

HOMELESSNESS IN THE UPPER FRASER VALLEY:

**Age, gender, community of origin,
health, income, employment, and
services in relation to homelessness**

"People in my situation, you don't have a home. If I had a permanent address I'd be able to work, which therefore would make income, which would make me not be on the street. What do I do?" (Homeless person in Abbotsford, BC)

***Project of MCC BC Employment & Community Development in partnership
with***

***Salvation Army
United Way of the Fraser Valley
Abbotsford Community Services Society
Mission Community Services Society
Chilliwack Community Services Society
Hope Community Services Society
Boston Bar Enhancement Society
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH PARTNERS

This report on homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley documents the process and findings of research conducted by the Employment & Community Development department of Mennonite Central Committee of British Columbia (MCC-ECD) during the spring and summer of 2004. The research was made possible through the work of more than 80+ volunteers, a monetary contribution from the Government of Canada through the Homelessness Initiative, funding by MCC BC and in-kind contributions from the project partners:

- Salvation Army
- United Way of the Fraser Valley
- Abbotsford Community Services
- Mission Community Services
- Chilliwack Community Services
- Hope Community Services
- Boston Bar Enhancement Society
- School of Social Work, University College of the Fraser Valley

DEFINITION

In the context of this study the term homeless refers to people who do not have a permanent shelter to call home. This includes the sheltered homeless: people living temporarily in emergency shelters, safe houses, or transition houses; the street/unsheltered homeless: people “sleeping rough” in places not intended for human shelter, including parks, alleys, doorways, parkades, beaches, vehicles, railway cars, dumpsters, and under bridges; and the hidden/concealed homeless: people temporarily staying with friends or family, commonly referred to as “doubling up” or “coach surfing”.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and ensure a greater degree of reliability the research team applied in respect of data collection, “between method triangulation” (Denzin, 1978). To this end the researchers used the following methods:

- Focus Groups involving service providers, homeless/formerly homeless adults and homeless/formerly homeless youth,
- A twenty four hour snapshot survey, and
- First person qualitative interviews with homeless and formerly homeless people.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In keeping with the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, it was recognized that the carrying out of the research should not harm any of the people involved physically, emotionally, or financially and that in no way should the research compromise the dignity of the participants or jeopardize their ability to receive services. Accordingly the research design was submitted to, reviewed and approved by the Ethical Review Board at the University College of the Fraser Valley.

SELECTION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

- 411 homeless people were interviewed during the 24-hour snapshot survey period August 19-20, 2004 (226 in Abbotsford; 87 in Chilliwack; 75 in Mission; 19 in Hope; 3 in Boston Bar/ North Bend and 1 in Agassiz).

Population size per community¹ compared with number of homeless people per community

¹ Based on 2001 Census data

	Population N	Population %	Homeless N	Homeless %
Abbotsford	131,000	56.6	226	55.5
Chilliwack	62,927	27.2	87	21.4
Mission	31,272	13.5	75	18.4
Hope	6,184	2.7	19	4.7
Total	231,383	100.0	407	100.0

- Lack of affordable housing, lack of stable income, addictions, medical conditions, broken relationships, family conflict, abuse and poor personal choices are some of the main reasons why people were homeless.
- The majority of the respondents were homeless for six months or longer (67.7% were homeless for six months or longer while 36.2% were homeless for one year or more).
- The majority of the respondents (67.4%) were males.
- The age group 35-44 years made up the biggest proportion (27.6%), followed by those 25-34 years (24.5%) and those 45-54 years (17.6%).
- 37 of those interviewed were homeless youth, 18 years of age and younger.
- The last permanent address of the majority of the respondents (64.8%) was in the Upper Fraser Valley.
- Of those whose last permanent address was not in the Upper Fraser Valley, the majority (69.5%) came from the GVRD.
- 43.4% of the respondents slept the previous night outside.
- 89% of those who responded have health concerns including addiction, mental health issues and physical problems.
- 29.2% of those interviewed worked and 14.8% received income assistance.
- Those who worked did part time work, seasonal work, worked as labourers and were involved in recycling (collecting pop bottles and cans).
- Previous occupations included service work, skilled work and unskilled work.
- Barriers to employment included disabilities (32.4%), multiple barriers (32.4%) logistical barriers (13.7%) and lack of skills (5.9%).
- The total number of shelter beds in the Upper Fraser Valley is 27.
- The total number of transition house beds is 60.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. Homelessness is probably inevitable but steps can and should be taken to reduce and prevent homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley.
2. There is a substantial amount of social capital present in the various communities that currently deliver significant services to homeless people, however there is a need to use existing social capital and community resources in partnership with City Councils to leverage more resources including provincial and federal dollars to

design and implement initiatives that will go beyond dealing with the symptoms of the problem.

3. People become homeless for a variety of reasons, not just because “they are lazy”.
4. Homeless people find themselves at the bottom of the income distribution ladder in a state of absolute poverty.
5. A substantial number of homeless people do work and a substantial number of those who don’t currently work want to work, but they face challenging barriers.
6. The answer to “get people off the street” does not only lie in “getting a job”, what is needed is a continuum of services that will enable homeless people to move to relatively greater degrees of self-sufficiency.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Action should be taken at two levels.

Level 1 – Addressing immediate need

- ✓ Increase capacity of existing shelter services
- ✓ Establish a safe house for youth 18 years of age and under
- ✓ Establish a shelter for women
- ✓ Redesign shelter provisioning to provide for daytime shelter where people can rest, take a bath/shower, do laundry and store belongings.
- ✓ Establish a youth drop-in center that provides meals/food, shower/bath and laundry facilities.
- ✓ Provide an assessment and referral service in order to connect people to longer-term supports and interventions.

Level 2 – Providing longer-term interventions

Band-Aid solutions are not going to provide the long-term solutions that are needed.

Changes in the lives of homeless people will not happen overnight. It will require longer-term interventions that in turn will require additional resources, creativity and innovation.

To this end definitive action is needed with regard to affordable housing and there is a need to design and implement an inter-agency program that provides a continuum of services, paced appropriately and “client-centered” with the goal of people becoming self-sufficient on their way to sustainable livelihoods. Included in this approach should be the design and implementation of two pilot social enterprises, one for homeless youth and one for homeless adults, where those who are ready can obtain work experience and transition back into routine and work. Properly designed and managed social enterprises can be cost-effective interventions.

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 - Agassiz-Harrison Community Services Society
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² See Appendix II for names of members of Research Advisory Committee

- Program Managers and staff of the Employment & Community Development Department of MCC BC for accommodating my involvement in this research project.
- The team of volunteers who helped with various logistical tasks especially in regards to the snapshot survey, the volunteer area coordinators and interviewers without whose help the researchers could not have conducted the survey.³

“Homelessness and hunger are the two most palpable indications of poverty, as well as the clearest indications of society’s inability to care even minimally for its most vulnerable members (Glasser, 1994:123).

³ See Appendix I for names volunteers

1. SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH PROJECT BACKGROUND

Empirical evidence confirms that homelessness is a growing phenomenon in Canada. Its manifestation is most visible in metropolitan areas such as Toronto, Vancouver, Regina, Edmonton, etc; however, homelessness is not restricted to these areas. Although less visible, homelessness is present in the Upper Fraser Valley. Given anecdotal evidence from Service Providers to this effect and the absence of a reliable estimate of the extent of homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley communities, it was decided to undertake this research project during the summer of 2004. The study focused on Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack, Agassiz-Harrison, Hope, Boston Bar and North Bend.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives were identified:

- To improve the understanding of the relationship between the variables homelessness and employment/unemployment;
- To determine the extent of homelessness in the upper Fraser Valley;
- To analyze the human face behind the phenomenon, by qualitatively developing a better understanding of factors that have contributed to a state of homelessness, survival strategies, sense of community, views on whether and how the situation can be alleviated and perceptions about employment and self-sufficiency or lack thereof;
- To compile a profile of homeless people including the distribution of typical variables such as age, gender, skills, employment history, duration of homelessness, type of homelessness, etc.;
- To raise public awareness of homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley;
- To identify potential resources internal and external to the community that can be mobilized to reduce homelessness and enable and empower the homeless towards self-sufficiency; and
- To inform the government, policy makers, and community based policy debates about the extent of homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley.

1.3. RESEARCH OUTCOMES

At a general level it is expected that the research will enhance the understanding among service providers, elected officials, bureaucrats, community volunteers, etc. of homelessness as a social problem and contribute to the design of interventions to reduce homelessness. Furthermore, that it will result in increased community capacity, including mobilization of resources, to respond to the phenomenon of homelessness. More specific outcomes include:

- Knowledge building in partnership with communities inclusive of the homeless community;
- A stronger knowledge base in each community of the extent of the phenomenon, factors contributing to it and available community resources;
- Enhanced understanding of homelessness in the upper Fraser Valley, facilitating effective public support and community action in response to homelessness;
- Enhanced understanding of what contributes to the state of homelessness and what services need to be provided at the community level to enable the homeless community to move to self-sufficiency;
- Better understanding of the needs of homeless persons in becoming ready to seek employment and the barriers preventing them from seeking employment and strategies on how to overcome these barriers;
- Effective dissemination of research findings;

- Identification and recording of best practices in responding to this phenomenon at the community level; and
- A strong and sustainable participatory research partnership and increased community capacity, marked by greater collaboration among service providers, researchers, government and not-for-profit sector to respond constructively and proactively to the issue of homelessness in the upper Fraser Valley.

1.4. DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

In order to guide the study and to know what to measure, the research team, in consultation with the Project Advisory Committee, developed a definition of homelessness. Two major factors have been taken into account in the formulation of this definition: first, the importance of maintaining consistency with studies done in the GVRD so that valid comparisons may be made; second, the desire to take into account as far as possible the variety of situations in which homeless persons are found.

For this reason, the definition used in this study was informed by the definitions used by the Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver, while taking into account categories and terms for homelessness used by researchers throughout Canada and parts of the United States.

In the context of this study the term homeless refers to people who do not have a permanent shelter to call home. This includes the sheltered homeless: people living temporarily in emergency shelters, safe houses, or transition houses; the street/unsheltered homeless: people “sleeping rough” in places not intended for human shelter, including parks, alleys, doorways, parkades, beaches, vehicles, railway cars, dumpsters, and under bridges; and the hidden/concealed homeless: people temporarily staying with friends or family, commonly referred to as “doubling up” or “couch surfing.”

1.5. METHODOLOGY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and ensure a greater degree of reliability the research team applied “Between Method Triangulation” (Denzin, 1978) with respect to data collection. To this end the researchers made use of:

- Focus Groups involving Service Providers, Homeless/Formerly Homeless Adults and Homeless/Formerly Homeless Youth,
- A 24-hour snapshot survey, and
- First person qualitative interviews with homeless and formerly homeless people

Focus Groups: Focus Groups were held with Service Providers in the 6 communities and with homeless/formerly homeless adults and youth. In total 14 focus groups were conducted involving 126 people. This included 5 Focus Groups with Service Providers, 4 Focus Groups with homeless youth and 5 Focus Groups with Homeless Adults. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather qualitative data from Service Provider Representatives working with homeless people and from homeless and former homeless people.

24-Hour Snapshot Survey: A 24-hour Snapshot Survey was used to enumerate as accurately as possible the number of homeless people, especially street homeless and sheltered homeless people and to an extent hidden/concealed homeless people. Together with the GVRD, other jurisdictions, organizations and researchers that have attempted such an enumeration, we recognize that exact enumeration of this population is impossible. However, by using recognized and established methods and procedures the researchers are of the opinion that this study has produced a reliable and valid estimate of the number of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that a 24-hour snapshot survey provides an estimate of the number of homeless people at a point in time. It does not capture each and every homeless person. As far as the research team could ascertain, no known ethical method exists that will provide a 100% accurate number of homeless people in a given region. Surveys to determine an estimate of the number of homeless people are known to “undercount.” Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that in all likelihood there are more homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley than the number determined by this study.

The following factors are potential reasons for an undercount of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley in the summer of 2004. First, although the research team consulted extensively with service providers and homeless people to identify places where homeless people may be commonly found, the research team cannot claim to have identified each and every possible place. Second, not all homeless people will necessarily visit these identified locations on a given day. Third, interviews from three of the communities surveyed reported that during the 24 hours of the snapshot homeless people with whom they normally interact were absent from their usual locations.

Given the above-mentioned reasons and the unavailability of an ethical method that can produce a 100% reliable number of homeless people, the homeless estimate that was arrived at through this study represents only the number of homeless people that were identified by the interviewers over a 24 hour survey period on August 19 and 20, 2004.

For purposes of further accuracy, estimates derived from snapshot surveys may be compared with HIFIS data (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System), where available. In the absence of HIFIS data, researchers can also rely on what is called a period prevalence estimate. A period prevalence estimate is obtained by arranging with various services providers in the communities under study to keep accurate records, using a standardized form, of the number of homeless people who make use of their services over a period of time, e.g. one year, six months, or 3 months. It is recommended that subsequent homeless studies in the Upper Fraser Valley incorporate this method of comparing a survey count with data from a period prevalence estimate.

After extensive consultation with service providers, homeless people and the Research Advisory Committee, it was decided that the survey would be conducted sometime during the week leading up to income assistance cheque-issue day. The rationale for this decision was that more people were likely to make use of food and shelter services during that time, and thus the researchers would maximize the population they hoped to cover during the survey. To allow for adequate time to recruit and train volunteer interviewers and finalize logistical planning for the survey, August 19 - 20, 2004, was chosen as the 24 hour period to undertake the survey. The 24-hour snapshot survey consisted of a nighttime component and a daytime component. These two components will now be discussed in more detail.

Nighttime Survey Component

The nighttime component focused on the complete enumeration of all shelters, safe houses and transition houses for the selected night of the count. For this purpose the researchers enlisted the help of staff at these locations to administer the short questionnaire and provide the research team with the numbers of people sheltered the night of August 19, 2004.

Preparation for the night-time component included:

- Compiling a comprehensive list of all emergency shelters, safe houses, transition houses and other temporary emergency accommodation in the Fraser Valley. Each of these places were contacted and one person enlisted to be responsible for administering the survey form and to submit completed survey forms to the researchers.

- Developing an information package for participating service providers that describes the Research Project, formally requesting cooperation and providing survey forms.
- A subsequent follow-up call or visit to confirm their participation and to answer any questions they may have.
- Orientation to the research project and training in the use of the survey forms was provided to those who agreed to assist the research team in gathering the survey data.

Daytime Survey Component

The function during the daytime component was to find homeless people who did not stay in shelters the previous night. This was carried out by trained volunteer interviewers who visited pre-identified locations throughout the day of August 24, 2004, looking for homeless persons and screening out those counted the night before in shelters and transition houses. The pre-identified locations included meal program sites, drop-ins and other services, and outdoor congregation areas.

Preparation for the day-time component included:

- Demarcating communities into various areas to ensure manageable survey areas.
- Working with various service providers (shelter services, drop in centers, meal programs) in each community and recruiting volunteer interviewers from amongst staff and local volunteer pool. Volunteers or staff persons who demonstrated a strong empathy for homeless people were selected as supervisors for various areas to oversee and support interviewers on the day of the count.
- Providing training to interviewers and supervisors to ensure that research participants were approached in a respectful manner, that the survey was done ethically and that the principle of informed voluntary consent was strictly adhered to.
- Contacting all service providers and facilities frequented by homeless persons during the day and explaining the Project, finding out their peak hours and estimated clientele, and enlisting their cooperation.
- Compiling a comprehensive list of all service providers, facilities and outdoor locations (pan-handling spots, malls, parks) where homeless people were likely to be found during the day, including estimated numbers expected, and times of peak congregation.
- Contacting all volunteers prior to the count to confirm their participation, answer questions, and establish co-ordination for the day of the count.
- Advertising the survey by means of posters and fliers that were distributed by service providers who felt that it was appropriate and that it would not offend their clients. Advertising was done on a restricted basis to avoid it becoming a widely known public event, since wide knowledge of the event could be seen to introduce an intervening variable that could potentially be interpreted as a factor skewing the survey findings.
- Equipping supervisors with cellular phones so that they could be reached on the day of the survey by interviewer-teams with questions or concerns or so they could contact the survey coordinators with questions or concerns.
- Issuing identification buttons to interviewers to facilitate easy recognition by homeless people.

- Issuing snacks, bottled water, juices and cigarettes to interviewers to be handed to interviewees as a means to break the ice. Interviewers were expected to operate in teams of two, with at least one having experience with homeless people.

First Person Qualitative Interviews: In order to document life experiences of homeless people and former homeless people and to identify prevention strategies and barriers to self-sufficiency, the research team made use of first person qualitative interviews. In total, 26 homeless or formerly homeless persons were interviewed.

Ethical Considerations

In keeping with the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, the researchers recognized that “the end does not justify the means.” In other words, the carrying out of the survey should not harm any of the people involved (both interviewers and interviewees) physically, emotionally, or financially. The survey should in no way compromise the dignity of the persons surveyed, or jeopardize their ability to receive services.

Accordingly, the research design was submitted to, reviewed and approved by the Ethical Review Board at the University College of the Fraser Valley. The following approach was applied to ensure that the survey was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical guidelines:

- Interviewers had to agree to keep an oath of confidentiality, assure anonymity of interviewees, and only interview persons if they freely complied based on informed voluntary consent.
- Interviewees were clearly informed about the nature of the project and were not deceived in order to elicit a response.
- Interviewers were selected from among people who have experience with the homeless community, an awareness of the realities contributing to homelessness, empathy for persons in this situation, and are at ease relating to homeless persons; all interviewers signed an oath of confidentiality.
- Training of interviewers included an overview of ethical considerations as contained in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and a discussion of “do’s and don’ts,” pertaining to confidentiality, non-intimidation, and non-coercion.

2. SECTION TWO – THE EXTENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE UPPER FRASER VALLEY

2.1. VIEWS FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS AND HOMELESS/FORMERLY HOMELESS PEOPLE

Service Providers

Service Provider Focus Group participants were asked “Is homelessness increasing in your community and if so why?” In both Abbotsford and Chilliwack, service provider representatives answered in the affirmative. Service Providers in Mission indicated that the numbers of homeless people fluctuate all the time; however, they have noticed a slight increase as a result of welfare cuts. In Agassiz, the opinion was that they haven’t notice an increase, but that not many homeless people move through Agassiz given its location off Highway # 1. Nevertheless, it was indicated that people come to Agassiz “to hide and they don’t want to be known.” In Hope, Service Providers reported that they continue to observe homeless people moving through, but they don’t really see an increase in the number of transient people or an increase in the number of homeless people settling in Hope. However, according to Service Providers, people do come to Hope for cheaper accommodation.

From Boston Bar, it was reported that not many homeless people are seen, but there are always a few people on the road moving up or down the Canyon. Service Providers also reported a “unique situation” of people in a remote area some distance away from North Bend who “chose” to live “outside” the system. According to Service Providers this group ...

“is tired of the system, of paying taxes and tired of welfare. They fend for themselves. They live in their “own” place and wouldn’t regard themselves as homeless.”

Based on information conveyed to the research team, it certainly is a phenomenon that, in the opinion of the researchers, warrants further research. However, it fell outside the scope of this study to further investigate this situation and, therefore, the researchers do not express an opinion on this matter in this report.

Estimate of number of homeless people

In terms of an estimate of the number of homeless people, Service Providers in all the Upper Fraser Valley communities indicated that they don’t have exact numbers of people who are homeless. However, they do have records of the number of people who they regularly serve, some of whom may be homeless. In this regard, the following information was provided:

Abbotsford

- **Abbotsford Youth Outreach Workers:** 2 – 3 new faces appear per week at their offices and rarely do these youth become stable in the absence of a continuum of services for street youth.
- **The Welfare and Handicapped Persons Rights Society:** Serves between 60-80 people per day and hands out ~ 800 sandwiches per month in trailer parks.
- **Fraser Valley Christian Centre:** Open 4 days a week for drop-in. Offers a Friday coffee house and dinner and a Sunday lunch. Numbers vary between 15-30.
- **The William Booth Shelter:** Run by the Salvation Army, this 10-bed shelter is full all the time with higher numbers in summer.
- **Salvation Army Meal Centre:** Open Mondays to Fridays and serves ~150 people per day.

