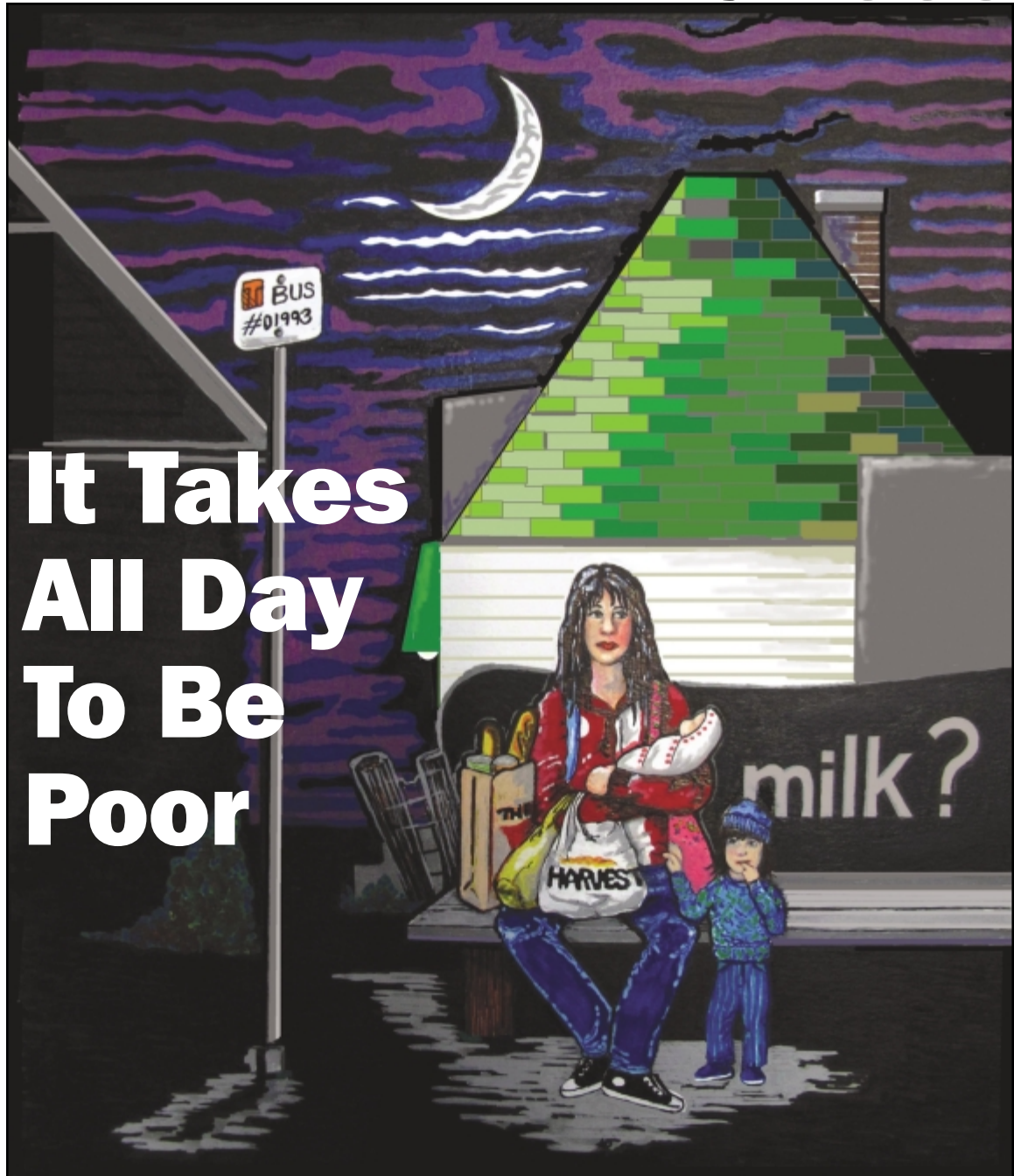


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Cover: *It Takes All Day To Be Poor*, brush pen on illustration board, 10"x13" by Laurie Green. Laurie is an eclectic visual artist from Winnipeg. She has Public Art on top of Poster Boards in the Exchange District and is part of a mural project on the rear of Red Road Lodge. She participates and volunteers at Artbeat Studio and Art from the Heart.



