

Ensemble pour vaincre
la pauvreté
Overcoming Poverty **Together**

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)

2010-2011 Annual Report



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The Honourable Dale Graham
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick
Legislative Assembly Building

P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B.
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Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to subsection 28(1) of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, we are pleased to submit the annual report of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation for April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Léo-Paul Pinet , Co-chair
Gerry Pond, Co-chair
Monique Richard, Co-chair
Minister Sue Stultz , Co-chair
Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to announce that the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion (ESIC) Executive Director is technically in operation for eight months in 2010-2011, the commitment of the numerous volunteers and the staff has been instrumental in reaching the inaugural year's goals for the *Overcoming Poverty Together Plan*.

The fall of 2008 was the start for the process of public dialogues that led to the provincial plan *Overcoming Poverty Together* (OPT), which was finalized in November 2009. The *Overcoming Poverty Together* Plan is a five year plan composed of 22 action items. The plan is the work of thousands of individuals from the four sectors: citizens who live or have experienced poverty, business, non-profit community groups and government. The dialogue that created the plan was one of the most important public engagement plans in recent New Brunswick history. More than 2500 people participated in 16 sessions held in the four corners of the province. This unique model offered the participants in the four sectors of society the opportunity to unite their ideas and their voices to create a provincial strategy for poverty reduction.

As part of the plan to reduce poverty, ESIC was created to coordinate and provide support for the deployment of the plan. ESIC is comprised of a 22 member Board of Directors, representing of the four sectors, with the following mandate:

1. To lead the implementation and evaluation of the plan and the development and adoption of a new plan in 2015.
2. To coordinate and support the Community Inclusion Networks (CINs).
3. To establish and manage the Economic and Social Inclusion Fund.
4. To manage the activities and produce the required reports.

A five member team has been put in place with the responsibility of coordinating the work of ESIC, ensuring the progress of the objectives of the plan, supporting the CINs, supporting the advisory committees and promoting the plan at the provincial level.

Highlights from the inaugural year of ESIC include:

- The proclamation of the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* in April 2010.
- The creation of a Board of Directors, who met three times, June and November 2010 and January 2011.
- The launch of a call of interest in November 2010 for the establishment of the Community Inclusion Networks. In January 2011, eight CINs were approved by the Board of Directors.
- The establishment of the three advisory committees which met in January 2011 and two other times in the fiscal year. The three committees are the Advisory Committees for Social Assistance Reform, Health Benefits and Social Enterprise & Community Investment Funds.
- A tender was issued to select a company that would assess the performance indicators which will measure the progress of the actions in the plan.
- Provincial wide promotion of the plan.

Key action items for the next fiscal year include:

- The acceptance of the remaining four CINs.
- Progress of the advisory committees and the creation of new working committees to support the activities of ESIC.
- The launch of funding programs that will support certain regional programs which will be developed by the 12 CINs.
- A working partnership with the 12 CINs in the development of their regional poverty reduction plans.
- Provincial promotion of the Plan.
- Strengthening and supporting the work of the four sectors in the fight to reduce poverty.

Through the province's poverty reduction plan a lot of good work has been accomplished so far and much work remains to be done to help people to overcome poverty.

ESIC, in partnership with government, business, community non-profit organizations, and people who have experienced poverty, looks forward to continuing to deliver on the commitments in the province's poverty reduction plan.

Stéphane Leclair
Executive Director

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)

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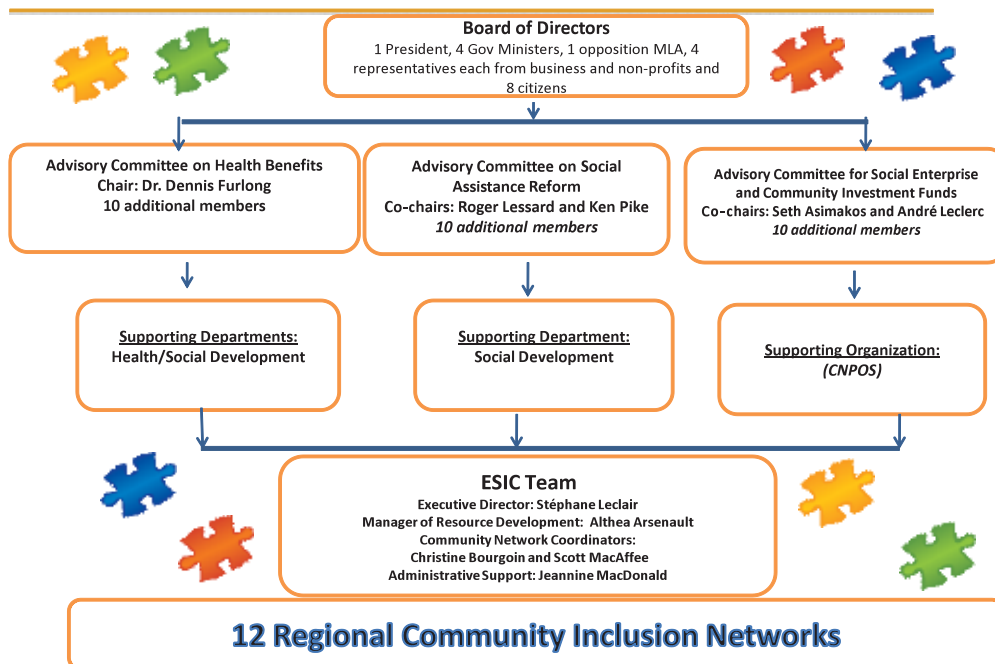
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ESIC Team

Stéphane Leclair, Executive Director
Althea Arsenault, Manager of Resource Development
Christine Bourgoïn, Coordinator
Scott MacAfee, Coordinator
Jeannine MacDonald, Administrative Assistant

N.B. Economic & Social Inclusion Corporation



Mandate

The prevention and reduction of poverty in New Brunswick is a very complex issue. There are various layers to the cause and effects, and not one solution alone is universal in preventing or eradicating poverty. No matter how poverty is defined, it can be agreed that it is an issue that requires everyone's attention. It is important that all members of our society work together to provide opportunities for all New Brunswickers to reach their full potential.