- **Abbotsford Food Bank:** Provides emergency food to about 20 people per day. In March 2004, 3,995 persons used the food bank. The number of families served by the Food Bank has increased substantially over the past few years:
 - 2001 – 322
 - 2002 – 925
 - 2003 – 1,701
 - 2004 - 1,968
- **Sikh Temple:** No restrictions on people who need food
- **The Sisters of Faith:** This group of traditional Catholic sisters provides on a daily basis an early morning meal package to about 300 individuals between the Aldergrove/Abbotsford Border and a part of western Chilliwack.

Chilliwack

- **Chilliwack Community Services Society:** According to the Society's Reconnect Youth Service, about 40 youth are couch surfing, and according to information from the Ministry of Children and Families, 12 youth are in need of accommodation. By definition these 52 youth (40 + 12) are homeless.
- **Salvation Army:** Provides one meal per day, Mondays-Fridays to between 80 - 130 people. In addition to the meal program, shelter is provided in the 8 bed Arthur Cartwell Shelter which can be extended to 11 beds, if needed, and up to 15 beds in the winter as part of the cold-wet weather shelter service. People staying at the shelter are provided with supper and breakfast, and those who take to the road, moving on the next day, are provided with a lunch box. The Army also runs the food bank in Chilliwack, providing ~6000 hampers per year to families in need. Through its Care and Share Centre, clothing vouchers worth \$50,000 per year are provided to families in need.
- **United Church, Downtown Chilliwack:** On rotation with other churches provides a soup kitchen and hot lunch program on Saturdays, serving ~ 160 people. They see a consistent growth in numbers and new faces.
- **Ruth and Naomi's Street Ministry:** Open Tuesday to Saturday evenings. Sees 60 – 100 people per night with higher numbers in the summer than in winter. Serves food at low prices (\$1.00) to between 20-35 people per night but doesn't refuse those who have nothing. Through an on-site Thrift Store, they also provide free clothes. Volunteers listen to and care for people and share the gospel.
- **The Bridge (Youth Drop-In):** Open Tuesday – Friday evenings. Serves meals to between 40-60 youth per evening.
- **Alliance Church:** Serves a community dinner once a month to ~ 400 people. The church estimates that 6,000-7,000 people live in poverty in downtown Chilliwack. They also have a Community Care Fund, and 12 people collected food vouchers (\$50.00 value) in the previous week (April 19, 2004). Also offers counseling services.
- **Fraser Valley Connection Services:** ~250 people use this service on average per month, some of whom are injection drug users, some suffer from Hepatitis C, and about 20-25% are HIV Positive.
- **Ann Davis Society:** Offers transition house and counseling services to about 900 people per year who have a background of abuse. Provides limited food hampers to their own clients who are homeless and help clients find affordable housing, which is a big problem. A Donation Room offers free clothing. Ann Davis Society also runs a Second Stage house that offers housing for 1 year. Calls from homeless women are on the increase, but there is no place to refer them to.

Mission

- **Mission Community Services Society:** Operates the Mission Food Centre which is open Mondays – Fridays, serving ~30 people per day. Also operates a Cold Weather Shelter Service that provided shelter to 57 individuals during the 2003-2004 Cold Weather Shelter Service period, which ran from November to April. In addition, the Society operates a 24 hr crisis line for the area from Mission to Boston Bar. The Crisis line service has a list of shelters in and around the study area. During 2003-2004, the

- crisis line received 294 calls from people inquiring about shelter/housing/food/financial assistance.
- **Union Gospel Mission:** Offers one meal per day Monday – Friday to about 120 people per day. In addition, they provide a bread/coffee drop-in (family setting).
 - **Miracle Valley:** 170 bed adult men addictions treatment/recovery centre. Many participants have a dual diagnosis (mental and physical health problems). Host/shelter people up to 30 days after treatment, offering food, clothing and pre-employment with Triangle Resources.
 - **All Saints Anglican Church, Mission:** Offers Harvest Bag (includes fresh food and vegetables) for families once a month at a cost of \$5 to over 100 families per month and a community dinner once per month serving on average 80 people or more. Vouchers for food and shampoo are available on Tuesdays.
 - **Mission Indian Friendship Centre:** Open Monday – Friday. Serves hot lunches at cost of \$1.00 per lunch. Serves 30-50 meals per day. Also offers shower facilities. ~ 70-80 people use services per month.
 - **Sikh Temple:** Open 5 am to evening. Cooked food is available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and on others days there is some food available (not cooked). No restrictions on people who need food.
 - **Fraser House:** Caters to youth and provides one-to-one and group counseling. Provides tea, coffee, hot chocolate and bagels on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

Hope

- **Joshua Project:** Open Tuesdays and Thursdays and serves a meal to ~40 people per sitting.
- **Hope Community Services:** Operates a 2-3 bed Shelter.
- **Mental Health Office:** Offers homeless people washer, dryer and shower facilities.

Boston Bar/North Bend

- Approximately 250-300 people are on income assistance.
- Hunger is an issue. Many kids at school don't have enough food to eat and rely on friends to bring food to share.

Homeless People

Homeless youth focus group participants indicated that there are between 30-40 homeless youth in Abbotsford, some as young as 10, 11 and 12. Adult homeless people were of the opinion that 40-50 homeless people live in the Abbotsford Downtown core, and if you add those living under bridges, in bushes, disbanded buildings, etc., then the number can go up to 100. In Chilliwack, they estimated the number of homeless people to be between 40 and 60 people, whereas in Mission the estimates were given as anywhere between 40-50 or even as high as 100 - 200 people in Downtown Mission. The point was also made by participants in focus groups that in Mission, Abbotsford and Chilliwack combined the number could be in the order of over 360 people, excluding those who couch surf.

2.2. NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE INTERVIEWED IN THE UPPER FRASER VALLEY ON DAY OF SURVEY

The communities in the Fraser Valley where the survey was conducted included Abbotsford, Agassiz-Harrison, Boston Bar-North Bend, Chilliwack, Hope and Mission. The total number of homeless people surveyed during the 24-hour period, August 19-20, 2004, in the Upper Fraser Valley is 411.¹ This number is made up of 226 in Abbotsford; 87 in Chilliwack; 75 in Mission; 19 in

¹ The survey was done during summer. The number of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley may vary from summer to winter. Some Service Providers are of the opinion that there are more homeless people in the Upper Valley in summer than winter because of the fact that more services are available during winter months in the GVRD.

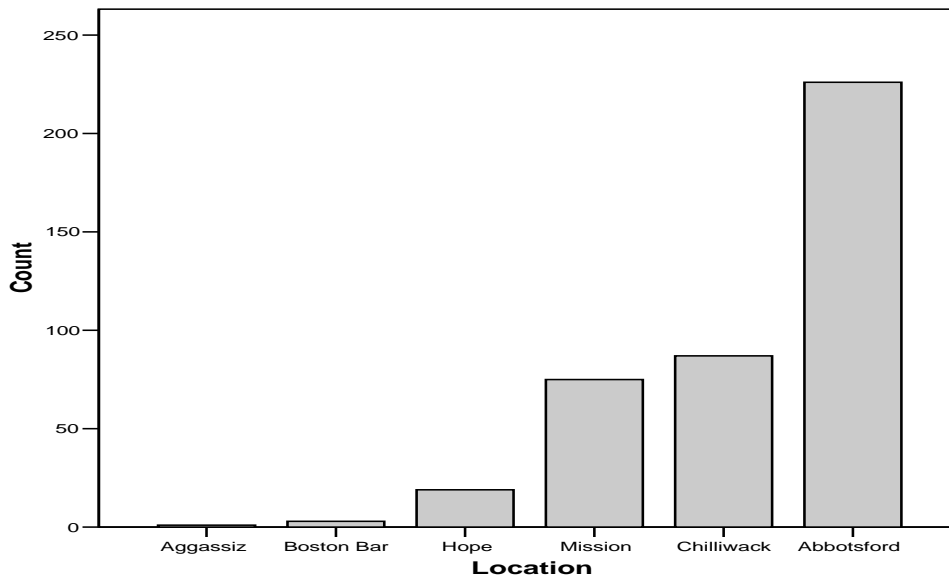
Hope; 3 in Boston Bar-North Bend 3; and 1 in Agassiz-Harrison. For a closer look see Table 1 and Diagram 1.

The number of homeless people interviewed during the survey is roughly comparable to the estimate obtained from focus groups (~360) and confirms the view held by many Service Provider Representatives that homelessness is not confined to the GVRD area, but is indeed present in the Upper Fraser Valley. Note should be taken of the fact, as explained in the section on methodology, that the number of 411 homeless persons in the Upper Fraser Valley is in all probability an undercount.

TABLE 1: COMMUNITY WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE SURVEYED

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mission	75	18.2	18.2	18.2
Hope	19	4.6	4.6	22.9
Abbotsford	226	55.0	55.0	77.9
Agassiz	1	.2	.2	78.1
Boston Bar	3	.7	.7	78.8
Chilliwack	87	21.2	21.2	100.0
Total	411	100.0	100.0	

DIAGRAM 1: COMMUNITY WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE SURVEYED



2.3. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

The reasons for being homeless obtained through the survey are reflected in Table 2. Combining this information with the information obtained by means of Focus Groups and qualitative interviews, the following reasons or combination of reasons have been identified as having contributed to the state of homelessness of people in the Upper Fraser Valley. See Box 1 for a listing of the identified factors.

TABLE 2: REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Can't find a place	37	14.9	14.9	14.9
Evicted	26	10.4	10.4	25.3
Ineligible for Income Assistance	38	15.3	15.3	40.6
Moving or stranded	10	4.0	4.0	44.6
Abuse	23	9.2	9.2	53.8
Addiction	64	25.7	25.7	79.5
Conflict in family/ family breakdown	40	16.1	16.1	95.6
Released from Corrections Facility	5	2.0	2.0	97.6
Refugee	1	.4	.4	98.0
Discrimination	5	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total response	249	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	162			
Total	411			

BOX 1: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS

- Addictions/ Lack of Addiction Treatment Facilities
- Medical condition/ Mental Disability
- Broken relationships/ family dysfunction/ family ties cut/ disowned by family/ family abuse
- Changing Job Market (McJobs)/ Older workers/ need skills retraining/Ageism
- Increase in income inequality and working poor
- Designed erosion of Safety Net (higher bar for eligibility/ red tape – re-application by People with Disabilities/ inadequate welfare payments/ cut off welfare/ ineligible for welfare)
- Cost of accommodation/ lack of affordable and accessible housing/discrimination by landlords against welfare clients
- Kicked out of foster home/ kicked out of Aboriginal Safe House
- Ran away from home
- Failure of foster care
- Released from incarceration
- Lack of Shelters
- Lack of Youth Safe Houses
- De-institutionalization of people with mental disabilities without adequate community based care plan and resources
- Poor personal choices/ lived wild, made money and didn't save up
- Population growth in Upper Fraser Valley and concomitant social problems
- Upper Fraser Valley Communities seen as safer than GVRD

Almost one third of the reasons for being homeless are blamed on family breakdowns (16.1%) and insufficient income assistance (15.3%). Lack of affordable housing is cited by 14.9% of the respondents as a reason for being homeless. It is clear that socio-economic factors such as low income and market related housing cost contribute towards homelessness in the Fraser Valley.

A significant percentage (25.7%) of the respondents indicated that addiction is the main reason for their homelessness. Ten percent (10.4%) indicated that they are homeless because they were evicted from their last residence. Almost ten percent (9.2%) indicated that they are homeless because of abuse at home. Only one respondent (.4%) indicated that he was a refugee. Two percent (2%) of the respondents indicated that they are homeless because they are from correctional services, and a similar percentage (2%) indicated that they are homeless because they experience discrimination in society. Discrimination is a theme that recurs among the statements of some of the respondents as reflected in this quotation:

“When you go see a place and they see what you look like, the place is rented ...”

It is evident from the survey results and the information obtained from focus group participants and interviewees that homelessness in the Fraser Valley is caused by both structural and personal factors. It is not only a matter of “poor personal choices” and “their own fault”. Indeed, poor personal choices play a significant role in people becoming homeless, as homeless people themselves have expressed to researchers on this project. However, the effect of a weakened or eroded welfare system, stricter eligibility criteria for welfare support, drastic cut-backs in federal dollars for social housing during the past decade, globalization and a changing economy and the phenomenon of McJobs cannot be ignored in any analysis of the reasons why homelessness is on the increase in Canada in general and the Upper Fraser Valley in particular.

2.4. DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

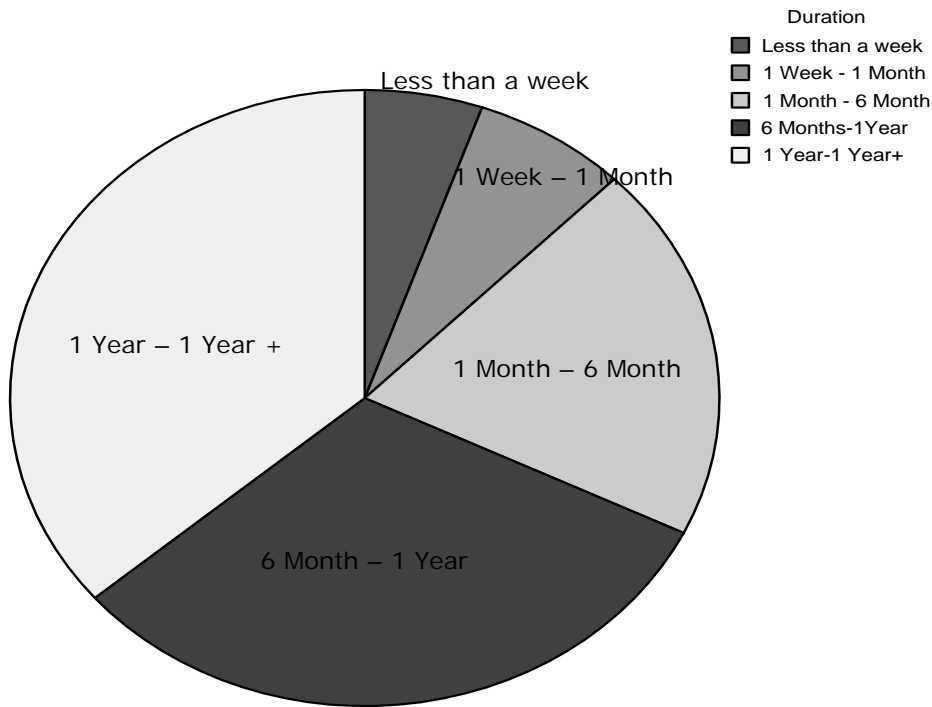
The respondents were asked to indicate how long they had been homeless. Those who have been homeless for a year or longer constitute 36.2%, followed by 31.5% who have been homeless for more than six months but less than a year and 19.8% who have indicated that they have been homeless for more than a month but no longer than 6 months.

TABLE 3: DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than a week	16	5.4	5.4	5.4
1 Week - less than 1Month	21	7.0	7.0	12.4
1Month - less than 6Month	59	19.8	19.8	32.2
6Months - less than 1Year	94	31.5	31.5	63.8
1Year+	108	36.2	36.2	100.0
Total response	298	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	113			
Total	411			

Seven percent (7.0%) of the respondent were homeless for more that a week but less than a month. 5.4% were homeless for less than a week (Table 3 and Diagram 2). Diagram 2 reflects that the majority of the homeless in the Fraser Valley are experiencing homelessness as a long-term situation.

DIAGRAM 2: DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS



According to the survey results and specifically data in relation to duration of homelessness as reported in Table 3 and Diagram 2, more than a third (36.2%) of homelessness occurring in the Upper Fraser Valley could be regarded as chronic or long-term. Other respondents reported situational homelessness while still others are episodically homeless as reflected in the reasons for homelessness (Table 2).

3. SECTION THREE – A CLOSER LOOK AT WHO OUR HOMELESS NEIGHBOURS ARE

3.1. PROFILE OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE UPPER FRASER VALLEY

From Abbotsford, there are reports of youth as young as 10 years living on the streets. Homeless adults visiting the Food Bank and the Salvation Army meal center in Abbotsford are mostly Caucasian Anglophones 40 + years in age. Chilliwack Service Providers report an increase in the number of people with mental disabilities on the streets, a higher number of aboriginal people, and more males than females living on the streets, in addition to couch surfing² youth. Service Providers in Hope highlighted the fact that there are quite a few alcoholics and drug addicts among those that they work with. In Mission, it was reported that many homeless people have a dual diagnosis, that they suffer from drug and/or alcohol addiction, are mentally ill, leaving or waiting for addictions treatment, and that a significant number of prostitutes, ranging in age from 20 – 40 years are to be found among the homeless. Present among the homeless in Mission are also persons who have been released from incarceration. In Mission, it would appear, according to Service Providers, that youth 16-18 years of age tend to be neglected by Social Services and have to go to Vancouver - not necessarily a desired action according to Service Providers in Mission.

3.2. BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Homelessness is difficult to measure and homelessness studies contribute towards an ongoing and contentious debate with respect to how prevalent and how serious the problem of homelessness is. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the fact that homelessness exists in the Upper Fraser Valley, confirmed by this study, and that homeless people are poor, seldom employed and therefore becoming caught in long term deprivation and progressively more excluded socially. The following biographical information obtained from homeless people surveyed in the Upper Fraser Valley will be discussed in this section:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity, and
- Community of Origin

3.2.1. GENDER

The gender distribution of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley did not differ significantly from available data regarding homelessness in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD: 2002) or the rest of Canada. Women constitute one third to one half of the homeless in major urban areas across Canada (Neal 2004:1; Wove, Serge, Beetle, and Brown 2002:9; Lenon 2000: 1). Homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley is not a male only experience or problem. The finding that almost one third (32.6%) of the respondents were women could be misleading (Table 4). There may be more homeless women who are not on the streets for safety and security reasons. It could be argued that homelessness of women is more hidden than that of men. This study does not reflect extensively on the hidden aspect of homelessness and may therefore exclude women who find themselves in a situation of hidden homelessness.

It is apparent from Table 4 that males represented just more than two thirds (67%) of the homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley. A total of 134 (32%) female respondents indicated that they don't have a place that they can call home. A comparison between research findings in the GVRD

² Couch surfing is the term that is used to describe how homeless persons spend their nights by making use of an available space in the home of a friend, relative, or acquaintance.

(GVRD: 2002) and this study indicates that there are one percent (1%) more male and one percent (1%) fewer females homeless in the GVRD than in the Upper Fraser Valley.

TABLE 4: GENDER DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	134	32.6	32.6	32.6
Male	277	67.4	67.4	100.0
Total	411	100.0	100.0	

3.2.2. AGE

It is clear from Table 5 and Diagram 3 that the respondents represent all age groups from very young to very old.³ The majority of the respondents who were unwilling to provide their age were either very young or females, with the exception of one male respondent who indicated that he was too old to remember his actual age. A significant number (90 or 23.2%) of the respondents fall into the category of “under 15 – 24” years old. Thirty-seven of the ninety youth who indicated that they are under 15-24 years were women. The proportion of females to males in the Fraser Valley increases as age decreases. All twelve respondents who indicated that they are less than fifteen years old were females (Table 5). These findings correspond with other findings regarding age and homelessness, which indicate that homeless women in Canada are younger in age than homeless men (CMHC 2004). The largest group of the respondents (27.6%) as indicated in Table 6 and Diagram 3 was 35-44 years of age. A significant number of the respondents (52.1%) were 25-44 years of age. More than two thirds of the respondents (69.7%) were between 25 and 54 years of age. There were 27 (7.1%) respondents in the 55-75 year age group. This group is dealing with homelessness and the physical and psychological challenges involved in the processes of growing older. Only one percent (1%) of the homeless in the GVRD indicated that they are older than sixty-five in the year 2002 (GVRD 2002: 73). Two percent (2.4%) of the homeless respondents in the Upper Fraser Valley indicated that they are older than sixty-five in 2004 (Table 5). The proportion of the older population that is represented among the homeless might increase dramatically in the next few decades as Canada’s population continues to “grey”. However, given the typical life expectancy of homeless people, this may not happen.

