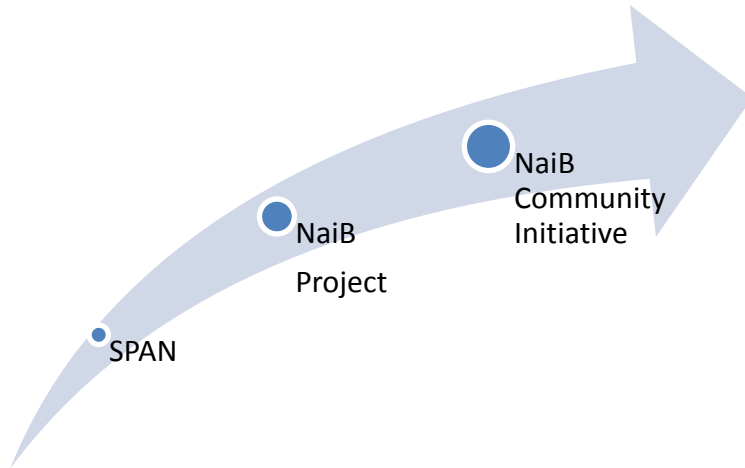




Poverty Reduction Strategy
2017-2018

October 2016

Introduction



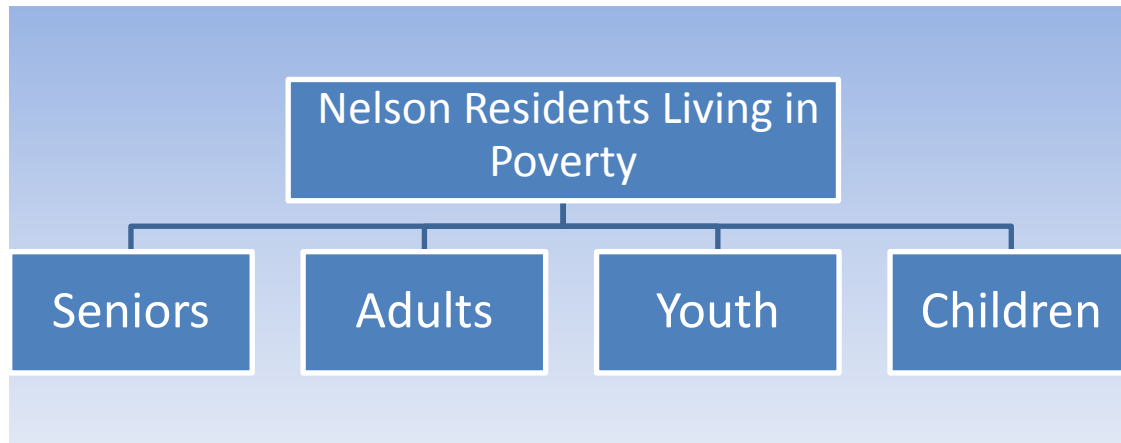
Nelson at its Best (NaiB) is a community project initiated and sponsored by the Nelson Social Planning Action Network (SPAN) Society in 2013 for the purposes of examining the nature and scope of poverty in Nelson and beginning to reduce the impacts of poverty, where possible. Two years were spent learning from and building relationships with people from all sectors of our community as well as other poverty reduction groups across our region, province, and country. We have reviewed and analyzed relevant literature and statistics to gain a better understanding of the issue and in particular how poverty manifests in Nelson. We have reached out into the community to learn from and engage residents and organizations in this work. And from there, we have developed a **Poverty Reduction Framework** (below) which led to a set of priorities, strategies, and activities to be undertaken moving forward. This **Poverty Reduction Strategy** document is intended to move Nelson at its Best along a continuum from a 'project' toward functioning as a 'community initiative' to end poverty in Nelson.

Poverty Reduction Framework (4 Pillars for a Healthy Community)



The Poverty Reduction Strategy

Year 1 outcomes highlighted that all demographic sectors of the population in Nelson are impacted by poverty.