Following extensive consultations that involved New Brunswickers from all walks of life, the province's first poverty reduction plan *Overcoming Poverty Together* was developed. The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation was established to implement and manage this unique approach to addressing the issue of poverty in New Brunswick.

The mandate of ESIC is:

1. To lead the implementation and evaluation of the *Overcoming Poverty Together* (OPT) Provincial Plan and the development and adoption of other Economic and Social Inclusion Plans.
2. To coordinate and support community inclusion networks in the development of their local plans and in the implementation of the objectives of the Provincial Plan set out in their local plans.
3. To manage the Economic and Social Inclusion Fund established.
4. To carry out the other activities or duties authorized or required by this Act or the regulations or directed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has met three times in 2010-2011; June 30, 2010, November 3, 2010 and January 19, 2011.

ESIC Board of Directors

Co-Chairs

Hon. Sue Stultz (Provincial government)

Léo Paul Pinet (Non-Profit sector)

Gerry Pond (Business sector)

Monique Richard (Citizen living in or has experienced poverty)

President

James Hughes, Social Development

Business sector:

Anne Hébert, Chief Executive Officer, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick Inc.

Jean-Claude Savoie, Chief Executive Officer, Groupe Savoie Inc., Saint-Quentin

Derek Oland, Executive Chairman, Moosehead Breweries Ltd., Saint John

Non-profit sector:

Steven Hicks, John Howard Society, Fredericton

Roger Lessard, Director General, Youth Priority Centre Inc., Pokemouche

Brenda Murphy, Co-coordinator, Urban Core Support Network Saint John Inc., Grand Bay-Westfield

Provincial government:

Hon. Madeleine Dubé, Minister of Health

Hon. Jody Carr, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Hon. Martine Coulombe, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

Opposition:

Bernard LeBlanc, MLA, Memramcook-Lakeville-Dieppe

Citizens living in or who have experienced poverty:

Juanita Black, Saint John

Dr. Pam Coates, Saint John

Ginette Arsenault, Fredericton

Liette Holmes, Haut-Rivière-du-Portage

Jacques-François Levesque, Grand Falls

Jennifer Melanson, Upper Coverdale

Rachel Kelly, Val-Doucet

ESIC Advisory Committees

There are three committees that have been formed to focus on specific areas of the Overcoming Poverty Together plan, health benefits, social assistance reform and social enterprise and community investment. Each committee is comprised of representatives from the four sectors including individuals from the ESIC Board of Directors.

Advisory Committee for Health Benefits

The mandate of the Advisory Committee for Health Benefits is to:

- Develop a vision and dental plan for all low-income New Brunswick children.
- Develop a mechanism to provide a prescription drug plan to all uninsured New Brunswick citizens.

Members:

Dr. Dennis Furlong, Dalhousie, Chair

Derek Oland, Saint John

Anne Hébert, Bouctouche

Juanita Black, Saint John

Jacques-François Levesque, Grand Falls

Ron Gathercole, Moncton

Rosella Melanson, Fredericton

Jean-Roch Cayouette, Saint-Quentin

Mary Anne Leblanc, Saint John

Barry Cohen Thorley, Grand-Bay Westfield

Mike Blanchard, Bath

Social Assistance Reform

The mandate of the Advisory Committee on Social Assistance Reform is to provide advice and feedback to the Department of Social Development's internal Steering Committee on Social Assistance Reform as it redesigns the social assistance program for New Brunswick in accordance with *Overcoming Poverty Together*. This advice and feedback will be in response to presentations and documentation prepared and presented by the Steering Committee on Social Assistance Reform at critical junctions in the program design, as well as in relation to implementation issues in rolling out the initiative.

Members:

Roger Lessard, Pokemouche, Co-chair
Ken Pike, Fredericton, Co-chair
Brenda Murphy, Saint John
Liette Holmes, Neguac
Dr. Pam Coates, Saint John
Jennifer Melanson, Upper Coverdale
Haley Flaro, Fredericton
Nancy Hartling, Moncton
Randy Hatfield, Saint John
John Wheatley, Saint John
Ben Beaulieu, Edmundston
Julia Auclair, Bathurst

Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds

The mandate of the Advisory Committee for Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds is to develop a policy framework on social enterprise and community investment funds within which the Community Inclusion Networks can work.

The Advisory Committee will guarantee that the concept is studied in depth and will also take into consideration what is being done in other provinces.

Members:

Seth Asimakos, Saint John, Co-chair
André Leclerc, Edmundston, Co-chair
Jean-Claude Savoie, Saint-Quentin
Steven Hicks, Fredericton
Monique Richard, Saint-Louis-de-Kent
Gerry Pond, Saint John
Ginette Arseneault, Fredericton
Dan Gillis, Moncton
Sharon Geldart, Moncton
Val MacDermid, Port Elgin
Simon Mitchell, Dumfries

Community Inclusion Networks

The OPT plan recognizes that effectively addressing the issues of poverty and exclusion involves collaboration among all sectors, as well as a sharing of resources and responsibilities. This approach requires infrastructure which enables all groups and citizens to work together close to the ground. A mechanism is needed through which communities can meet, identify priorities, obtain resources and take action on issues of concern to them. This mechanism is the **Community Inclusion Network (CIN)**.

