



SAINT JOHN
STRONGER
TOGETHER

Sherri Torjman

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PREFACE

Saint John Stronger Together captures how one Canadian city has been successfully breaking

the cycle of poverty by engaging a whole community and applying a comprehensive approach to drive change. This case study highlights Saint John, New Brunswick's 20-year journey.

We want to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 and the escalating challenges for individuals, families, communities and the organizations that are working to reduce the impact. It is our hope that Saint John's lessons learned can assist in guiding community responses in these extraordinary times.

Thank you to Sherri Torjman, our writer, who accepted the task of synthesizing Saint John's journey into a short, impactful and readable document. Sherri was Vice-President of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy for 25 years and is currently a social policy consultant. She has made invaluable contributions to social policy in Canada through her analysis, writing and public speaking on welfare reform, disability income and supports, home care, caregiver needs and community-based poverty reduction.

Thank you to Tamarack Institute, our national partner, who recognized the value of the Saint John story and participated in its development. The Tamarack Institute is the backbone that inspires, challenges and strengthens communities across Canada and beyond, to create ambitious initiatives to bring about transformational population change outcomes. A community and system catalyst, Tamarack has over 20 years of experience in supporting community-based collaborative efforts to reduce poverty in Canada.

JANUARY 2023

THANK YOU TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN SAINT JOHN WHO PROVIDED INPUT TO SHAPE THIS STORY.

Thank you to the United Way Saint John, Kings & Charlotte, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI), Cathy Wright, Duke Creative Collective and the Tamarack Institute, for contributing your resources to this project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the links to specific organizations and initiatives that are inserted throughout this document and listed in the Appendix.

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We recognize and respectfully acknowledge that our interactions take place on traditional lands of Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet.

This is the story of a city that **took charge** to solve a **big problem.**

This is the story of how a community of leaders, from all sectors, rolled up their sleeves. How they worked together to tackle a deeply-rooted social challenge, compounded by a rapidly changing economy, which left too many people behind, destroying lives and shaking the fabric of the city they called home.

This is the story of determination and a commitment to strengthen the economic and social foundations of the community in order to reduce poverty and fuel the economy.

This is the story about removing the roots of poverty by improving education outcomes for children living in poverty, preparing everyone for the future of work, addressing the factors that affect health, and rebuilding wellbeing in neighbourhoods.

This is the story of long-term commitment – because that is what it takes to transform systems to strengthen a city’s future.

Saint John, New Brunswick is not alone in its deep concern for its many residents living in poverty. Cities throughout the country – and indeed the world – are grappling with this tough problem. But the story of Saint John is worth telling because of its unique pathway to poverty reduction and economic growth.

Its story started with helping people meet their basic needs, but evolved over time to the longer-term goal of **breaking the cycle of poverty**. The community is now engaged in a culture shift that moves away from ‘charity for the poor’ to strengthening the economic and social wellbeing of individuals and families.

CREATE

Common Purpose

CARING SAINT JOHN

Saint John is an exceptional place. It is Canada's first incorporated city. With a population of 69,900, it is

known for its heritage, architecture, stunning landscapes, maritime hospitality and resilient culture. It is a vital economic centre for New Brunswick.

During hard times, it has overcome adversity. The people of Saint John care deeply about their community. Everyone pitches in to help. Throughout its history, Saint John has thrived.

But Saint John also has a challenging story, common to many cities. Global economic trends have created monumental changes in the workplace and long-term impact on communities. The gaps in some parts of Canada's social safety net have widened. **Far too many residents have been left behind.**

Saint John has always worked hard to care for residents who live in poverty, with many organizations and volunteers helping. A new spark was lit 25 years ago when 100 local business leaders organized and vowed to get at the root of the poverty problem.

These leaders listened to residents explain their life circumstances and why, despite their best efforts, they were stuck in poverty. Although Saint John had strengthened its economy and jobs were available, the poverty rate had not budged in years. Despite all the services and programs in place, far too many people living in poverty were not moving forward in their lives. Something was missing.

In the early days of this poverty reduction work, community leaders sought to understand more deeply the problem they had observed. They started by **collecting information** on the numbers of Saint John residents actually living on low income. Who were they – and how many?

Their work (released in 2000) revealed that poverty impacted tens of thousands of people:

- 20% of the population lived in poverty – compared to the national average of 12.5% (according to the low income cut-off or LICO measure used at the time)
- One in three children were living in poverty in Saint John compared to one in six in Canada
- Six in ten lone-parent families lived on low income
- Many low-income families lived in five inner-city neighbourhoods where poverty was highly concentrated and generational poverty was common

In addition to this local data, Saint John poverty reduction efforts were influenced by evidence – both academic research and residents’ lived experiences – which led to a focus on ending lifetime poverty, seeded from childhood, as opposed to targeting short-term or situational poverty. Although the social safety net had never been designed to tackle this generational challenge, a focus on families over the long term became the task that Saint John embraced.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Poverty affects the economic and social bottom line. For everyone
- Economic strength and social wellbeing of individuals and families = economic vibrancy for the city and good quality of life for all



Here are some of the lessons learned from the evidence that was gathered:

