourism and manufacturing for industry.

Statistics Canada 2006 Census data for Charlotte County and sub-regions was considered in the planning process. A few highlights that are important considerations for the work of CCCIN are detailed below:

	Charlotte County	New Brunswick
Total Population:	26,898	729,997
% population 0-14	17.0	16.2
% population 15 – 24	11.6	12.7
% population 25-54	42.4	43.4
% population 55+	29.0	27.7
% Lone parent families	15.3	16.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	14.4	10.0
Participation Rate (%)	61.8	63.7
Persons 15 years and over with income	20,905	573,785
% low-income after tax – total persons	9.4	9.3
% low-income after tax – persons less than 18 years of age	14.0	11.6
% government transfers as % of total income	19.6	16.5
Total population 15 years and over	22,025	601,420

% less than high school certificate	29.6	29.4
% university certificate diploma or degree	12.1	16.2
Total private dwellings occupied by		
usual residents	11,160	295,960
% rented dwellings	16.7	24.1
% dwellings requiring major repair	12.9	9.7

## The Process

Charlotte County Community Inclusion Network (CCCIN) hosted 7 community consultations from October to December 2011 across the region, involving over 75 participants. Meetings were held at different locations on the mainland, Deer Island and Grand Manan, and a meeting with community members from Campobello was held by telephone conference. The objectives of the consultations were as follows:

- To identify community assets and strengths in relation to poverty reduction
- To identify opportunities to build on those assets to help reduce poverty in the region
- To identify priorities in relation to poverty reduction in the region.

Information from all the community consultations was consolidated to form a primary reference base for the development of this directional plan.

Additionally, the following sources of information were used as reference in the development of this plan:

- Charlotte County Community Profile, 2006 Census Data, Statistics Canada
- Earlier work undertaken by FCF and the Moving Forward Together group
- Charlotte County Poverty Survey, 2007, FCF
- *A Choir of Voices: A Dialogue on Poverty*, 2010, GNB
- *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*, 2010, GNB
- *Integrated Community Growth Strategy*, 2007, Enterprise Charlotte

The draft directional plan framework was presented to and approved by the FCF Community Inclusion Committee prior to submission.

Bridging the Gap: A Poverty Reduction Plan for Charlotte County (Directional) has been developed to provide a roadmap for local poverty reduction efforts over the next three years, in support of the Overcoming Poverty Together provincial plan.

## Directional Plan

### Introduction

*Bridging the Gap: A Poverty Reduction Plan for Charlotte County* demonstrates a commitment to focus on the people within our community. The needs of low-income community members will drive the plan and all actions relating to the plan. To this end opportunities are outlined within the context of three people groupings – ***our children, our youth and our adults***. For the purposes of this plan, the following age ranges will be utilized to further define these groupings: children – age 0-12; youth – age 13-24; adults – age 25+.

This target group segmentation will not be approached in silos however, and opportunities that run across these groupings, such as those applicable to families, may feature in more than one grouping. This approach also recognizes that although some solutions may be the same across age groups, others may be radically different.

Opportunities to build on current community assets to meet the needs of the target group/s were identified, and the following priority themes emerged (in no particular order):

- a) Employment***
- b) Learning***
- c) Housing***
- d) Transportation.***

A number of key principles are seen to be integral to the plan and the work of CCCIN:

- Four-sector participation - the network will ensure four-sector participation in both planning and execution
- Service Delivery – the mandate of the network does not include direct service delivery. The objectives of the network will be achieved through fostering partnerships and encouraging collaboration
- Informed practice – the network will ensure that decisions are informed by current, relevant data and that community members living in poverty have a voice in both planning and execution
- Basic Needs – wherever possible the network will support communities and service providers in provision of basic needs
- Inclusion – the network will strive to raise awareness of and promote inclusion, modeling good practice in the work of the network.

