

Portrait of child poverty shows Montreal ridings among the worst in Canada ^[1]

A downtown Montreal riding has the fifth worst child poverty rate in the country. In Trudeau's riding, almost 30% of children live in a low-income situation.

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EXCERPTS

More than 17 per cent of children in Canada live in poverty, a new report from the group Campaign 2000 says.

The organization created a portrait of poverty among children in each of Canada's ridings using data from the 2015 census. Campaign 2000 says the average child poverty rate in Canada is 17.4 per cent, and of the country's 338 ridings, 162 are at or above that percentage.

Four Quebec ridings — all in the Montreal area — are among the 30 worst in the country.

In the Ville-Marie—Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs riding, more than 38 per cent of children live in poverty, giving it the fifth worst child poverty rate in the country.

In Papineau, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's riding, almost 30 per cent of children live in a low-income situation.

The census was taken before the Canada Child Benefit was implemented in July 2016 with the goal of reducing child poverty. However, there has only been a decline in poverty of 1.2 per cent between 2015 and 2016, which is not enough, according to Campaign 2000.

Northern Manitoba is where the group found the highest poverty rate among children. In Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, more than 64 per cent of children live in poverty. In second place is Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, where the rate is 57 per cent.

According to the report, child poverty affects Indigenous communities at a higher rate — about 37 per cent of children in poverty in Canada are Indigenous. The organization also noted that radicalized people, recent immigrants and single-parent families led by women are also overrepresented in the rankings.

"We see that it's really not a question of choice, it's a matter of the family children are born into," said Nathalie Appleyard, a member of Campaign 2000's coordinating committee.

"The system we have now doesn't give the same opportunities for well-being, health and employment to all of our citizens."

In more encouraging news, nine of the 10 ridings with the lowest poverty rates were in Quebec.

National strategy needed

Campaign 2000 recognized that some progress has been made by the government within the last few years with the Canada Child Benefit, but it is not enough.

The organization wants the Trudeau government to develop a national strategy aimed at decreasing poverty.

“We need leadership from the federal government, but also work in collaboration with the provincial, territorial and municipal governments,” Appleyard said.

Campaign 2000 recommends adopting a law that would impose a target to reduce poverty, as well as increasing the Canada Child Benefit, improving the Employment Insurance program and implementing a universal child-care system.

“Because every federal riding in Canada has a significant number of children and families living in poverty, all communities, all members of the House of Commons and all political parties are essential to the eradication of poverty in Canada,” said Anita Khanna, national coordinator of Campaign 2000, in a statement.

The 10 ridings with highest poverty rates

Churchill—Keewatinook Aski (Manitoba): 64.2 per cent

Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River (Saskatchewan): 57.8 per cent

Winnipeg-Centre (Manitoba): 41.1 per cent

Toronto-Centre (Ontario): 40 per cent

Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs (Quebec): 38.1 per cent

Nunavut: 36.1 per cent

Kenora (Ontario): 34.7 per cent

Hamilton-Centre (Ontario): 34.2 per cent

Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa (Saskatchewan): 33.8 per cent

Sydney—Victoria (Nova Scotia): 33 per cent

The 10 ridings with the lowest poverty rates

Levis-Lotbiniere (Quebec): 4.1

Montarville (Quebec): 4.1

Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier (Quebec): 4.5

Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes-Vercheres (Quebec): 4.7

Beloeil-Chambly (Quebec): 5.6

Beauport–Cote-de-Beaupre–Ile d’Orleans-Charlevoix (Quebec): 5.8

Carleton (Ontario): 5.9

Louis-Saint-Laurent (Quebec): 6.3

Charlesbourg–Haute-Saint-Charles (Quebec): 6.3

Vaudreuil–Soulanges (Quebec): 6.3

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