On average Canadians are now healthier than ever before. Canada ranks among the top three developed countries in the world in terms of life expectancy, self-rated health and mortality rates. The average life expectancy of Canadian men has reached a new high of 75.7 years, and the life expectancy of Canadian women now stands at 81.4 years (United Nations Human Development Report, 2004). However, the picture for homeless Canadians is markedly different as homelessness affects health and life expectancy in significant ways. Homeless Canadians are more likely to die at a younger age and to suffer more illnesses than the general Canadian population. Many factors contribute towards the lower life expectancy of homeless people including lack of social support networks, education, unemployment, living conditions, personal health practices, biology and genetic endowment, unavailability of health services, etc. A study by Cheung and Hwang (2004:170) found that the mortality rate between younger homeless women and homeless men was not significantly different from their corresponding age cohort in the general population. In contrast the mortality rate was significantly higher among older homeless people. Of further interest is the fact that the mortality rate was also significantly higher among older homeless women than older homeless men. Homeless women 18-44 years of age were ten

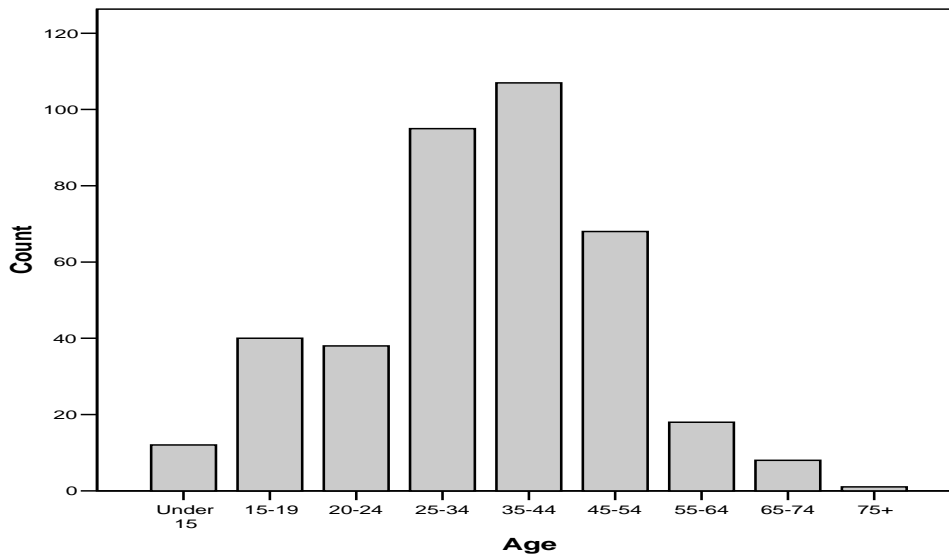
³ The survey identified 37 homeless youths 18 years and younger (16 in Abbotsford; 10 in Mission; 7 in Chilliwack and 4 in Hope).

times more likely to die than women in the general population. Among men using homeless shelters in Toronto, mortality rates were 8.3, 3.7 and 2.3 times higher than the rate for men in the general population aged 18-24, 25-44 and 45-64 years respectively.

TABLE 5: AGE DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 15	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
15-19	40	10.3	10.3	13.4
20-24	38	9.8	9.8	23.3
25-34	95	24.5	24.5	47.8
35-44	107	27.6	27.6	75.5
45-54	68	17.6	17.6	93.0
55-64	18	4.7	4.7	97.7
65-74	8	2.1	2.1	99.7
75+	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total response	387	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	24			
Total	411			

DIAGRAM 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION



3.2.3. ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is the cultural heritage or identity of a group based on factors such as language or country of origin. The respondents were asked to indicate their ethnic background. This question was very carefully approached and the privacy of the respondents was respected in cases where they regarded their ethnicity as private, confidential or “None of your business.”

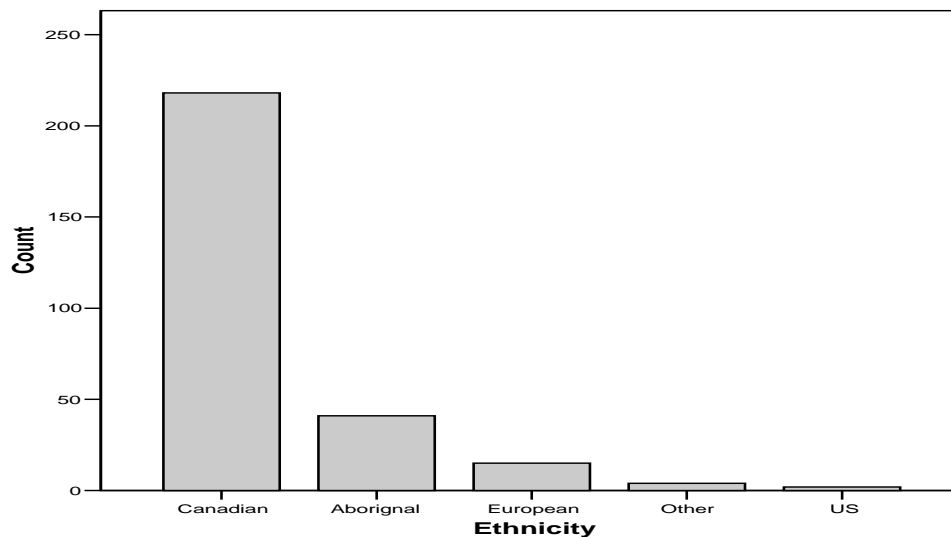
TABLE 6: ETHNIC BACKGROUND

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Canadian	218	77.9	77.9	77.9
Aboriginal	41	14.6	14.6	92.5
US	2	.7	.7	93.2
European	15	5.4	5.4	98.6
Other	4	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total response	280	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	131			
Total	411			

More than three quarters of the respondents (77.9%) indicated that they are Canadians. Forty-one (14.6%) of the respondents stated their ethnicity as Aboriginal. Aboriginal representation amongst the homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley was slightly higher (14.6%) than in the GVRD (12%) (GVRD 2004:74). Literature indicates that the Aboriginal homeless have special needs (e.g., cultural appropriateness, self determination, and traditional healing techniques that need to be considered (Beavis, Klos, Carter, Douchant, 1997). Some aboriginal respondents did indicate that the Indian Friendship Centre in Mission provides some assistance in regards to their special needs while a focus group participant, self-identified as Aboriginal, made the following comment:

“...some Aboriginal people are not accepting of services from white people because of being biased.”

DIAGRAM 4: ETHNIC BACKGROUND



3.2.4. COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN

The places where the respondents responded to the questionnaire (Table 1) and the place that they have indicated as their last permanent home (Table 7) were not the same. However, nearly two-thirds of the respondents (64.8%) indicated that their last permanent home was in the Upper Fraser Valley. They are from our communities; they are indeed our neighbours.

Nevertheless, a substantial number of the respondents (35.2%) indicated that their last permanent home was not in the Fraser Valley (Tables 7 and 8). The question then arises: Is there an influx of homeless people into the Fraser Valley? Based on the survey results, the majority of the respondents are originally from Upper Fraser Valley communities. Although the majority of those who are originally from outside the Upper Fraser Valley are from the GVRD, this amounts to 73 individuals or 69.5% of 105 (see Table 8). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that people from the GVRD do contribute to an increase in the number of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley, but it must be kept in mind that, based on the survey results, the majority of homeless people (192 or 60.4%) are originally from Upper Fraser Valley communities.

TABLE 7: LAST PERMANENT RESIDENCE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Abbotsford	95	31.9	31.9	31.9
Mission	32	10.7	10.7	42.6
Chilliwack	51	17.1	17.1	59.7
Agassiz-Harrison	1	.3	.3	60.1
Boston Bar	1	.3	.3	60.4
Hope	13	4.4	4.4	64.8
Other	105	35.2	35.2	100.0
Total response	298	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	113			
Total	411			

TABLE 8: LAST PERMANENT HOME OUTSIDE THE FRASER VALLEY

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
GVRD	73	69.5	69.5	69.5
Vancouver Island	4	3.8	3.8	73.3
Rest of BC	15	14.3	14.3	87.6
Rest of Canada	13	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

In addition to those from the GVRD, others from outside the Upper Fraser Valley came from the "rest of BC" (4.3%). Kamloops, Kelowna and Prince George were well represented among those coming from the "rest of BC." Thirteen (12.4%) respondents were from the "rest of Canada," specifically from Alberta, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Four (3.8%) respondents were from Vancouver Island.

4. SECTION FOUR - HOW DO OUR HOMELESS NEIGHBOURS LIVE?

4.1. ACCOMMODATION

The William Booth Shelter in Abbotsford has 10 beds for adults, 8 for men and 2 for women. The Arthur Cartmell Shelter in Chilliwack has 11 beds,⁴ and the Shelter in Hope has 2 beds. In Mission, through Mission Community Services Society, shelter services have been available 6 months of the year since 2001 consisting of 4 adult shelter beds and 1 family bed for emergency situations. A total of 28 shelter beds. Mission also has a Cold/Wet Weather Shelter Program and during November 2004, 25 homeless individuals have been assisted through this program. The Transition Houses in the Upper Fraser Valley combined, offer 60 beds⁵ and there is no Safe House (Shelter) for youth in the Upper Fraser Valley.

In the event of these shelters/shelter beds being full, people on income assistance can use their shelter allowance to access alternate “affordable” accommodation. However, living conditions in many, if not all, of these “affordable” places are described by Service Providers as appalling, and include buildings which might arguably be declared unsuitable for human habitation. Despite the appalling conditions, costs are still higher than what a single person on income assistance can afford. Moreover, this option is not available to those without income assistance or any other income. It is also important to note that single women find housing faster than women with children because some landlords are reluctant to rent accommodation to women with children. Furthermore, people with mental disabilities do not fit well into a transition house setting.

The total number of Shelter and Transition House beds available for homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley is 88 of which 60 are transition house beds, leaving 28 shelter beds. There is a limit on the number of days people can be accommodated in Shelters and Transition Houses, and people who make use of a shelter can only access it from 9 pm to 7am the next morning. That means 17 hours on the streets with no place to go, carrying all belongings because of the risk of theft.

In these circumstances, what do homeless people do? They bunk together, share rent, live temporarily in someone’s garage, or stay with families or friends (couch surfing). Some are admitted to psychiatric wards of hospitals for the night.⁶ All of these remain, temporary solutions. Others try and find affordable housing, but have described to the researchers experiences of long waiting lists for affordable housing and discrimination by some landlords when they indicate that they are on social assistance. Even those who do share rent or manage to scrape together a security deposit find it hard if not impossible to make it work; with very little or no income it doesn’t take long to be evicted and end up on the streets.

Homeless people in Mission reported that there are about 40-50 “crack houses” in Mission and that they can always find a place to sleep there. However, drugs are freely available. Alternatively, they may secure a sleeping spot in exchange for sex. One homeless youth had the following to say about this “option” utilized by some youth:

⁴ The Arthur Cartmell Shelter in Chilliwack has an additional 8 seasonal (winter time) cold/wet weather beds, and according to staff interviewed on January 11, 2005, they do not turn anyone away. If the shelter is full, they find accommodation somewhere.

⁵ Transition Houses are situated in Aldergrove (8 beds), Abbotsford (12 beds), Mission (14 beds), Chilliwack (14 beds) and Hope (12 beds).

⁶ An example of this was reported on January 6, 2005, by the Abbotsford Mental Health Consumers Association. According to the Association, 11 people were admitted to the MSA psychiatric ward on the night of January 4, 2005 as they were looking for shelter and/or group homes.

“... the thing with young girls, the pretty ones, they’re called fresh meat, but once they get addicted to drugs, that prettiness goes away, and they send them on their way. And they find someone else.”

Some homeless people, especially youth, indicated that they don’t sleep at night but walk around and sleep during the day because they find it safer. Others just stay high, and awake, on drugs for a number of days on end. Then there is couch surfing, an increasing trend among those searching for affordable housing. Couch surfing is a term that is used to describe how homeless persons spend their nights by making use of an available space in the home of a friend, relative, or acquaintance. They depend on accommodation for a couch, a corner, or even a spot on the kitchen floor to spend the night. The homeless that couch surf might not always find an available space and will spend nights outside. They go from friend to friend or relative to relative until their welcome is worn out. So they are on and off the street, sometimes part of the hidden homeless, sometimes part of the sheltered homeless, and sometimes part of the unsheltered homeless.

According to the snapshot survey, almost one third (31.9%) of those who were found to be homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley have indicated that they have spent the previous night at a relative, friend or acquaintance (Table 9 and 10 and Diagram 5). It has also been reported by homeless youth that couch surfing is an option, but in many cases people couch surf at places where drugs are freely available.

TABLE 9: COUCH SURFING

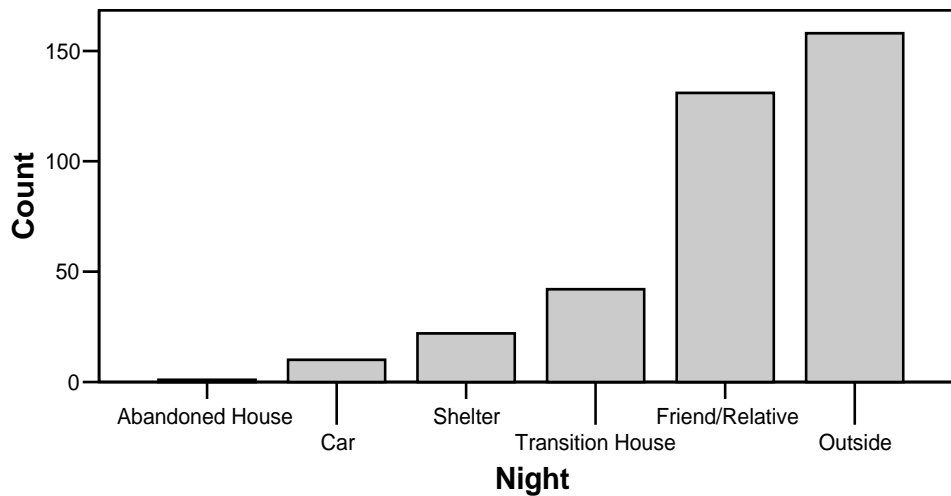
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Couch Surfing	280	68.1	68.1	68.1
Couch Surfing	131	31.9	31.9	100.0
Total	411	100.0	100.0	

Survey respondents were asked to indicate if they have an apartment, house, or room that they call their own or where they pay rent. Four hundred and eleven respondents indicated that they don’t have a place to call home (Table 9). In addition to couch surfing, the places where respondents spent their previous night included shelters; transition houses; abandoned houses; cars, garages or public buildings and outside (Table 10). An alarming number (158 or 43.4%) of the respondents indicated that they have spent the night outside. Only one respondent (0.3%) spent the previous night in an abandoned house. Ten (2.7%) spent the previous night in a car, garage or a public building (Diagram 5 and Table 10).

TABLE 10: WHERE RESPONDENTS SPENT THE PREVIOUS NIGHT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Shelters	22	6.0	6.0	6.0
Transition Houses	42	11.5	11.5	17.6
Abandoned House	1	.3	.3	17.9
Car, garage, public building	10	2.7	2.7	20.6
Outside	158	43.4	43.4	64.0
Friend or Relative	131	36.0	36.0	100.0
Total response	364	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	47			
Total	411			

DIAGRAM 5: WHERE RESPONDENTS SPENT THE PREVIOUS NIGHT



The lack of affordable housing available to people with low income is not a problem that is confined to the Upper Fraser Valley. It is a nation-wide problem. One of the blueprints for addressing this housing problem is contained in a report to the Prime Minister, Paul Martin.

“The federal role in housing must not be a residual one. The connection between housing and other aspects of both social and economic policy means that the federal government must take a lead role ... Our market housing system has not responded adequately to all of society’s needs ...” (Hulchanski, 2004).

TABLE 11: WHY RESPONDENTS DON'T USE A SHELTER OR A TRANSITION HOUSE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Could not get in	21	14.3	14.3	14.3
Did not work out	16	10.9	10.9	25.2
Did not know	19	12.9	12.9	38.1
Do not like	54	36.7	36.7	74.8
Turned away	21	14.3	14.3	89.1
Other	16	10.9	10.9	100.0
Total response	147	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	264			
Total	411			

The respondents were asked to state the main reasons for not having used a transition house or a shelter the previous night. The respondents gave the following reasons:

- Could not get in - full (14.3%);
- Did not work out due to personal problems (10.9%);
- Did not know where to find the facilities (12.9%);
- Do not like the facilities (36.7%);
- Turned away⁷ (14.3%), and;
- Other (10.9%).

“Other” responses include “Don’t want to go to a shelter”; “Want to be alone”; “Want to be with my partner”; “Don’t want to be with that people”; “Want to have privacy”; “Weird to go there”; “Too many rules”; “Rules sucks”. ; “Want to be on my own”; “Not sure”; “Don’t know the place”; and “Don’t know the people”.

See Box 2 for sleeping places identified by homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley.

⁷ This includes having been turned away because of being intoxicated or having a history of not abiding by shelter rules.

BOX 2: SLEEPING PLACES IDENTIFIED BY HOMELESS ADULTS AND HOMELESS YOUTH

<i>Homeless Adults</i>	<i>Homeless Youth</i>
Bank machines	Cemetery
Shelters and transition houses	Overpasses
During day visit library and rest there	Newspaper boxes
McDonalds	Stolen cars
Alano club	Abandoned houses
Sikh temple	Couch surfing
Parks (Use picnic table as cover/bed)	Sleeping as a crew to stay warm
Lakes	Sleep alone because of trust issues
Abandoned houses	Park benches
Tents	Dealers' houses
Loading bays	Walk around at night and sleep during the day
Over passes/ bridges	Friend's house
Abandoned cars	Car
Dumpsters	
Go up and down alley ways	
Bushes and trees	
Walk all night and sleep during the day	
Trails	
Warm and dry make shift shelter	

4.2. EATING

According to Service Providers and some homeless people, food and clothing are relatively easily available, although some homeless people have indicated that they had to, at times, access food from dumpsters or they ate left over food from people at McDonalds or other fast food outlets. Other options for food include Tim Hortons, McDonalds and others that give out left over food from 12 – 1 a.m. Others, especially youth, reported that they just stay high on drugs and thus don't need food. Other sources of food include the Salvation Army and Food Banks while some said they sometimes shop lift for food. Friends provide food, too.

Homeless people who have participated in focus groups and personal interviews said that Faith Groups such as the Salvation Army, Street Hope (Abbotsford), New Heights (Mission), Ruth and Naomi's (Chilliwack), Joshua Project (Hope), Sikh Temple (Abbotsford), and various other church-based initiatives form a big part of their survival in terms of food and empathy. But the researchers also came across those who are tired of bread and donuts, captured to an extent by the following quotation from an interviewee:

"Bread and donuts. Sugar, sugar, sugar. Sugar and carbs.... I'm amazed I'm not diabetic, because of all the sugar I eat."

4.3. PERSONAL SAFETY

Mixed reaction was received with regard to feeling safe. In smaller communities, e.g. Agassiz, the opinion was that street youth are taken care of fairly quickly and that there appears to be a great degree of camaraderie among youth, although some street youth did indicate that they have been attacked on the street. Others said:

"...street kids are not friends. They will stab you to get something and you always worry about where you're going to eat or sleep".

In larger communities, it would appear that youth are more aware that danger does lurk on the streets, especially at night, and that youth, especially younger ones, are easy prey. Some youth also indicated that it is not fun to be “out”; in fact, according to them, it is simply cold and unsafe. As one youth said:

“Hanging out with people you don’t really know is at best scary, but most of the time it is safer to be with strangers on the street than by yourself. ... there are many sick people (Hep C Infected) on the streets and I’m scared that I may become infected too.”

Generally speaking, according to homeless people in focus groups and those interviewed, males feel safer on the streets than females. This is probably not surprising given the continued disappearance of women from streets and violence and abuse by pimps and johns against women. Others indicated that when people know you are on assistance people tend to manipulate you and that in general poor people are taken advantage of. Others said that they are particularly scared of certain people on motorcycles.

4.4. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Responses and information have been mixed about what homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley do when they get sick. Some youth reported that when sick they simply keep on looking for drugs or go to the drug dealer’s house because “drugs put them up”. When they go to some walk-in clinics, staff there assume they are coming in for needles or to stay warm, and they get kicked out.

Others indicated that they access medical help because they have a care card and proof of ID or insurance. However, youth outreach workers reported that many street youth have lost these types of vital documents. Some homeless adults reported that they don’t go to the doctor; they just get through it, and they have good immune systems and don’t get sick. Others just hope that they don’t get sick because they have no medical coverage and no ID. Some indicated that although they can go to a drop-in clinic and see the doctor they don’t have money to pay for prescription drugs⁸.