- Poverty means not having enough money – and more
- It affects where people live, what they eat, what they are able to do, how they feel and how they cope with daily stresses
- Perhaps most serious, poverty can crush hopes and dreams for the future
- It ruins many lives through lack of opportunity and unstable, stressful living conditions. The impact of poverty is almost immediate for children. Vital brain development occurs in the first three years from birth. The early years set the intellectual and emotional foundations of life. Daily adverse living conditions cause deep stress and trauma, which can have lifelong consequences
- Widespread poverty takes a toll on business. The financial security of the community suffers. The economic and social vibrancy of a city are shaken to the core when so many of its residents have limited skills, no steady work and low income. Poverty is a waste of talent. Saint John would be in a state of perpetual economic decline if no action were taken
- The entire community, province and country pay the price when so many residents face unrelenting stress. Poverty raises the cost of health care, income security and government services. It also reduces tax revenues because low-income households have little income on which they owe tax. At \$2 billion annually, the total estimated cost of poverty is equivalent to about 7% of New Brunswick’s GDP (gross domestic product or size of its economy).



COLLABORATIVE SAINT JOHN

What to do in the face of such a tough challenge? Put heads and hearts

together – business, social development leaders and people with lived experience. Take ownership of the problem, learn how to solve it, and then act.

To define the problem more clearly, Saint John undertook additional study to identify who lived in poverty, the barriers they faced, how other communities were successfully tackling the problem and what researchers **recommended as the best solutions**.

Building a better future for the city would require a razor-sharp focus on helping children and parents thrive. It would be essential to improve the ways that Saint John supported vulnerable families, positioning it to strengthen their health, education and employment pathways. The study became a roadmap for new programs to emerge that could **break the cycle of poverty**.

A second spark was lit when a new pan-Canadian network, known as Vibrant Communities, began looking for partners. Spearheaded by three national organizations: **Tamarack**, **Caledon** and **McConnell**, the purpose of the network was to create a national learning partnership. Only communities that brought together diverse sectors to tackle poverty were invited to participate. Saint John was one of seven selected trail blazer communities.

Four Saint John founding partners, each representing a different sector, agreed to work together to form **Vibrant Communities Saint John (VCSJ)**:

- **Human Development Council**
(non-profit social sector)
- **Urban Core Support Network**
(people who live in poverty)
- **Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative**
(business sector)
- **City of Saint John**
(government sector)



At that point, Saint John became both learner and leader. It would learn from poverty reduction efforts being tested elsewhere in the country and the world, and it would provide leadership to other communities interested in its groundbreaking work.

Saint John was the first to:

- develop a poverty reduction strategy with a focus on education, employment and neighbourhoods
- conduct research to help the community understand that poverty was generational and concentrated in neglected neighbourhoods
- strengthen the infrastructure of five neighbourhoods, through the leadership of local organizations and residents

During the Vibrant Communities period (2003-2013), progress was made in introducing new health, education and employment pathways for low-income residents, and improving housing and neighbourhood conditions.

The initial projects that produced excellent results are the pillars that inform and drive Saint John's progress today: **First Steps, Teen Resource Centre, PALS** (Partners Assisting Local Schools), **Saint John Learning Exchange** and **St. Joseph's Community Health Centre**, along with five neighbourhood organizations. These programs integrate services and funds to wrap fundamental resources around the children, youth and adults, to remove barriers to life progress. These pillars interconnect and are in place for the long term.

Saint John's leadership group expanded to include the **United Way Saint John, Horizon Health Network**, the **Anglophone South School District, University of New Brunswick - Saint John**, New Brunswick **Department of Social Development** and **PETL** (Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour), and other foundations, businesses and community groups.

After 10 years of collaboration, learning, and improvement, community-wide consultations were held once again to revisit Saint John's priorities. The next iteration of the poverty reduction strategy was starting to emerge. In 2014, VCSJ evolved into a new entity called **Living SJ**, which became part of a national and international movement employing **Collective Impact** as its organizing framework.

Collective Impact is used by neighborhoods, cities, and regions around the world to solve complex problems. The method brings together diverse people and organizations, blending their unique talents with their commitment to a shared vision. In Saint John's case, that vision was ending generational poverty.

Saint John's local placed-based work continued to receive support from the Tamarack Institute, and a network of more than 330 municipalities and regions committed to ending poverty. Saint John's long history of progress began to be **recognized on a national level**.

Here at home, several hundred individuals, groups and organizations have contributed to the Collective Impact effort over the last decade. Many of these partners have also been engaged in key projects, supported by a \$10 million **Social Innovation Fund** (SIF) announced by the New Brunswick government in 2018 as a community-based approach to breaking generational poverty. SIF projects identified successful practices with potential for significant return on investment and could be applied beyond Saint John.

Through the Social Innovation Fund, the Provincial government entrusted the community with making key funding decisions and supporting ground-breaking research and development in the social sector. Both these approaches were unprecedented.

Collective Impact is not a perfect framework – no framework is. But it has enabled communities to achieve better results. In fact, the Collective Impact approach has strengthened the capacity of Saint John to:

- increase community connections
- change the way partners work together
- centre the voice of lived/living experience as experts for the first time
- enhance the community’s capacity to evaluate impact by including the partners’ commitment to measurement
- raise awareness of poverty and make it a priority in the city

Over the years, other noteworthy developments have influenced the work of Saint John and New Brunswick more generally. In 2009, the province announced a five-year ***Economic and Social Inclusion Plan. Overcoming Poverty Together*** set out 28 priority actions, with interventions clustered into several pillars: community empowerment, learning, and economic and social inclusion.