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

C. Our Adults	
<div>Employment</div> <div>Learning</div> <div>Housing</div> <div>Transportation</div>	<div> <p><b>Research and explore opportunities to work in partnership to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Support regional efforts for job creation</li> <li>2) Engage NBCC, Enterprise Charlotte and other relevant organizations to identify future labour force/training needs of region</li> <li>3) Identify measures to overcome barriers to employment and further education and training</li> <li>4) Develop social enterprise opportunities</li> <li>5) Enable access to self-employment through micro-lending and/or community investment funds</li> <li>6) Increase adult literacy and essential skills development opportunities</li> <li>7) Increase work-related training options for adults linked to current and future labour force needs of the region</li> <li>8) Develop community learning opportunities; promote universal education</li> <li>9) Increase access to financial literacy training for adults</li> <li>10) Increase awareness of health and wellness* and encourage healthier choices</li> <li>11) Develop multi-dimensional community gardens as part of health and wellness awareness/education</li> <li>12) Provide parenting skills education and mentoring</li> <li>13) Explore opportunities to increase access to safe, affordable, mixed income housing for groups in needs</li> <li>14) Enable access to government funding for home updates</li> <li>15) Undertake review of Charlotte Dial A Ride; identify opportunities for further development</li> <li>16) Explore options for increasing access to transportation in the region, for specific target groups; initial priorities - medical appointments, travel to work</li> <li>17) Investigate more cost-effective ways of transportation for community service groups</li> </ol> </div>

## Notes:

- Not all high-level actions will evolve to the point that they are included in the detailed action plan – please see "Next Steps".
- Acknowledging the toll that living in poverty takes on individuals, both physically and mentally, health and wellness within this plan focuses on prevention and encompasses a broad range of topics.



The high-level actions within this Charlotte County plan are consistent with and supportive of actions identified in the provincial plan, as demonstrated in Appendix A.

## **Next Steps**

### **Detailed Action Plan**

This directional plan represents the platform for the next phase of planning. Further community and stakeholder consultations will inform the development of a detailed action plan by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. The detailed plan will include firm action items with defined leads, partners and anticipated timelines. Within this phase, further work will be undertaken to understand the value proposition of each high-level action identified and to determine those actions that are going to bring the greatest value and make the greatest contribution to breaking the cycle of poverty. CCCIN will focus on achieving a balance of short term actions and longer term actions.

In addition to the above areas of action, CCCIN recognizes that the network has a key role to play in a number of other areas:

- a) raising awareness of poverty issues in the region
- b) fostering collaboration, networking and sharing amongst stakeholders
- c) developing the recruitment, recognition and support of Charlotte County volunteers.

To a large extent these roles will be fulfilled implicitly through the work of the CIN but the network will be pro-active in identifying opportunities to fulfill these roles more explicitly.

Additionally, CCCIN recognizes the importance of defining, measuring and reporting on progress and success. The detailed plan will include performance measures for each action item and key performance indicators for the overall plan.

### **Official Languages**

Region 8 is predominantly Anglophone and the accepted working language for the region is English. All communication to date has been undertaken through commonly accepted media and arrangements have been made to ensure that French-speaking network members are available for meetings. However, CCCIN recognizes its responsibility to meet the needs of both official languages in our region and the FCF Community Inclusion Committee will develop further recommendations for action to support that need, and these will be outlined in the detail action plan.

### **Governance**

And finally, by end March 2012, the FCF CI Committee will develop recommendations regarding the status, organization and name of the network going forward.

## Appendix A: Cross-reference between provincial plan and Charlotte County plan

<b>Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan</b>	<b>Bridging the Gap: A Poverty Reduction Plan for Charlotte County</b>
<b>Opportunities for Being</b> (f) Provide funding for community transportation alternatives such as Dial A Ride	Actions A7, B7, C14 - 16
<b>Opportunities for Becoming</b> a) Invest in the early learning and childcare sector to ensure that a minimum of 20% of infants and 50% of two to five year olds in the province may access a registered early learning space  b) Provide literacy mentor to every student in grades one and two who is struggling to read  e) Advance the community as school concept with particular focus on literacy and numeracy, life skills, experiential learning, trades and cooperative education, and extra-curricula activities	Action A1     Action A2   Actions A3-6, B2-4, B6, C7-11
<b>Opportunities for Belonging</b> a) Develop comprehensive housing strategy that enables mixed income neighbourhoods, affordability, supported housing options and housing co-ops  b) Explore the concept of social enterprise and community investment funds  c) Strengthen the ability of low-income people to enter the skilled workforce through the provision of training, education and volunteer opportunities as part of their transition to work  d) Reduce barriers to continuing education, making it more accessible and affordable  e) Develop a strong public awareness campaign which is critical to the success of the poverty reduction strategy	Action C12, C13   Actions C3, C4  Actions B1, C5, C6   Actions B5, C2  CCCIN Communication Strategy