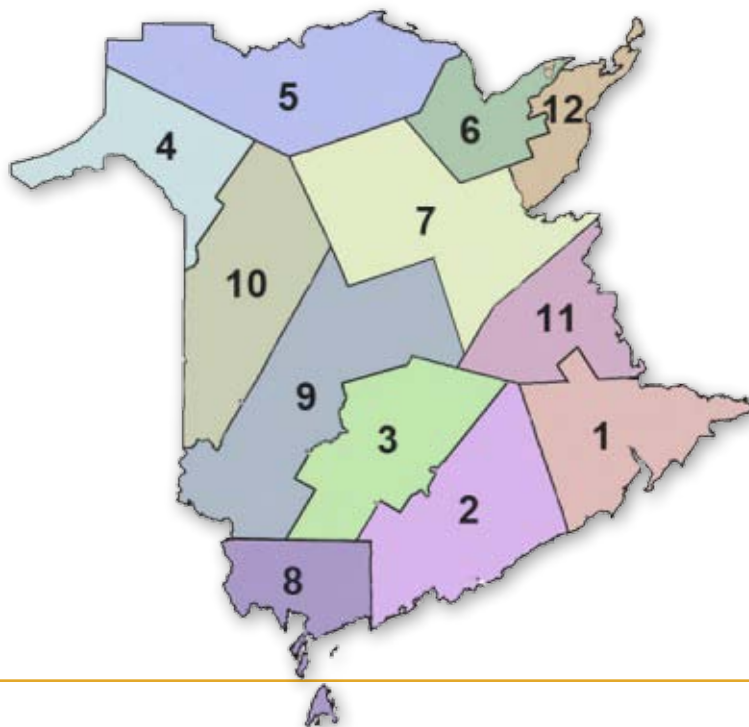
There are 12 designated CIN regions. Each region created its own CIN with assistance from the ESIC team and with some financial support provided by ESIC.

In November 2010, ESIC issued a call for interested parties to host regional community inclusion networks. This organizational structure is a unique New Brunswick approach to the issue of poverty. Applications or letters of interest were received from all 12 regions. At the January 19, 2011 ESIC Board of Directors meeting, eight organizations received approval to be Community Inclusion Networks. The remaining four CINs would be reviewed at the June 2011 board meeting.

Community Inclusion Network

Region	Host	Communities served
1	United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick	Greater Moncton, Westmorland County and Albert County
2	The Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) / Vibrant Communities Saint John	Greater Saint John, Sussex, Queens East and Kings East
3	Greater Fredericton Social Innovation	Fredericton, York South, Tracy, Oromocto, Gagetown, Sunbury County, Queens North, Minto and Chipman
4	Vacant, as of March 31, 2011	Edmundston and surrounding area
5	Restigouche Community Inclusion Network.	Restigouche County
6	Bathurst Youth Centre des Jeunes Inc.	Bathurst and surrounding area
7	Vacant, as of March 31, 2011	Miramichi and surrounding area
8	Charlotte County Community Inclusion Network	Charlotte County
9	Vacant, as of March 31, 2011	Doaktown, Harvey, McAdam, Nackawic
10	Carleton Victoria Community Inclusion Network	Carleton County and Victoria County
11	Place aux compétences Inc.	Kent County
12	Vacant, as of March 31, 2011	Acadian Penninsula
For a complete list of the communities served by each region visit www.gnb.ca/poverty under Community Inclusion Networks		

This map indicates the 12 Community Inclusion Networks in New Brunswick.



Historical dates of the poverty reduction process in New Brunswick

October 17, 2008 to March 31, 2011

October 17, 2008	Government announced a public engagement initiative called <i>Bringing the Pieces Together</i>
January 1 - April 30, 2009	Public dialogue phase conducted
June 2 and September 30, 2009	Round table sessions were held
November 12 - 13, 2009	Final forum was hosted which resulted in the development of <i>Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan</i>
February 19, 2009	Economic and Social Inclusion Act introduced
March 2010	ESIC Progress Report # 1 released
April 16, 2010	<i>The Economic and Social Inclusion Act</i> established
May 3, 2010	ESIC Vice-chairs and President announced
June 25, 2010	ESIC Board of Directors announced
June 30, 2010	First meeting of the ESIC Board of Directors
August 2010	ESIC Progress Report # 2 released
August 10, 2010	Advisory Committees established
August 30, 2010	Two ESIC staff – (executive director and manager of resource development) commence work
August 31, 2010	Regulations under the Economic and Social Inclusion Act filed
October 28, 2010	Invitation for Community Inclusion Network application released
November 3, 2010	ESIC Board of Directors meeting
November 16, 2010	Advisory committee members were finalized
November 2010 to January 2011	Remainder of three ESIC staff hired
December 22, 2010	Deadline for Community Inclusion application
January 18, 2011	First meetings for the Health, Social Assistance and Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds Advisory Committees
January 19, 2011	ESIC Board of Directors meeting eight Community Inclusion Networks were approved
February 9, 2011	Health and Social Assistance Advisory Committees meet
February 18, 2011	Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds Advisory Committee met
March 4, 2011	Health Advisory Committee met
March 23, 2011	Social Assistance Advisory Committee met

Historical Background of the Overcoming Poverty Together Plan

On October 17, 2008, the provincial government announced a public engagement initiative called *Bringing The Pieces Together*, which gave New Brunswickers the opportunity to become involved in reducing and preventing poverty. Since poverty has a direct or indirect impact on everyone, it was decided that everyone should be included in finding solutions to the economic and social problems related to poverty.