Survey respondents were asked to state their health concerns (Table 12). Almost half (47.4%) of the respondents indicated that they do have a health concern. Respondents were then asked to specify their health concerns. These are reflected in Table 13 and Diagram 6.

TABLE 12: STATE OF HEALTH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Good Health	24	11.0	11.0	11.0
Health concerns	195	89.0	89.0	100.0
Total response	219	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	192			
Total	411			

⁸ According to Ministry of Human Resources staff people can obtain assistance if they bring proof of a medical prescription that they cannot afford. An emergency drug benefits application form can be obtained from the local MHR office.

Only five (11.0%) percent of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley reported good health with no chronic or acute health problems. The majority (89%) of the respondents indicated that they do have some health concerns (Table 12). These respondents were asked to specify their health concerns which are reflected in Table 13 and Diagram 6.

Given the living conditions of homeless people, it is easy for immunization schedules to be ignored or forgotten. Thus, homeless people are particularly at risk to develop ill health. For instance "...communicable diseases infect the homeless significantly more than average citizens" (Alperstein & Arnstein, 1988; Miller & Lin, 1988 in MacKnee & Mervin 2002: 294). They are subject to stress because of the factors that made them homeless and because of the experience of being homeless. Poor diet, stress, cold and damp, along with inadequate sleeping arrangements, sanitation and hygiene increase the risk of health problems. For example, prolonged exposure to cold puts strain on the heart, and high stress is associated with an increased incidence of cardiovascular disease and cancers. Research on the average lifespan of people who sleep on the streets of major cities in Canada has indicated that many men only live until their mid- to late-forties (Hulchanski 2004). Table 13 and Diagram 6 provide details regarding respondents' state of health. Health problems reported include the following:

- Medical conditions (18.3%);
- Addictions (50.7%);
- Mental problems (7.3%);
- Emotional problems (6.4%), and
- Physical problems (6.4%).

TABLE 13: HEALTH PROBLEMS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Medical Condition	40	18.3	18.3	18.3
Addiction	111	50.7	50.7	68.9
Emotional	14	6.4	6.4	75.3
Mental	16	7.3	7.3	82.6
Physical	14	6.4	6.4	89.0
Healthy	24	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total response	219	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	192			
Total	411			

According to Hulchanski (2004), homelessness in itself is an "agent of disease". The homeless are more exposed to and more likely to develop health problems than the general population. Hwang (2004) states,

"Homelessness is associated with exposure to the elements and an increased risk of infections such as tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease ... "

Half (50.7%) of the respondents indicated that they have an addiction problem. The majority of these respondents did not want to specify their addiction, or they use very broad terms such as alcohol, "crack", "speed" or drugs. Four specified were heroine, cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamines ("Crystal Meth"). It could be argued that substance abuse contributes to medical problems such as tuberculosis, hepatitis and HIV. Sixteen (7.3%) of the respondents indicated that they have a mental problem. These respondents did not specify the nature of their

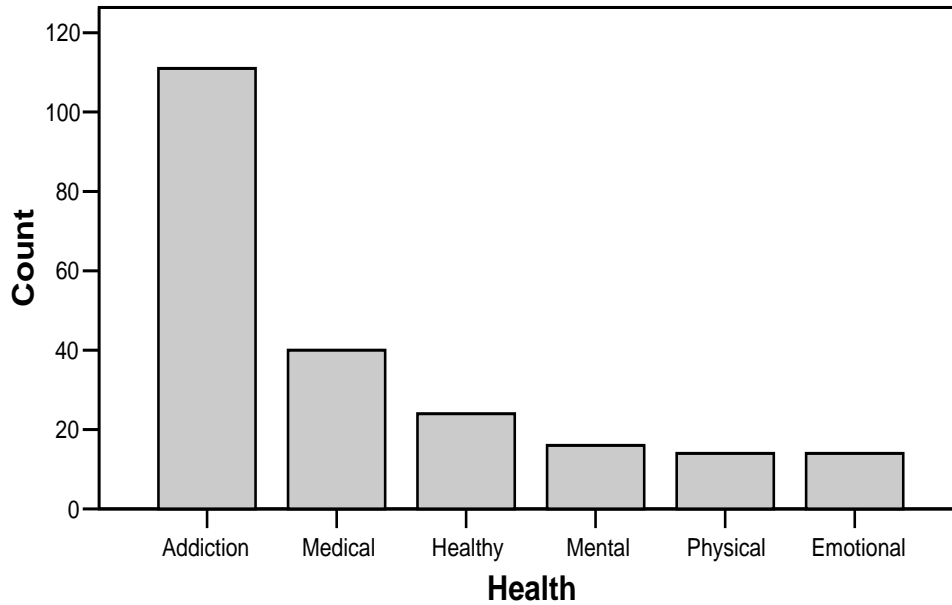
mental problems with the exception of respondents who described their mental condition as, “Suffering from paranoia”, “Diagnosed with Bipolar via blood test” and “ADD”. Fourteen (6.4%) described their emotional problems as anger, schizophrenia, stress and depression. Chronic emotional and mental illness complicates daily existence and can mask acute illnesses or prevent people from taking care of themselves.

It is not clear whether the diseases and disorders identified by homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley preceded the loss of a place to live or whether they were precipitated by life on the streets. Fourteen respondents (6.4%) indicated that they do have a physical condition; three described their physical problems in the following words: “bad back”, “spine disjoint”, and “double vision” (Table 13 and Diagram 6). A variety of medical conditions (18.3%) were identified (Box 3 and Table 13). The homeless in the Fraser Valley do in fact suffer from a wide variety of chronic and acute illnesses that are aggravated by life on the streets as indicated in Box 3.

BOX 3: CHRONIC AND ACUTE ILLNESSES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic fatigue • Diabetes • Arthritis • Osteoporosis • Respiratory problems • Heart disease • Skin disease • Skin cancer • Head injury • Hepatitis C • Blood disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High blood pressure • Bad knees • Back problems • Malignant tumour • Asthma • Epilepsy • Bowel syndrome • Broken arm • Infection in feet • Work injury • Eye problems.
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DIAGRAM 6: MEDICAL CONCERNS



4.5. STREET COMMUNITY AND MUTUAL SUPPORT

Based on the survey findings, it can be reported that just more than half (55.4%) of the homeless respondents indicated that they live with others while 44.6% live alone (Table 14). The respondents who indicated that they do live with people were asked to indicate with whom they are living. They responded that they live with their street family (30.2%), street partner (13%), with their children (7.4%), and other people (4.9%) (See Diagram 17 and Table15).

It could perhaps be argued that those who live with others do find social support through this arrangement and that this is a way to counter social isolation. Homeless participants in focus groups and qualitative interviews said that they do look out for each other and that there are rules. They respect one another, and they know who not to fool around with; they stay away from the really bad people. Young women indicated that they learned quickly to keep a male companion with them.

TABLE 14: LIVING ALONE OR WITH OTHERS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Live alone	127	44.6	44.6	44.6
Live with people	158	55.4	55.4	100.0
Total response	285	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	126			
Total	411			

DIAGRAM 7: STREET COMPANYY

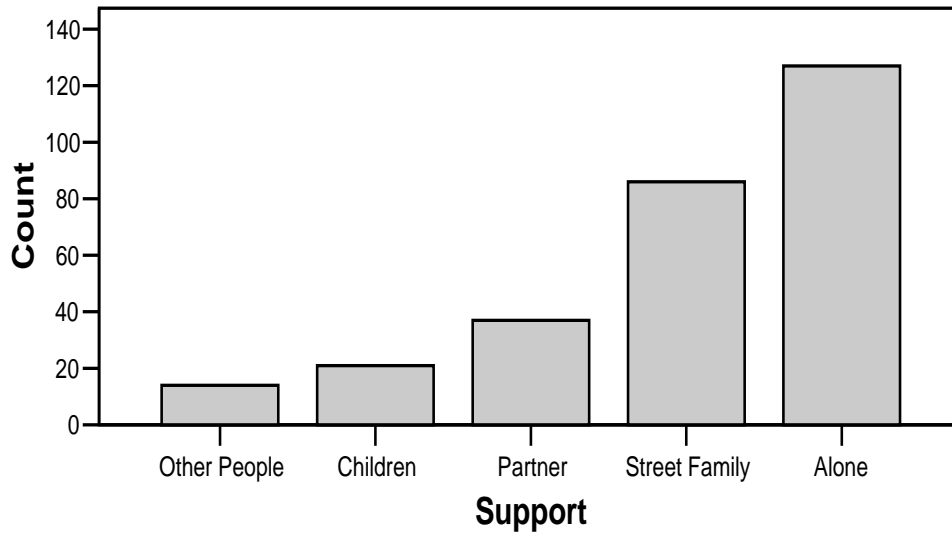


TABLE 15: STREET COMPANYY

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Street family	86	30.2	30.2	30.2
Partner	37	13.0	13.0	43.2
Children	21	7.4	7.4	50.5
Other people	14	4.9	4.9	55.4
Alone	127	44.6	44.6	100.0
Total response	285	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	126			
Total	411			

On the other hand, statements from other homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley who said, “that they don’t trust anyone and that homeless people steal from one another and attack one another” can be juxtaposed with the picture of rules and respect and co-existence. Judy Graves, Tenant Housing Coordinator for the City of Vancouver, works daily among homeless people in Vancouver, and though she confirms the phenomenon of the “street family”, it is, according to her, a highly dysfunctional family, similar to dysfunctional families among non-homeless people. Furthermore, because of “... basic survival needs, relationships among street people are frequently characterized by distrust and suspicion” (MacKnee & Mervyn, 2002:301). It is probably for reasons similar to these, among others, that a substantial number (44.6%) of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley have opted to live alone (Table 15).

4.6. INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Low-income Canadians have little cushion when calamities –such as lay-offs or poor health – strike. Income disparity or wealth gaps have grown alarmingly over the past two decades. Between 1984 and 1999, young Canadian couples with children saw a 30 percent drop in their median wealth, while the median net wealth of the top 10 percent of families rose 35 percent (Morissette, Rene, Xuelin Zhang, and Marie Drolet. (2002). “Wealth Inequality.” Perspectives. Spring 2002. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE.

Canada does not have an official definition of poverty. Statistics Canada argues that there is no internationally accepted definition of poverty and that any definition is arbitrary. Statistics Canada reports on what it calls a “Low Income Cut-Off” (LICO) (Statistics Canada 2000: 122). Using the LICO as a measure of poverty, the National Council of Welfare (2002:1) estimates that 16.2 percent of the Canadian population, or more that 4.8 million people in Canada, including 1.3 million children, live in poverty. Homelessness is a manifestation of this poverty. Homeless people find themselves at the bottom of the income distribution ladder in a state of absolute poverty. They have inadequate resources to acquire the necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing (Sarlo 2001).

This section contains information on the following aspects in relation to homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley:

- The changing nature of work in Canada;
- Sources of Income;
- Type of Work;
- Previous Occupation; and
- Attitudes toward work and employment hopes and dreams

The changing nature of work in Canada

The extent to which structural factors contribute to homelessness should not be ignored. Structural factors include the growth in low paying part time jobs and a decline in the demand for manual labour in cities (Rossi, 1989 & 1990; Begin, 1996). A look at the changing nature of work confirms the contributing role of structural factors to homelessness in Canada.

Canada, like every country across the globe, is not immune to the impact of economic globalization and “free” trade on work and employment. Economic globalization is the process whereby companies identify the most profitable place to set up production, looking specifically for cheaper but still relatively well trained or trainable workers and less government “red tape” with regard to standards relating to environmental protection. Through economic globalization companies have become less nationalistic and operate across the globe. “Free” trade as part of globalization also resulted in less workplace regulation and therefore a reduction in programs that protect workers’ jobs.

As a result of globalization companies embarked on downsizing or the process whereby firms reduce the number of employees, while trying to maximize return on invested capital. In addition to a reduction in the number of employees the changing nature of work also resulted in a flattening of wages and salaries with a concomitant decrease in the standard of living or a rise in poverty. Another concomitant affect of economic globalization and “free” trade is neo-liberal government policies that have resulted in the laying off of public sector workers and a reduction in spending on social services and programming.

The end result of these changes is that the social contract that used to govern work and industrial relations changed because both business and government started to apply a new approach to work, resulting in reduced job security and a reduction in full employment. This social contract was based on Keynesian economic theory. Based on his theory, the common understanding was that if you work hard and produce more goods and services each year, the economy will grow. Such growth means an increasing return on investment to owners of capital, and increases in the standard of living for people who work and create the production. Government’s role is to ensure stability in the social, political and economic system by creating policies to move toward full employment. Finally, those who earn their living from wages or salaries would not need to fear unemployment, because their jobs would be secure so long as the economy grew, or at least maintained itself. However, economic globalization and “free” trade have eroded this social contract and to date nothing has replaced it.

Other factors, associated with economic globalization and “free” trade, that have contributed to higher unemployment in Canada in general include an increase in small-batch form production,

the movement of jobs to developing countries, and a reduction in government provisions for a safety net and a shrinking civil service (White in Teevan & Hewitt (eds), 2005:303). Introduction to Sociology: A Canadian Focus, Pearson, Prentice Hall, Toronto

Work in Canada is now dominated by the service economy. Jobs are becoming polarized into good and bad jobs, and nonstandard or part-time jobs are becoming more prevalent. Since the second Industrial revolution⁹ we have witnessed a move away from a manufacturing-based economy to a service economy. The Canadian economy has shifted from its early industrial base of primary production (mining and logging) and secondary production (manufacturing) to tertiary production (service industries). In 2001 the proportion of Canadians employed in service industries reached 74 percent. (Brym, Robert J, *New Society* (4th edition), Thompson – Nelson Canada, 2004) Globalization, “free” trade and increased global competitiveness have contributed to the lowering of labour costs and the movement of manufacturing to lower wage areas resulting in a loss of manufacturing jobs in Canada. Thus, we are witnessing an increase in low-skilled, low-paying service jobs and a steady rise in the level of unemployment. Not all jobs in the service sector are bad jobs. Nevertheless, two broad categories of jobs can be identified; lower tier jobs made up of traditional services, such as retail trade, food, and personal services, and an upper tier consisting of other services, such as finance and business, utilities, health, education, and public administration. Whether you find yourself in a lower- or upper-tier service job has implications for your wages, job security, and the skill content required in your work (Krahn, Harvey J. 1992, *Quality of Work in the Service Economy*. General Social Survey Analysis Series 6. Cat. No. 11-612E, no. 6. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

In addition, an analysis of the Canadian occupational structure confirms a decline in blue collar jobs in the middle and job growth at the top and the bottom of the occupational structure (Myles John, 1988, “The Expanding Middle: Some Canadian Evidence on the Deskilling Debate.” *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 25 (3), 335-64. Thus, we see an increasing polarization of jobs in the service sector – higher-skilled knowledge jobs on the one hand and lower-skilled “hamburger” jobs on the other (Myles). Statistics Canada points out that growth in the business services is driven by an increase in part-time work and self-employment. So although there is job growth, some of the jobs are not full-time. Taking a look at the most common jobs for women and men the 1996 census shows retail service jobs dominate for both sexes. Missing for women are any non-service industry jobs. For the men, we see a mix of lower-tier service jobs (retail salesperson, janitor) and blue-collar jobs (material handler, carpenter, and construction trade helper). Missing are any of the high-skilled “knowledge” jobs.

A crucial outcome of the shift to a service-based global economy is the rise of nonstandard jobs. These are jobs that provide temporary, part-time, or part-year employment. For employers these jobs reduce labour costs as these workers receive lower wages and benefits. Part time employment is highest in the lower tier of the service sector. Responding to changes in demand for products and services, companies now rely on temporary workers, ranging from clerical help to computer programmers, hired through temporary-employment agencies. In 2001, almost 13 percent of Canadian workers were employed in temporary or contract positions. Like part-time workers temporary workers tend to be young and/or women. These temporary workers are usually hired for short-term contracts to fill in for absent full-time workers, or as part of a “just-in-time” labour force called in to fill production or service demands.

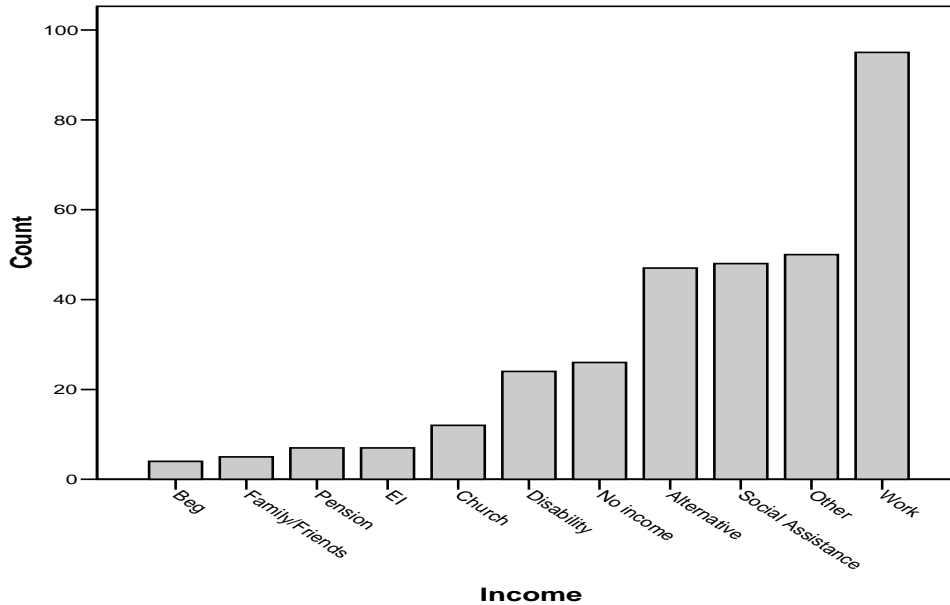
⁹ The second industrial revolution started in the early twentieth century. Henry Ford’s assembly line and other mass-production technologies transformed the workplace. Marked by larger consolidated companies, mass-production technologies, increased ability by owners to dominate the market and control the activities of workers.

Sources of Income

The result of the phenomenon of non-standard jobs and fewer jobs is an increase in the number of the working poor in Canada. The working poor are well represented among the homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley.

the Upper Fraser Valley, it is plain to see why affordability of housing is a huge issue and a major contributor to homelessness and why working people are homeless and why there is an increase in the number of people accessing the food banks.

DIAGRAM 8: INCOME SOURCES



Almost one third (29.2%) of the respondents indicated that they are working. They typically hold unskilled jobs, seasonal jobs, and lower-paid jobs as reflected in Table 17. Their level of income makes it impossible to save money for emergencies such as periodic or seasonal unemployment, or to secure the kind of economic stability that would prevent homelessness.

“**Other income**” as reported in Diagram 8 and Table 16 consists of charities, loans/borrowed money, training programs, “mercy handouts”, savings, investments, “money in the bank”, “stocks”, “support”, “allowance”, “pocket money”, “have my own money”, and sources that were not specified by the respondents.

Social assistance (14.8%) and alternative income (14.5%) were also reported as sources of income and are reflected in Diagram 8 and Table 16. The respondents who reported that they have an alternative source of income were asked to specify their form of income. The alternative sources of income include prostitution, stealing, crime and drug dealing. There was an equal distribution of males (16) and females (16) who worked as prostitutes. Some of the female

prostitutes were between the ages of 13-15. One of these young females indicated that prostitution is her career of choice and that she “loves it”.

Whether this is a situation of real choice or exploitation is debatable given the extent of sexual exploitation that is prevalent in British Columbia. For instance, according to Hay (2004:119), the commercial sexual exploitation of children is

“...an extensive problem in British Columbia and Canada, where 10% to 12% of individuals involved in prostitution are younger than 18 years of age. Commercial sexual exploitation includes prostitution, child pornography, trafficking for sexual purposes, child sex tourism, and early marriage. Children at risk include those whose families suffer from mental illness, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, or sexual, emotional, and physical abuse. Recruitment into the sex trade is gradual and well organized, playing on children’s insecurities or weaknesses. Prevention strategies include educating children, families, teachers, and health care providers about sexual exploitation, as well as early warning signs that a child is being lured into the sex trade”.