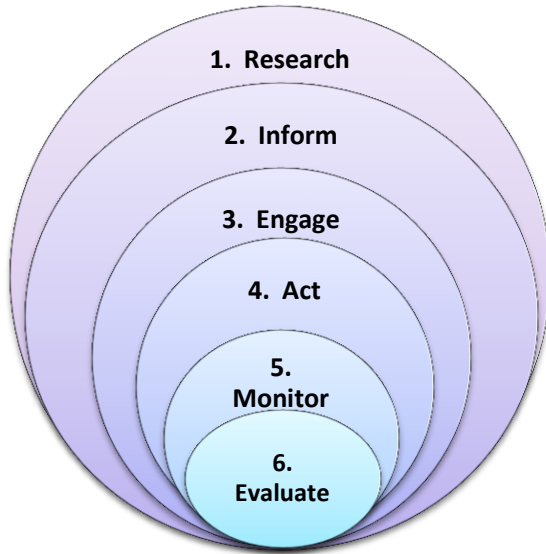


Work in Year 2 included analysing tax-filer, Statistics Canada, and other data in order to prioritize specific demographic sectors of the population and specific areas of intervention for both immediate and longer-term planning purposes. The goal was to develop a flexible strategy that could respond to the changing landscape of poverty yet remain consistent with a set of long-term guiding principles and the Poverty Reduction Framework. This document reflects NaiB's efforts to transform the learning achieved during Years 1 and 2 of this project into a strategy for the future. (For a detailed outline of year 2 activities see [Year 2 Final Report: October 2016](#)).

Guiding Principles

- *actively engages and gives voice to people experiencing poverty*
- *promotes human rights-based approaches in responding to poverty*
- *recognizes the need for innovation and systems change and is willing to pilot new ideas*
- *knows that ending poverty requires solutions that can be easily replicated and scaled up*
- *believes that everyone in community must be involved for lasting, positive change to happen*
- *aims to operate as a community initiative rather than as a conventional organization*

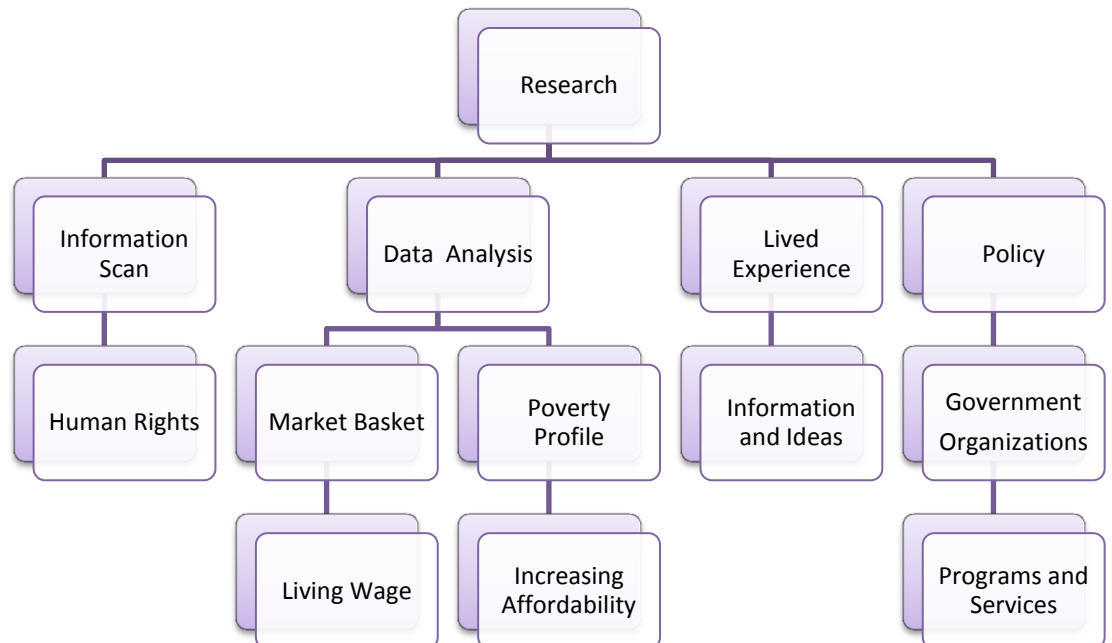
Scope of Work:



Poverty is a complex issue requiring significant data gathering and analysis to understand and identify opportunities for effective intervention. For any community initiative, implementing effective interventions requires community awareness and understanding in order to engage people in the work. Individuals and organizations must be engaged on a level that inspires action – even if that action is simply a response to FACEBOOK or a blog post. Actions must be monitored and the results of that monitoring evaluated. Monitoring and evaluation are forms of research that renew the work cycle and enable good decisions to be made about additional research requirements and future efforts to inform, engage and inspire action.