The standard consultation format was not going to work for this monumental task. Therefore, an authentic, comprehensive process was designed to ensure that all perspectives were heard, considered and represented. The public engagement process would include participants from government, official Opposition, business, the community non-profit sector and persons living in or who have experienced poverty. Public meetings were replaced by facilitated dialogue sessions; background papers and workbooks were developed to provide information, raise awareness and sharpen the focus on solutions. Specific meetings in comfortable locations were held for groups whose voices are sometimes overwhelmed by more vocal sectors. As the initiative progressed, orientation sessions were held for those representing people in poverty at the round table and final forum so they would be familiar with the process and comfortable in the discussion environment. This attention to capacity-building was a key factor in the success of the public engagement process.

There were three phases: public dialogue, round table session and final forum.

Phase One – Public dialogue

The public dialogue phase was conducted between January 1 and April 30, 2009. Nearly 2,500 people participated through:

- Internet survey and/or questionnaire.
- Emails, faxes, letters and briefs.
- 16 face-to-face dialogue sessions held around the province.
- Complementary sessions for specific groups.

All the input received was published in the *What Was Said* report entitled *A Choir of Voices*, which supported Phase Two of the process. These documents can be found at www.gnb.ca/poverty under publications.

Phase Two – Round table session

The round table sessions were conducted between June 2 and September 30, 2009. About 30 participants from all sectors met to develop options for a poverty reduction plan based on the findings in *A Choir of Voices*. These participants were all chosen for their experience and expertise.

These discussions resulted in the “Summary of Options” document, which was the root of the discussions and the decisions made in the final phase. It was developed in small group sessions of round table members, with each sector represented in each group. These group sessions produced a menu of choices from which members of the final forum would select the priority actions for the first five years of the poverty reduction plan.

Phase Three – Final forum

The final forum was chaired by the premier and brought together 47 New Brunswick leaders from the four sectors to adopt a poverty reduction plan. It was held on November 12 and 13, 2009, and resulted in the development of *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*. This document can be found at www.gnb.ca/poverty under publications.

Two days of intense sessions were held in Saint John. A convergence of interests of all sectors was articulated as the basis of the plan for economic and social inclusion. These sessions were remarkable for their focus on results and ability to find common ground while respecting all perspectives. Participants from every sector were able to step outside their traditional silos in a collaborative environment and arrive at a unique agreement that went well beyond expectations for poverty reduction.

The final forum was the shortest phase as its purpose was to achieve an outline of a plan that identified the priority actions for each sector in the next five years. The outcome, which can be seen in the next section of this document, had to be initiated by a public engagement process. Its goal was to address the root causes of poverty through transformational change rather than by making marginal changes to programs that do not achieve the desired results.

The Outcome

As a result of the comprehensive public engagement process, a new set of assumptions about poverty reduction and social services emerged, leading to changes in policy directions and service delivery mechanisms.

Change is occurring in four major areas:

1. Policies
2. Programs
3. Service delivery
4. Shared responsibility

1. Policies: from assistance to investment

Government, business and community non-profit organizations have traditionally approached poverty issues from their own perspectives and sought solutions within their own silos, with little communication or coordination. It is only recently that the divergent sectoral perspectives have been expressed as common interests, which have opened the door to unprecedented collaboration. The government wants self-reliant citizens; the non-profit sector wants security and opportunity for all; and the private sector wants a skilled workforce. The ends may be different, but the means are essentially the same: income, education and employment.

In the past, government policy reflected erroneous societal assumptions:

- The poor is a stagnant population.
- Persons on social assistance choose to stay there instead of working.
- Once people leave social assistance; they should be on their own.
- Providing support for the poor is solely the government's responsibility.

Overcoming Poverty Together recognizes these assumptions have failed to improve the lives of persons living in poverty. The *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* is constructed on principles that affirm the following:

- Everyone has gifts and abilities and the potential to share them in some productive way; the focus is on assets, not liabilities.
- People want to work because it generates income; work also promotes inclusion because taking responsibility as a member of a team or community builds respect and relationships.
- Poverty affects everybody, either directly or indirectly; its reduction is a shared responsibility in which all sectors have a role to play and a benefit to reap.
- Support must extend beyond the limits of the social assistance system, through the transition from poverty to an adequate livelihood; assistance should be based on income and not on designated status.

2. Programs: from structure to innovation

The results of the poverty reduction plan will be felt first by those living on social assistance. The changes will result in more flexibility and less stress as policies are altered and healthcare is secured through the transition period from social assistance to employment. Persons with disabilities, who may have previously been excluded from the standard workforce, will have the income and supports they need to learn and work to the extent possible. The minimum wage will rise gradually to provide a living income for the employed. The plan also provides for those whose ability to sustain themselves is limited or absent.

Overcoming Poverty Together proposes a path out of poverty on which people may travel at their own pace. The plan is structured in three segments: Being, Becoming and Belonging.

Being means meeting basic needs for income, food, housing, and transportation through an integrated service delivery model so that no one is constantly struggling to survive.

Becoming addresses issues of lifelong learning and skills acquisition. It is the transition phase between dependence and independence, designed to enable individuals to become autonomous to the extent that they can and want to be. The actions proposed include investments in early learning and childcare, literacy and numeracy. In the first five-year plan, this phase seeks to ensure that every child succeeds in school. This means advancement of the community school concept, with intersectoral partnerships to help children acquire life skills, learn about trades, gain work experience and participate in recreational and extra-curricular activities.

Belonging is about socio-economic engagement. It includes the development of an integrated, comprehensive housing strategy as well as the promotion of community-based, economic inclusion networks through social enterprises and local investment funds. It is intended to encourage the transition to work by improving opportunities for training, education and volunteering as well as access to higher education.

The poverty reduction plan will be implemented over five years, with subsequent renewal through another public engagement process. It is enshrined in law as the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act* and overseen by a Crown corporation.

