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SOCIAL JUSTICE: USEFUL DEFINITIONS

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice: Distribution of the social and economic resources of society for the benefit of all people.

-- "An Inclusion Lens: Workbook for Looking at Social and Economic Exclusion and Inclusion," Public Health Agency of Canada, Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Canada, June 2002

Social justice: The process through which society attains a more equitable distribution of power in the political, economic and social realms.

-- "Understanding Social Justice Philanthropy," John Hunsaker and Brenda Hanzl, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, April 2003

Social justice: A concept based upon the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to civil liberties, equal opportunity, fairness, and participation in the educational, economic, institutional, social and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community.

-- "Cultural Competency Handbook," R. Degan and Dr. M. Disman, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto

SOCIAL JUSTICE PHILANTHROPY

Social justice philanthropy is the practice of making contributions to nonprofit organizations that work for structural change and increase the opportunity of those who are less well off politically, economically and socially.

-- "Understanding Social Justice Philanthropy," John Hunsaker and Brenda Hanzl, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, April 2003

For community foundations, social justice work is directed at social change--seeking solutions to social, economic, and political injustice by addressing root causes of those problems, not just their symptoms.

-- The Social Justice Spectrum, Community Foundations of Canada, January 2004

POVERTY

Poverty line: There are many measures used in Canada to define poverty, and considerable controversy about how each is calculated. There is no one standard measure. Many are referred to as LICOs (low income cut-offs) and they are often based on the amount of household income required for housing, food and other necessities in a particular city or region.

The national Council of Welfare, Statistics Canada LICOs are one example:

Statistics Canada's Before-Tax Low Income Cut-Offs (1992 Base) for 2003¹

Family Size	Community Size				
	Cities of 500,000+	100,000-499,999	30,000-99,999	Less than 30,000	Rural Areas
1	\$19,795	\$16,979	\$16,862	\$15,690	\$13,680
2	\$24,745	\$21,224	\$21,077	\$19,612	\$17,100
3	\$30,774	\$26,396	\$26,213	\$24,390	\$21,268
4	\$37,253	\$31,952	\$31,731	\$29,526	\$25,744
5	\$41,642	\$35,718	\$35,469	\$33,004	\$28,778
6	\$46,031	\$39,483	\$39,208	\$36,482	\$31,813
7+	\$50,421	\$43,249	\$42,947	\$39,960	\$34,847

Racialized poverty: the relationship between poverty and one's ethno-racial status.

Brain waste: the under-utilization of immigrants' skills and credentials. By paying immigrants less than native-born Canadians, their experience, education and training is undervalued.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION / SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social exclusion: "... a comprehensive formulation, which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society. Social exclusion may therefore be seen as the denial (non-realization) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship."

-- Walker and Walker, referenced in "Social Inclusion, Anti-racism and Democratic Citizenship," Anver Saloojee, The Laidlaw Foundation, 2003

Social inclusion² is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth.

-- Christa Freiler, "What needs to change? Towards a vision of social inclusion for children, families and communities," draft concept papers, The Laidlaw Foundation, October 2001 (referenced in "An Inclusion Lens: Workbook for Looking at Social and Economic Exclusion and Inclusion," Public Health Agency of Canada, Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Canada, June 2002)

Building Foundation Commitment and Capacity for Social Justice Project, November 2004

¹ © 2004 National Council of Welfare

² For a very useful description of elements of exclusion and their corresponding inclusion elements (marginalization vs. empowerment for example) see "An Inclusion Lens: Workbook for Looking at Social and Economic Exclusion and Inclusion," Health Canada, Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Canada, June 2002