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Tracking Poverty in Winnipeg's Inner City, 1996–2006

by **Shauna MacKinnon**

There are many ways to measure progress in a community. Tracking poverty rates over time is one way. While poverty is a much more complex story than statistical data can tell, measuring poverty over time by comparing such data can help us to track trends. For governments that have been bold enough to set targets, this can be particularly important as it helps them to measure their progress.

Census data are a tool to measure changes in poverty. Census data are collected every five years in Canada. Using data from the Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS) and past local data networks, we are able to provide an overview of the poverty story in Winnipeg's inner city.

The CSDS is a consortium of local data user networks that provides a gateway through which municipalities and community-based organizations access social data from Statistics Canada and other sources. Led by the Canadian Council on Social Development, the CSDS obtains and disseminates a wide variety of social data at a preferred rate, allowing CSDS partners to share the costs and benefits of this vital information. CSDS data are important because they mine the census data and provide us with deeper insights.

Poverty indicators

While Canada does not have an official poverty line, the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) is most often the measure used. The LICO is an income threshold below which a family will likely devote a substantially larger share of its income on food, shelter and clothing than would the average family. Using data from the 1992 Family Expen-

ditures Survey as a base, and then factoring in Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rates, Statistics Canada calculates both before and after-tax cut-offs for various family and community sizes resulting in 35 cut-offs. Another absolute measure—the Market Basket Measure (MBM) was introduced in 2003 by the Canadian government. It takes into account a broader range of essential goods and services but the net result is not much different than the LICO. We use LICO data in this State of the Inner City Report because it is available to us through the consortium.

Inner City boundaries

When we refer to the inner city we mean the geographic area originally defined by the 1980s Core Area Initiative. It is bounded on the north by Caruthers Ave. west of the Red River and Munroe Ave. east of the Red River; on the west by McPhillips St., Ingersoll St. and Raglan Road; on the south McMillan Ave. and Marion St.; and on the east by Raleigh St., the Seine River and Archibald St.

Census Canada uses the boundaries shown in Map A (Appendix A). The highlighted areas in the centre of the map indicate inner city neighbourhoods, some of which are featured in our tables.

The boundaries for the neighbourhoods in Map A are defined in Appendix A.

It is also worth noting the boundaries used by the Government of Manitoba's Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) initiative. NA! is a provincial government initiative that provides funding to targeted neighbourhoods in the inner-city of Winnipeg as well as Brandon, Dauphin,

Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk Thompson and The Pas. The following map outlines where Neighbourhoods Alive! funding is focused in Winnipeg.

It helps to know where support has been targeted because that support has made it possible for neighbourhood renewal corporations (NRCs) to facilitate some important initiatives in these neighbourhoods. NRCs and other organizations form a network of services and supports that do important work on the ground. Some of these community-based organizations (CBOs), like the Community Education Development Association, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Native Women's transition centre, North End Women's Centre, Rossbrook and others have been at work in the inner city for a very long time. Others, like the Aboriginal Visioning Centre, and Daniel McIntyre/ St. Matthews Community Association are newer. These organizations receive support through a variety of funders including the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, the Government of Canada, United Way of Winnipeg, The Winnipeg Foundation and others. The contribution that

these community-based organizations make cannot be overstated.

Testimonials from people who we have interviewed over the past five years through our State of the Inner City report provide insight into how important organizations are to inner-city residents:

...thank God for this place [without it] I don't know if I would have my daughter today

...It's helped me to see [how] to live my life away from drugs and alcohol....