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation as well as 12 Community Inclusion Networks were created at that time. Saint John was designated as one of the networks.

In 2018, the federal government introduced Canada’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy. ***Opportunity for All*** included an official poverty line and clear targets for reducing poverty. A National Advisory Council on Poverty was also enshrined in law.

Saint John played a significant role in the development of both the provincial and federal strategies. All this to say: the story of Saint John Stronger Together has a remarkable and enduring history. Its central purpose over time – **to break the cycle of poverty** – has remained the same. The question of how best to do this was a key challenge. As lessons are learned and progress is made, new priorities emerge.



LESSONS LEARNED:

- Strong leadership is the foundation of a Collective Impact initiative. It includes a special kind of leadership from behind, which builds a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. A strong, experienced backbone with local roots must be adequately resourced to drive constant learning and measurement of progress
- The action plan to break the cycle of poverty in Saint John was constructed in a deliberate way. An influential leadership team built on research, reports, facts and meetings with community members. It worked across disciplines to understand the multiple barriers and unique needs of individuals and families
- Collaboration and coordination across all sectors build the capacity of local leaders to reduce poverty and break its cycle. Collective Impact starts with creating the collective
- Poverty reduction efforts must engage all voices and views – especially those of people with lived experience. Their contribution is evident when they speak publicly, serve on boards of directors or help develop projects. Their insights are uniquely grounded in day-to-day experience and enable the community to figure out how to do better

The community-based leadership team knew it had to act strategically to be successful in breaking the cycle of poverty, through a collective impact approach. Based on data, solid research evidence and consultation, the team identified three key strategic areas:

- **education: to close the education achievement gap from cradle to career**
 - **employment: to build skills and bridges to paid work**
- **neighbourhood: to create healthy and vibrant mixed-income neighbourhoods**

Each strategic area set unique targets, identified leadership and established teams from various sectors and organizations. Each team established action plans that built on promising initiatives already under way. Leaders were strategically chosen to chair each pillar. For instance, the education pillar was chaired by the school district superintendent and a well-respected business leader.

Together, these strategies built a stronger, more resilient Saint John. Here are just a few examples of the ground-breaking work.

Learn AND Take Action Together

SMART SAINT JOHN

The largest group of children who struggle in school live in poverty. Many reside in inner-city neighbourhoods where low income is highly concentrated and generational poverty has taken hold.

The children in these households lack the opportunities to thrive, graduate from high school, gain employment and achieve economic stability later on.

Children burdened by social and economic disadvantage are at greatest risk of a lifetime of poverty. It is essential to intervene to ensure that these children are off to a good start in life and achieve their education.

In 2000, Saint John leaders made a commitment to embrace this challenge. Over the years, they supported the development of 'best practice' programs and projects led by schools, community organizations and businesses. These initiatives enrich children's learning environments and act as stepping-stones that enable at-risk children to succeed in school and in life.

Examples of these programs and projects include the Early Childhood HUBS, the When Children Succeed (K-2) project, the PALS program, and the community's suite of supports for 'at-risk' teens.

Early Childhood HUBS set up in neighbourhood schools by a collective of early childhood leaders provide multiple services and programs that contribute to the wellbeing of children from birth to age five and support parents in their vital role.

A focus on improving children's experiences in their earliest years has been found to reduce poverty for both children and their caregivers as they age. Investments in early childhood education with wraparound supports for both children and their families can produce great success and a high return on investment.

When Children Succeed, (K-2) a partnership of Anglophone South School District, the Government of New Brunswick, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative and Living SJ, is a vital program for the children in the early grades.

This initiative provides additional staff for the K-2 classrooms in the elementary schools that serve low-income neighbourhoods. Children who live in poverty often enter Kindergarten, behind in their development compared to other children. Helping them to quickly catch up to their peer group is essential.

Early literacy is fundamental. Children who cannot read by Grade 3 are six times less likely to graduate. Students in the program receive intensive individualized assistance to build their social, literacy and numeracy skills. The program is closing the gap and putting the students on the right trajectory for school and life success.

The excellent results from this initiative caused the Government of New Brunswick to announce, in June 2022, that it would fully fund the program for the next two years and apply the learnings to help more NB children succeed.

The PALS program - Partners Assisting Local Schools - has inspired hundreds of organizations from all sectors to partner with schools to help ensure every child has equitable opportunity to succeed, from K to 12. Together, the partners address basic needs and enrich the learning environment for the children and youth, in school and out of school, year-round.

High School Success - Another goal of the poverty intervention work is to **support ‘at risk’ teenagers**, to stay in school and graduate, be ready for employment and be equipped for continuing education and training.

Led by the Teen Resource Centre and their Pathways to Education program as well as the Promise Partnership Program at UNB’s Saint John campus, PALS En Route to Success and First Steps, specialized programs have been established in school and in community to achieve this goal.

These programs are all demonstrating high success rates. Each year, more teens are graduating from school and are ready for their next step in life.

Over the past 20 years, the growth of community contributions and quality programs for children has been astounding. High school graduation rates have increased from 50% to 70% in the low income neighbourhoods (compared to 90% for the rest of the city’s students). The gap is closing and Saint John is determined to close it completely within the next decade.

Many other best-practice programs are helping to close the education gap. They are listed in the Appendix at the back of this document.

