

Women's Economic Justice Project

An Examination of How Women Would Benefit from a
Guaranteed Livable Income

A project of
the Women's Livable Income Working Group
c/o the Victoria Status of Women Action Group (SWAG)
Report prepared by Project Coordinator Cindy L'Hirondelle
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this report to help advance the movement for a guaranteed livable income

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A Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) is an unconditional and universal income, administered by federal governments and granted to individuals to ensure that no person's income falls below what is necessary for health, life and dignity.

In the past it was called a Guaranteed Annual Income; today, some groups call it a Basic Income. It is a concept that has been promoted by people such as Thomas Paine (1796), Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) as well as being one of the recommendations in Canada's Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1972. Today there are over 25 countries in the world with active guaranteed income groups including in Europe, Africa, South America, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S and Canada. See the Canadian Website: www.livableincome.org for more details.

For myself, 90% of what I worry about is money, and lack of it.

—Meshum

*A Guaranteed Livable Income would be a big paradigm shift.
It will really change the way people look at the world, how we interact with each other,
and what we value. Just the idea of a GLI in the world will begin the process of change.*

—Janine

*We all are dependent on each other most of the time.
For example, the food that we eat, maybe I cooked it,
but I didn't produce it, I didn't sell it.*

We are like a chain, all connected to each other.

We are responsible for each other.

*If one is broken, everything falls apart,
and that is what we are living in this society now.*

—Hilda

*This is the issue that has to be tackled worldwide,
not just limited to one country or one continent.
We are facing the same problems in all parts of the world.*

—Evelyn

*GLI would be a breath of fresh air;
it would be the closest thing to utopia;
it would be finally progress.*

—Rachel

*If people have GLI,
then it frees us up to think of what we need,
and how do we create a sustainable place to live.*

—Sol

*I see this as a different way of doing economics, of revaluing what is important.
We are way past the limits of economic growth. A Guaranteed Livable Income
is a step toward a guaranteed livable world.*

—Valerie

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Introduction

What is this all about?

Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) is an idea that just won't go away. It was a popular social justice demand in the 1960's and 70's (then called Guaranteed Annual Income): proposed by Martin Luther King Jr.; promoted by U.S. socioeconomist Robert Theobald as a response to automation; recommended in Canada's Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1972; and the subject of a multi-year Canadian experiment called the "Manitoba Mincome" in 1974-77. It was even featured in the first issue of Ms. Magazine in 1972, where welfare activist Johnnie Tillmon stated: "*Maybe we poor welfare women will really liberate women in this country... We put together our own welfare plan, called Guaranteed Adequate Income, which would eliminate sexism from welfare.*"

But by the mid-1980's, the idea fell (or was pushed) to the wayside. Demanding good jobs, good wages and daycare was, and still is, regarded as the primary solution to poverty by social justice groups. However, there is a major problem with this "solution": it does not address the fact that women are the producers of humanity. Without this work, not only would the economy quickly come to an end (no more workers, consumers, clients, patients, students etc.), but all of humanity would end.

This intense work cannot be viewed a small hobby women do on the side while they also do their "real" work. The costs of doing unpaid work are very high. According to 2004 Revenue Canada data obtained by this project, there are 67 percent more women than men in the lowest income groups of under \$30,000 per year, and there are 337 percent more men than women in the highest income groups of over \$100,000 per year. Gee, I wonder why men aren't rushing to quit their jobs to be fulltime dads and demanding implanted wombs? Yet, even though the economics of unpaid work has been written about for decades by feminists such as Marilyn Waring, most "progressives" continue to advocate solutions to poverty that render this work invisible. To treat this work as a small side issue that can be addressed through demanding jobs and daycare, does not reflect the intensity of time, thought and energy it takes to create and nurture new human beings to functioning adulthood. No proposals are offered that regard family care, as essential or legitimate work. (Groveling for welfare is not a solution; many women would rather do *anything* than subject themselves to that humiliation.) By default this supports the continuation of women's slavery—what else can you call work that is (a) essential, (b) unpaid and (c) is expected to be done almost exclusively by one group. This is not an issue that can be ignored since it affects all women and all jobs that look remotely look like "women's work": if something is normally done for free, then any price seems too high.