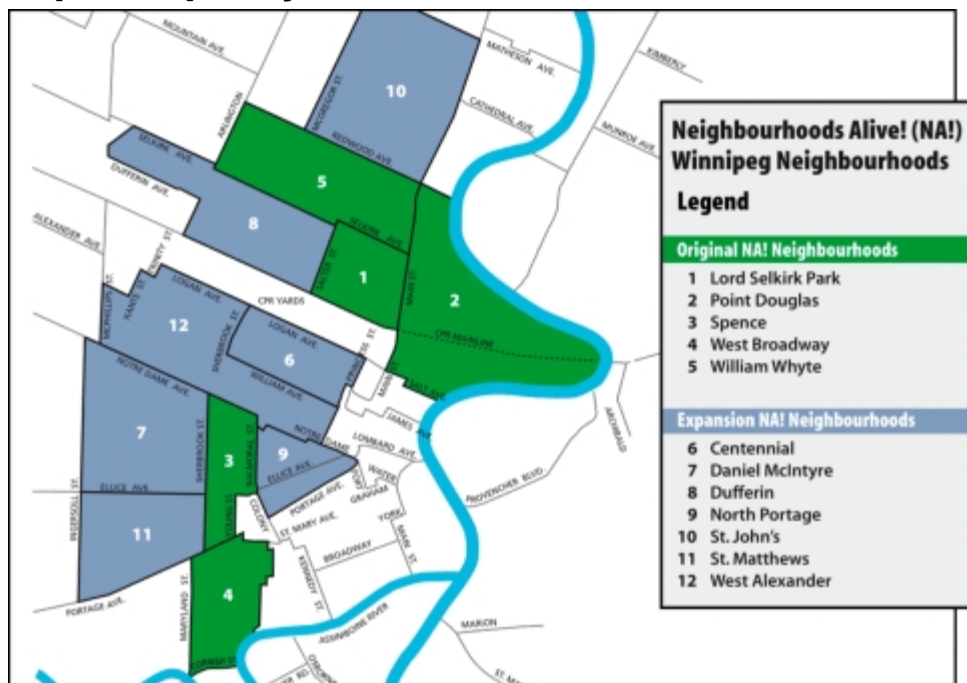
...I felt so welcome when I came there and I got to know everyone right away and it kept me away from getting into trouble....

...I love it....

...so, I guess for me, [the CBO] was a lifesaver for my family.

This is a sample of what we have heard over the past five years from the hundreds of people we have interviewed for our State of the Inner City Reports. As we describe further in this report, many people living in the inner-city have very complicated lives rooted in poverty and oppression. For these people, CBOs make a world of difference.

Map B: NA! priority districts



Inner-city population and poverty over time

CCPA Manitoba began the process of measuring poverty in Winnipeg's inner city in the publication *Solutions that Work: fighting poverty in Winnipeg* (Silver: 2000). At that time we had census data that showed how significantly the inner city had changed over the 30-year period between 1966 and 1996. During that time, Winnipeg's census metropolitan area (CMA) population grew by 31.20 percent, while the inner city population declined by 25.5 percent. The inner-city share of Winnipeg's population dropped from 28.7 percent in 1966 to 16.3 percent in 1996 (Silver, 2000, p, 27-31).

We also showed that poverty had increased significantly. The poverty rate in Winnipeg increased from 20.6 percent in 1971 to 28.4 percent in 1996. Inner-city poverty increased from 32.6 percent to 50.8 percent in that same time period.

The situation for the Aboriginal population had also worsened. In 1971, 57.1 percent of Aboriginal households lived in poverty. This number increased to 64.7 percent in 1996. Data for Aboriginal households in the inner city were not available until 1986 however at that time the rate was 67.2 percent, increasing to 80.3 percent in 1996.

So what has happened since 1996?

Census data from 2001 and 2006 show a slight change in the trend in terms of population.

As shown in Table 1, the population in the Winnipeg CMA grew by 4.1 percent from 1996 to 2006 while the inner-city population increased by 11.8 percent. In 2006 the inner-city population was approximately one percent higher as percentage of the Winnipeg CMA population than it was in 1996. So, it appears that more people are living in the inner city. This is an interesting trend that can likely be attributed to a variety of factors. One explanation is that increasing house prices in Winnipeg is prompting people to move to the inner-city where housing is comparatively affordable. As has been documented in previous CCPA reports, this has been particularly true for neighbourhoods like West Broadway and Spence. The result has been mixed. It is positive that these neighbourhoods are increasingly becoming mixed-income neighbourhoods; on the other hand, when higher-income people move in it pushes up housing prices, thus forcing some low-income people to move elsewhere, a process typically called gentrification.