The investment recognizes that the creation of vibrant communities that support educational success will help break the cycle of poverty. When Children Succeed, everyone succeeds.

The return on investment in the education pathway has proven to be significant, widespread and long-lasting. The impact on children and youth is immediate and life-changing. Parents feel supported and valued. Schools and neighbourhoods embrace the additional supports and associated successes. All contributors are proud of the children’s progress.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Children thrive when their families are healthy. Individuals and families do well when they live in supportive communities
- Helping every child succeed from cradle to career is a vital responsibility that cities/communities must embrace. Parents and educators are not able to do this alone, neither can the individual services. All sectors need to work together to understand the education gaps and organize diverse resources to address them. Communities, ready to lead collective action, are the conduits for change
- Investments in early childhood education also provide an economic benefit, helping caregivers to get and keep jobs on which communities depend
- How every child is prepared and equipped today matters more than ever for a healthy and prosperous tomorrow

SKILLED SAINT JOHN

In order to contribute to a Skilled Saint John, community leaders began to seek ways of helping at-risk adults and youth find their path to employment.

These individuals often struggle with multiple barriers related to poor housing, food insecurity, family breakdown, mental health issues and addiction. Any one – and certainly all – of these factors can seriously impede school attendance, training and employment. The challenges are not unique to Saint John. Both automation and the rise of precarious work have made it difficult for jobseekers of all ages and in many communities to find decent, stable employment. The COVID pandemic complicated matters by restricting access to education, training and essential supports.

Learning that 2,000 Saint John youth, ages 15 to 30, were not in education, training or employment, three organizations – the **Human Development Council**, **Saint John Learning Exchange** and the **Teen Resource Centre** – collaborated to establish a new program and secure federal funding. The **Urban Youth Employment and Education Service** (UYES!), now in its fifth year, successfully works with young adults who are at risk to:

- stabilize their lives by addressing their health and housing barriers and basic needs
- participate in community projects that build confidence, skills, purpose and relationships
- continue their education and secure a high school diploma
- enter post-secondary and training programs with secured funding and support
- gain employment experience and sustain a decent job that provides economic stability

The evaluations for UYES! have confirmed that this multi-service program, providing wrap-around support, is meeting and exceeding the education and employment targets established with the funder. Investment in UYES! is achieving solid economic impact for the youth and the community. The three partner organizations work well together and have built strong relationships in the community to better address chronic gaps in services, supports and opportunities for youth.

A similar multi-pronged program for older adults, who lack education credentials and/or employment experience, has successfully operated in Saint John for over 25 years. Led by the Saint John Learning Exchange, this program is celebrated as a best practice. It is funded by PETL in a new way for non-profits: performance-based funding. A five-year contract pays the Learning Exchange to achieve agreed-upon education and employment benchmarks.



More than 100 local businesses have been partnering with the Saint John Learning Exchange. The businesses appreciate the opportunity to help prepare and secure employees who are trained and ready for the job, and they report a high retention rate.

Additionally, the Saint John Learning Exchange owns three social enterprises that serve the community, and provide training and employment opportunities for their participants. The workers also learn about developing and operating a business. The social enterprises work towards paying their employees a 'living wage' – an hourly rate, higher than minimum wage, which is actual cost of essential services (housing, food, transportation, etc) and living a decent life.

The SJ Learning Exchange and the Human Development Council, along with other non-profits, social enterprises and micro-enterprises, are co-located in the **Social Enterprise Hub** in the heart of the city. The building was developed through the leadership of *Kaleidoscope Social Impact* to help organizations work together to reduce poverty and build community.

Building on the success of these programs, a community-wide strategy is in the making to strengthen the pathways to employment.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- The Saint John approach begins with people. The partners kept asking questions about the lives of people trapped in poverty. For example, what do young people need to graduate from school? Asking questions based on real-life experience helps drive responses that are relevant and appropriate
- Leaders from community, government and business need to collaborate to test new approaches; monitor, encourage and support continuous progress; and scale up what works. Learning together is key
- The partners are learning together how their respective organizations can work differently for better results. They need to embrace innovative approaches that let go of traditional ways



HEALTHY AND VIBRANT SAINT JOHN

A key objective of Saint John's poverty reduction initiative is to foster healthy and vibrant communities. It is not possible to create a Smart

Saint John or a Skilled Saint John in the absence of strong, supportive neighbourhoods.

A guiding principle of this poverty reduction work is to build on the community assets already in place. Five organizations (**Carleton Community Centre**, **Crescent Valley Resource Centre**, **ONE Change**, **PULSE**, and **Waterloo Village**) in the Saint John priority neighbourhoods were already delivering a range of essential programs and services in response to residents' needs.

Neighbourhood organizations are often the first responder in assisting residents who face health, housing or financial challenges. They help increase resources for residents through partnerships with governments and community services. They are also well regarded for engaging residents and building neighbourhood spirit – an important benefit for the entire community.

Despite their valuable work, neighbourhood organizations face challenges in communicating their unique approaches and impact on residents' lives. To help explain their important contributions, a partnership was created with the Impact Measurement and Evaluation Team of the **Greater Saint John Community Foundation**. Its purpose was to assist these organizations in assessing their effectiveness and demonstrate the difference they are making in their respective neighbourhoods.