1. Research

Undertaking research on poverty is a time-consuming but central requirement of the work of Nelson at its Best. This diagram illustrates the core research work of NaiB at present. New research themes

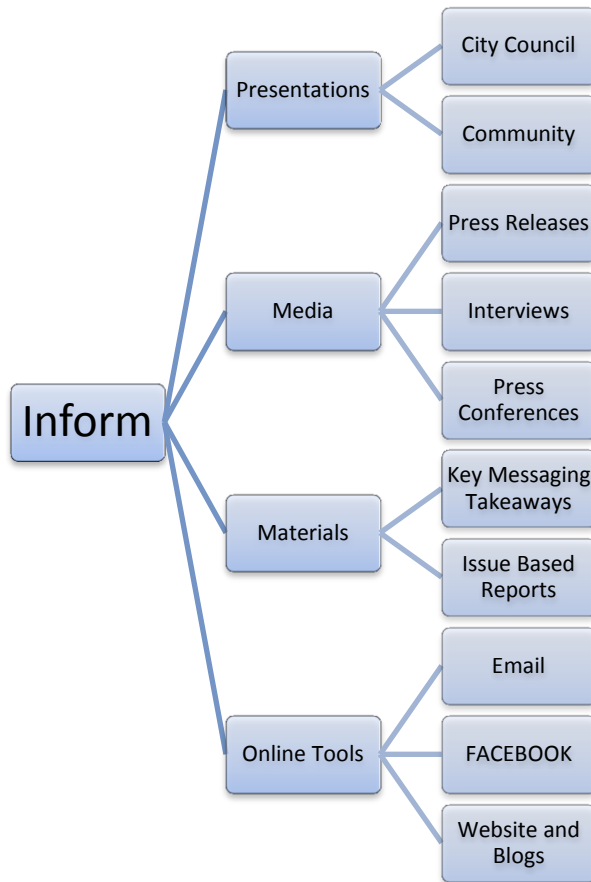


and projects may be added or removed in response to new information including the results of monitoring and evaluation activities moving forward.

Recommendations for moving Research forward:

- Information Scan: It is recommended that Steering Committee members commit to some targeted reading to discuss at the SC table each month. A current need is to more thoroughly consider the ways in which human rights law might be used by NaiB to support low income children, youth and workers (priority demographic sub-groupings), or in support of systems change (e.g. guaranteed basic income). The work of 'Canada Without Poverty' should be regularly monitored in this regard. Tamarack Institute's Vibrant Communities has also begun to look more closely at how human rights might support poverty reduction. Note areas where provincial and federal policy needs improvement in this regard.
- Data Analysis: Identify an NaiB liaison to work with RDI on the statistics required to produce the 'Poverty Profile for Nelson'. In December/January each year arrange for the market basket and living wage calculations to be updated. This could be accomplished by advertising the work as a research opportunity for (LVR, Selkirk, Self Design) students seeking to fulfill an academic requirement. If approached in this way the work also strengthens the Priority of Youth Economic Literacy. Identify a person to act as NaiB liaison to students and with Living Wage for Families and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to finalize the market basket and living wage.
- Lived Experience: It is recommended that the Steering Committee regularly reviews information generated through the lived experience work in an effort to identify promising actionable items brought forward by 'lived experience' representatives. Continue to support work initiated under the pilot project as possible while awaiting results of grant application for Living Experience work (early January).
- Policy: Invite City Council to a meeting to discuss the ways in which City bylaws support or do not support people living in poverty as well as other City activities that impact (positively or negatively) on low-income residents. Monitor Council agendas – inform network (especially with opportunities for action) and attend meetings where issues of concern will be debated. Feed City Council with information on provincial and federal policy improvements needed – identify issues where resolutions drafted for City Council's consideration and endorsement are worthwhile.