Poverty in Winnipeg

It should be noted that while we are focusing on poverty in the inner city of Winnipeg, poverty can be found across Manitoba. Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, women, and new immigrants are over-represented among the poor.

Geographically, poverty is most severe in First Nations communities and in urban centres. In

Table 1: Winnipeg and Inner-City Population, 1996–2006

	Winnipeg CMA	Winnipeg CMA % increase 1996-2006	Inner city	Inner city % increase 1996-2006	Inner city as % of CMA
1966	508,760	4.1%	145,910	11.8%	28.70%
1996	667,210		108,695		16.30%
2001	671,274		119,670		17.8%
2006	694,670		121,615		17.5%

Sources: 1966, 1996 - Silver, 2000, pg. 30; 2001, 2006 - Statistics Canada Census

Winnipeg, poverty can be found in pockets throughout the city however much of it is spatially concentrated in Winnipeg's inner city.

The poverty situation in Winnipeg as well as in the inner city has improved somewhat. As seen in Table 2, the percentage of households living in poverty has decreased since 1996 in the inner city and in Winnipeg as a whole. However the rate of poverty continues to be much higher in the inner-city at 39.6 percent compared with 20 percent in Winnipeg

In addition to the spatialized nature of poverty described above, there is also a very clear distinction in income when comparing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

Aboriginal people make up approximately 10 percent of Winnipeg's population yet constitute 25 percent of those living in poverty. Aboriginal women are consistently poorer than Aboriginal men (PCWHCE: 2009). In 2006, Aboriginal children were almost three times more likely to be poor than non-Aboriginal

children. Aboriginal children under six years of age living in Winnipeg had a poverty rate (based on before-tax LICO) of 65 percent compared to 23 percent for non-Aboriginal children less than six years.

As seen in Table 3, Aboriginal poverty in Winnipeg is double that of the non-Aboriginal population. The poverty rate for Aboriginal people in the inner city is more than three times that of the non-Aboriginal Winnipeg rate.

While we do not have 2006 census data to show Aboriginal household poverty comparable to that in Table 4A, we do have data showing the percentage of Aboriginal persons in inner-city households in poverty compared to non-Aboriginal persons in the inner-city living in poverty (before and after tax). It is notable, as shown in Table 4B, that the after-tax percentage of inner-city households living in poverty (37.4 percent) was higher than the before-tax poverty rate. While it seems odd that the after-tax percentage is higher than the

Table 2: Household Poverty Rate Trends: Winnipeg and Winnipeg Inner City, 1996–2006

Year	Households in poverty Winnipeg	Households in poverty inner city
1996	24.25%*	48.25%
2001	20.29%	40.49%
2006	20.20%	39.60%

Sources: 1996 - Silver, 2000 p. 39; 2001, 2006 - Statistics Canada Census

*the definition of this census table has changed therefore the 1996 percentages shown are somewhat different than those used in previous calculation. We have used the new calculations for 1996 to remain consistent.

Table 3: Aboriginal and Overall Household Poverty Rates (before tax): Winnipeg and Winnipeg Inner City, 1996–2006

	Households in poverty in Winnipeg	Aboriginal households in poverty	Aboriginal poverty compared with non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal households in poverty inner city
1996	28.4%	64.7%	2.27%	80.3%
2001	24.7%	53.7%	2.17%	71.3%
2006	20.2%	46.0%	2.27%	65.0%

Sources: 1996 - Silver, 2000 p. 40; 2001, 2006 - Statistics Canada Census

before-tax percentage, the data are based on a small sample size—making the difference statistically insignificant.

Other data that tell a story of spatialized poverty in Winnipeg are shown in Tables 5 and 6 (next page). There is an over representation of people with low-incomes in the inner city compared with the City of Winnipeg, in all categories. Not surprising then is the difference in average income between the inner city and Winnipeg as a whole. As seen in Table 7 (next page), the average income in Winnipeg is 50 percent higher than in the inner city. It should also be noted that this difference is higher when looking at specific inner-city neighbourhoods. Incomes in the inner city are also skewed upward as small pockets of high-

income earners in downtown Winnipeg and places like Armstrong Point are included in the inner-city boundary.