A core task for each local organization was to develop its theory of change – a map that sets out the relationships between the activities undertaken and the desired outcomes of these efforts. Formulating these theories of change enabled community leaders to articulate their unique approaches and impact on both individual residents and the neighbourhood as a whole. The theories of change also highlighted opportunities for joint learning and collaboration among the five neighbourhoods.

Was the effort successful? The initial investment of \$100,000 generated a return of \$680,500 (\$6.81 per dollar invested) in improved services and outcomes. The five community organizations are now in a stronger position by being able to explain why their work is vital to the health and vibrancy of the neighbourhood.

In spring 2021, four of the neighbourhood organizations received \$458,000 over two years through the Social Innovation Fund to build on the initial project. They hired four full-time **Neighbourhood Developers** who continue to build relationships with residents, assess needs and track the effectiveness of their programs.





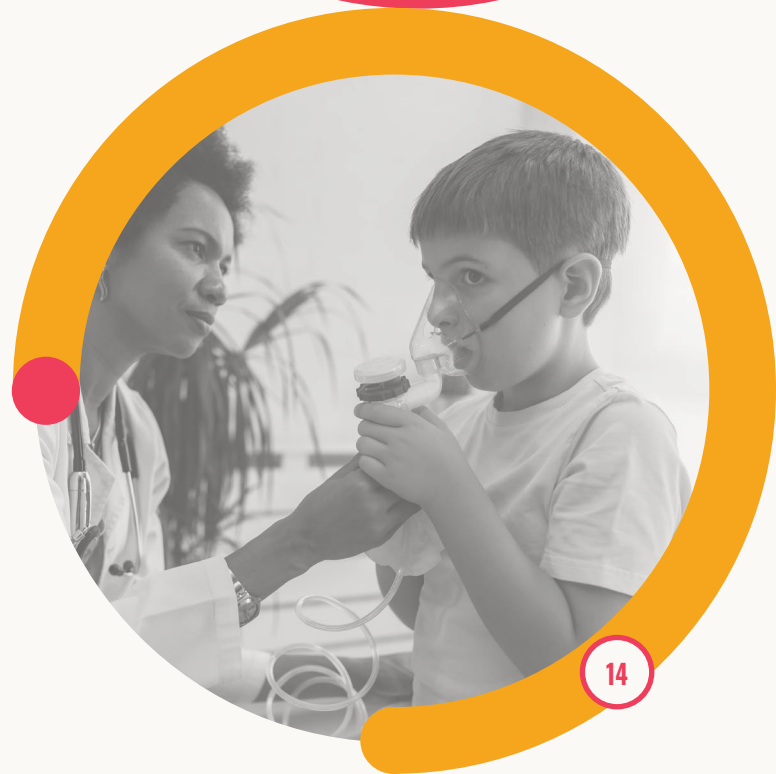
Several other noteworthy initiatives are currently under way in Saint John neighbourhoods. In the area of health care, for example, the data pointed to a higher use of emergency services for residents in a defined geographic community. The numbers were a call to action that spurred the creation of the **North End Wellness Centre** (NEW-C). This model of primary health care, which includes addiction and mental health services, has resulted in lower use (44% reduction for non-urgent care) of emergency health services and improved access to primary care. The hope is to scale this successful model to other Saint John neighborhoods and beyond.

The **Pediatrics on Princess POP Centre** is a vital contributor to breaking the poverty cycle and reducing family trauma and toxic stress that can harm a child for life. It's a family-friendly place led by an interdisciplinary team of health and social service professionals. The NB Social Pediatrics team helps families, who face health and social-economic challenges, to remove key roadblocks that affect their children's health, build essential skills and participate in community experiences that help the children thrive. The Centre builds partnerships with others in the community to continually support the wellbeing of families and their journey out of poverty.

Work is also being undertaken to support the growing number of individuals challenged by unaffordable housing and homelessness. The City of Saint John is leading the development of an affordable housing strategy. Non-profit agencies are working with local and provincial governments to build or renovate affordable housing with wraparound supports. A new initiative is also being piloted to house and provide supports to 35 'at risk' youth. These targeted efforts are seeing positive results, despite challenging times.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- While governments play a vital role in reducing poverty, the leadership must always come from the community. Community-based partners can colour outside the box. They can engage unusual suspects to work together. Residents and the associations that they form are best positioned to identify the most pressing challenges and impactful solutions
- The Saint John poverty initiative combines interventions and resources in new ways. The community is nimble, innovative and creative in its approaches. It can take the long road – unlike governments, which must often plan around two- to four-year election cycles
- New approaches are tested by rooting interventions deeply in neighbourhoods and mixing and matching services that used to be delivered in 'silos'
- Work with entire households where appropriate and stay with individuals and families over the long term



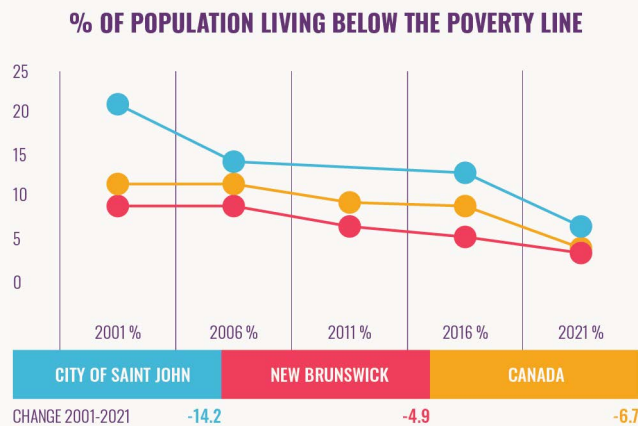
Assess Results AND Apply Lessons Learned

ASPIRING SAINT JOHN

Over the past 20 years, Saint John has strengthened the ability of the community to improve social and economic conditions that build a better future for all. The community continues to set bold targets, develop impactful approaches and seek measures to show progress over time.

