

# Advancing a National Anti-Poverty and Supports Agenda

Presentation to the Canadian Association for  
Community Living 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference  
November 21, 2008

*Michael J. Prince*



University  
of Victoria

British Columbia  
Canada



# 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?

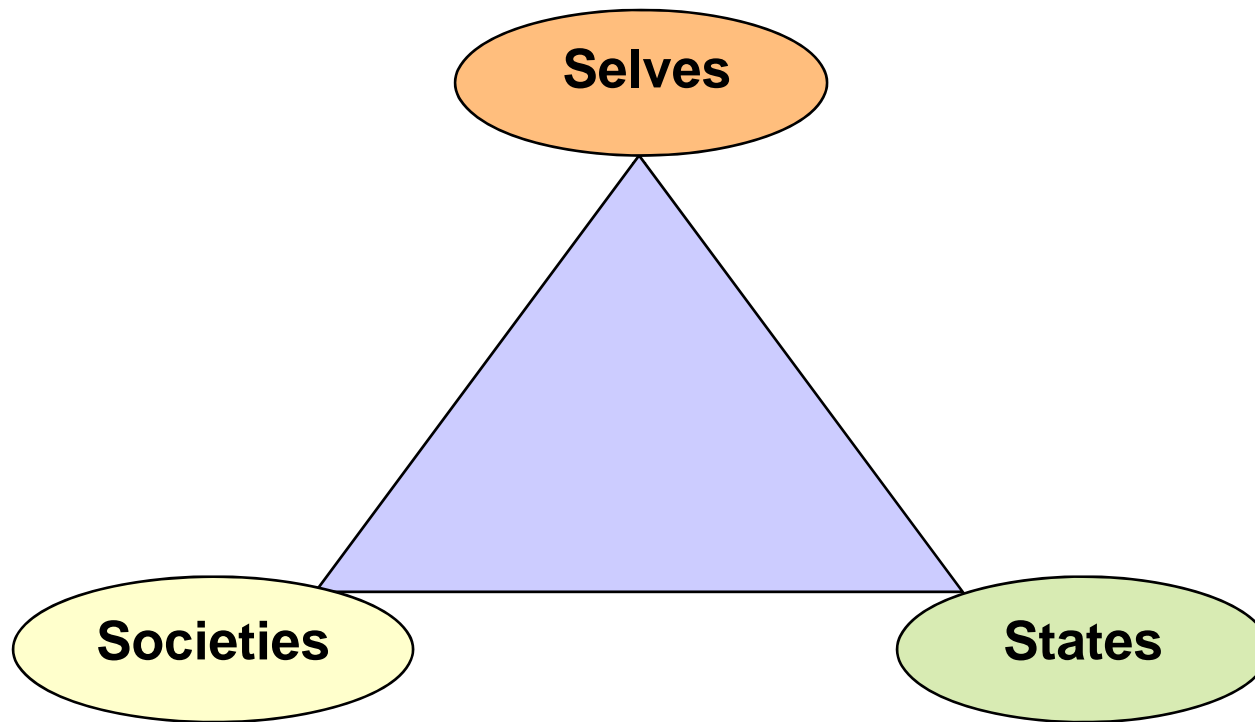
- Conservatives: repeated government record, a few new plans on RDSP and income splitting for families, overall no coherent plan
- Liberals: promised to make the DTC refundable, maintain funding to community programs, change CPP Disability to recognize episodic impairments
- NDP: a significant place 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

- 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

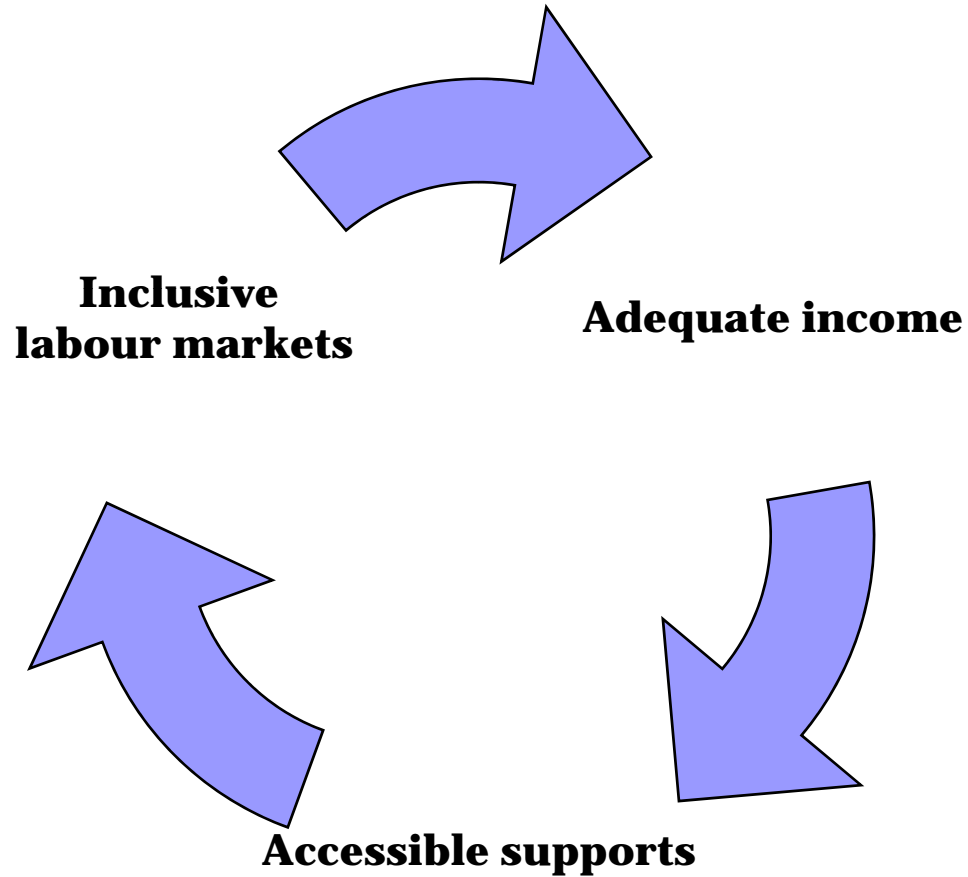
- Federalism: multiple jurisdictions and levels of government
- Cabinets and central agencies (Finance)
- Departmental silos and relations
- Financial frameworks and budgets
- The Charter of Rights, human rights codes, and courts
- Parliamentary governments



# **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





# **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



**50** *years*  
*ans*

**Canadian Association  
for Community Living**

**Association canadienne pour  
l'intégration communautaire**