According to Table 16: Income Sources, twenty six (8.0%) of the respondents indicated that they do not have any source of income. The following additional income sources are also reflected in Diagram 8: Disability allowance (7.4%); dependence on church support (3.7%); employment insurance (2.2%); pension (2.2%); money from friends and family (1.5%), and begging on the street (1.2%).

TABLE 16: INCOME SOURCES

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Social Assistance	48	14.8	14.8	14.8
EI	7	2.2	2.2	16.9
Disability	24	7.4	7.4	24.3
Pension	7	2.2	2.2	26.5
Work	95	29.2	29.2	55.7
Family and Friends	5	1.5	1.5	57.2
Alternative	47	14.5	14.5	71.7
Other	50	15.4	15.4	87.1
No Income	26	8.0	8.0	95.1
Beg	4	1.2	1.2	96.3
Church	12	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	325	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	86			
Total	411			

A large number (86) of the respondents indicated that they are not willing to state any information regarding their income. No further details were requested from these respondents.

Type of Work

Ninety five of the respondents (29.2%) who indicated that work is their main source of income (see Table 16 and Diagram 8) were asked to describe the type of work that they are doing. The type of work is reflected in Table 17 below.

TABLE 17: WORK

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Part time	36	37.9	37.9	37.9
Recycling	13	13.7	13.7	51.6
Laborer	12	12.6	12.6	64.2
Full time	7	7.4	7.4	71.6
Driver	6	6.3	6.3	77.9
Farm work	5	5.3	5.3	83.2
Maid	6	6.3	6.3	89.5
Seasonal	4	4.2	4.2	93.7
Construction	3	3.2	3.2	96.8
Baby sitter	1	1.1	1.1	97.9
Cook/Cleaner	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
Student job	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Part time work - More than a third of the respondents (37.9%) who were asked to explain what kind of work they were doing indicated that they were working part time. Part time workers specified amongst others the following employers: Sears; Wal-Mart; Lordco; Dollar store; McDonalds and Rona.

Full time work - Seven of the respondents indicated that they are working full time (Table 17). People who work full time, year round for poverty level wages need to develop survival strategies as the income that these jobs generate is not sufficient to cover basic costs of living, such as rent, food and hydro. Survival strategies include help from relatives, constant moves from one place to live to another, periods of homelessness or homelessness during the warmer months of the year (Ehrenreich 2001: 221).

Other types of work – Other types of work included labourers¹⁰ (12.6%), recycling (13.7%), drivers (6.3%), farm work (5.3%), maid (6.3%), cook/cleaner (1.1), babysitter (1.1%), seasonal worker (4.2%), construction (3.2%), and student job (1.1%). Seasonal workers specified their jobs as fisherman, fruit pickers and mushroom pickers. The respondents who indicated that they work in the recycling industry collect bottles and recycling materials to support themselves. One homeless person told the researchers that as a matter of principle he doesn't ask for money but collects pop cans, beer bottles, etc. and makes about \$10-\$12 a day, but it means working from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. (9 hours) every day.

Previous occupations

The respondents were asked to indicate what kind of work they had done in the past. The majority (86.3%) of the respondents indicated that their previous jobs involved unskilled work

¹⁰ Respondents indicated that they obtain work through Labour Unlimited but said that they are given all the dangerous jobs that no-one else wants to do. Respondents are also of the opinion that they are being used for temporary work because it is cheaper for companies to pay them only \$8 per hour instead of hiring someone on a longer term basis and having to pay benefits in addition to wages.

(42.4%), skilled work (39.6%), professional work (2.9%) and service work (1.4%). The remaining 13.7% of the respondents described their previous occupations as:

- Student
- Never worked
- Prostitute
- Drug Dealer
- Crime

The nine respondents (6.5%) who indicated that they have never worked were all under the age of fifteen. Four (2.9%) respondents indicated that they previously worked in the sex trade. Other types of previous occupations include student (1.4%), drug dealers (1.4%), and two respondents (1.4%) who said they were previously involved in crime for which they had served jail time.

TABLE 18: PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Service	2	1.4	1.4	1.4
Skilled	55	39.6	39.6	41.0
Unskilled	59	42.4	42.4	83.5
Professional	4	2.9	2.9	86.3
Student	2	1.4	1.4	87.8
Never worked	9	6.5	6.5	94.2
Prostitute	4	2.9	2.9	97.1
Drug dealer	2	1.4	1.4	98.6
Jail/Crime	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total response	139	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	272			
Total	411			

Reasons for losing employment – The following were identified by participants as reasons for having lost their employment:

- Surgery and long recovery time (job wasn't kept)
- Business went under
- Trauma in life (victim of rape)
- Stay-at-home-mom and abused by husband (lost currency in job market)
- Caregiver to ailing and dying mother (lost currency in job market)
- Became pregnant and abandoned by boyfriend
- Family trauma (conflict and violence)
- Company closed down

Attitude towards work and employment hopes and plans – Societal evolution over time is marked by man's activity of using most of its creative and intellectual energy to sustain herself in the natural environment. Given this established purposive and conscious process, referred to as work, it can be asserted that in general, and mostly as a result of socialization, humans want to contribute to society through working. In this sense work provides a sense of involvement and completeness. Work has always been organized according to methods that are efficient, enabling businesses to compete successfully (Gorz, 1982). Gorz, Andre, Farewell to the Working Class. London: Pluto.

As reported above, a substantial number (29%) of the homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley interviewed during the summer of 2004 reported that they work, countering the commonly held assumption that homeless people do not want to work. In the opinion of the authors, it is similarly problematic to assert that homeless people are contented with their situation and do not want to change. It needs to be kept in mind that people become homeless for a variety of reasons, and a superficial conversation or interview, such as is the case during a survey or when people come and go at meal centres, food banks and shelters, cannot uncover the real and “deep” reasons for why people find themselves in a situation of homelessness. Just as people don’t choose to be poor, they don’t choose to be homeless. Though it needs to be recognized that people do make choices and some of them are homeless because they have made poor personal choices, as many of them would admit, that does not mean they choose to be homeless and that they are content with their situation. In the case of some, they may be in a situation of despair and homelessness for such a long period of time, that despite having tried, and without support, they are not able to break out of the cycle of absolute poverty. Eventually, tiredness and hopelessness set in, and they become resigned to the idea that they will remain homeless. They have lost hope. However, hope can be rekindled, but it takes time and, given their despair and continued struggle to exist and survive, it is not hard to understand why they may be sceptical, withdrawn or even appear angry if approached by a “want-to-do-good-stranger.” It takes time to build trust, and ample time is required for hope to take root again. This view is supported by Breakey and Fischer (in MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002:301) when they indicate that street people’s “...level of alienation from the mainstream is such that extraordinary efforts are needed to gain a level of trust that will permit them to accept help.”

Homeless people with disabilities have told the researchers that they want to work, that they feel useless not working. As one said,

“I’m not part of anything.”

Some have indicated that they do volunteer work as recommended by others and counselors, but still they do not find employment, and they can not volunteer forever, as they need an income. Another participant said,

“All my life I’ve always worked. I’ve always enjoyed getting paid every two weeks. Assistance is once a month.”

Others have shared their employment dreams and their hope to make decent money. Various homeless youth shared their employment dreams. One 17 year old was hoping to become a carpenter. Another 17 year old was dreaming of becoming a fireman or a police officer. Others mentioned their plans to become a youth outreach worker, a youth counsellor, a mental health counsellor, a flagger, or to obtain a fork-lift license or become a mechanic. Still another expressed his wish to get training in metal fabrication. Another person shared with us her interest in hotel/restaurant management given her employment background as a waitress and hostess. One other person was hoping to go back into nursing because she loves taking care of people.

4.7. BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

In response to the question, “Is there anything that makes it hard for you to work?” survey respondents provided the answers reflected in Table 19: Barriers to Employment. Almost one-third (32.4%) of respondents indicated “disability”, including medical, emotional, physical, addiction, age and appearance. They were of the opinion that their disabilities make it hard for them to get a job.

Canadians with temporary or permanent disability face a higher likelihood of being poor or homeless. Based on pre-tax income, 35.8 percent of people with a temporary disability and 55.2 percent with a permanent disability experience poverty at least once between 1993 and 1998. Among those without a disability, the rate was 23 percent (National Council of Welfare 2002: 104-105). This evidence suggests that people with disabilities have a higher risk of living in poverty or being homeless, but not all people with disabilities live in poverty or become homeless.

It is clear from Table 19 below that almost one third (32.4%) of the respondents indicated more than one reason why it is hard for them to find a job. These respondents face multiple barriers, such as disability, logistical issues, and lack of skills, including the following: no fixed address, no phone number, no identification document, no education, no qualifications, no skills, medical problems, emotional problems, physical disabilities, addiction, ageism, and problems with physical appearance.

TABLE 19: BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disability	33	32.4	32.4	32.4
Lack of skills	6	5.9	5.9	38.2
Logistical barriers	14	13.7	13.7	52.0
Multiple barriers	33	32.4	32.4	84.3
Nothing	9	8.8	8.8	93.1
Conflict	7	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total	102	100.0	100.0	
Not stated	309			
Total	411			

Some of the respondents specified only one barrier that makes it difficult for them to find employment. Six (5.9%) of the respondents indicated they lack proper skills. They described the required skills as

- Reading skills: "I can't read".
- Writing skills: "I can't write"; "I can't read and write".
- Educational skills: "I need to have training"; "Lack Training"; "Train me, and I will work".

Logistical barriers (13.7%) included lack of transportation, no fixed address and phone number. Conflict (6.9%) included conflict in the family or conflict with previous employer. Previous conflict contributed towards a "bad employment record with bad references".

The researchers had mixed feelings when the matter of employment was raised both in the snap shot survey and qualitative interviews. On the one hand, it felt insensitive and out of place to even broach the topic given the desperate situation that many people find themselves in plus the fact that many have serious disabilities including mental disabilities. On the other hand, there were those who affirmed that they want to work, but challenged the researchers to tell them how successful they would be in finding a job, given their circumstances and personal condition. Despite this awareness of barriers, there are those who spoke about their determination and commitment to improve their situation, as evidenced by the following quotation from a former homeless youth:

"I had to quit school because I was in foster care till I was 19 and after that I pretty much had to go out and work, so I had to quit school. I now work full time and extra hours so that I can go back to school in the fall to finish my grade 12 and then start training for my hairdressing certificate."

Some indicated that they have worked all their lives and paid taxes, and now when it is a "rainy day", there is nothing for them. One person indicated that the government should be told that it is raining now and asked, "Where is the help"? Others are angry and expressed their anger. They are angry at the system; angry for being where they are; angry that they are always misunderstood; angry that nobody really has time for them. They are angered and want to get out of their situation, but feel trapped. Many indicated that having no home and no support to find accommodation, coupled with constant harassment, because except for meal centres and shelters they do not really feel welcome anywhere else, make it very difficult if not impossible to break out of the downward spiral associated with homelessness. Many times in the midst of trying to survive day by day they do not even know where to start. The following quotation from a homeless person confirms the insurmountable challenge faced by many:

"People in my situation, you don't have a permanent address. They won't hire you because you're on the street. You can't be depended on. You can't be relied on. They don't know if you're going to show up the next day or not. That's the way they look at it. And if they think you won't show up the next day, they won't hire you. If I had a permanent address I'd be able to find work, which therefore would make income, which would make me not to be on the street. What do I do?"

Then there were others, although clearly a minority, who clearly stated they don't want to work and that they are accepting of their situation. However, the question that keeps coming back is "Are they really contented or is this resignation; have they given up?" If people remain in a quagmire, eventually they get tired and have no choice other than to give up.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there are indeed many barriers for homeless people to overcome in an attempt to transition successfully into paid and sustained employment. Based on the survey and qualitative interview data, the following barriers to employment have been identified:

- Young, homeless, unskilled with no work experience
- Lacking in current marketable skills
- Ill health
- Disability (both physical and mental)
- Addictions problem
- Priority is survival (The "street" doesn't offer support to find employment)
- Difficulty adapting to structure and fixed schedule
- No work clothes and/or tools and lacking means to purchase these
- No permanent address
- Lack of ID
- Too old (people in late forties/early fifties and older have difficulty finding employment especially when their skills set is relatively limited)¹¹
- Don't fit McJobs¹²
- Lack career direction
- Lack of confidence/low self-esteem/self-doubt

¹¹ One participant said the following in this regard: "...you apply for a job, after job, after job and they look at you, well you're too old! You've got too much experience. No, that's cold words, for you're too old."

¹² McJobs is a term coined by sociologist George Ritzer. (See George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, 1996 and *McDonaldization: The Reader*, 2002, Sage Publications.) The term "McJobs" refers to jobs that are mostly entry level, part time, low wage, relying heavily on teenage employees, marked by a high turnover rate and an overrepresentation of minorities in the US.

- Self-conscious about appearance
- Transportation
- Criminal record
- No driver's license
- Lost ability to present self and sell self
- Gave up
- "Don't want to work"
- An inadequate and non-responsive/ slow to respond welfare system

Accessing employment services

A mixed response was received with regard to employment services available in the community. Some respondents were aware of the services like the Job-Zone, MCC Employment Centre, the ARMS program, RITE/WRITE programs and Community Assistance Programs¹³. They appreciated the fact that these services are available free of charge and that staff at these programs do a good job.

However, there were also those participants who indicated that they don't access these services because they have found work in the past by themselves. Other reasons given as to why the services are not accessed include:

- "They can't help me with my barrier – age."
- "I don't know about these places and I don't really know how to access them."
- "I don't like the idea of schooling. I had trouble with schooling."
- "They need ID and I don't have ID."¹⁴
- "I am not having the confidence to go into these services."
- "What they do is not always needed. I don't need the flowery stuff" (in reference to resumes.)
- "I am not eligible because I am cut off income assistance."

Based on feedback from respondents as reflected above, it would appear that many homeless participants, if not the majority, do not benefit from existing services. In the opinion of the authors, the most important reasons for this relate to lack of self-confidence or being self-conscious given personal condition and appearance as a result of living without a home, literacy challenges, aversion towards classroom settings, lack of transportation, ineligibility,¹⁵ and the single biggest issue, not having an address or stable housing which is assumed to be in place when employment programs are designed. Homeless people are, as indicated earlier, on a downward spiral with the result that they and their situation present tremendous challenges when an attempt is made to stop the downward spiral. Given this situation, a longer term engagement and commitment is typically required in order to begin to make a positive difference in their lives.

¹³ These are various employment programs funded through contributions from the Government of Canada (HRSDC) and/or delivered on contract with the Ministry of Human Resources. These programs are designed for service delivery to youth at risk, women who have survived abuse and violence, independent job seekers, those who are job ready, those in need of career decision-making, those with multiple barriers and those who have difficulty keeping employment.

¹⁴ People without ID can get assistance from the Ministry of Human Resources office to reapply for an ID. Whilst waiting for ID to be re-issued they can access services if they meet eligibility criteria.

¹⁵ To access programs delivered by agencies on contract with the Ministry of Human Resources, people usually have to be in receipt of BC Employment Assistance (formerly Income Assistance). It is also important to note that although programs funded through contributions from the Government of Canada (HRSDC) are available to any person legally entitled to work in Canada, these programs are typically not designed for people who have severe multiple barriers and/or who do not have permanent and stable housing (e.g. homeless people).

Employment Services Needed – Homeless people have indicated that there is a need for more, what they call, “hands on training”, given literacy issues and learning styles. They have also identified the need for training courses for older people (40-50) with learning disabilities or people who haven’t finished school. They prefer trades training and indicated that helping them to complete grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 won’t help. Given their learning disabilities, that won’t work, but some are capable of mastering “hands-on trades training.” Others acknowledged that they are still intimidated by computers, but they realize that this technology is part of the contemporary work place, and they have to overcome this barrier. It is important to note, though, that their learning style and/or literacy level will require a special approach to teaching. With regard to training, some of them have asked the question, “How do I do training if I am not on welfare or don’t have enough EI insurable hours. Who will pay for it?”

They have also identified the need for financial assistance to obtain work clothes, boots and tools and a place where they can clean up, rest and recover before they can take on the challenge of making a start toward employment.

In conclusion, the authors think it is safe to assert that existing employment programs in the Upper Fraser Valley communities are not designed to effectively engage homeless people. The situation calls for a program, designed around the challenges that have caused people to become homeless in the first place and the additional barriers that have emerged as a result of living homeless, not to mention the importance of first stabilizing their housing before taking on employment.

4.8. HOMELESSNESS AND EMPLOYMENT

There are many stereotypes about homeless people. One of these stereotypes is that people are homeless because they don’t want to work. According to the National Council of Welfare (2002:50), about 330 000 poor, unattached persons under 65 work between 49 and 52 weeks and 90 000 families are poor despite the fact that husbands and wives worked a combined total of 103 or more weeks during the year. A good job should be a guarantee against living in poverty or homelessness, but a job is not always an insulator. Individuals working 40 hours per week at a wage of \$8 per hour have an annual income of \$16 640, which is below the poverty line for single individuals in urban areas (Lee 2000: 57-63). This translates into a gross income of \$1,386.66 and a net income of \$1,290.98¹⁶ per month. Comparing this level of income with the cost of living in makes for an interesting comparison.

As indicated earlier, increased economic globalization, privatization and the hegemony of the industrialized capitalist free-market economy has led to changes in employment patterns resulting in a strong correlation between homelessness and the decreased demand for labour (Fisher & Karger, 1997; Ward, 1989). The number of people living in poverty or who are homeless increase as permanent, sustainable positions paying living wages are replaced with short-term, contractual, low-paying, no benefits positions. Many homeless people, more so men, who previously were able to support themselves, are now forced to use shelters as jobs were eliminated by means of greater mechanization and smarter technology. This has created a growing labour pool that does not have the skills required to work in the evolving labour market (Ward, 1989).

Having done a literature review of homelessness research in Canada, Josephson (2005:1-2) indicates that several authors agree that homelessness is both affected by and affects employment, income support and education. Based on his examination of Canadian homelessness literature Josephson (2005: 1-2) asserts that the following can be stated with a degree of certainty:

¹⁶ This calculation of net monthly income is based on a 6.9% deduction (4.95% CCP and 1.95% EI) in respect of the Employee contribution to EI and CPP and does not factor in any income tax deduction.

- “Difficulties with education, employment, and income support can be related to difficulties with health, mental health, and addictions, and all of these factors both affect and are affected by homelessness.
- Specific sub-populations of homeless people, such as First Nations people and youth, face considerable challenges in the areas of education and employment.
- Among homeless people, there are high rates of unemployment. Many have not completed high school, and income support is often difficult to access.
- There is agreement on the need for programs in education, training, and employment. Toward this end, several programs exist. However, information is lacking on the details of their operations, and objective evaluations of their performance are rare.”

Helping people move out of homelessness is a complex and difficult task that requires efforts to address the underlying causes of poverty, not just programs to address the symptoms. As Begin (1996:2) puts it, “homelessness implies more than an absence of four walls and a roof. Homelessness produces profound social dislocation and is associated with the absence of a role in the community, privacy and security. Homeless people lack a base from which to work, go to school, receive training, sustain social contacts, receive social services, and provide and receive nurture.” Although an argument can be made that the provision of adequate income from gainful employment is a good way out of homelessness, it needs to be recognized that many Canadians are unemployed although they want to work. No amount of retraining will get them back into the workforce and off the streets if available jobs do not exist. Therefore, the creation of sustainable, gainful, employment has to be a goal (Landry, 2002:15).

In the US the basic strategies for addressing the problem of homelessness have progressed from emergency shelter to affordable housing to housing with support to housing with services and access to jobs. Many who work in the field of homelessness would argue that housing is the answer, and it is indeed an important piece of the answer. However, according to Emerson (2005) it has become clear over time “...that any effort to help formerly homeless individuals move into the mainstream must rest upon what many ...have referred to as the ‘three legs of the stool.’ Namely, housing, services, and jobs.” (Jed Emerson, retrieved on 10/05/2005 at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/89/towardsmarket.html>)

The importance of employment and income to stabilize living for vulnerable youth has also been confirmed in a youth project in the UK. (Anderson & Crossan, unpublished paper, University of Cambridge, UK, 2004) Pathways out of Homelessness: Self-Build as an Employment-Led Strategy. Trainees in the “Self-build” project all had reasonable secure accommodation from which to embark upon the self-build project. (Anderson & Crossan, 2004:12). A significant coping issue seemed to be managing debt and money management generally. P 13). At end of first phase evaluation, initial evidence suggests that “...well resourced supported employment projects can be a useful tool in both the alleviation and prevention of homelessness.” (Anderson & Crossan, 2004:16).

