Community Action Plan on Poverty

Victoria, Canada

Rupert Downing

Organization type: nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Project Stage: Growth
Budget: $50,000 - $100,000
Website: http://www.communitycouncil.ca/

Citizen participation
Community development
Conscious consumerism
Poverty alleviation
Sustainable development
Vulnerable populations
Public policy

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

We have developed a “Community Action Plan on Poverty” that identifies 10 key areas of work that are bringing all of us together to end poverty in the region.

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

We are all affected by poverty in different ways, and we believe Canada can and should do better in living up to its international human rights and its commitments to Canadians to ensure everyone is able to achieve sustainable livelihoods. We believe Canada has the national conditions and the means to eliminate poverty. Our capital region has the resources to help ensure people and communities have access to sustainable livelihoods. Too many residents live in poverty and face complex challenges while trying to create sustainable futures. Therefore, we believe that all residents, communities, businesses and organizations in the capital region need to join together to take strategic action on poverty.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

As citizens, we want to coordinate actions that foster a sense of community and collective purpose, with justice, respect and dignity for all. Building on an extensive community consultation process, we have developed a Community Action Plan on Poverty that identifies 10 key areas of work that support people living sustainable healthy lives. They are: Access to meaningful work, Child and Youth Care, Strong local economy, Access to Justice, Education and training, Food Security, Health Care, Affordable Housing, Sustainable Transportation, and Livable Income. The solution emerges, when as many organizations and individuals as possible endorse this action plan and work in a coordinated way to address poverty, using local resources, local ideas and local action.

Impact: How does it Work
Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

We are inviting all residents and organizations in the Region, from across sectors, to join us in endorsing the Community Action Plan and build ways for coordinating and promoting sustainable livelihoods for all. We believe that a strategy to take action on poverty can create sustainable livelihoods for all of our residents. To achieve this we will: • Secure commitment to implement prioritized actions this year and each subsequent year to achieve objectives of the plan • Engage residents and stakeholders to endorse and participate in implementing the plan • Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy • Periodically evaluate progress and review action on the plan

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

There are no competitors in this initiative, as we all become peers in addressing poverty in the region. Our initial core group is formed by the following 14 organizations: Aboriginal Health Department-VIHA, Chapter of BC Deacons Christ Church Cathedral, Community Micro-lending, Disability Resource Centre, Faith in Action, James Bay New Horizons, Victoria READ Society, SocialCoast, Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS), Victoria Downtown Public Market Society, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG), Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), and Women in Need Cooperative (WIN). Some of these organizations have been addressing poverty apart from each other. The Community Action Plan on Poverty brings us all together.

Team

Founding Story

A public forum on sustainability held by the Council in April 2011 resulted on the spontaneous formation of a steering group know as the “Doing it Better Together group”. This group mandated the Council to lead the design of a new and integrated strategy to address poverty at the local level, building on collective and innovative approaches. An Action Learning Forum was also held by the Council in October 2011 to learn from one another and from another community with experience in place based poverty reduction strategies (Winnipeg). This forum was followed by a broad community consultation that came to validate the strategy in the form of the document “Community Action Plan on Poverty”, which leads the program’s direction.

About You

Organization:
Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria

About You

First Name
Rupert

Last Name
Downing

Twitter URL
https://twitter.com/cspc_victoria

Facebook URL
https://www.facebook.com/CommunitySocialPlanningCouncilVictoria

About Your Organization

Organization Name
Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria

Organization Country
BC, Victoria

Country where this solution is creating social impact
BC, Victoria

Region in BC where your solution creates social impact
Vancouver Island.

How long has your organization been operating?
More than 5 years

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen.
Innovation

How long have you been in operation?
Operating for less than a year

Which of the following best describes the barrier(s) your solution addresses? Choose up to two
Access, Equity.

Social Impact

Please describe the goal of your initiative; outline what you are trying to achieve

The main goal of this initiative within one year is to generate broad support and endorsement of the "Community Action Plan on Poverty", that is based on local resources and involves different sectors of stakeholders in the coordinated implementation of specific actions in 10 key areas of work. In the mid term, enough evidence will be accumulated to initiate changes in local government and funding bodies' policies, that enable a more strategic approach to address poverty. The long term goal of this idea is to facilitate the necessary shift in culture, in society, and in policy-making, resulting in concrete actions that address poverty by eliminating inequality first at the regional level, disseminating the best practices later for a broader impact at the provincial and national levels.

What has been the impact of your solution to date?

After one year of development, we have already completed the Community Action Plan (CAP) on Poverty (www.caponpoverty.ca), and we have initiated the endorsement process. So far there are 21 local organizations on the list, one national (Canada Without Poverty) and one from another province (Action to end Poverty in Alberta). Pledges for concrete actions are being documented and so far there are 5 concrete pledges in the key area of Food Security; 3 in Affordable Housing; 2 in Access to Justice; and one in Livable Income, Sustainable Transportation and Strong Local Economy respectively.

What is your projected impact over the next five years?

As described in the initiative's goal, the impact of this project in the next five years is that policies and procedures that regulate activities relevant to the 10 key areas of work on the CAP on Poverty will begin to change. We anticipate changes to start in local government and funding bodies' policies, that enable a more strategic approach to address poverty at the local level. A second impact within five years will be a better coordination of community organizations and local governments. There are over 200 social service organizations and 13 municipalities in the Capital Region. A strategy to make social and economic services and activities more efficient will start to emerge within five years of implementing this project.

What barriers might hinder the success of your project? How do you plan to overcome them?

The key barriers we may face relate to the political environment, which currently appears to address poverty mostly as an individual issue, and not as a social, complex and systemic issue. Another barrier is limited resources and funding, however, we are actively pursuing a strategy to diversify our funding base for all of our work. A third barrier relates to the wide dispersion and limited capacity of social and community service organizations, as they are very numerous (over 200 in the capital region) and we are currently promoting better collaboration and cooperation among them all.

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Tell us about your partnerships

There are 14 organizations in the steering group committed to this partnership. They play a crucial role ensuring the strategies on the CAP on Poverty are successful. They are:
Aboriginal Health Department-VIHA
Are you currently targeting other specific populations, locations, or markets for your solution? If so, where and why?

Because poverty affects us all, we are targeting a wide range of populations, starting with the private sector. This is done directly by approaching small businesses in the downtown area, and through business associations such as the West Shore Chamber of Commerce, which has already endorse our project, and other business associations and service clubs such as the Rotaries.

We are also asking the 13 municipalities in the Capital region to adopt resolutions supporting this project. Faith and Religious organizations are also involved, and a campaign targeting schools will begin next year.

What type of operating environment and internal organizational factors make your innovation successful?

The Community Council is a leader in social innovation in the Capital Region with 75 years experience. It is also a key member of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, and the Cities Reducing Poverty Network nationally. The council is a dynamic incubator of socio-economic innovation in the region and leads the development of social entrepreneurship in Greater Victoria. The combination of staff expertise and volunteer-stakeholder engagement produces a flexible, inclusive and dynamic platform for social innovation.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren’t specified within the list.

In addition to social and community research, we have a strong capacity in the planning and evaluation of social and community initiatives.

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/BCideas/entries/community-action-plan-poverty