Income disparity and demographic differences are most pronounced when comparing neighbourhoods in Winnipeg's inner city with those in the suburbs, and in particular suburbs in the south side of the city. For example, according to 2006 census data, 56 percent of Point Douglas economic families had incomes below the poverty line, compared with 4 percent in Seine River and 6 percent in Fort Whyte. The unemployment rate in Point Douglas was almost 3 times that in Seine River and Fort Whyte in 2006. Point Douglas is also home to a much larger Aboriginal population (36 percent) and almost

**Table 4A: Aboriginal Poverty Rates:
Winnipeg Inner City Households, 1996–2001**

	Aboriginal households as % of all inner-city households	Aboriginal households as % of inner-city households in poverty (before tax)	Aboriginal households as % of inner-city households in poverty (after tax)
1996	13.9%	22.0%	NA
2001	15.0%	24.3%	NA

Sources: 1996 - Silver, 2000 p. 40; 2001 - Statistics Canada Census

**Table 4B: Aboriginal Poverty Rates:
Winnipeg Inner City Persons in Private Households**

	Aboriginal persons as % of all inner-city persons	Aboriginal persons as % of all inner-city persons in poverty (before tax)	Aboriginal persons as % of inner-city persons in poverty (after tax)
2006	21.0%	34.4%	37.4%

Sources: Statistics Canada Census 2006

**Table 5: Incidence of Low Income:
Winnipeg and Winnipeg Inner City, 2006**

Percentage incidence of low income	Inner City		City of Winnipeg	
	Before tax	After tax	Before tax	After tax
Total economic families	32.5%	25.8%	14.9%	11.1%
Female lone parent	60.9%	52.9%	42.0%	33.6%
Total private households	39.6%	32.5%	20.2%	15.7%
Children under 6 years	62.6%	54.3%	31.7%	25.9%

Sources: Statistics Canada Census 2006

half of Point Douglas families are sole parent headed—a striking difference from the demographics and household structures of the two suburban neighbourhoods.

Homeownership is often used as an indicator of stability. This is not to suggest that owning a home is always the best option. In his research on the benefits of homeownership for low-income households, Hajer (2009) notes that while it is often promoted as a goal for low-income families, the statistical evidence to support the argument that homeownership leads to improved self-esteem, happiness and health is not strong. Hajer concludes that for

many low-income families, “homeownership may not be the best solution as the higher costs can lead to greater financial strain in the short-run. For families that are time and credit constrained, this can lead to significant stress and hardship (p.5)”. Nonetheless, it is useful to look at housing tenure when comparing neighbourhoods. As shown in Table 8, there is a drastic difference between inner-city and non-inner city neighbourhoods. Fully 72 percent of households in non- inner city neighbourhoods own their homes compared with 39.1 percent of those in the inner- city. In some neighbourhoods like Centennial most residents rent their homes.

Table 6: Household Income: Winnipeg and Winnipeg Inner City, 2006

	Inner city	City of Winnipeg
Average household income	\$40,900.	\$63,023
Median household income	\$31,773	\$49,790

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006

Table 7: Selected Social and Economic Indicators for Specified Geographical Areas, 2006

Indicator	Manitoba	Winnipeg	Point Douglas	Seine River	Fort Whyte
Population	1,148,400	633,451	20,560	23,095	29,480
Lone-parent families	17.0%	19.5%	44.5%	11.8%	6.8%
Aboriginal identity	15.5%	10.1%	36.2%	5.9%	2.7%
Unemployment rate	5.5%	5.2%	14.1%	3.6%	3.7%
Median total income pop. 15+	\$24,194	\$26,015	\$14,982	\$33,362	\$35,339
Incidence of low income (economic families before tax)	12.0%	15.0%	56.0%	4.0%	6.0%
Incidence of low income (unattached persons 15+)	38.0%	43.0%	67.0%	28.0%	29.0%
Median income all economic families	\$60,754	\$65,016	\$31,351	\$83,585	\$99,528
Median income couple economic families	\$66,686	\$72,337	\$38,820	\$87,859	\$102,547
Median income female lone parent families	\$32,883	\$34,960	\$22,128	\$51,305	\$62,801

Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, Census 2006

Important indicators of poverty are unemployment and labour force participation rates. This is not to suggest that employment is always a ticket out of poverty. In fact many low-income families earn their primary income through employment. In 2004, 17.4 percent of the Manitoba labour force earned under \$9.00 per hour (Just Income Coalition, 2005, p. 54). Nonetheless, examining employment and participation rates over time tells us that there were improvements between 1996-2006 in the Winnipeg CMA and in the inner city. While unemployment rates for both men and women in the inner city remain higher than Winnipeg generally, they have dropped significantly. And while labour force participation rates for both men and women in the inner city remain lower than Winnipeg generally, they have risen significantly—in fact labour force participation rates for women were as high in the inner city as in Winnipeg overall by 2005. It is notable however that the unemployment rate has dropped more significantly for males in

both the inner city and in Winnipeg. The unemployment rate for women in Winnipeg was less than that of males in 1996 (7.3 vs. 8.5) however in 2006, the rate for males was lower at 4.9 percent compared with 5.1 percent for females. In the inner city a similar dynamic is observed. The rate for males was a striking 17.8 percent in 1996 but down to 7.8 percent in 2006. The rate for women in the inner city also sat at 7.8 percent in 2006 however the decrease was less significant, dropping from 12.4 percent in 1996. Labour-market participation rates for women continue to be much lower than men's in Winnipeg and in the inner-city, which may partially explain why their unemployment rate is lower than men's.

While labour force trends in the inner-city appear positive, closer analysis is required to determine whether gains have been made for long-time low-income inner city residents and to what extent gains are a reflection of factors like gentrification.

Table 8: Dwelling tenure, Ownership Versus Rental, 2006

Tenure	Inner-city households	Non Inner city	Lord Selkirk park	Centennial
Owned	39.1%	72.3%	10.6%	21.3%
Rented	60.9%	27.7%	89.4%	78.7%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2006

**Table 9A: Labour-force Characteristics: 15 years and over, 1996–2006
Adult Unemployment and Labour-force Participation by Gender**

	Winnipeg CMA Unemployment Rate: Male	Participation Rate: Male	Inner city Unemployment Rate: Male	Participation Rate: Male
1996	8.5%	74.0%	17.8%	66.3%
2001	6.0%	75.0%	10.0%	71.0%
2006	4.9%	73.8%	7.8%	70.4%
	Unemployment Rate: Female	Participation Rate: Female	Unemployment Rate: Female	Participation Rate: Female
1996	7.3%	60.9%	12.4%	50.9%
2001	5.0%	56.0%	8.0%	56.0%
2006	5.1%	58.7%	7.8%	58.7%

Sources: 1996 - Silver, 2000 p. 34; 2001, 2006 - Statistics Canada Census

Table 9B shows us that unemployment rate and labour-force participation rates for both male and female youth in the inner city have also improved. But unemployment rates are still too high, and labour-force participation rates too low.

Education is critical to securing well-paid employment. As shown in Table 10, education attainment is lower among inner-city youth between the ages of 25 and 35 years and the percentage of individuals in low income is highest among those with the lowest education attainment. Also of note is the higher concentration of low-income people between 25 and 35 years residing in the inner city.

More recently we have seen an increase in the number of new immigrants settling in the inner city compared with those settling in non-inner city neighbourhoods. As shown in Table 11, prior to 1991, there was an equal distribution of immigrants, as percentage of the total population, in both the inner city and non-inner city. This has changed since 1991 but in particular, since 2001. Between 2001

and 2006, the percentage of new immigrants settling in the inner-city was double the number settling in non-inner city neighbourhoods. Further analysis is required to determine the nature of this dynamic but the affordability of housing in the inner-city compared with that in non-inner city neighbourhoods is likely an appeal for new immigrants with limited incomes. Many of the new immigrants settling in the inner city are refugee families from war-torn countries. In the Central Park neighbourhood for example, it is estimated that some 90 percent of families are refugees from African countries (MacKinnon and Stephens, 2007).