Every initiative that has been created tracks its results and all have reported progress helping thousands of Saint John residents along their pathway out of poverty. The collective effort is working. Here are just a few examples of the positive results achieved over the years:

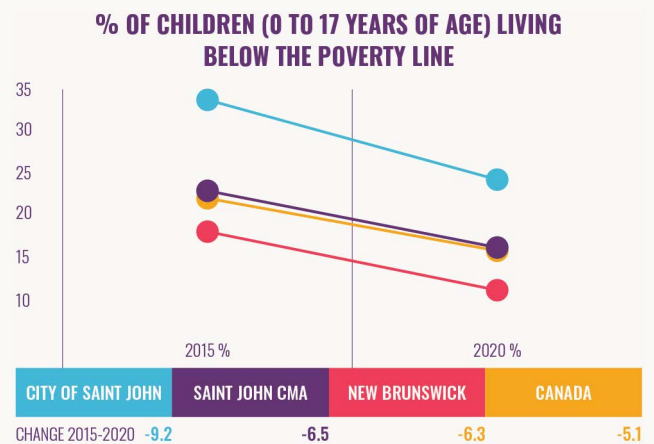
THE POVERTY RATE IN THE CITY OF SAINT JOHN HAS DROPPED OVER THE TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD



Source: Statistics Canada Census Measure: **Low Income Cut-Off, After Tax (LICO-AT)**. The statistics were compiled by BICAPI with help from local partners, Human Development Council and Community Foundation.

- Statistics Canada has multiple poverty measures. The LICO measure is used for this chart because it's the only consistent measure that can be compared over 20 years for these three geographies.
- 2011 data for Saint John is not reported here because 'community' data was considered unreliable due to a change in the way LICO data was collected. (Data from the voluntary census survey, rather than the mandatory survey, was applied.)

THE POVERTY RATE AMONG CHILDREN HAS DECLINED BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Census measure – **Low Income Measure-After Tax (LIM-AT)**

- Statistics Canada applies multiple ways to measure poverty. The LIM-AT measure is currently the only available measure to compare the 2015 and 2020 rates for these four geographies.
- In 2020, many households received government assistance in response to COVID challenges. These subsidies, were temporary, and have affected child poverty rates.

PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN CLOSING THE EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN LOW-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOODS

- More children are entering Kindergarten ready for school, from 70-80%
- Students in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and 2 are meeting the early literacy benchmarks for their grade
- High school graduation rates have risen from 50-70% (compared to 90% for the rest of the city)

PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN MEETING THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS

- Of the 412 youth who participated in UYES programs between 2018 and 2021, 117 transitioned into full or part-time employment, 56 completed the Adult High School Diploma, 150 completed credits towards their Adult High School Diploma and 22 went on to post-secondary education, many of whom are first-generation attendees
- Through a five-year Social Return on Investment analysis, the Saint John Learning Exchange demonstrated a \$7.50 social and economic return on every \$1 invested. They continue to innovate and enhance their wraparound service delivery model to help adults and youth achieve their educational and employment goals in order to break the cycle of generational poverty

FROM 2000 TO 2017, SAINT JOHN SAW A 17% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE CASES

At this juncture, the Vibrant Communities/Living SJ backbone has wound down. It is making way for a new regional approach to tackling social and economic priorities as part of the New Brunswick government's **Local Governance Reform**. Local government must continue to be a central player in sustaining the poverty reduction efforts in Saint John.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Communities need to row with common purpose in order to invest wisely and achieve impact that lasts
- No single intervention alone can substantially reduce generational poverty. Comprehensive programs with wraparound supports work best
- A two-generation focus, involving both children and adults, is required to help families progress together. Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty is a long-term goal and takes time to achieve the intended impact
- The earlier these strategic interventions begin, the better the results for individuals, families and neighbourhoods
- Strong partnerships must be built with senior government leaders and major funders to test and evaluate creative interventions and to scale up good practices



Perhaps most important at this threshold, Saint John remains committed to long-term change as it aspires to tackle generational poverty and to reform the systems that maintain the status quo. Progress along the education, employment and basic quality of life pathways out of poverty is helping to **break the cycle of poverty.**

The community has skillfully woven together the multiple threads that collectively strengthen the social fabric and economic vibrancy of Saint John.

