



Fast

FACTS

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES - MANITOBA

May 7, 2014

CCPA MB research backs social movements, leveraging change

Evidence-based policy research can exert a powerful force for social change, especially when it stands with the community in its actions and organising. The role of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Manitoba is to inform social movements and to provide them the arguments they need to advocate for a progressive future. In a world where mainstream media too often takes its newsfeed from corporate spin and government news releases, the work CCPA-MB does in providing non-partisan, community-based research is essential for stemming the neoliberal assault on workers, the environment and on our communities.

Our research has been crucial to many of the achievements of Manitoba's social justice organizations over the past 17 years. Most recently, community activists won a major victory when Manitoba's Budget 2014 committed to an increase in welfare rates (also called EIA) that will bring the shelter benefit up to a level equal to 75 per cent of the median market rent. After 20 years of stagnation, basic housing will be within reach for Manitoba's poorest citizens without having to give up most of their budgets for food and other necessities.

Anti-poverty organizers have been fighting for increased shelter benefits for several years. A turning point in this campaign was the publication of the 2009 CCPA-MB report *The View From Here: Manitobans call for a poverty reduction plan*. This community-based document set out a map for what

needs to be done to eliminate poverty in Manitoba. It is heartening to see how many of the recommendations from *The View from Here* have been acted upon, including a recently completed provincial commitment to create 1,500 social housing spaces over five years. More still needs to be done to address poverty, so we working with community partners on an update to *The View From Here* to be published later this year.

Key to the success of *The View From Here* was its community consultative process. CCPA-MB has a strong focus on conducting research grounded in community partnerships. Another example is our annual *State of the Inner City Report*, which celebrates 10 years this year. The *State of the Inner City Report* gives our community partners the opportunity to take the lead in setting research priorities, reversing traditional academic hierarchies between researcher and subject. Partnerships like these have helped Manitoba to become a leader in community development policy and practice.

Last year, Manitoba became only the second province to extend health care coverage to seasonal agricultural migrant workers. The announcement came in response to CCPA-MB research conducted in partnership with the Migrant Workers Solidarity Network.

there is an alternative.

CCPA-MB
765 Main St.
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 3N5

phone

(204) 927-3200

email

ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

website

[www.policyalternatives.ca/
manitoba](http://www.policyalternatives.ca/manitoba)

blog

www.policyfix.ca

twitter

@ccpamb

continued..

The report Migrant Voices found that Agricultural workers work long hours for low pay but are denied many of the basic benefits other Manitoba workers take for granted. Manitoba's economy and food consumers across the continent all benefit from this mobile and underpaid workforce. Manitoba's decision to provide them healthcare coverage undoes one of the most egregious forms of disparity within the migrant labour system.

The influence of CCPA-MB's research has been felt right across the country. The Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues is housed at CCPA-MB. This project conducts research to raise the standard for working people across Canada. Since 2009, the CCPA Living Wage report has set a benchmark for progressive workplace compensation. The Living Wage concept provides a powerful tool for workers seeking a decent minimum standard of living and also for community groups pushing for a stronger social safety net where workplace compensation is insufficient.

We are most pleased that last year we received international recognition in the form of a Community Campus Partnership for Health (CCPH) award for the work we do through the Manitoba Research Alliance (MRA). The MRA conducts community-based research bringing together researchers from Manitoba's major universities and grassroots community organization and activists. Sarena Seifer, executive director of the CCPH explained that the MRA "stood out for its ability to mobilize partners to pursue the systems and policy changes needed to overcome the root causes of poverty, ill health and social exclusion" – an achievement of which CCPA-MB, as lead organization of the MRA, is deeply proud.

Margaret Thatcher famously declared that there is no alternative to economic liberalism. In the name of keeping the economy running, workers must reduce their expectations, eco-systems will suffer

degradation and communities must accept levels of poverty and dislocation. The ideologies of the right that have dominated public discourse for too long, are not themselves products of nature, but are constructs of economic theories and open to challenge and dispute. At the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, as our name suggests, we stand for the notion that there are many alternatives to this unjust economic status quo. Together with the support of the community, we will continue to articulate them and give strength and tools to the courageous activists who fight for those alternatives to be made real.

Josh Brandon, Researcher, CCPA MB

CCPA-MB
765 Main St.
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 3N5

phone
(204) 927-3200

email
ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

website
www.policyalternatives.ca/
manitoba

blog
www.policyfix.ca

twitter
@ccpamb



Fast Facts are produced and distributed free via email. They can be reproduced as an OpEd or opinion piece without obtaining further permission, provided they are not edited, and full credit is given to both the author and the source, CCPA-MB. Please contact CCPA-MB today to begin your free subscription.