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ISAC Poverty Reduction Update

The provincial government is creating a Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario. This was a commitment that the Liberals made during the election campaign last fall. They have set up a Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction to oversee this project:

<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/team/committee.asp?Team=15>.

The creation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy is potentially good news for people living on low incomes in Ontario.

A Poverty Reduction Strategy is a long-term action plan made by the government that coordinates anti-poverty programs across all ministries and sets out specific indicators, measurements and timelines to reduce – and eventually eliminate – poverty.

Many other places around the world have created strategies that have had a positive impact for low income people. We will all have to work hard to make sure that the Ontario strategy ends up being a good one too!

ISAC contributes to Poverty Reduction Discussion Paper

ISAC was very involved in lobbying for a poverty reduction strategy during the last provincial election. ISAC staff helped write Ontario Campaign 2000's discussion paper on what a strategy for Ontario might look like. The discussion paper can be found on the internet at: www.campaign2000.ca/on/pdf/OntarioPovertyReductionStrategy.pdf.

ISAC and the 25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction

ISAC is a founding member of the 25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction, which is calling on the Ontario Government to reduce poverty by 25% in the next 5 years, 50% in the next 10 years, and to completely eradicate poverty within a generation. The Network is currently pressing for accessible, province-wide consultations and will be working with its members and other groups to build consensus around key components for a strategy that includes improvements to social assistance, as well as other supports to low-income people in areas like housing, labour standards, early childhood education, health, dental care and more.

ISAC staff sit on the Network's steering committee, which is working hard to engage other organizations and community groups in discussions around poverty reduction and to lobby government for the best strategy possible.

Information, including materials and power-point presentations about poverty reduction, can be found on the new 25 in 5 website at www.25in5.ca.

ISAC partners with Campaign 2000 in new Poverty Reduction Project

ISAC and Ontario Campaign 2000 have received funding from the Metcalf Foundation to work with low-income people in 10 communities to share ideas for what's needed to end poverty in Ontario and build political and public support for a broad, far-reaching poverty reduction strategy that benefits single people as well as families.

The two-year project will involve community partners in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa, Owen Sound and Windsor. In Toronto, the project will involve youth, people with disabilities, single moms, racialized communities and urban Aboriginal people.

ISAC and Campaign 2000 will be working with popular education consultant, Chris Cavanagh, to create a workshop that will engage low-income people in discussions about Ontario's poverty reduction strategy and what they can do in their own communities to lobby the government and build public support for reducing poverty. Workshops will be held in our 10 partner communities between March and June, 2008.

ISAC and Campaign 2000 will also be holding train-the-trainer workshops for legal clinics, community agencies and groups who are not in the project but interested in using our workshop to organize with low-income people in their communities. Train-the-trainer workshops are being planned for Toronto and for clinic staff in the Eastern Region and hopefully Southwest and Northern Regions. A facilitator's manual will be included with the workshop.

More information will be available soon on ISAC's website and through our networks.