2. Inform



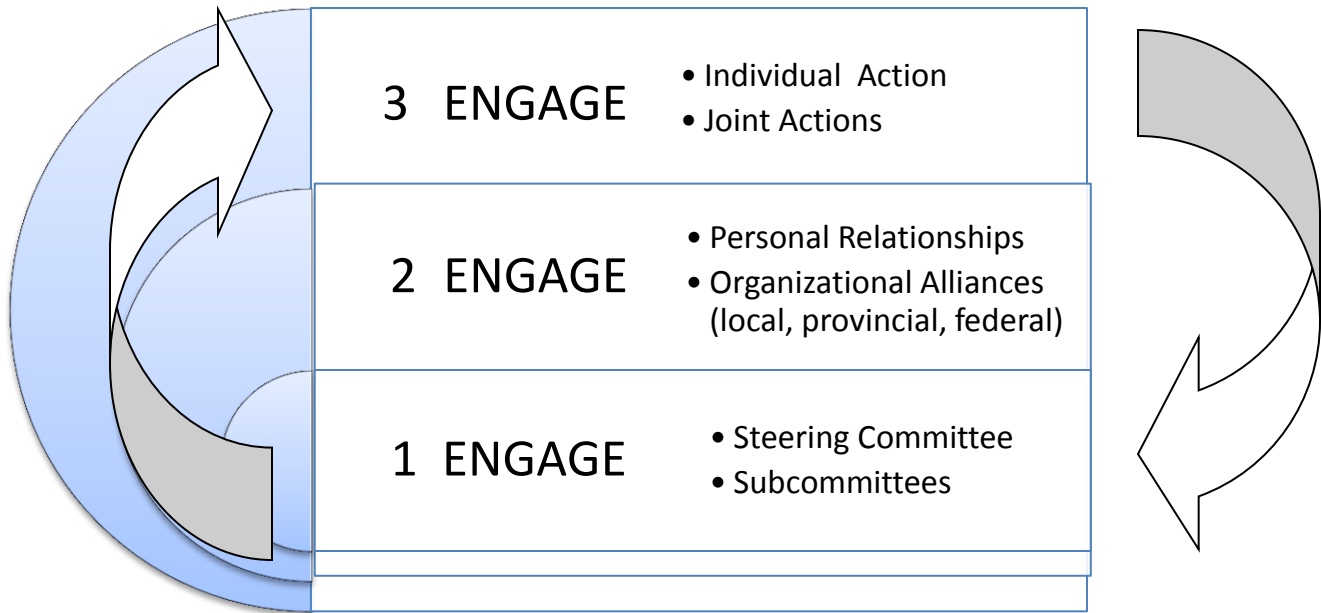
Informing community members and partners about research findings is also a core function of Nelson at its Best. The most significant challenges in this regard are: information

overload, fear and apathy, difficulties reaching people with a different world view.

Recommendations:

- The Education and Outreach Subcommittee work on developing key messages for discussion with the Steering Committee and that these key messages continue to form the basis of NaiB's work of informing community.
- Steering Committee members and others associated with NaiB distribute printed and online information produced by NaiB and hand out business cards at every opportunity
- Hire a coordinator to:
 - Write press releases and feed information to media, arrange interviews and speaking engagements, press conferences and prepares speaking points
 - Prepare presentations to Council and other groups
 - Write issue-based short reports as directed by Steering Committee
 - Work with graphic designer to prepare key messaging materials and review them with the Education and Outreach Subcommittee (and relevant others)
 - Arrange for printing of materials
 - Monitor general email account
 - Administer FACEBOOK page and blogs
 - Update website (or works with site administrator Shauna Fidler of R | Brand Designs to do so)

3. Engage



Networks gain in strength through strategic efforts to engage people. NaiB's network building is focussed on individuals and organisations in Nelson, the Kootenays and British Columbia but is responsive to opportunities to lend the strength of its network to calls for action from those working to end poverty (or for social and economic justice) at national and even global levels.