3. Service delivery: from a centralized approach to a community-based approach

In this model, financial resources are funneled through regional community inclusion networks that establish local priorities and allocate funding. These networks offer the flexibility to meet community-defined needs and to access various funding sources. Since communities are at different levels in their ability to cooperate to implement inclusion activities, capacity-building efforts will be needed. Government benefits and transfer payments will continue to flow directly to individuals and families, but communities will participate in localized planning and program delivery to ensure standard government programs are shaped to meet local needs.

4. Shared responsibility: from disengagement to commitment

Much of the drive for the public engagement process and the poverty reduction plan came from the private sector. A convergence of sectoral interests, as well as the common recognition of the socio-economic costs of poverty, enabled New Brunswick to go beyond the reach of other provincial plans and produce a more comprehensive inclusion plan. The government and the community sector have been engaged for years in addressing poverty. The difference, as compared to previous efforts, was the active participation of the private sector and persons who have lived in or experienced poverty.

The poverty reduction plan takes a community development approach to economic and social inclusion. It requires increased collaboration and a willingness to share responsibility and resources to promote the transition from poverty to self-sufficiency to inclusion.

The Plan - *Overcoming Poverty Together*: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan

Vision:

Through the collaboration of governments, business and non-profit sectors, persons living in poverty and individuals; 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.

Global Objective:

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

Delivery and Accountability:

Final Forum members have agreed that the success of the poverty reduction initiative has its roots in the recognition that all citizens and sectors of society play a key role in the reduction of poverty. There is a commitment to continue this partnership in a governance model with the following components:

1. Community economic and social inclusion networks established at the local level composed of representatives of persons living in poverty, non-profit, business and government sectors.
2. A provincial economic and social inclusion board consisting of representatives of government (ministers and deputy ministers), community, business and low-income persons, presided over by four co-chairs.
3. A secretariat providing coordination and administrative support to the board and community inclusion networks.

All administrative costs of the Provincial Economic & Social Inclusion Board will be the responsibility of the provincial government.

This governance model will be a mechanism for coordinated action and not a vehicle for the devolution of provincial government responsibilities.

A transition team representative of all sectors will address outstanding issues such as terms of reference, accountability mechanisms and consistency with official language requirements.

Priority Actions

The business, non-profit and government sectors together with citizens agree to implement the following priority actions:

Opportunities for Being (meeting basic needs)

1. Reform social assistance as follows:

Immediate:

- i. Elimination of the interim social assistance rate program (single employable people).
- ii. Extend health card for persons exiting social assistance for up to three years until a prescription drug program is introduced.
- iii. The household income policy will only be applied to social assistance recipients who are in spousal relationships.

Over five years:

- i. Move from a rules-based to an outcome-based system.
 - ii. Move from passive assistance to employment orientation.
 - iii. Move from a focus on income poverty to social and economic inclusion.
 - iv. Restructure and increase social assistance rates including a new regime more appropriate for persons with disabilities.
 - v. Significant overhaul of household income policy.
 - vi. Introduction of vision and dental care for children in low-income families by April 1, 2011.
 - vii. Provide more opportunities to keep earned income as individuals transition to work.
 - viii. Reform wage exemptions to include a working income supplement.
 - ix. Raise allowable asset exemption.
 - x. Link benefits such as child care, home heating and health to household income to the extent possible.
2. Mandate the board of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation to work together with stakeholders to determine the details of a prescription drug program for non-insured citizens with the goal of starting to phase in the program by April 2012.
 3. Raise the minimum wage to the Atlantic average by September 1, 2011, and adjust for inflation annually thereafter. Dialogue with stakeholders regarding the scheduling of increases.
 4. Provide stable funding for homeless shelters within five years.
 5. Include protections for roomers and boarders in the *Residential Tenancies Act*.
 6. Provide funding for community transportation alternatives such as Dial-a-Ride.
 7. Develop and implement an integrated service delivery model focused on low-income people.

Opportunities for Becoming (life-long learning and skills acquisition)

1. Invest in the early learning and child care sector to ensure that a minimum of 20 per cent of infants and 50 per cent of two- to five-year-olds in the province may access a registered early learning space.
2. Provide a literacy mentor, through collaboration with the business and non-profit sectors, to every student in Grades 1 and 2 who is struggling to read, so that every child may graduate with adequate literacy and numeracy skills through the leadership of Elementary Literacy/Littératie au primaire.
3. Introduce an early learning and child care act.
4. The McCain Foundation will fund five additional integrated early learning sites.

5. Advance the community school concept with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy, life skills, experiential learning, trades, cooperative education and extra-curricular activities.
6. Continue training teachers to expand educational program options to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Opportunities for Belonging (community participation)

1. Develop a comprehensive housing strategy that enables mixed income neighbourhoods, affordability, supported housing options and co-op housing.
2. Explore the concept of social enterprise and community investment funds.
3. Strengthen the ability of low-income people to enter the skilled workforce through the provision of training, education and volunteer opportunities as part of the transition to work as well as on-the-job training.
4. Reduce barriers to continuing education, making it more accessible and affordable.
5. Develop a strong public awareness campaign, which is critical to the success of the poverty reduction plan.

Indicators and Monitoring

Progress indicators and monitoring have been referred to the board of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation.

Renewal of this Plan

The poverty reduction plan will be renewed every five years through a public engagement process led by the corporation.

Legislation

The vision, global objective, delivery structure, reporting requirements and renewal of the plan will be entrenched in legislation.

Priority Actions – Implemented and In-progress

In addition to working out a governance model to ensure that the reduction of poverty involves all sectors of society and all regions of the province, much progress has been made to implement the agreed upon priority actions. Many of the actions are underway while others will be undertaken by the Economic & Social Inclusion Corporation. The following provides a report on the actions within the plan which are organized in three segments: Opportunities for Being, Opportunities for Becoming and Opportunities for Belonging.

