



News release

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Moncton- New Brunswick food banks usage is still very high.

The 2014 Hunger Count is out and the number of individuals who need food banks in Canada has gone up since last year. What is more important, there has been close to a 25% increase since the economic crisis of 2008.

For New Brunswick, the picture has not changed a lot with 19,590 men, women and children having used food banks in March of this year. Since 2008, we have seen a constant increase in the number of citizens having to use food banks to feed themselves and their family. There have been an a quarter more citizens using food banks since the economic crisis of 2008 meaning the economy has not really picked up.

Number of citizens using food banks in New Brunswick (page 30)

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
19,590	19,989	19,524	18,539	18,517	17,889	15,638

What is distressing is that more than one-third are children under 18 year old, seventeen percent have a job or are on Employment Insurance (so have worked) but close to two-third (63,2%) are on social assistance.

The Hunger Count 2014 report is making the very important statement that there is a real income gap for people who are going to food banks. Their revenue is too low compare to the Market Basket Measure of Low Income. This is very evident for citizens on social assistance. The income gap for social assistance recipients (couple with two children) in our province is the highest of all the province.

Income Gap to the Market Basket Measure of Low Income (page 14)

BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL
32%	32%	24%	29%	28%	22%	37%	33%	21%	28%

There are a number of recommendations made in the report that the NB common Front for Social Justice agrees with.

We are certainly supporting the proposal that the federal government should invest more in affordable housing. We all know how housing takes up a big part of our budget, more so for people living in poverty.

There has to be an increase in the basic rate for citizens having to rely on social assistance to live. We hope the present government will be open to our proposal.

Finally, the level of literacy has to go up. We were happy to read in the Liberal Platform that there was a commitment to implement a comprehensive literacy strategy that involves the public education system, educational researchers, employers and community organizations and a desire to restore the funding to adult literacy cut by the Conservative government.

The annual Hunger Count gives us the picture, but we need to act to change the situation.

For information

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The Common Front for Social Justice is one of the largest democratic and popular organizations in New Brunswick, with close to 75,000 group and individual members. The Common Front brings together individuals as well as local, regional and provincial organizations to work towards the eradication of poverty