**THERE IS NO BETTER
RETURN ON INVESTMENT.**



Appendix: Partners AND Resources

EDUCATION

ACHIEVE LITERACY GSJ

ACHIEVE LITERACY GREATER SAINT JOHN — BCAPI

ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

[HTTP://WEB1.NBED.NB.CA/SITES/ASD-S/PAGES/WELCOME.ASPX](http://web1.nbed.nb.ca/sites/asd-s/pages/welcome.aspx)

BEE ME KIDZ

BEE ME KIDZ - UNLEASHING A CHILD'S LIFE AND LEARNING POTENTIAL

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

HOME | BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF SAINT JOHN

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

BGC GREATER SAINT JOHN ([SJBGCLUB.COM](http://sjbgclub.com))

BRILLIANT LABS

MAKER-CENTERED LEARNING | BRILLIANT LABS LABOS CRÉATIFS | ATLANTIC CANADA

EARLY CHILDHOOD HUBS

EARLY CHILDHOOD HUBS – YMCA OF GREATER SAINT JOHN

FAMILY AND CHILD EDUCATION (FACE)

FAMILY AND CHILD EDUCATION (FACE) | INTERVENTION | NEW BRUNSWICK ([FACENB.CA](http://facenb.ca))

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (SAINT JOHN)

THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE SAINT JOHN INC. - FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE SAINT JOHN INC ([FRC-CRFSAINTEJOHN.COM](http://frc-crfsaintjohn.com))

NB COMMUNITY COLLEGE – SAINT JOHN

NBCC SAINT JOHN CAMPUS

PARTNERS ASSISTING LOCAL SCHOOLS (PALS)

ASD-S | PALS ([NBED.NB.CA](http://nbed.nb.ca))

PALS EN ROUTE TO SUCCESS

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ([NBED.NB.CA](http://nbed.nb.ca))

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION

PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION | TEEN RESOURCE CENTRE ([TRC4YOUTH.CA](http://trc4youth.ca))

PROMISE PARTNERSHIP

PROMISE PARTNERSHIP | UNB

P.R.O. KIDS

P.R.O. KIDS | CITY OF SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

TEEN RESOURCE CENTRE

TEEN RESOURCE CENTRE | FOR YOUTH IN SAINT JOHN ([TRC4YOUTH.CA](http://trc4youth.ca))

SISTEMA

SAINT JOHN CENTRE | SISTEMA ([SISTEMANB.CA](http://sistemamb.ca))

YMCA GREATER SAINT JOHN

YMCA OF GREATER SAINT JOHN – BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

EMPLOYMENT

DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

EMPLOYMENT - DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS | NEW BRUNSWICK ([211.CA](http://211.ca))

ENVISION SAINT JOHN

ENVISION SAINT JOHN: THE REGIONAL GROWTH AGENCY

KALEIDOSCOPE

KALEIDOSCOPE SOCIAL IMPACT ([KALEIDOSCOPEIMPACT.COM](http://kaleidoscopeimpact.com))

OUTFLOW

[HOME - OUTFLOW \(OUTFLOWSJ.COM\)](https://outflowsj.com)

SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE

[HOME - SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE \(SJLE.ORG\)](https://sjle.org)

URBAN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION SERVICES (UYES!)

[UYES! - HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL \(SJHDC.CA\)](https://sjhdc.ca)

YMCA NEWCOMERS CONNECTIONS

[NEWCOMER CONNECTIONS - YMCA OF GREATER SAINT JOHN](https://ymca.ca)

WATERLOO VILLAGE

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WATERLOOVILLAGEASSOCIATION/COMMUNITY/?REF=PAGE_INTERNAL](https://www.facebook.com/waterloovillageassociation/community/?ref=page_internal)

SAINT JOHN NON-PROFIT HOUSING

[HTTPS://WWW.SJNPH.NET](https://www.sjnph.net)

ST. JOSEPH'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

[HTTPS://HORIZONNB.CA/FACILITIES/ST-JOSEPHS-HEALTH-CENTRE/](https://horizonnb.ca/facilities/st-josephs-health-centre/)

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

[HTTPS://SJLE.ORG/WOMENS-EMPOWERMENT-NETWORK/](https://sjle.org/womens-empowerment-network/)

HEALTHY PEOPLE - HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOODS

FIRST STEPS

[HOME | FIRST STEPS HOUSING PROJECT INC | BABY | SAINT JOHN \(FIRSTSTEPSNB.CA\)](https://firststepsnb.ca)

HORIZON HEALTH NETWORK

[HOME - HORIZON HEALTH NETWORK \(HORIZONNB.CA\)](https://horizonnb.ca)

HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

[SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS \(HOUSINGALTERNATIVES.CA\)](https://housingalternatives.ca)

PEDIATRICS ON PRINCESS POP CENTRE

[HTTPS://WWW.NBSOCIALPEDIATRICS.COM/](https://www.nbsocialpediatrics.com/)

NORTH END WELLNESS CENTRE (NEW-C)

[HTTPS://HORIZONNB.CA/FACILITIES/NORTH-END-WELLNESS-CENTRE/](https://horizonnb.ca/facilities/north-end-wellness-centre/)

NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

CARLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE

[HTTPS://WWW.CARLETONCOMMUNITYCENTRE.CA](https://www.carletoncommunitycentre.ca)

CRESCENT VALLEY RESOURCE CENTRE

[HTTPS://CRESCENTVALLEYRESOURCECENTRE.CA](https://crescentvalleyresourcecentre.ca)

ONE CHANGE

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ONECHANGEINC](https://www.facebook.com/onechangeinc)

PEOPLE UNITED LOWER SOUTH END (PULSE)

[HTTPS://PULSESJ.CA/SERVICES/](https://pulsesj.ca/services/)

POVERTY REDUCTION SAINT JOHN

BUSINESS COMMUNITY ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVE

[HTTPS://WWW.BCAPI.CA](https://www.bcapl.ca)