“The government has an undeniable role in preventing and reducing homelessness because the market economy on its own cannot secure a reasonable distribution of income to enable all citizens to afford the basic necessities of life” (Toronto Mayor’s Homeless Action Task Force, 1999:20). It is at this point where a case can be made regarding the role that the social economy in general and the social enterprises in particular can play in providing a pathway out of homelessness.

When it comes to programs for homeless people a lot of emphasis is typically placed on lifelong learning, “life skills” training, skills upgrading and re-skilling, and as indicated above many studies confirm the relatively low educational level of homeless people and the fact that many used to work in labour intensive industries and that they are now displaced by new technologies and greater mechanization. However, there is limited evidence, for instance of the effectiveness of “life skills” training (Anderson & Crossan, 2004).

Furthermore, it is important to realize that unless specific and deliberate steps are taken to ensure that learning opportunities are made available to those most marginalized, lifelong learning may act to increase the learning divide, leading to greater exclusion for some groups. Research undertaken in the field of lifelong learning has highlighted that marginalized people and those at the risk of social exclusion face complex and interlinking barriers to participation in lifelong learning and to accessing and sustaining participation in learning and training opportunities. These barriers are a combination of structural factors (i.e. poverty, low income, homelessness), dispositional factors (such as a lack of confidence in abilities or prior negative experience of participation) and institutional factors (such as the learning organization not being sensitive to the needs and fears of non-traditional learners) (Crosson, 2001) Similar factors are known to be closely associated with youth homelessness (Anderson and Tulloch, 2000). Research also shows that with support, people can overcome barriers, and that participation in learning can have positive impacts related to employability, extending social networks, improving self confidence and self esteem, and helping with mental health difficulties (Gallacher et al, 2000; Crossan et al, 2000). Based on the former, it is clear that special effort needs to be made with program design and implementation so as to be conscious of and sensitive to the highly complex and interlinking barriers that homeless people face with regard to participating in programs designed to provide a pathway out of homelessness.

Another important principle to keep in mind with respect to program design for homeless people is that by providing services to the homeless, while ignoring the potential to organize and mobilize homeless persons to work as part of the solution to homelessness, serves to promote ongoing dependency. In this regard Ward (1989) indicates that "...most services follow a charitable model. Professionals design and provide services with little or no consultation with those they serve. Such systems tend to oppress further the recipients by placing them in a disempowered position below those providing the services. ... Their abilities are devalued and dismissed. The perception of them as unable to make important decisions for themselves proliferates. Such an approach is often also paternalistic, devaluing homeless people's efforts and abilities to identify and solve their problems." Furthermore, many services designed for homeless people has a strong emphasis on rehabilitation. According to Ward (1989) such an "approach further individualizes and stigmatizes the problem and promotes a belief that changes in the individual, rather than socio-economic changes, provide the best solution.

4.9. EMPLOYMENT, THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The social economy consists of non-profit societies, associations and cooperatives that purposefully create social and economic assets to the benefit of the local community. The social economy therefore includes enterprises that are deliberately created to contribute to social objectives yet at the same time produce and market goods and services to achieve a financial return (profit). Social enterprises are businesses that are deliberately created to contribute to social objectives yet at the same time produce and market goods and services to achieve not only a financial return (profit) but also a social return and/or an environmental return. The financial return is allocated or reinvested to generate further social benefits and outcomes. An example of an Abbotsford based social enterprise is Above the Underground Retail Store that is funded through revenue generated by its sales and providing customer service and retail training on contract to a third party or directly to participants. As a business Above the Underground adds social value to its operation by providing retail and customer service training, work experience, employability skills training and job search services to unemployed people. The enterprise maintains an employment success rate of 65-70%. Another example, also based in Abbotsford, is Ecoworks. This enterprise operates in the area of conservation, habitat restoration, park development and landscaping. As a contracting alternative Ecoworks competes for contracts. Multi and/or persons with severe barriers, including at-risk youth are hired as project staff and in the process they obtain work experience, build their confidence and work the number of hours per week that they are able to. This enterprise is also sustaining itself with income generated through contract work. Ecoworks has contracts with the Township of Langley, GVRD Parks, FVRD Parks, City of Abbotsford, City of Chilliwack, BC Parks, Corrections Canada, etc.

In Canada, Social Enterprises take three different legal forms.

- Registered non profit society (in some cases also with Canada Revenue Agency charitable status) - governed by a volunteer board of directors to meet social needs, that operates an enterprise to meet both its social mandate and to generate financial returns to the society that are expended on activities that create social benefits for the community (i.e. are reinvested in the community). In this case the enterprise is not a separate legal entity but is an operational unit of the society, operating within its own business plan producing and marketing goods and/or services in the open market, at a profit that is then a source of revenue to the “parent” society for reinvestment in social benefits for the wider community.
- Registered cooperative – owned by its members and operates an enterprise involving the production and/or marketing of goods and services, the surplus from which is wholly or in part allocated to investment in social benefits for the wider community.
- Unincorporated collective or association – in this case you have individual self employed members who produce goods and/or services, the revenue of which is pooled by individual members for them to be reinvested in activities of community social benefit.

A social entrepreneur is an individual who is continually looking for economic opportunities to create added value, and who is comfortable with defining value not by what a “great cause” one has, but by how the market views the relative worth of the organization's work. This ability, while perhaps not making an organization fully independent, decreases reliance on public funding, increases access to mainstream markets, and improves overall efficiencies. This is an approach to combine social justice with business. It is simply good business!

Those who experience homelessness, may have become dislodged from their social networks, family networks, friendship networks or networks created through work. The result can frequently be isolation and mental difficulties (Anderson & Crossan, 2004:5). Thus, many homeless people or formerly homeless people encounter significant difficulties maintaining employment in the mainstream labour market or they encounter significant barriers to receiving services from traditional programs. Organizations that might work with these individuals include education and training institutions, employers, job training and placement organizations, and nonprofit enterprises. Of these four types of organizations social enterprises are adequately positioned to take individuals with no skills or work experience and provide them with the opportunities necessary to move from shelter to housing to support services and transitional employment. This process is not one of providing an individual with a “12-week” training program and then referring her out to a job. It is a process of assisting individuals in reconstructing their lives and may take as long as two years, as participants stabilize their personal situations and develop greater capacity to maintain long-term employment. The social enterprise approach can also be used to involve homeless people in the design and implementation of the enterprise as social enterprises can take the form of worker co-ops.

5. SECTION FIVE - SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

In this section, the focus is on services for homeless people. Homeless people and service providers have been asked about their perceptions regarding services for homeless people in the communities under study. In addition, homeless participants were asked how, in their experience, the community treats them, how they would like to be treated and what services, in their opinion, are lacking.

5.1 SERVICE PROVIDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICES

In focus groups held with service providers, they were asked for their views about services available to homeless people in Upper Fraser Valley communities. A major concern among service providers relates to the fact that, in their opinion, there is a lack of information among the public on the need, indicating that the public does not realize that services are not available. According to Service Providers, there are those whose lives can be changed, e.g. youth, if supports are there.

An unmistakable refrain sounding from all focus groups was that there is a desperate need to provide affordable housing. As a result of the lack of affordable housing, people end up living in appalling conditions while still spending upwards of 70% of their meagre income on rent. For example, service providers in Hope indicated that the cheapest accommodation in Hope costs \$425.00 per month. For a single person on income assistance, this does not leave much for food and other expenses, not to mention the condition of the room that can be rented for this amount. Serious emphasis should be placed on subsidized housing that is affordable and accessible. The availability and accessibility of affordable housing would allow people exiting homelessness to increase their social interaction, curbing their progressive social exclusion as a result. The inadequacy of social and government policies to prevent homelessness has become clear in the face of the increasing number of homeless people across Canada (Todd, 1993 in MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002: 294). This worsening situation can be attributed, to a large degree, to a major federal policy shift that occurred in the early 1990s. The Federal government used to provide financing for and build subsidized housing (non-profit and cooperative housing) to the extent that subsidized housing represented 6% of the Canadian housing stock. This all changed in 1994 when the Federal Government cancelled funding for affordable housing citing budget constraints in the light of a policy priority to address the budget deficit. Responsibility for the provisioning of affordable housing was then turned over to provincial governments who in turn also cut back on this type of expenditure and expected that local governments should take up this responsibility (Hargrave, 1999). The result of this policy shift is now seen in the steady increase in the number of homeless people across Canada over the past decade as affordable housing has become much harder to find.

Another contributing factor to the decline in the number of available affordable housing units is the fact that urban renewal in recent decades resulted in a boom in gentrification that continues to occur in major Canadian cities. According to Pohl (2001), city governments have in some cases "...promoted gentrification by granting lucrative tax breaks to developers who convert low-cost rental units into luxury apartments and condominiums. Between the early 1970s and mid 1990s, the process of gentrification resulted in a net loss of 250 000 affordable housing units in Canada's four major cities."

There is, furthermore, a strong perception that landlords take advantage of low-income tenants. Keeping this in mind along with the fundamental importance of affordable and accessible housing for the alleviation of homelessness, service providers consider it imperative that the matter of

affordable housing in the Upper Fraser Valley be urgently addressed in a coordinated fashion.¹⁷ The authors are of the opinion Federal and Provincial tax dollars must be made available for the provision of affordable/accessible housing. This is a social policy change that needs to be made in the interests of an inclusive economy and medium- to long- term societal health and stability.

In Boston Bar/North Bend, the issue is not homelessness but rather hunger. Most people have accommodation, but food is an issue. Social assistance does not meet their needs for food and shelter. Christmas hampers are sought after and go quickly, and there is a relatively high number of working poor people in Boston Bar/North Bend. Whatever Food Bank assistance is available comes from Hope. Many kids at school don't have enough food. The availability and misuse of drugs seem to be an additional problem. According to an unofficial survey by the Youth Action Group conducted through the RCMP 1-2 years ago, 7 out of 10 youth apparently use Cocaine in Boston Bar/North Bend.

Service Providers were unanimous in their opinion that not enough services are available for homeless people or people at risk of becoming homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley and that people can't live on the money they receive from welfare or if they work in McJobs that pay low wages with no benefits. However, they were also unanimous in their view that the services that do exist do a relatively good job given the lack of available resources. Nevertheless, shelter provision needs urgent and serious attention because there are so few beds available.

The total number of shelter beds in the study area is 28.

- **Abbotsford 10¹⁸**
- **Chilliwack 11¹⁹**
- **Hope 2**
- **Mission 5**

The total number of beds in transition houses is 60.

- **Abbotsford 12**
- **Aldergrove 8**
- **Mission 14**
- **Chilliwack 14**
- **Hope 12**

¹⁷ An Upper Fraser Valley Affordable/Accessible Housing Initiative has been formed. Representation on this initiative includes the United Way, MCC BC Employment & Community Development, Salvation Army, Fraser Valley Regional District, City of Chilliwack, Planning Department, Chilliwack Supportive Housing Society, Abbotsford Women's Resource Centre, Abbotsford Community Services, Fraser Valley Institution, Hope & Area Transition Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, BC Schizophrenia Society, Abbotsford Mental Health Consumers Union, Mission Social Justice Committee, Abbotsford Creative Centre Society, and BC Kinsmen Housing Network.

¹⁸ According to the Salvation Army, the William Booth Shelter will move to a new facility in June 2005 with an increased capacity. In addition, 14 beds will be available for Supportive Independent Living effective June 2005. During the extreme weather of the first two weeks of January 2005, Youth for Christ in Abbotsford created 15 temporary emergency shelter beds for youth, and between the Salvation Army and other church groups an additional 30 temporary emergency shelter beds have been created in Abbotsford.

¹⁹ During the extreme cold weather spell in the first two weeks of January 2005, The Arthur Cartwell Shelter run by the Salvation Army in Chilliwack created 8 additional extreme cold/wet weather shelter beds, and the Shelter Staff indicated that nobody was turned away. Also in Chilliwack, Ruth & Naomi's Street Ministry opened space for people to sleep during the cold spell and has, similarly to the Salvation Army, indicated that they wouldn't turn anyone away.

The total number of beds in Youth Safe Houses is 0 as there are no Youth Safe Houses in the entire study area.

In addition to the limited number of shelter and transition house beds, there are also limits on the number of days people can stay at these facilities, and most of the time they have to leave before self-sufficiency is reached or before the person is linked to an integrated service provision that will support her/him on her/his path to a sustainable livelihood. This desired outcome cannot be achieved overnight and is dependent on medium to long-term supports.

See Box 4 below for specific issues raised by Service Providers in reference to existing services or services that are lacking.

BOX 4: SERVICE PROVIDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING SERVICES

- A Youth Safe House is desperately needed.
- Without an ID it is hard for youth to access health care.
- Service Providers need church involvement; however, some people are suspicious of church involvement. In the opinion of some participants, churches have “missed the boat” in helping the homeless.
- Many people are stuck in a cycle of using most money on shelter and food and end up being homeless.
- Many homeless people have become trapped in a lifestyle that is hard to change, and change can only happen if the person wants to change, provided adequate services and supports are in place.
- The challenge is to provide some way out for people.
- Several unofficial houses in Mission and Abbotsford house men after they leave Miracle Valley and other treatment facilities. There is quite some discomfort with this phenomenon and there is a strong perception that some, if not the majority of people using these services are being exploited. Profit seems to be the overriding motive in most of these unlicensed facilities. On the other hand they do keep people of the street, although at the same time they don't solve the problem of homelessness in the long run.
- Food provision seems to be adequate although there are seniors who are “shut in” and have difficulty obtaining enough nutritious food in a timely manner.
- Every community has lots to work on, both individually and collectively.
- The provision of affordable and supported housing would address a lot of needs.

5.2. HOMELESS PEOPLES' PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

5.2.1. HOW SHOULD THE COMMUNITY TREAT YOU?

To the question: “How should the community treat you?” the following responses were obtained from homeless participants:

- Listen to us
- Treat us with more respect – we are humans
- Provide community service projects for youth
- Enable (Arm) the homeless – give them opportunity to work

5.2.2. HOW DOES THE COMMUNITY TREAT YOU?

Homeless people provided the responses in Box 5 when asked: “How does the community treat you?”

BOX 5: PERCEPTIONS OF TREATMENT FROM THE COMMUNITY

Homeless Adults	Homeless Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People for the most part are understanding • Once homeless you are stigmatized and it is hard to crawl out from underneath that and be accepted by the community • You are seen as the lowest level • Some people say “we don’t have a problem” • We don’t want “them” in our backyard • Abbotsford ignores us • Not very many people know of the homelessness issue • Majority in community believe people should get off their butts and get a job • People ignore us • People are judgemental; they look down on us • People say it is our fault • All females are seen as “working girls” • We are all seen as addicts with no goal in life • People get beat up for asking change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches kick people out – just want to convert you; you are judged not by what you believe but by the clothes you wear • It is charity at a price • The church in Mission is welcoming on Friday and Saturday nights. • It is hard for street kids to believe in something that they can’t see. • Churches should continue what they do (helping homeless) but some individuals who attend church treat you like s...; they don’t care • Thumbs down to services in the community • Some workers see occupation more as a job than a passion

5.3. PERCEPTIONS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE ABOUT EXISTING SERVICES

Homeless participants recognized that services are available and that benefit can be derived from accessing the existing services. However, they have also identified, based on their experience, some of the problems and shortcomings associated with existing services. Their responses are presented in Box 6 below.

The following quotation further illuminates the perceptions of homeless people with regard to services and supports in place to “assist” them:

“There’s a lot of things that could be done but the government’s too cheap to do anything about it.”

BOX 6: PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING SERVICES

- ✓ Services are available to help you find a job e.g. Triangle, JobWave, MCC Employment Centre, but you have to be ready for work (ID; transportation, affordable accommodation, etc)
- ✓ You can only stay at the shelters for a limited number of days (3 days), and there are only a few beds (27); how does this get you off the street?
- ✓ Soup kitchens and meal centers are good
- ✓ People should be treated with more respect
- ✓ Services can be better coordinated and made more seamless
- ✓ There is police brutality occurring towards men
- ✓ Landlords manipulate real estate. Need for subsidized housing
- ✓ 19 bed Peardonville House Addictions Treatment Centre is doing good work but waiting list is long
- ✓ There are other services, too, to help with addictions. You can access residential treatment for up to 3 months, but affordable “clean” housing afterwards is a problem.
- ✓ Agencies tend to support families with children, single parents and women before thinking of single men. There are not many services for men.
- ✓ There are a lot of great services offered by churches, but they are not coordinated
- ✓ Services are businesses. They are interested in numbers and targets, not persons. I am told what to do without them finding out what my particular situation is.
- ✓ Food hampers given out by St Andrews Church are appreciated
- ✓ Sunday night dinner provided by New Heights Church in Mission is good. They have gained the trust of a lot of people.
- ✓ Mission Indian Friendship Centre provides meals and showers.
- ✓ Union Gospel provides meals and helps poor people, but open only 5 days a week
- ✓ There is lack of an environment that doesn't shun the homeless
- ✓ Food Banks are a great help
- ✓ Salvation Army provides good service, especially their meal centres, but only one meal per day
- ✓ Ruth and Naomi's in Chilliwack does good work
- ✓ Women have a “choice”, not a great “choice”, to survive and to stay off the street – prostitution.
- ✓ Street Hope is really good
- ✓ Nothing available for us on Sundays in Abbotsford
- ✓ Welfare is not responsive enough; it is hard for people to qualify; how do you survive during the waiting period; people are being “boxed” into programs with emphasis on getting them off welfare and not helping the individual in his situation, so welfare doesn't really help you.

The following quotations provide further insight into the perceptions and opinions of homeless people with regard to services and supports in place to “assist” them:

- *“In BC they really don't care, they just want the numbers there, they just want your ass in that seat so they get Federal money. And they don't care what they do to you.”*
- *“I need ID and a place to live.”*

- *“I am kicked out of the Salvation Army – what do I do now?”*
- *“Shelters are full.”*
- *“It is harder to approach someone and ask them to help you with your drug habit, than to ask them if they know where to get it.”*
- *“It’s always hard when you starting from scratch. You got no room of your own, you got nothing. All you have is need...”*
- *“We’re labelled from being on the street, so we get turned down right away.”*

5.4. NEEDED SERVICES ACCORDING TO HOMELESS YOUTH

Homeless youth were asked what services they think are needed for homeless youth. Box 7 below summarizes their responses.

BOX 7: SERVICES NEEDED BY YOUTH

Type of Service
Warm place/shelter A 24-7 Drop-In Centre to rest, shower, do laundry and have a return address to receive mail, make a phone call to let parents know “I am still OK” Place to eat and find clothing Better foster homes Youth Activity Centre Safe Houses Emergency Services for Food, Clothing and Shelter A Drop-In Clinic for Medical treatment Centre that provides career and life counseling, motivation and builds self-esteem Establish a business or service run by youth More immediate action to set up projects for young people to gain skills and work experience Detox Centre in the Upper Fraser Valley Family Counselling

In addition, homeless youth had the following to say with regard to how services should be provided. According to youth participants, it is hard to prevent some youth from becoming street kids, and although they appreciate the prevention services available, they argue there are always those who end up on the street because they rebel and choose to leave home. Youth clash with parents with regard to lifestyle choices or not wanting to kick a drug habit. For example, one youth participant made the following statement in a focus group:

“Even if people would have given me information about drugs, I think I still would have taken them. A lot of it has to do with rebelling against your parents. You can inform children as much as you want, but peer pressure is powerful. ... And there’s some people that just don’t have the power to say no.”

Another youth said the following in relation to the availability of drugs and drug misuse:

“A lot of families are torn apart because of either the kids are into drugs, or their parents are, and for me, I’m now in the middle of trying to find a place to live, cause my mum doesn’t want me at home, but it’s really hard to find a good place to go ... I am couch surfing right now. ... There’s so much anger between us because my mum’s done so much and I’ve done so much in the past and we’re so mad at each other for the things we’ve done. My mum’s in recovery and my step-dad’s coming out of jail, and to be living together when all that stuff happened between us, is just too much. I’ve been talking to a social worker and they’re either going to put me in a group home or a foster home. Which will be strange, since I’ve been looking after myself since I was about 10 years old. I totally lost my childhood”.