Opportunities for Being (meeting basic needs)

Social Assistance Reform

A great deal of planning and research is underway on reforming the social assistance system to move from a rules based to an outcome based system. These changes, when fully implemented, will represent a much called for change to a system that has been said to prevent many New Brunswickers from moving off social assistance and becoming self-reliant. An advisory committee to the board of ESIC has been formed to reflect the perspectives of all four sectors.

Advisory Committee on Social Assistance Reform

The Advisory Committee on Social Assistance Reform has met on three occasions (January 18, February 9 and March 23, 2011).

So that the Advisory Committee it is better able to provide feedback on the proposed changes that are brought forward, in accordance with OPT plan, they have been gaining in-depth knowledge of:

- the current social assistance system and the interdependencies
- marginal tax rates
- jurisdictional review of worldwide best practices
- Basic Unit rate
- Household composition and the impact on the Economic Unit policy.

The Advisory Committee has begun to provide input to Social Development's Social Assistance Reform Steering Committee on some social assistance re-design options; including basic rates, eligibility and household composition issues.

Two Committee members (including one of the co-chairs) have been involved with departmental consultations with the New Brunswick Disability Executives Network on ways to reform the disability aspect of the income support program.

The following initiatives have been implemented:

The Interim Assistance Rate eliminated

Social assistance clients who qualified for the Interim Assistance Program rate as of January 1, 2010 now qualify for benefits under the Transitional Assistance Program. This means that these clients will benefit from an 82 per cent increase in their monthly cheque. This will help those who qualify to bridge the gap between employment positions and will help them maintain a level of self-reliance during their job search. The Transitional Assistance Program provides financial assistance to individuals and families that have the potential to become self-reliant once particular barriers to employment have been addressed.

In the two years prior to this particular policy change, there were on average, 1,200 cases per year receiving the Interim Rate - the lowest rate available to clients. This caseload was comprised of families with children awaiting EI benefits, single employable persons under age 55 with no medical issues, childless couples under age 55 with no medical issues, and roommates under 55 with no medical issues.

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.

Extended Health Card

A change in policy was made to extend the health card provided to social assistance clients for up to three years after they leave social assistance for a job. As a result, 802 clients have been able to benefit from the extension of the health card up to 36 months.

Changes to the Household Income Policy

Improvements have been made to the Household Income Policy under the social assistance system. The modifications mean that clients who were in receipt of social assistance on January 1, 2010 and who are in non-spousal relationships will be able to share accommodations with clients or non clients and receive separate cheques. This policy has been a long-time barrier for many social assistance clients who are struggling to achieve self-reliance and improve their financial situation. This is an interim measure that will economically help current clients until a complete overhaul of the social assistance system is completed.

As of February 6, 2011, there were 350 people who received the Transitional Rate that have more than one "head of household" living at the same address.

Minimum Wage Increases

On April 1, 2011, minimum wage in New Brunswick was raised to \$9.50 per hour.

In 2009, Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimated that 17,100 New Brunswickers earned minimum wage. This represents 5.3 per cent of all employed persons in the province.

Homeless Shelters

Since the June 2010 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.

A total of \$460,000 was provided to five homeless shelters in need of repairs to alleviate health and safety concerns.

Homeless Shelter	Beds	Amount Approved	Status
Fredericton Homeless Shelter (adult men)	40	\$24,982	completed
Grace House (adult women)	9	\$32,586	completed
Miramichi Youth House (youth)	1	\$9,962.93	completed
Harvest House (men and women)	30	\$151,733	end date February 2011
Nazareth House (youth, men and women)	30	\$240,736.07	end date January 2011

The following initiatives are in progress:

Advisory Committee for Health Benefits

The Advisory Committee for Health Benefits has met three times (January 18, February 9 and March 4, 2011).

The committee has worked in a priority manner, on the details and cost analysis for options for a vision and dental plan for low-income children in New Brunswick.

The committee received presentations from the respective professional associations to guide them in their decision.

Although the established goal for the committee was to have options regarding a vision and dental plan ready for April 1, 2011, the committee requested extra time to ensure that all options were researched and discussed.

Prescription Drug Program

The Advisory Committee for Health Benefits will develop a prescription drug program for non-insured citizens aiming towards a gradual establishment from now till April 2012.

Funding for Community Transportation

The lack of public transportation systems in many New Brunswick communities, particularly rural areas of the province, has been considered to be a major barrier to economic and social inclusion. A partnership between ESIC and the Regional Development Corporation has been established to fund community-based transportation projects. Two such initiatives have been approved, in Region 8 (Charlotte Dial A Ride) and Region 10 (Western NB Alternative Transportation) with community transportation well on the radar of many of the other CIN's.

Integrated service delivery model

The OPT plan calls for the development and implementation of an integrated service delivery model focused on low-income people. Government departments and service providers are finding ways to work more collaboratively. The Department of Social Development has commenced a strategic planning process which will include a review of its service delivery model to ensure that it is client focused.

Opportunities for Becoming (lifelong learning and skills acquisition)

The following initiatives have been implemented:

Early Learning and Child Care Act

Work is ongoing on the development of new Regulations, and the new *Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Act* will take effect once the Regulations have been approved by government.

Integrated Early Learning Sites

Five early childhood development centre demonstration sites are being developed as part of a three-year project to provide integrated services and support for young children and their parents. The sites in Centreville, Keswick, Millville, Perth-Andover and Richibucto are receiving start-up grants from the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation. Government is working in partnership with the foundation to provide support and guidance to the sites.

There are nine early childhood development sites in total. The four government-funded sites (Bath, Moncton, Robertville and Saint John) have been open since 2009. As of January 2011, two of the McCain-funded sites (Keswick and Richibucto) are now offering a full range of services. The remaining three sites (Centreville, Millville, Perth-Andover) are continuing their work to get up and running.