CITY OF SAINT JOHN

[HTTPS://SAINTJOHN.CA/EN](https://saintjohn.ca/en)

GREATER SAINT JOHN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

[HTTPS://THECOMMUNITYFOUNDATIONSJ.COM](https://thecommunityfoundationsj.com)

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

[HTTPS://SJHDC.CA](https://sjhdc.ca)

NEW BRUNSWICK CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

[HTTP://NBCHILDREN.COM](http://nbchildren.com)

SISTERS OF CHARITY IC

[HTTP://SISTERSOFCHARITYIC.COM](http://sistersofcharityic.com)

UNITED WAY SAINT JOHN, KINGS & CHARLOTTE COUNTIES

[HTTPS://UNITEDWAYSAINTEJOHN.COM](https://unitedwaysaintjohn.com)

NEW BRUNSWICK AND CANADA

GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

[ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION CORPORATION HTTPS://WWW2.GNB.CA/CONTENT/GNB/EN/DEPARTMENTS/ESIC.HTML](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic.html)

EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

[HTTPS://WWW2.GNB.CA/CONTENT/GNB/EN/DEPARTMENTS/EDUCATION.HTML](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education.html)

HEALTH

[HEALTH - NEW BRUNSWICK \(GNB.CA\)](#)

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LABOUR

[HTTPS://WWW2.GNB.CA/CONTENT/GNB/EN/DEPARTMENTS/POST-SECONDARY_EDUCATION_TRAINING_AND_LABOUR.HTML](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour.html)

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

[REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION - NEW BRUNSWICK \(GNB.CA\)](#)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

[HTTPS://WWW2.GNB.CA/CONTENT/GNB/EN/DEPARTMENTS/SOCIAL_DEVELOPMENT.HTML](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development.html)

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA:

[HTTPS://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/EMPLOYMENT-SOCIAL-DEVELOPMENT/PROGRAMS/POVERTY-REDUCTION/REPORTS/STRATEGY.HTML](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/reports/strategy.html)

TAMARACK INSTITUTE – CITIES ENDING POVERTY

[TAMARACK INSTITUTE \(TAMARACKCOMMUNITY.CA\)](#)

POVERTY AND PLENTY STUDY

[HTTPS://UNITEDWAYSAINTEJOHN.COM/MOVEMENT-TO-BREAK-CYCLE-OF-POVERTY/](https://unitedwaysaintjohn.com/movement-to-break-cycle-of-poverty/)

SAINT JOHN POVERTY STUDIES – 2000, 2010, 2020

[HTTPS://WWW.BCAPI.CA/POVERTY-STUDIES](https://www.bcapic.ca/poverty-studies)

SAINT JOHN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPERS

[HTTPS://THECOMMUNITYFOUNDATIONSJ.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2022/06/NEIGHBOURHOOD-DEVELOPERS-WEBSITE.PDF](https://thecommunityfoundationsj.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Neighbourhood-Developers-Website.pdf)

STATISTICS CANADA: LOW INCOME CUT OFF (LICO)

[HTTPS://WWW150.STATCAN.GC.CA/N1/PUB/75F0002M/2012002/LICO-SFR-ENG.HTM](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lico-sfr-eng.htm)

STATISTICS CANADA: LOW-INCOME MEASURE, AFTER TAX (LIM-AT)

[HTTPS://WWW12.STATCAN.GC.CA/CENSUS-RECENSEMENT/2021/REF/DICT/AZ/DEFINITION-ENG.CFM?ID=FAM021](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/definition-eng.cfm?id=fam021)

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND

[THE SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND – COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SJ \(THECOMMUNITYFOUNDATIONSJ.COM\)](#)

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES SAINT JOHN

[HTTPS://UNITEDWAYSAINTEJOHN.COM/MOVEMENT-TO-BREAK-CYCLE-OF-POVERTY/](https://unitedwaysaintjohn.com/movement-to-break-cycle-of-poverty/)

WHEN CHILDREN SUCCEED: A 3-YEAR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

[HTTPS://WWW.BCAPI.CA/WHEN-CHILDREN-SUCCEED](https://www.bcapic.ca/when-children-succeed)

UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK SAINT JOHN

[HTTPS://WWW.UNB.CA/INITIATIVES/UCSI/](https://www.unb.ca/initiatives/ucsi/)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CASE STUDY | FOUR PHASES OF POVERTY REDUCTION IN SAINT JOHN

[HTTPS://WWW.TAMARACKCOMMUNITY.CA/LIBRARY/CASE-STUDY-FOUR-PHASES-OF-POVERTY-REDUCTION-IN-SAINT-JOHN](https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/case-study-four-phases-of-poverty-reduction-in-saint-john)

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

[CI AT A GLANCE TOOL APRIL 2017.PDF \(TAMARACKCOMMUNITY.CA\)](#)

COMMUNITIES ENDING POVERTY

[COMMUNITIES ENDING POVERTY \(TAMARACKCOMMUNITY.CA\)](#)

LIVING SJ

[HTTPS://UNITEDWAYSAINTEJOHN.COM/MOVEMENT-TO-BREAK-CYCLE-OF-POVERTY/](https://unitedwaysaintjohn.com/movement-to-break-cycle-of-poverty/)



United Way
Saint John, Kings
& Charlotte