However, the youth was also quick to indicate that there are also those who have to leave home because of abuse, severe family dysfunction or lack of money. In this regard, they mentioned instances where they or some of their friends had to leave home because of abuse, including sexual and emotional abuse. As one participant put it,

“Sometimes we leave home to reach out – to say we need help, because we don’t know how else to say it.”

Given this reality, services should be geared towards helping them to cope while on the streets and providing assistance to get them off the streets. The message came loud and clear from the youth that they want to work with agencies to assist youth in getting off the streets. According to the youth, it makes sense to focus on the younger ones first and try to get them off the streets as quickly as possible.

The researchers also heard youth crying out for someone to talk to them, to get to know them, to find out about their background and build trust over a period of time. They are looking for people they can trust. The youth also expressed a strong desire to tell their stories to those in authority who can make decisions to improve things.

The youth further indicated that services, when provided, should be nice and clean. To quote one participant:

“If It is dumpy, it won’t stay clean”.

Furthermore, the researchers were encouraged by the youth to not hand things to youth who are not used to it. According to the participants, youth,

- Learn responsibility if they work for it
- Want to be part of something
- Will work cooperatively if given a chance
- Services should be provided drug free and with very clear guidelines
- Want structure

One former homeless youth shared the following with us, indicating that her life is on track again and that she is motivated to succeed:

“I am working full time so that I can go back to school in fall to finish my high school and then go to College”.

5.5. SERVICES NEEDED ACCORDING TO HOMELESS ADULTS

Homeless people acknowledged that some people abuse their chances or do not take advantage of second chances provided. According to them, there is therefore no point in talking and working with those who don't want to change. Those who fall within this category need care in terms of food, clothing and temporary shelter, but once they have decided within themselves to change direction, then services should be made available. The participants also strongly argued that everyone deserves "second chances" no matter how far down a person has gone.

According to those who were formerly homeless, what made a difference for them is the fact that there was someone there for them, who helped them to take one step at a time. First steps involved an affordable place to stay, stable income, followed by ongoing support as they move to self-sufficiency.

Participants also stressed that people need to take responsibility for their actions, i.e. if they get shelter, then they should take a program. Many homeless people should be taught responsibility, they argued. Furthermore, according to participants, many homeless people are angry and don't believe in the system. The following quotation captures, in the view of the researchers, the anger and frustration that has built up in many homeless people:

"... build a shelter. The homeless people need somewhere warm to stay. This is crazy. Why let people suffer and starve on the streets, struggling to eat and get by? The people around here are ignorant. They won't help you that way. You run into the occasional person who is nice and will help you out, but it's just crazy. A better food bank, goddamit. Like, come on, bread? You expect homeless people to live on bread? Where's the nutritional factor? There's no nutrition in bread? It's either we're going to eat and have a full stomach on bread, or die of malnutrition. I'm already there!"

They feel let down and are ashamed of themselves. A strong sentiment was expressed that homeless people are lonely, but grateful to people who help. They agreed that they are stereotyped as drug addicts, but not all are. There are those who want to turn their lives around, but they are at the end of their rope and need help. Helping homeless people find a job is one part of the solution. Finding a job without supports to keep the job and finding affordable and accessible accommodation will not ensure a successful transition out of abject poverty. To change this will require a lot of patience, understanding and empathy accompanied by building trust. What is needed in the opinion of the authors is an integrated service response, providing a continuum of services to enable homeless people to move toward sustainable livelihood.

The following quotations further illustrate unmet needs of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley:

"If you have been physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually abused in any way, resources in the community to counsel you, to get the support to get you on your feet again, because with some people it takes a long time."

"Help to get back on my feet again. Real people that can take our hand and help us."

"A lot of people don't have enough time to deal with us, you know, they have other things to do with their families, right? We need people who don't have families, who have the time to take and give it to us for a while."

Homeless adults were asked to indicate which services are needed and will be beneficial to homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley. Their responses are summarized in Box 8 below.

BOX 8: SERVICES NEEDED BY ADULTS

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shelter for women 2. Affordable rental housing accessible by transit 3. Showers and laundry facilities to clean up 4. A Shelter where you can feel safe; build up your self-esteem and general appearance/ receive counselling, emotional support and work experience/ where I can learn by doing and look for a job 5. Dental, eye and foot care 6. A well-run facility where people can connect with other people, find support, direction and hope 7. Detox facility 8. Follow-up help for people with health problems and pregnant girls 9. Clothing and sleeping bags 10. Emergency/Drop-In referral and connection service 11. Program for older people (Some experience ageism) 12. Food Bank at either end of Abbotsford 13. Regular and reliable transit between Mission, Abbotsford, Langley and Chilliwack to get to jobs. 14. Need help to develop skills and to get clothes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. A safe place for girls 16. Give people a chance to gain skills and experience 17. Street youth needs a shelter/safe house 18. Transition Place where emergency food and shelter are provided for a while, but after a while have to move to place where they can build themselves up with support 19. More addiction treatment beds for women 20. A place to find food on Sundays 21. Hostels/shelters 22. Literacy classes – many can't read or write 23. Skills training/education/life skills training 24. Affordable accommodation with rules and regulations (people can do tasks in exchange for rent discount) 25. A place where people can go where there is no agenda 26. Counselling and Employment Services at the right pace 27. Bigger shelters 28. A place to rest during the day 29. A Shelter in Mission 30. An advocate
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5.6. FACTORS THAT HAVE IMPROVED THE LIFE OF FORMERLY HOMELESS

Based on information obtained by means of first person qualitative interviews with formerly homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley, the following are factors that helped them to get off the street, find stable housing and provide support to stay off the street.

5.6.1. GETTING OFF THE STREET

- Personal will power
- Support from friends, family or a worker
- Financial help or income from welfare or a job.
- Support to get cleaned up and stay clean until finding a job
- Support in a safe environment
- Someone who came along side and advocated without giving up
- Connection to services and ongoing support from worker

5.6.2. OBTAINING STABLE HOUSING

- Access to affordable housing
- Job and income and keeping the rent affordable
- Someone advocated
- Persistence

5.6.3. STAYING OFF THE STREET

- Positive, supportive and clean environment
- Ongoing support from family, friends, or worker
- Emotional support especially when temptation comes

The following quotations from formerly homeless people confirm the important role played by someone, be that a family member, a friend, or a worker, in providing ongoing support, showing there is a choice, and because there is a choice, there is hope. In answer to the question, "What made the difference for you?" Interviewees said the following:

"Just people helping me was the main thing."

"Having a person on your side."

"To actually have hope, and actually know you have somewhere to go. It actually makes you want to do it yourself."

"Someone that cares"

This is supported by the research of Mercier and Racine (in MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002: 301-302) who found that street people who have had the support of at least one person (e.g. family member, friend, worker, etc.) were more successful in making the transition off the street.

According to MacKnee and Mervyn (2002:294), not many studies on homelessness have focused on what contributed to or hindered exiting from homelessness. In an attempt to address this gap in the literature, MacKnee and Mervyn undertook a qualitative study involving 17 participants who spoke English, and were 18 years and older, who made a permanent transition to a mainstream lifestyle.²⁰ Their study identified nineteen categories of incidents that played a facilitative role and four categories of incidents that acted as a hindrance in relation to transitioning successfully and permanently to a mainstream lifestyle (MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002:297-301).

CATEGORIES OF INCIDENTS THAT FACILITATED SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

- 1) Recognizing one's personal destitution: Facing the reality that it is an illusion that life on the street is desirable.
- 2) Revolting against death, violence, and the devaluation of life: First hand and close experience of death, violence and devaluation of life shocked them into brutal realization of the direction in which their lives were going.
- 3) Having someone reach out: Because someone reached out they felt cared for.
- 4) Relocating and separating from the street lifestyle: Moving away from life on streets was crucial.

²⁰ MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002, defined a person in mainstream society as one who has been actively employed within a legitimate establishment, and/or enrolled in an educational program, and one who has resided within a stable dwelling. A person who had made a successful transition was defined as one who has moved from a homeless situation into the mainstream society, and maintained that position, without relapse, for at least 1 year.

- 5) Experiencing a spiritual event: Integrating spirituality into their lives gave hope and helped with forgiving of self. Prayer was found to be a powerful tool.
- 6) Going through “detox” or drug rehabilitation: Experiencing the structure of a program and overcoming dependency promoted responsibility, self-respect, discipline and stability.
- 7) Realizing one’s self-worth: Knowing that “I matter” was crucial.
- 8) Realizing one’s confidence and abilities: Discovering talents and gifts to offer to society was equally empowering.
- 9) Establishing a stable, legitimate job: Having a job gave a sense of responsibility and pride and kept them busy and out of trouble.
- 10) Achieving educational success: Provided confidence, pride and increased work options.
- 11) Creating new relationships with mainstream people: Support of and relationships with mainstream people motivated them to continue with transition. This includes marriage with a mainstream partner.
- 12) Reestablishing family relationships: Love and acceptance found in reconciling with family gave more motivation.
- 13) Experiencing accountability: Accountability to a friend, family member or spouse helped them to gain perspective, become more disciplined and live a more structured life.
- 14) Establishing a stable residence: Obtaining and upholding stable housing was a major factor in completing the transition.
- 15) Emulating mainstream role models: Without modeling by mainstream people what life off the street could be like, it would have been difficult to start the transition.
- 16) Counseling, formal or informal: They felt respected when someone counseled or talked with them, gave perspective and helped with skills development to deal with conflict, anger, communication, boundaries, etc.
- 17) Facing the responsibilities of parenthood: The desire to care for their children and for their children to do well played an important role in the decision to start the transitioning process.
- 18) Dealing with the issues prior to the streets: Resolving outstanding issues (e.g. confronting an abuser, counseling in dealing with painful issues) was crucial.
- 19) Bottoming out: For some, they had to reach “the bottom” in order to change. However, what constituted “the bottom” differed from one to the other.

CATEGORIES OF INCIDENTS THAT HINDERED SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

- 1) Feeling a sense of “street” family and being loyal to them: Feelings of guilt over leaving their friends and “street family”.
- 2) Receiving free services/welfare: Too easy to attain and scam. It also created dependency.
- 3) Having bad experiences with support providers: Poor delivery of services when needed.
- 4) Learning in alternative schools: Some specialized school programs lacked structure and positive peer support.

Based on research findings of Shlay (1994) as presented in MacKnee and Mervyn (2002), MacKnee and Mervyn’s own research, and findings from our study on homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley, we conclude that in order for street people to transition successfully off the street to a stable mainstream lifestyle requires not only interventions that can be sustained over the longer term helping homeless people to obtain and maintain stable housing, enter the labour market, stay healthy and care for their families; it also requires changes in perceptions and attitudes of homeless people. In other words, homeless people do need social support in the form of someone who cares and a responsive welfare system characterized by compassionate and caring staff. However, and this is very important, the transition off the street is equally well facilitated by the acceptance of personal responsibility based on the discovery of self-worth. It is important that this realization on the part of a homeless person be augmented by a stable, clean, affordable and supportive housing situation, counseling to deal with personal issues and emotional wounds and scars, advocacy support with regard to further training/education and/or legitimate employment, and ongoing affirmation and support until independence and self-sufficiency have been reached. Which variable is the most important or will set the process in

motion, differs in all probability from person to person. In summary, the chances for a successful transition off the street to a mainstream lifestyle are greatly improved if the following variables are present: ongoing and reliable emotional support, discovery of self-worth, build up of self-esteem, stable and affordable housing and sustained income.

6. SECTION SIX – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

Quality of life for a homeless person could be explained by the condition of disengagement from ordinary society. A homeless person deals with a condition of disengagement from ordinary society, family, friends, neighbourhood, church, community and, perhaps most important, from self. It is an extreme condition of disaffiliation and exclusion resulting in a complete loss of community and sense of self and drifting into social isolation. The result is disconnection from social support systems that usually provide help in times of crisis. It means being without structure and being alone. Poor people who have family ties, mentally ill persons who are able to maintain social and family relationships, alcoholics who are still connected to their friends and jobs, and drug addicts who manage to remain part of their community do not become homeless (Baum & Burnes, 1993:153).

Unfortunately, people do end up homeless in the Canadian society. Individuals and families living homeless or on the brink of homelessness is a distressing social problem confronting Canadian society for the past decade or more and clearly, the Upper Fraser Valley is not immune to this problem.

To date in Canada our policy response has more often than not revolved around steering homeless people toward shelters that for the most part are overcrowded and unhealthy. This is an approach that focuses on feeding, clothing and providing a place to sleep with little or no emphasis on initiatives or programs that are preventative or remedial in order to “turn the tide” of homelessness. The current emphasis on emergency shelters, although important, should be put into perspective. This is a symptomatic measure that does not address the causes of the problem. To effectively address the problem of homelessness will require a long term commitment and willingness to make major changes in housing, welfare support and social development strategies.

Based on literature consulted and the findings of our study on homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley the following summative conclusions and recommendations are put forward.

The extent of homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley

The number of homeless people interviewed during the snapshot survey (411) is comparable to the estimate obtained from the various focus groups (~360). This finding confirms the view held by more than one service provider that homelessness is present in the Upper Fraser Valley, albeit more hidden or concealed.

The biggest concentration of homeless people was found, as was expected, in Abbotsford, followed by Chilliwack and Mission with low numbers further east into the valley and the Fraser canyon. Service providers are of the view that the extent of homelessness is greater in the summer months than winter given the fact that the Fraser Valley is apparently seen as a safer area than some areas within the GVRD and the warmer summer weather makes it possible for people to live outside. According to this view homeless people tend to gravitate back toward the GVRD during winter, as there are more “winter” services in GVRD communities. It wasn’t possible to confirm or refute this view through this study. By means of a survey during winter one would be able to determine whether there is indeed fewer homeless people out in the Upper Fraser Valley during winter, provided the research design controls for other variables.

If the number of people who access the various food banks and meal programs in the various upper Fraser Valley communities are added to the number of homeless people then it becomes clear that the communities are faced with increasing numbers of working poor people who struggle to or who have lost their ability to maintain their self-sufficiency.

It cannot be claimed that this number include each and every homeless person in the Upper Fraser Valley given the reality that homeless studies are known for undercounting and there is, as

far as the researchers could ascertain, no known ethical methodology that enables you to enumerate every homeless person. Reasons for undercounting relate to the fact that given the nature of homelessness, people are transient, not all necessarily make use of shelter facilities or visit meal centers regularly and they find “temporary accommodation” in all sorts of places which are not always known to researchers despite extensive survey pre-planning. However, despite these methodological challenges the Upper Fraser Valley homeless study made use of recognized and accepted methodology and therefore the finding that 411 people were found to be homeless on August 19-20, 2004 does provide a baseline against which findings of future Upper Fraser Valley homelessness surveys can be compared. It also acts as an indicator together with other statistics such as average income, unemployment rates, income inequality, cost of housing, number of people using food banks, etc. that poverty, homelessness and being at risk of homelessness are issues that should not be ignored by community economic development agencies, planners, and politicians in the Upper Fraser Valley.

Factors contributing to homelessness

The following are some of the main factors that were identified as contributing to homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley:

- Cost of accommodation and lack of affordable housing
- Changes in the job market
- Erosion of welfare safety net
- Increase in income inequality
- Broken relationships and dysfunctional family set-up
- Drug addictions
- De-institutionalization of people with mental disabilities
- Poor personal choices

According to the findings it would appear that family breakdown, insufficient income (poverty), lack of affordable housing and drug addiction are the major reasons for homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley. These contribution factors are similar to other jurisdictions in Canada and similar to findings of other homelessness studies. The factors contributing to homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley associate around structural issues and personal issues. It also underscores the complexity of a homeless person’s situation and confirms the fact that once homelessness has set in the solution is not necessarily linked to only one particular issue, but rather the solution or intervention would appear to require a multi-faceted response.

Duration of homelessness

More than two thirds of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley could be regarded as long-term homeless. Long-term homelessness is probably more difficult to undo given the fact that a greater degree of social isolation and hopelessness would in all probability be present, making it more challenging to create a pathway out of homelessness that has a reasonable change of success. This would require a longer intervention timeframe and therefore more resources.

Biographical profile of homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley

The study identified 37 homeless youth 18 years and younger, the majority of which were in Abbotsford then Mission followed by Chilliwack and Hope. Anecdotal evidence from service providers indicates that more youth are couch surfing and this study cannot claim to have captured all the couch surfers in the Upper Fraser Valley.

Just more than half of the homeless people were between 25 and 44 years (52.1%). More than a third (32.6%) were females. Based on these findings services need to be geared toward males and females and a specific effort is required for youth as there is no safe house (youth shelter) in the Upper Fraser Valley.

14.6% of the homeless people indicated their ethnicity as aboriginal, whereas the majority (77.9%) indicated their ethnicity as Canadian. The relatively low number of aboriginal homeless

people is interesting given the fact that a number of bands reside in the study area. However, this number is probably skewed as the study area did not include Aboriginal reservations despite a number of efforts to connect with representatives from Aboriginal communities in order to include Aboriginal communities in the study.

Community of Origin

Just over two-thirds of the homeless people interviewed indicated that their last permanent address was in the Upper Fraser Valley. However, a substantial proportion (35.2%) does originate from outside the valley with the majority coming from the GVRD. This finding debunks, as it were, the popular notion that all homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley are from GVRD communities.

Accommodation for homeless people

At the time of the study the Upper Fraser Valley had 28 permanent shelter beds and 60 transition beds for women. It has also been reported that there is a limit on the number of days that people can stay in shelters and on average shelters can be accessed from 9 pm to 7 am.

In addition to the shelters homeless people find accommodation by means of couch surfing, using “crack houses”, exchanging sex for accommodation, or outside in a number of places. At the time of the survey 43.4% of respondents reported that they have slept outside the night before. It would therefore appear that there is a lack of shelter beds in the Upper Fraser Valley. However, the authors are not convinced that more shelter beds is the answer to the problem as “sheltering” tend to focus on the symptoms whereas focusing on causes by finding means and designing ways to provide affordable housing, supported and resourced training and support linked to independent living and employment would probably be more cost effective in the long run.

Reasons for not using available shelter beds vary from “not knowing where shelter is located” to “shelters were full” to “do not like the facility”.

Eating

Food appears to be readily available and of relative good quality, at least one main meal per day. In addition to Salvation Army meal programs in Abbotsford and Chilliwack and the meal program of Union Gospel Mission in Mission a number of faith groups in the various communities are involved in providing meals, soup, sandwiches, coffee, etc. to homeless people, confirming the view that homeless people generally do not have to go hungry in these communities.

Health

It did come as no surprise that only 11.0% of survey respondents have indicated that they are healthy. Given the harsh conditions associated with living homeless aggravated by not enough and uninterrupted sleep, irregular meals and exposure to the elements, and lack of ready access to health care, it is to be expected that homelessness is seen an agent of disease.

Health concerns include addictions and mental and physical disability. The following are some of the chronic and acute illnesses among homeless people namely, chronic fatigue, diabetes, respiratory problems, hepatitis C, asthma, physical injuries, etc.

Street community and mutual support

Just more than half of the respondents indicated that they “live with others”. It can be assumed that this occurs as a way to counter social isolation. However, there is also a strong view among service providers that the so-called “street family” is highly dysfunctional, similar to some conventional families, and that this probably explain why a substantial proportion of homeless people (44.6%) do live alone. Opinions from homeless people vary from that they look out for each other to that it is scary out on the streets to that you cannot trust anyone on the streets. Research has indicated that for the sake of survival, relationships among street people become easily strained marked by distrust and suspicion.

Income and employment

There are high rates of unemployment among homeless people. An obvious fact, however, it is important to also note that many have not completed high school and income support is more often than not difficult to access. There appears to be agreement that homelessness is both affected by and affects employment. Furthermore, difficulties with employment, education and income support can be related to difficulties with health, mental health and addictions. Thus, it would appear that these variables are interlinked and in order to develop a potentially successful pathway out of homelessness, the extent to which these variables inter-relate must be kept in mind in program design. Although there are current programs working with homeless people, objective evaluations of their operations and performance are rare.