Early Learning and Child Care

As of January 1, 2011, there were 20,253 licensed day care spaces in New Brunswick, which is an increase of 1,468 licensed spaces from March 31, 2010.

	Total licensed day care spaces	Infant spaces	Preschool spaces	After school spaces
March 31, 2010	18,785	1,371	8,283	9,131
January 1, 2011	20,253	1,458	9,054	9,741

Note: Percentage coverage is calculated by applying actual daycare spaces in each age group against 2006 Census population counts as follows: Infants 0 -23 months – 13,335
Preschool 2 – 4 years -21,095 School age 5 – 12 – 65,080

To date, \$112,000 in funding has been provided from the Early Learning and Childcare Trust Fund to two childcare facilities (one in St-John, one in Moncton); a total of 56 places in the childcare facilities for francophone children.

Literacy Mentor Programs

As of February 2011, Elementary Literacy/Littératie au Primaire is delivering the ELF Program and Programme CLEF in 17 schools (an increase of nine schools from 2009-2010) throughout New Brunswick. Marketing efforts are generating interest from parents, volunteers, and the business and non-profit communities as the momentum for this initiative continues to develop.

In this second year of pilot program operations, more than 100 volunteers were recruited and trained to deliver one-on-one literacy tutoring to struggling readers in Grades 1 to 3 as the programs continue to expand. Volunteers and schools are fully equipped with the necessary resources to deliver the ELF Program and Programme CLEF in a manner that is consistent with expectations and curriculum outcomes. Sessions are held after school, twice per week for the duration of one hour. Volunteers are required to commit to the program for an initial duration of 12 weeks. Progress is evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measurement.

The following initiatives are in progress:

Teacher Training

In collaboration with school districts, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed a professional development strategy to target a number of areas, including helping teachers to meet diverse learning needs.

Opportunities for Belonging (community participation)

The following initiative has been implemented:

Comprehensive housing strategy

Over the next five years, the New Brunswick Housing Corporation (NBHC) will focus its activities on supporting the overall goal of moving the province to self-reliance and overcoming poverty. Specifically the NBHC will invest in:

- Reducing the number of households in need of housing assistance
- Making quality housing more affordable
- Ensuring the sustainability of government assisted housing
- Reducing chronic homelessness
- Increasing rural housing opportunities
- Creating homeownership opportunities
- Strengthening housing supports
- Supporting government's commitment to energy efficiency
- Ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities

Strategic objectives and key actions have been developed to identify what NBHC plans on achieving in order to ensure the success of the strategy.

Changes in existing program policies as well as new program initiatives will be developed to assist with the continuum of housing and support services needed to address housing challenges in the province.

The strategy is a framework for better understanding complex and interrelated housing issues. It is intended to help identify the gaps in the system and how we can work together to fill those gaps. The supporting actions will form the basis for a more integrated response that deals with housing and communities more holistically.

The following initiatives are in progress:

Strengthen the ability of low-income people to enter the workforce

A three-year action plan was released in February 2011 that relates to *Working Together for Adult Literacy: An Adult Literacy Strategy for New Brunswick*. The strategy focuses on four priority areas: reducing barriers and increasing participation; increasing the number and range of adult literacy learning opportunities; ensuring the quality and effectiveness of adult literacy programs; and strengthening partnerships to develop an effective adult literacy system.

Work is underway to improve New Brunswick's adult literacy system in departments of government and with stakeholders in the private and voluntary sectors.

A citizen engagement initiative on learning, called *Learning: Everybody's Project*, was launched on November 10, 2010 by Roundtable NB2026. The initiative will involve New Brunswickers in a sharing of ideas on how the province's learning culture may be fostered and improved. The process will unfold over the coming year, leading to a provincial forum, to be held in early 2012. At that time, an action plan will be adopted by citizens from all sectors of New Brunswick.

Workplace Essential Skills

Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour has collaborated with business, industry, community and labour organizations to introduce Workplace Essential Skills (WES) training throughout the province. The program has developed rapidly since its implementation formally commenced in November 2009. The department has developed a comprehensive competency-based curriculum that covers all nine of the essential skill areas identified by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Two Centres of Excellence have been established within the WES Program, one at Collège Communautaire du Nouveau Brunswick (CCNB) in Bathurst (French) and one at New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) Saint John (English). The Centres of Excellence provide leadership and expertise provincially in the development of learning materials, best practices and trainer development.

The mandate of the WES program is to increase literacy through essential skills training. The target population for the program is employed and employable adults with low essential skills. The WES program provides an accelerated learning pathway to employment and/or further learning. The primary focus of the program in its initial year was delivery to employed individuals through workplace trainings. The second year continued to prioritize training to employed individuals and will further expand delivery of training to employable individuals. By the end of 2010-11, there had been 81 active initiatives since the program was formally implemented in 2009. In 2011-12, a strategic plan will be developed and implemented. Training will continue to prioritize employed initiatives and will explore opportunities to enhance delivery to employable learners and foster provincial partnerships.

Community Adult Learning Centres

The Community Adult Learning Network (CALNet) was created to expand and improve adult literacy training around the province. CALNet manages Community Adult Learning Centres offering academic and e-learning programs in either English or French depending on the needs of the community. This service provides adults with the opportunity to attain the literacy and information and communication technology skills they need to function in a knowledge-based economy and society.

Community Adult Learning Centres provide literacy training to adults to IALSS Level 2, GED preparation, both in class and online as well as e-learning programs that offer computer training and other lifelong learning opportunities. In 2010-11, a total of 242 academic and e-learning programs have been funded in over 100 communities throughout the province. The overall number of learner hours committed to training has risen substantially (approximately 10 per cent) over the course of the year.