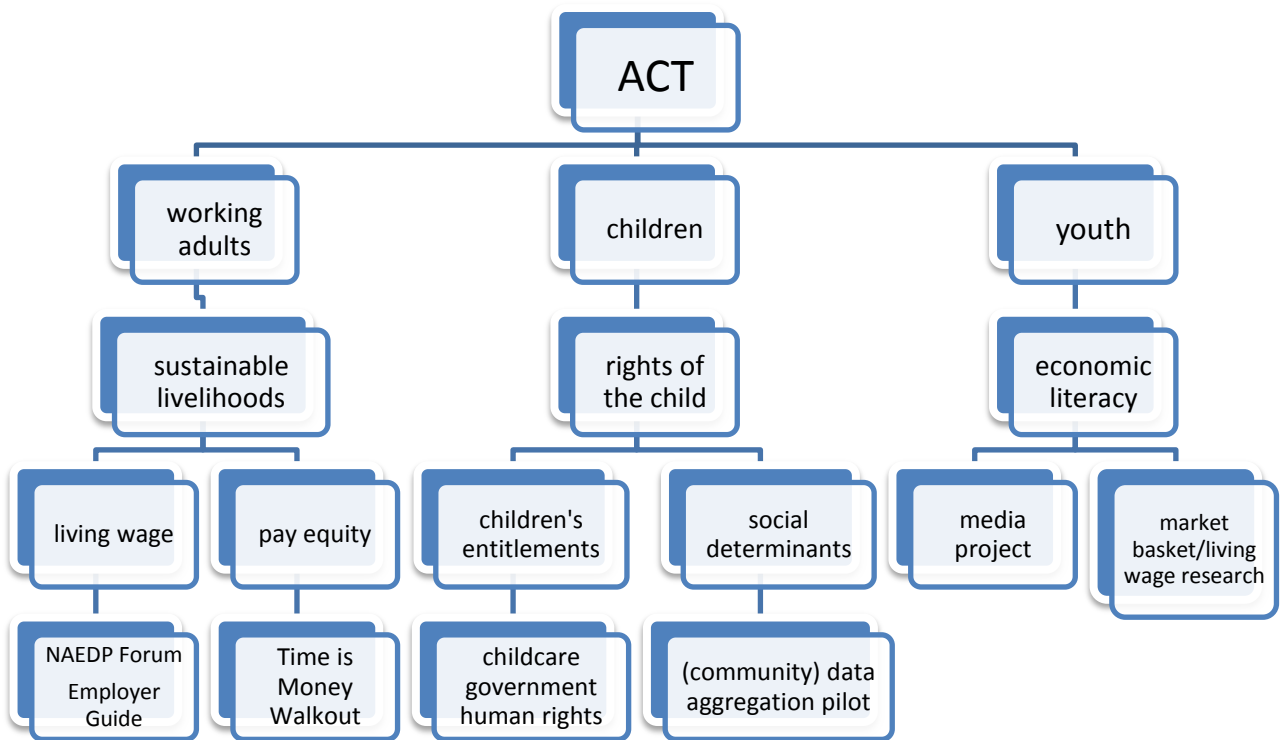
Recommendations:

- Reach out to engage individuals in discussions on the issue of poverty and the work of NaiB. Invite other than the usual people involved in addressing poverty for coffee, lunch, an after-work cocktail as a way to create new possibilities, identify new allies and expand the network. For e.g.:
 - Planning for a philosopher's cafe type group is underway as a means of expanding the network and keeping the conversation going
 - A poverty simulation project using the Nelson arts community to assist in its development is envisioned. Next steps would be to consult with Sydney Black of the Nelson and District Arts Council who recently hosted an 'artists and poverty' forum. NaiB Liaison: Awareness and Education Subcommittee
- Build and sustain organisational alliances through email, telephone, conference calls/communities of practice, webinars, other organisations site/ page monitoring; coordinating joint actions with partners; attending workshops, conferences and meetings.
 - Maintain information-sharing and partnering relationships with local organizations and in particular the Nelson Food Cupboard, Nelson Committee on Homelessness, Age Friendly Initiative and the Moving Together Transportation Project
 - Maintain contact, explore and engage in opportunities for joint action with provincial organisations, in particular the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Basin Poverty Reduction group, BC Families for Living Wage.