As shown in the previous pages, poverty is spatially concentrated in the inner city of Winnipeg, and it is racialized. Spatialized poverty is of particular concern because in addition to the obvious barriers that result from insufficient income, it creates a situation where everyone one comes into contact with is poor. This concentrated and intense poverty was described in our 2005 State of the Inner City Report as follows:

Table 9B: Youth Unemployment and Labour-force Participation Rate by Gender: 15-24 Years of Age, 1996-2006

	Winnipeg CD		Inner City	
	Unemployment	Participation	Unemployment	Participation
1996	14.30%	67.60%	18.90%	59.30%
2001	14.52%	61.06%	18.34%	61.45%
2006	11.10%	69.50%	11.90%	64.10%
	Unemployment Rate: Male	Participation Rate: Male	Unemployment Rate: Male	Participation Rate: Male
1996	15.40%	69.20%	21.80%	61.50%
2001	16.51%	62.21%	24.00%	62.50%
2006	11.90%	69.70%	12.80%	67.40%
	Unemployment Rate: Female	Participation Rate: Female	Unemployment Rate: Female	Participation Rate: Female
1996	13.20%	66.00%	16.20%	57.20%
2001	12.98%	60.13%	13.83%	60.65%
2006	10.30%	69.30%	11.00%	61.10%

Sources: 1996 - Silver, 2000 p. 35; 2001, 2006 - Statistics Canada Census

One is the notion of a complex web—a web of poverty, racism, drugs, gangs, violence. The other is the notion of a cycle—people caught in a cycle of inter-related problems. Both suggest the idea of people who are trapped, immobilized, unable to escape, destined to struggle with forces against which they cannot win, from which they cannot extricate themselves. The result is despair, resignation, anger, hopelessness, which then reinforce the cycle, and wrap them tighter in the web (CCPA-Mb 2005: 24).

The web of despair described is particularly damaging. It is deeply rooted and the solutions are as complex as the causes. This form of poverty often manifests itself in negative forms of behaviour—crime, violence, family dissolution, for example. Some may come to see the behaviour, and the culture of which it is a part, as the cause of spatially concentrated, racialized poverty (Lewis 1968). But the causes of this poverty are structural and those caught

up in it often make behavioural responses and cultural adaptations to their socio-economic circumstances. If we change their socio-economic circumstances, their patterns of behaviour will change. As described by Wilson (1987: 14):

As economic and social opportunities change, new behavioural solutions originate and develop into patterns, later to be complemented and upheld by norms. If new situations appear, both the patterns of behaviour and the norms eventually undergo change. “Some behavioural norms are more persistent than others”, wrote Herbert Gans in 1968, “but over the long run, all of the norms and aspirations by which people live are nonpersistent: they rise and fall with changes in situations”.

The details in this section remind us that versions of the stories from section one are being repeated over and over in the inner city. And

Table 10: Education Attainment and Low Income: 25–35 Years of Age, 2006

Total in labour force (employed/unemployed)	56,000	Non inner city Percentage low income	20,490	Inner city Percentage low income
Total low income	7,725	13.8%	7,335	35.0%
No certificate	5,970	55.0%	3,140	59.0%
High School or equivalent	16,940	19.0%	5,835	38.0%
PSE certificate or degree	4,103	12.0%	11,515	35.0%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2006

Table 11: Immigrant Population: Inner City and Non-inner City

Immigration period	Percentage of Inner City	Percentage of Non Inner City
before 1991	11.96%	11.33%
1991-1995	2.42%	1.59%
1996-2000	2.18%	1.57%
2001-2006	6.65%	3.15%
Immigrant population 2006	23.21%	17.64%

Source: Statistics Canada Census

although the numbers show us that we've begun to turn things around, we cannot be complacent, particularly in the current precarious economic situation. If we turn our backs on this vulnerable population because of the recession, we will lose all the ground gained and have to start over. Not only should we continue our efforts, now is the perfect time to intensify them. If we were to implement a well-financed comprehensive poverty-reduction plan, we would stimulate the economy

while improving people's lives. People like Angelica, Uzochi, Allan, Taryn, Janette and Claudette.

For those who would think that the combined efforts of government and community-based organizations don't work—think again. The following section shows us exactly how it works. Yes, it works slowly. Yes, it takes great effort. But it works. Person by person, family by family, we can turn neighbourhoods around.