Advancing a National Anti-Poverty and Supports Agenda

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Objectives

- Locate recent proposals for change in income security and disability supports to political contexts in Canada

- Offer a way of thinking about the steps we might take as a movement to make an anti-poverty agenda a priority
A national agenda

- CACL’s 10 year agenda for change
- On income and supports, core objectives include:
  - Eradicate poverty for people with intellectual disabilities and their families
  - Secure the right and access to disability supports
  - Ensure families have supports
2008 Canadian election: where was disability?

- **Conservatives**: repeated government record, a few new plans on RDSP and income splitting for families, overall no coherent plan

- **Liberals**: promised to make the DTC refundable, maintain funding to community programs, change CPP Disability to recognize episodic impairments

- **NDP**: a significant place in their platform, endorsed the End Exclusion National Action Plan, a notable shift

- **Green Party**: endorsed Caledon Institute’s proposal of a national basic income program for working-age Canadians with severe disabilities
National parties and disability

- Parties adopt some explicit commitments on disability, especially income
- Three parties accept idea of converting the DTC to a refundable benefit and to modernizing the coverage under CPP Disability for persons with episodic work/illness
- Neither disability issues nor social policy more generally were major factors in deciding the 2008 election results
Moving the agenda forward: key factors

Selves

Societies

States
Selves

- **Roles and relations**: self-advocates, family members, support networks of friends, colleagues, and sympathetic others
- **Activities**: identifying issues, participating in community organizations, sharing experiences, offering support
- **Social processes**: acquiring identity beliefs and self-images, self-learning and teaching others
Societies

- Public attitudes, beliefs, and actions
- Population trends (e.g., aging, family forms)
- Interest groups and social movements
- Economic circumstances
- Science and technological developments
- Political parties and elections
- Mass media and Internet
States in Canada

- Federalism: multiple jurisdictions and levels of government
- Cabinets and central agencies (Finance)
- Departmental silos and relations
- Financial frameworks and budgets
- The Charter of Rights, human rights codes, and courts
- Parliamentary governments
An anti-poverty agenda

- Reducing rates of poverty
- Alleviating depth and persistence of poverty
- Preventing poverty
- Thinking about poverty in new ways
- Designing policies and programs for social protection and active inclusion
Active inclusion

Inclusive labour markets

Adequate income

Accessible supports
How to make anti-poverty a priority in Canada?

- Success is shaped by a combination of factors and influences from our selves, our societies, and our state sectors.
- We must not pursue just one of these approaches to the neglect of the others.
- Make strategic choices across self, society, and state arenas.
- Partnerships with other disability organizations and other social movements (e.g., seniors, child and family).
How to make anti-poverty a priority in Canada?

- Significantly raise public awareness of, and interest in disability-related issues
- Shift the political imagination and the electoral appeal of these issues
- Treat CACL’s 10-year agenda as a living document that will adapt and develop
- Be deliberate, but resist timid incrementalism in policy reforms
- Real change requires a “political donnybrook”
Thank you