- Internal engagement:
 - Report to Steering Committee and incorporate agreed actions into NaiB work plan and cycle (research, inform, engage, act, etc.).
 - Link interested people into NaiB activities.
 - Orient and work with project facilitators, champions, liaisons.
 - Develop an email list-serve to support a network response as "calls to action" arise

4. Act

The chart below indicates the **3 Priorities** that have emerged through the work undertaken to date. NaiB is aware that the needs of low-income seniors, affordable housing, and accessible and affordable transportation are also important areas to be addressed in any poverty reduction work. In Year 2, the NaiB Steering Committee identified that much good work is already underway by other groups in the community to address these issues. Nelson at its Best maintains an information-sharing relationship with these relevant community organisations and will continue to do so.



Strategies and activities in these three priority areas are implemented and expanded as there are champions and resources to do so. Subcommittees may be champions.

Some identified activities may be delayed as action is dependent upon having sufficient resources (volunteers, funding, in kind contributions etc.). It is important that Nelson at its Best continue to produce a roster of prioritized activities to which interested participants can be linked, grant proposals written or other resources targeted as available.

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. Hold the Living Wage Forum in collaboration with NAEDP and develop Employer Guide

- Champions: Anna Purcell, Andrea Wilkey
- NaiB Liaison: Tom Thomson

2. Pay Equity

- Women of Iceland's walkout to be proposed at provincial poverty meeting as a joint action drawing attention to disproportionate number of women in poverty
- Champion: Valerie Warmington
- NaiB Liaison: Sustainable Livelihoods Subcommittee

3. Children's Entitlements (e.g. RESP grants)

- Champions: Laura Munoz, Alison Salo
- NaiB Liaison: Rights of the Child (Child Poverty) Poverty Sub-Committee

4. Social Determinants of Health

- Champions: Dr. Nelson Ames and Dr. Lee McKay
- NaiB Liaison: Rights of the Child (Child Poverty) Sub-Committee

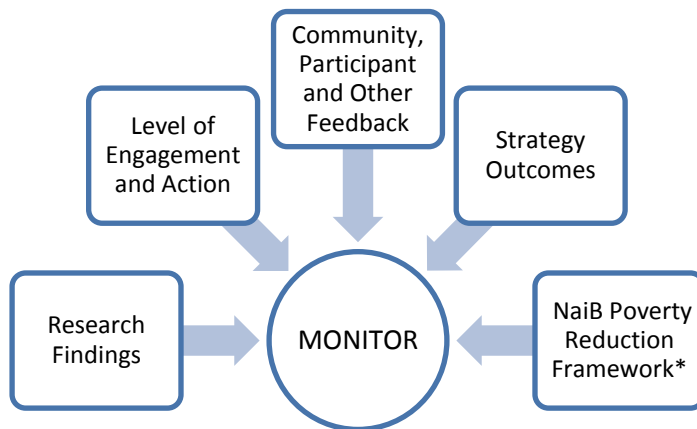
5. Youth Economic Empowerment/Literacy

- Champion: not yet identified
- NaiB Liaison: not yet identified
- If the Market Basket/Living Wage research is to be used as a youth economic empowerment initiative, an announcement should be created and distributed by the end of December 2016. There will also be need to vet applicants, provide orientation and act as NaiB mentor and liaison for students.

6. Funding Support

- Write grant applications for projects for which no champions or other means of implementation emerge

5. Monitor



NaiB monitors research results, community, participant and other feedback, strategy outcomes and, in particular, levels of engagement and new or sustained action generated. The poverty alleviating effects of its work are considered qualitatively and, where it is practical and useful to do so, quantitatively. In line with recommendations emerging through the Vibrant Communities' Evaluation Community of Practice, NaiB monitors the incidence of poverty in community but does not generally attempt to isolate the effects of its work from the vast array of other influences at play due to the high resource requirements and low reliability of doing so. Rather, focussed reflection and discussions about the activities and processes in play are undertaken regularly.

**See Nelson at its Best Year 2 Final Report for the NaiB Poverty Reduction Framework*

6. Evaluate



Information gathered during the monitoring process is annually considered in relationship to NaiB's guiding principles, priorities, strategies and processes, goals and outcomes to ensure that necessary adjustments are made at the foundational level, and that activities underway and future planning reflect NaiB and its partners' growing knowledge and experience. Ending poverty is a long-term goal that requires sustained application of creative innovation and learning over time. Thus the evaluation process serves both as the completion of Nelson at its Best's work cycle as well as its renewal.