

FACT SHEET # 1

ABOUT COLOUR OF POVERTY - COLOUR OF CHANGE

There is a growing "colour-coded" inequity and disparity in Ontario that has resulted in an inequality of learning outcomes, of health status, of employment opportunity and income prospects, of life opportunities, and ultimately of life outcomes. We at Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change believe that it is only by working together that we can make the needed change for all of our shared benefit.

Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change (COP-COC) is a campaign made up of individuals and organizations working to build community-based capacity to address the growing racialization of poverty and the resulting increased levels of social exclusion and marginalization of racialized communities (both Indigenous Peoples and peoples of colour) across Ontario. COP-COC works to build concrete strategies, develop tools, and build community-based capacity through which individuals, groups and organizations work together to address the growing structural ethno-racial inequalities across Ontario and Canada.

COP-COC formally came together in 2007 to raise public awareness around issues concerning and affecting communities of colour - understanding that in order to best bring about racial equality in Canadian society the work needed to be done in full relationship and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. In September, 2007, the network launched the hugely successful Colour of Poverty Campaign to highlight the growing racialization of poverty in Ontario. In the ongoing effort to make the facts about racialized poverty more accessible to individuals and organizations, we produce this comprehensive set of updated Fact Sheets.

COP-COC ACHIEVEMENTS

COP-COC is now working to best build on all of the gains that have been made over the past ten years - in a way that is fully consistent with the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 94 Calls to Action.

COP-COC has consulted the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which resulted in recommendations for a Canada Action Plan Against Racism (CAPAR), which the Canadian Government has now agreed to.

COP-COC pushed for the Anti-Racism Directorate and drafted the Anti-Racism Legislation of Ontario.

COP-COC has pushed for a strong racial impact analysis into the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and the National Housing Strategy.

COP-COC helped co-found both the Toronto area Good Jobs for ALL coalition and the Toronto Community Benefits Network, together maintaining a focus on provincial Employment Equity legislation as a shared advocacy priority.

COP-COC recognizes that we operate upon the traditional territories and original nations of the Mississauga of the New Credit, Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, the Metis, Cree and Huon Indigenous Peoples, who, along with all off reserve Indigenous peoples, continue to demand justice, sovereignty, and full nation-to-nation relationship.

FACT SHEET OVERVIEW



Fact Sheet #1: About Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change

Fact Sheet #2: An Introduction to Racialized Poverty

Fact Sheet #3: Racialized Poverty in Education and Learning

Students of colour and Indigenous students face discrimination in schools. They are often streamed into lower level non-academic programs, and unfairly targeted for expulsion. Children from poor families are half as likely to attend university as those who are well-off, and some communities of colour and Indigenous groups have very low rates of high school completion.

Fact Sheet #4: Racialized Poverty in Health and Child Welfare

Poverty puts people at a much greater risk for poor health. Because many people of colour and Indigenous people are poor, they face health problems from stress, unsafe working conditions, polluted neighbourhoods, and inadequate food. Many have trouble accessing culturally appropriate healthcare, social services and other needed supports, and are over-represented in Child Welfare.

Fact Sheet #5: Racialized Poverty in Employment

Communities of colour and Indigenous groups are much more likely to be unemployed than others. They are over-represented in low-paying, unstable, and low-status jobs, in which their rights as workers are not fully protected. They are under-represented in professional positions, and immigrants' skills and credentials are often not recognized in Canada.

Fact Sheet #6: Racialized Poverty in Income and Social Assistance

Poverty among communities of colour and Indigenous groups is growing faster than for non-racialized groups. Social assistance in Ontario was severely cut back in the 1990s, and the minimum wage keeps people well below the poverty line.

Fact Sheet #7: Racialized Poverty in Justice and Policing

Poor, racialized communities - both Indigenous and communities of colour - are often over-policed, and Indigenous men and women, and men and women of colour are over-represented in jails and prisons. Racialized men are especially targeted for violence by law enforcement, including racial profiling at the Canadian border.

Fact Sheet #8: Racialized Poverty in Immigration and Newcomer Settlement

As the face of immigration to Canada has changed dramatically over the past few decades poverty rates among immigrants have risen dramatically and critical settlement support services remain severely under-funded. People without status cannot easily access healthcare, education, fair work or police protection.

Fact Sheet #9: Racialized Poverty in Housing and Homelessness

Communities of colour and Indigenous groups have higher levels of under-housing & homelessness due to poverty and unemployment, cuts to social programs, & lack of housing services. Racialized persons also face discriminatory & prohibitive demands from landlords. The majority of recent immigrants to Toronto live in unsafe, sub-standard housing.

Fact Sheet #10: Racialized Poverty in Food and Water Insecurity

Because communities of colour and Indigenous groups are disproportionately poor, they are less likely able to provide enough healthy and familiar food for their families, putting them and their children at higher risk for many diseases and chronic conditions. Social assistance rates & minimum wage do not provide adequate income to afford a healthy diet.