The working poor are well represented among homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley. In addition to income from work, income sources include social assistance, employment insurance, pension, support from families and friends, begging, and charity from churches. The majority work part time, mostly in retail and have been employed in unskilled work prior to becoming homeless. However, a substantial proportion (39.6%) has been involved in skilled work with a few having professional backgrounds. A few others were involved in illegal activities such as drug dealing and prostitution.

In addition to those who do work, there are those with disabilities and those who are unemployed who have indicated their desire to work. Others volunteer in an attempt to obtain paid employment. This reality debunks the popular view that homeless people are homeless because they do not want to work. Such a view also ignores the reality of a changing labour market and the changing nature of work that result and continues to result in job losses and a replacement of workers with new technology not to mention the role that economic globalization, “free” trade, and downsizing have played in respect of fewer good jobs and the concomitant rise in the service sector and new jobs in this sector. However, these new jobs are bad jobs in the sense that in most cases they do not offer benefits and they provide part-time or part-year employment.

Barriers to employment for homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley include disability, lack of skills, physical appearance, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, logistical barriers, don't fit in McJobs, lost hope (gave up), criminal record, etc.

Homeless participants have indicated that there is a need for more “hands on training” giving low educational level, literacy issues, learning disabilities, and learning styles. Based on information obtained through this research, the researchers are not convinced that the existing employment services in the Upper Fraser Valley are designed to effectively cater for the training and employment needs and complex constellation of employment barriers associated with homeless people. However, a deeper analysis of existing employment and training services is required to verify this assertion.

Helping people move out of homelessness is a complex and difficult task that requires efforts focusing on addressing the underlying causes of poverty and not just programs that address the symptoms. An important principle to keep in mind with regard to program design is to include homeless people in the process of program design. Such an approach marks the beginning of moving away from dependency toward self-sufficiency.

Many homeless people or formerly homeless people encounter significant difficulties obtaining and maintaining employment in the mainstream labour market or they encounter significant barriers to receiving services from traditional programs. In this regard social enterprises are adequately positioned to take individuals with no skills or work experience and provide them with the opportunities necessary to move from shelter to housing to support services and transitional employment. What is not required is to provide a “12- week” training program and then a referral to a potential job. What is required is measured capacity building. A process to make it possible for people to reconstruct their lives (it may take as long as two years or longer) as participants

stabilize their personal situations and develop greater capacity to maintain long-term employment.

Social enterprises are well positioned for this role, as these are businesses deliberately created to contribute to social objectives. Social enterprises combine social justice with business.

Many stereotypes are attached to homeless people, one being the assumption that they don't want to work. What needs to be kept in mind is that a substantial number of homeless people who were interviewed during this study either do work, or want to work. However, part time and even full time low wage jobs keep people in poverty, and low levels of income combined with the lack of affordable housing²¹ leave people with few options besides living homeless. Thus, the working poor are well represented among the homeless people in the Upper Fraser Valley. People are working, but in spite of having a job, they are still homeless. Others who are unemployed but want to work face multiple barriers to employment, including disabilities, logistical barriers, age, physical appearance and lack of skills.

It would appear that assisting or enabling homeless people to transition "off the street" to a greater degree of self-sufficiency is a complicated and multi-faceted issue. The answer certainly does not lie simply in "getting a job", although self-sufficiency, which may be on a continuum from a relatively low level to a relatively high level, should be the goal to work towards, and this could include employment, again ranging from relatively part time to relatively full time. Helping homeless people find a job is, therefore, but one part of the solution. Finding a job in the absence of affordable housing and adequate supports to enable the person to keep a job without having addressed major challenges and barriers will not ensure a successful escape from homelessness and dependency. To achieve successful transition off "the street" will require a lot of patience, understanding and empathy.

Services

A major concern is that there appears to be a lack of information among the public on the existing need and the fact that some services are not available e.g. youth shelter. Service providers were unanimous in their opinion that not enough services are available for homeless people or people at risk of becoming homeless in the Upper Fraser Valley.

The need to provide affordable housing was confirmed through this study. A strong perception was registered that some landlords take advantage of low-income tenants. In areas towards the eastern part of the Upper Fraser Valley and into the Fraser Canyon the issue is not so much affordable housing as it is hunger and food security.

Service providers expressed the view that many homeless people have become trapped in a lifestyle that is hard to change and therefore the challenge is to provide a potentially successful pathway out of homelessness. No definitive input was obtained with regard to program design to achieve the former and this is an actionable item for the future.

Homeless people have indicated that they are stigmatized and they recognize that it is hard to escape the stigma. This underscores the need for more public education and advocacy.

Like many other communities the "not-in-my-backyard" attitude is present in the Upper Fraser Valley communities when it comes to the provisioning of services.

Homeless participants recognized that services are available and that benefit can be derived from accessing the existing services. However, they have also identified, based on their experience, problems and shortcomings associated with the services. These include:

- Apparently some police brutality toward homeless men.

²¹ Lack of affordable housing is a major contributing factor to homelessness in Canada, and the Upper Fraser Valley is no exception in this regard.

- Available employment services focus mostly on job ready people and people with a base to operate from. Obviously, the latter is not the case with homeless people.
- Services could be better coordinated and made more seamless.
- Need for “clean” and stable housing after residential addictions treatment.
- Single men are “last in line” to receive services.
- A perception that welfare is not responsive enough.

Homeless youth have identified, among other a need for the following services:

- Youth shelter
- 24/7 Drop-In Centre to rest, shower, do laundry, obtain a return address and become connected to services
- Better foster homes
- Emergency services for food, clothing and shelter
- Drop-In Clinic for medical treatment
- Projects where young people can gain skills and work experience
- Detox Centre in the Upper Fraser Valley
- Family counselling

It is important to deal without delay with homeless people’s emergency situation. However, as this is addressed an assessment needs to be made of what is needed to assist people to find affordable housing and stable income. It is recognized that self-sufficiency will mean different things for different people, meaning that different levels of self-sufficiency could be reached. In the Upper Fraser Valley, there are currently varying capacities to address immediate needs of homeless people, e.g. food and limited shelter. Little to nothing, however, is in place in terms of a longer-term intervention to stabilize their situations through affordable housing and stable income, assisting them on the road to self-sufficiency.

There are also various employment programs available, including programs for people with multiple barriers, but practitioners argue that it is extremely hard, if not impossible, to work with someone and try to employ him/her if the person doesn’t have stable housing. It is hard to look for a job you have slept outside the previous nights, haven’t had a bath for days or perhaps weeks, don’t eat regular and balanced meals and don’t have an address. In addition, lack of transit at certain times and between certain destinations is a huge barrier with regard to getting to interviews and to and from the job. This very challenging situation is further aggravated by the fact that when a person wants to apply for income assistance, currently called BC Employment and Assistance, a three-week work search period applies²² before the person becomes eligible to apply for income assistance.

With regard to services and a potentially successful pathway out of homelessness the following conclusion is put forward based on this study. In order for homeless people to transition successfully “off the street” to a stable mainstream lifestyle requires interventions that can be sustained over the longer term and changes in perceptions and attitudes of homeless people. Homeless people do need social support, but the transition off the street is equally dependent on acceptance of personal responsibility based on either the discovery or rediscovery of self-worth. This realization on the part of a homeless person must be augmented by a stable, clean, affordable and supportive housing situation, counseling to deal with ongoing personal issues and

²² According to “Your Guide to Employment and Assistance” on the Ministry of Human Resources’ website, a person who wants to apply for assistance is required to do a three-week (21 day) work search prior to the interview date at which point eligibility will be determined. According to the website, this three-week work search gives the person the opportunity to look for work and access other sources of support, such as family, friends and the community. It also gives the person time to complete an in-person or on-line orientation session which outlines work search requirements, job search tips, and the application process and to collect the documents needed for the application interview.

healing of emotional wounds, advocacy for adequate resources for training/education and/or employment and ongoing support until independence and self-sufficiency have been reached. Recognizing however that the degree to which this integrated intervention is needed will vary from person to person based on length of homelessness and complexity of issues that have caused the person to become homeless in the first place. It would appear that the chances for a successful pathway out of homelessness are greatly enhanced if the following variables are present, namely ongoing and reliable emotional support, discovery of self-worth, building up of self-esteem, stable and affordable housing, and sustained income, ideally through employment.

Resources

There is a substantial amount of social capital present in the communities in the study area. This needs to be recognized. In addition to professional and caring practitioners, social capital is present in the form of highly committed and dedicated volunteers, networks of similarly committed people and businesses who make substantial donations to those providing services to homeless people. This social capital could be mobilized more deliberately and in a coordinated fashion to leverage additional resources in partnership with governments at municipal and regional levels. The many well-intended faith-based initiatives that are in place, and whose work is greatly appreciated, are further evidence of the social capital available at the community level.

However, there is still room for even greater coordination and, without diminishing the importance of food and clothing, it is necessary to move beyond providing these bare essentials to homeless people. It is thus recommended that at community level steps are taken to better coordinate existing services and determine what resources can be leveraged locally and from outside the community. This should not only be done to create additional shelter capacity, but to design and implement preventative and medium- to longer-term assistance measures so that homeless people can break out of their cycle of poverty and dependence.

Specific community based organizations that can bring various foci and social capital to the table in order to coordinate service delivery and a more seamless service continuum include among others:

- Salvation Army;
- United Way of the Fraser Valley;
- Community Services Societies in the various communities;
- The Fraser Valley Social Enterprise Centre;
- Community Futures Development Corporations for South Fraser and North Fraser;
- Fraser Valley Regional District
- Municipal Governments in Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack, District of Kent and District of Hope
- Focus Disabilities Network;
- Fraser Valley Community Skills Centre;
- Triangle Resource Inc;
- Fraser Valley Affordable/Accessible Housing Working Group;
- Chilliwack Social Planning and Research Council
- Various community based organizations and faith based groups working with marginalized people including among others people coming out of incarceration, women who have survived abuse and/or violence, single mothers, street youth and at-risk youth, people with multiple barriers to employment, people suffering from drug addictions, people suffering from HIV/Aids, people with mental disabilities, people with disabilities, etc.; and
- Mennonite Central Committee, Employment & Community Development.

Other resource directly or indirectly linked to the Upper Fraser Valley include among others:

- BC Housing
- Ministry of Human Resources
- Ministry of Children and Families

- Human and Skills Development Canada
- Ministry of Communities, Aboriginal Affairs and Women
- BC Community Economic Development Network
- Canadian Community Economic Development Network
- Centre for Policy Alternatives, British Columbia
- University College of the Fraser Valley
- Western Economic Diversification
- Greater Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat
- Vancity Savings Credit Union
- The Cooperators
- Coast Capital Savings Credit Union
- Vancouver Foundation

Recommendations

A band-aid approach is not going to provide the long-term solutions needed to improve homelessness outcomes in the Upper Fraser Valley. It is imperative to recognize that a long-term approach is necessary. The changes in the lives of homeless people necessary for the achievement of self-sufficiency will not happen over night. Such changes will require a longer-term intervention that in turn will require resources, creativity and innovation.

Services should be available to help people cope while on the street, but provision should also be made for assistance to help them get off the streets, long term. To transition successfully from the street depends to a large degree on first building a relationship of trust, involving a long-term commitment to “walk with people” as they take one step at a time out of their situation. What is needed in addition to addressing their immediate need of food and shelter is an integrated approach that provides a continuum of services designed to enable homeless people to move toward sustainable livelihoods.

It is therefore recommended that action to address the issue of homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley be taken at two levels. One level involves increased capacity to provide, in a more coordinated fashion, in the immediate needs of homeless people with a view of stabilizing their situation. It is assumed that the latter will create or prepare a setting conducive for a second level of action, namely longer-term assistance in order for homeless people to embark on a road towards a greater degree of self-sufficiency.

Recommendations for immediate action over a short term

- As an important and crucial first step establish an Action Committee to develop a strategy to better coordinate service delivery and to create a more seamless service delivery continuum. This Action Committee should be made up of representatives of relevant and interested service providers operating in the Upper Fraser Valley communities. MCC Employment & Community Development could convene the first meeting of such an action committee.
- Increase the capacity of existing shelters and shelter services.
- Establish a shelter for women.
- Establish a youth safe house (shelter).
- Design an emergency response plan to deal with situations like the cold spell during the first two weeks of January 2005 and to appropriately refer and assist homeless people.
- Redesign shelter provisioning to include daytime “shelter” services where people can rest during the day, take a shower/bath and do laundry. Shelter provision should be more than just nighttime help.

- Work towards even better coordination of existing services in respect to food provisioning such as meal programs, soup kitchens, daytime drop-ins, and food banks.
- Provide a separate drop-in center for youth inclusive of a place where they can get meals, clothing, rest, take a shower and do their laundry.
- In conjunction with the latter, provide an assessment and referral service in order to connect youth to longer-term supports and interventions.

Recommendations for action over the long-term

- In the interest of efficiency and cost effectiveness an assessment should be undertaken of existing services, their capacity, eligibility criteria and the extent to which they should or could be adjusted to be more effective and become part of an envisaged continuum of services. By doing this, the community will build on existing social capital and use existing local resources to leverage more resources.
- Take definitive action with regard to the provision of affordable housing including identifying and accessing additional resources (dollars). Through coordination by the United Way of the Fraser Valley and MCC Employment & Community Development and in partnership with a number of other organizations, an affordable/accessible housing initiative has been started to design innovative ways to provide affordable housing in the Upper Fraser Valley communities.
- Design and implement an inter-agency program that provides a continuum of services, paced appropriately, with the goal of people becoming self-sufficient on their way to sustainable livelihoods. The continuum of services should range from emergency intervention, providing shelter and stabilizing the person's situation, including initial recovery, to building up of self-esteem and the ability to hope and dream again, affordable housing, followed by training, then work experience (paced person appropriately), then assistance with job matching (work could initially be part time if needed) with ongoing employment maintenance and eventual independence and self-sufficiency or a degree thereof. The program design should make provision for services, such as counseling and medical treatment, including dental, eye and foot care.
- Design and implement two pilot social enterprises, one for homeless youth and one for homeless adults, where they can obtain work experience and transition back into routine and work.
- Improve intra - and inter-community transit.

Dissemination of findings

It is recommended that the research findings be disseminated as widely as possible and that the dissemination process be action-oriented as far as resource identification and mobilization for sustained community action is concerned. The aim of such ongoing community action is to facilitate an improvement in homeless outcomes in the Upper Fraser Valley communities.

Specifically, the report will be distributed to:

- Local mayors and councilors
- MLAs and MP
- Chairperson and members of the Fraser Valley Regional District Board
- Municipal and Regional Planners
- Relevant Federal and Provincial Government Departments
- Relevant and interested community based service agencies

Distribution of the report will be followed up with an offer to present a summary of the findings and to identify options for resource mobilization for ongoing pro-active action to prevent and reduce homelessness in the Upper Fraser Valley.

Other steps as part of the dissemination includes:

- Presentations to community based service agencies and interested community members
- Press conferences and/or press releases
- Papers at conferences, symposia, workshops and research colloquims
- Posting report on website
- Distribute report to Regional Homelessness Secretariat, GVRD Homelessness Secretariat and the Fraser Valley Affordable/Accessible Working Group.
- Make presentation on findings as invited
- Distribute report and provide briefings to agencies working on establishing facilities or designing programs in response to the identified need, e.g. Cyrus Centre Project to establish a drop-in and counseling service for homeless and at-risk youth in Abbotsford. The Fraser Valley Youth Shelter Committee working in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee BC and Abbotsford Community Services to establish a Fraser Valley Youth Shelter, and faith groups who are considering an appropriate response to the identified need.

APPENDIX I – LIST OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers and Staff at

- Salvation Army Meal Centre, Abbotsford
- Salvation Army Meal Centre, Chilliwack
- Abbotsford Food Bank
- Mission Food Bank
- Chilliwack Food Bank
- Ruth and Naomi's Street Ministry, Chilliwack
- Street Hope, Abbotsford
- Joshua Project, Hope
- New Heights Community Church, Mission
- Transition Houses in Mission, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Hope
- Shelters in Mission, Abbotsford and Hope

- 1) Sharon Arthur
- 2) Redina Borros
- 3) Ginny Breckenridge
- 4) Daniella Cairns
- 5) Randy Cairns
- 6) Uultsje DeJong
- 7) Jeanette Dillabough
- 8) George Epp
- 9) Judy Giroux
- 10) Gerry Gosling
- 11) Alex Grammatikos
- 12) Myrna Guilbault
- 13) Andrea Haggerty
- 14) Autumn Jenkinson
- 15) William Johnson
- 16) Karen Keller
- 17) Paul Keller
- 18) Kristal Kimber
- 19) Andrew King
- 20) Brittney Knelson
- 21) Manpreet Lima
- 22) Tannis Martin
- 23) Penny Marcotte
- 24) Tracy McCarthy
- 25) Joyce McElhoes
- 26) Vikki McGee
- 27) Susan McTavish
- 28) Ernst Middleton
- 29) Delaine Milette
- 30) Barb Milito-Smith
- 31) Caroline Neville
- 32) Sarah Palmer
- 33) Reno Pasla
- 34) Luanne Payne
- 35) Rodney Phillipson
- 36) Helen Pierce
- 37) Deena Prankratz
- 38) Cara Rosborough

- 39) Keith Rudance
- 40) Richard Rye
- 41) Bev Shields
- 42) Katie Shields
- 43) Ken Short
- 44) Tamara Smith
- 45) Dan Steele
- 46) Ingrid Stahl
- 47) Louise Thomson
- 48) Christiaan VanWyk
- 49) Anna VanderSchyff
- 50) Anita VanWyk
- 51) Paul Watson
- 52) Pixie Wells

APPENDIX II – MEMBERS OF RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- 1) Don Law – Salvation Army, Chilliwack
- 2) Don Armstrong – Salvation Army, Chilliwack
- 3) Sharon Arthur – SFU student
- 4) Siri Bertelsen – Fraser Valley Regional District
- 5) Maclynne Bourguin – Hope Community Services Society
- 6) Karen-Ann Daleman
- 7) Peter Bailey – Freerein Associates
- 8) Erica Copley
- 9) Joy Cox – Mission Community Services Society
- 10) Julie Crooks – Ann Davis Transition Society
- 11) Dale Cuthbertson – Chilliwack Community Services Society
- 12) Brian Chiasson – Triangle Resources Inc.
- 13) Dave Denault – Street Hope Ministry, Abbotsford
- 14) Jerri Dyble – Hope Transition House
- 15) Norm Dale – Union Gospel Mission
- 16) Phil Glaister
- 17) Phil Hope – Mission Food Bank
- 18) Scott Hill – Ministry of Human Resources, Region 3 (Fraser Region)
- 19) Glenn Hope – United Way of the Fraser Valley
- 20) Bobbi Jacob – Ann Davis Transition Society
- 21) Paul Keller – Hope Community Services Society
- 22) Joyce Knapp – Chilliwack Independent Living Society
- 23) Joanne Kerr – Boston Bar Enhancement Society
- 24) Kristal Kimber – Bridging the Canyons
- 25) Dan Larsen
- 26) Barbara Milito – Mission Indian Friendship Centre
- 27) Dave Murray – Abbotsford Food Bank
- 28) Ernst Middleton – Agassiz-Harrison Community Services Society
- 29) Terri McClellan – Abbotsford Transition House
- 30) Lynn McCullagh
- 31) Sam Mohan – Fraser Health Region
- 32) Sister Matthew – The Sisters of Faith
- 33) Patti Macahonic – Agassiz-Harrison Community Services Society
- 34) Wayne Northey – M2W2
- 35) Sylvia Pranger – Mayor, District of Kent
- 36) Patricia Ross – Abbotsford, Councillor and Fraser Valley Regional District Board Representative
- 37) Thelma Schrock – Abbotsford Community Services Society
- 38) Bev Shiels – Abbotsford Community Services Society
- 39) Mel Simmons – Chilliwack Councillor
- 40) Tamara Smith – Mission Community Services Society
- 41) Cora-Lee Terry – Fraser Health Region
- 42) Louise Thomson – Abbotsford Community Services Society
- 43) Milt Walker
- 44) Annette Walsh – Store Front Community Services Society
- 45) Brad Whittaker – Chilliwack Social Research and Planning Council
- 46) David Woodland – Salvation Army, Abbotsford
- 47) Gloria Wolfson – School of Social Work, University College of the Fraser Valley

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