Reducing barriers to continuing education and making it more accessible and affordable

Projects with the objective of increasing participation of Aboriginal persons in post-secondary education are ongoing.

Projects aimed at increasing access to New Brunswick Community College and Collège Communautaire de Nouveau-Brunswick campuses are ongoing. The colleges will be able to offer all their students the support they need, and to develop and maintain services and adaptive training that take into account any special needs they may have.

In 2011-12, funding for improving access to post-secondary education for families with lower incomes was increased to \$1.5 million. This funding assists post-secondary education institutions in developing and implementing a variety of pilot projects such as low income support programs to encourage parents and their children to pursue post-secondary education, development of services for students with learning and physical disabilities, improved academic and skill supports and individualized outreach to students who do not meet the admission average requirement for university, and free academic upgrading courses in both official languages for adults wanting to improve their occupational and academic situations.

Explore the concept of Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds

ESIC's Board has created an Advisory Committee for Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds which has met twice (January 18, 2011 and February 18, 2011).

The members have designed a project plan framework to develop a social enterprise (SE) model that will foster social and economic growth. From April 2011, the committee is investigating and inventorying social enterprise operations and best practices across the province. This will identify the location, purpose, challenges and operations of the social enterprises in New Brunswick.

The committee will also be developing a communication strategy that will include a phased approach to educating the public on social enterprises. It will include a video on the committee's efforts, in order to bring awareness to our work in relation to the OPT, the SE terminology and to educate the public and businesses on social enterprises. The goal of the committee is to develop a framework that will mobilize investment, individuals and communities to initiate social enterprises which will strengthen the economy of New Brunswick.

Indicators and Monitoring

The Request for Proposals on performance measures for ESIC was issued on October 20, 2010 and closed on December 1, 2010. Seven proposals were submitted by companies within and outside New Brunswick. In January 2011, the Board of Directors approved a company to conduct the performance measures for ESIC for the next five years.

Performance measures include: school readiness among four-year olds, participation rate in post-secondary education and percentage of New Brunswickers in core housing need.

Summary of meetings and presentations attended by the ESIC team

Activity	Conference/Group	Date and Location (All events were in NB unless otherwise noted)
Presentation	United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeast New Brunswick	November 25, 2010 - Moncton
Presentation	Government of Canada - Rural Team New Brunswick	November 30, 2010, February 21, 2011 & March 17, 2011 - Moncton
Presentation	Region 3 CIN meeting	November 30, 2010, February 21, 2011 & March 17, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation	Region 7 CIN meeting	December 6, 2010 & January 25, 2011 - Miramichi
Presentation	Region 2 CIN meeting	December 8, 2010 & February 7, 2011 - Saint John
Presentation	Edmundston and Grand Falls CINs	December 13 & 2010, March 28, 2011 - Madawaska
Presentation	Region 1 CIN meeting	December 17, 2010 & March 28 - 29, 2011 - Moncton
Presentation	Region 6 CIN meeting	December 20, 2010, January 26, 2011 & Feb 21, 2011 - Bathurst
Presentation	Region 5 CIN meeting	January 13, 26 & March 15-16, 2011 - Campbellton
Presentation	University of New Brunswick Sociology Course	January 31, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation	Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour - Community Adult Learning Program Consultants	February 3, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation	Region 11 CIN meeting	February 3 & 23 2011 - Richibucto
Presentation / Workshop	New Brunswick Youth Summit	February 18-20, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development - Community School Director	February 18, March 1 & 10, 2011- Fredericton
Presentation	Bathurst City Council	February 21, 2011 - Bathurst

Activity	Conference/Group	Date and Location (All events were in NB unless otherwise noted)
Presentation	Region 12 CIN – Public and Private meetings	February 22, 2011 - Shippagan
Presentation	Region 12 CIN – Citizens and Non-Profit	February 22, 2011 - Inkerman
Presentation	Fredericton Chamber of Commerce	February 24, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation	Human Resources Services Development Canada	March 4, 2011 - Fredericton
Presentation / Workshop	Government of Canada – Department of Fisheries and Oceans - Exploring Community Values	March 16-17 – St. Andrews
Presentation	Provincial Wellness Conference	March 24-25 - Moncton
Presentation	New Brunswick Disability Executives Network	September 24 - Fredericton
Presentation	Mouvement Acadien des Communautés en Sante-NB	October 1, 2010
Presentation	Association des Municipalités Francophones du NB	October 9, 2010
Presentation	Women’s Council	September 7, 2010
Presentation	Community Action Group for Homelessness and New Brunswick Non Profit Housing Association	September 27, 2010
Presentation	New Brunswick Food Security Conference	November 18, 2010
Presentation	Social development Community Development Officers	January 13, 2011
Meeting	Editorial Board of L’Acadie Nouvelle	January 21, 2011
Press Conference	Acadian Peninsula	January 25, 2011
Participation	Annual Conference of Communautés Loisirs NB	February 10, 2011
Presentation	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	February 7, 2011
Presentation	Chambre de Commerce de la Péninsule Acadienne	February 21, 2011
Presentation	Forum des maires de la Péninsule Acadienne	February 21, 2011
Presentation	Forum des maires du Nord-Ouest	February 24, 2011
Presentation	Coordonateurs des écoles communautaires du NB	March 9, 2011
Presentation	Tamarack Institute Toronto	March 17, 2011
Presentation	Colloque Mieux-être du NB	March 24, 2011
Presentation	Social Development Regional Office in Edmunston	March 29, 2011

Financial Summary

	2010/2011
Total Revenue	\$1,710,000
Expenses	
Program spending	202,492
Operating expenses	97,155
Total Expenses	\$299,647
Net Assets	\$1,410,353

