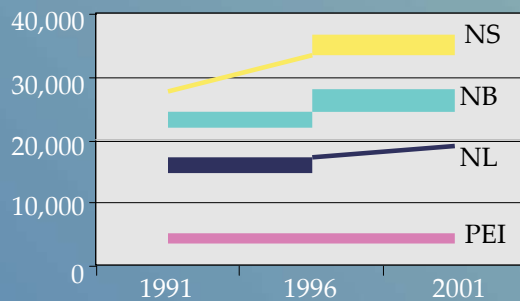


Rethinking Health Disparities: Social and Economic Inclusion and Lone Mothers

Numbers of female-headed lone parent families in Atlantic Canada 1991-2001



Source: Statistics Canada

Alarming evidence proves that lone mothers and their children are some of the most marginalized and vulnerable people in Canadian society. For example, lone parent families are much more likely to experience hunger, homelessness, and other forms of privation (McIntyre, Connor & Warren, 1998; Pascall & Morley, 1996; Rude & Thompson, 2001)

There has been an increase in the number of families headed by lone mothers; in 2002 there were half a million lone mothers in Canada, representing 4.2% of all family units. (Avison, 1997; Colman, 2003; Harding, 1993; Reekie, 1996)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Notwithstanding a decade or more of research on the social determinants of health, significant and troubling health disparities among vulnerable populations remain, including among poor women raising children on their own. Sometimes we lack requisite research about specific populations: at other times we lack mechanisms to transform research into appropriate policies and programmes.



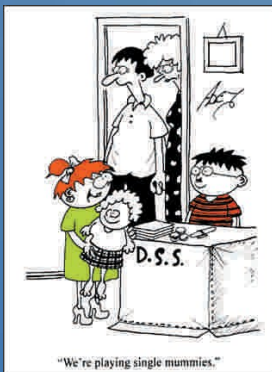
Credit: Joe Sharpnack

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of policies and programmes designed for lone mothers in Atlantic Canada;
- To evaluate how public policies and programmes could be enhanced and improved to promote even greater social and economic inclusion for lone mothers nationally

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What root causes can account for the disparities faced by lone mothers?
- Which policies and programmes help alleviate or deepen their social and economic exclusion?



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USING A SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INCLUSION (SEI) FRAMEWORK:

- broadens the debate about poverty
- links economic vulnerability to other sources of exclusion
- moves us beyond notions of centre and periphery, mainstream and margins
- helps guide the development of success indicators
- fosters a more holistic analysis
- demands new policy instruments



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HEALTHIER PUBLIC POLICY FOR LONE MOTHERS

- More inclusive and responsive public policy is crucial to change the social and economic conditions facing lone mothers, their children and their communities.
- In turn, inclusive and responsive public policy requires research and evidence framed by the concept of social and economic inclusion
- This project aims to bridge the worlds of policy and research in this way to better address the health inequities and vulnerability experienced by 'lone mothers'

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