Recently, however, interest in various forms of guaranteed income has been shown by groups as diverse as the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres and Toronto Dominion Bank economists. In 2005 Dr. Evelyn Forget of the University of Manitoba began a project to examine data from the Manitoba Mincome; in early 2006, guaranteed income was mentioned as a possible solution to rural poverty in a University of Saskatchewan report and by a member of the Canadian Senate Committee on Agriculture. Most recently, the Saskatchewan office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives included Basic Income in their Alternative Provincial Budget. (See pg. 72 for sources)

The amount of analysis of guaranteed income is growing—there are over a hundred discussion papers on the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee website alone—but the voices are those of (mostly male) academics. With this project we wanted to document the voices of the women who would be most profoundly and immediately affected by the implementation of a GLI: women from the grassroots—not the ivory tower; women not near the glass ceiling except to clean it; women standing in the rain at bus stops, packing kids, groceries and a lifetime of worries; women who leave the food bank in tears; women who finally explode in frustration and rage at the welfare office; women who are

almost paralysed by anxiety; women who have survived attacks of all kinds from all sides; women who must smile at all times to keep their service job; women who help others worse off than themselves even though they cannot afford to; and women who skillfully disguise their anger and poverty, but if you ask them, they will say: "they want to kill us."

With funding provided by Status of Women Canada and the participation of 44 women, we were able to create a mini think-tank on Guaranteed Livable Income. We did not set out to determine 'if' a guaranteed income is wanted, or not wanted, by women. There is simply not enough familiarity with the concept to have an informed discussion. However, this report can be used as a starting place for such discussions—now especially urgent due to the impacts of poverty on health, and the environmental damage caused by blind pursuit of economic growth and jobs. With that in mind, we interviewed women who were interested in the concept of GLI, women who contacted us wanting to be interviewed, and women we met through outreach or community meetings. This report documents the highlights of approximately 50 hours of interviews, 4 focus groups and almost 400 pages of notes. We discussed the benefits of Guaranteed Livable Income; the costs of poverty; concerns about what might go wrong, and the barriers and strategies to achieve a GLI. It is also important to point out that, although we examined the benefits to women of Guaranteed Livable Income, women emphasized GLI is needed for everyone.

Goals of the project

- Investigate and document the benefits that would accrue to women with the implementation a universal Guaranteed Livable Income as compared to a) the costs of the continuation of the feminization of poverty and b) the costs of pursuing jobs as a solution to poverty.
- Disseminate our findings in order to expand social policy debate in BC and elsewhere to include how women would benefit from a universal Guaranteed Livable Income.
- Analyze and evaluate the response to our findings in order increase effectiveness of future action for women's economic justice.

Coordinator's background

I have come to this work through being a mother, anti-poverty organizer and former coordinator of a women's centre. I do not have an academic background, but have learned from my children, my family, and from organizing and attending possibly hundreds of community meetings since 1988 with groups which focused on the issues of children, poverty and women, as well as extensive research, interviews, discussions and writing. I am from rural Northern Alberta (Peace River) with a Cree-Metis father and a Dutch mother. In the early 1980's I moved to the west coast of BC, married and had three children before the age of 30. Later, I learned about life as a single mother on welfare. This prompted me to begin organizing grassroots meetings on poverty issues. At these meetings the idea of guaranteed livable income would always come up as the most logical demand to organize for. In 2001, I was hired as the coordinator of the Victoria Status of Women Action Group and guaranteed livable income became a solution we focused on. In 2004, provincial funding to women's centres was cut 100 percent and we survived for a year with barely enough donations to pay our modest rent. Then in July 2005, we received federal funding from Status of Women Canada to start this project. I also need to express how much I learned during the time in 2004/5 that I worked for a mental health organization. Until then, I had not realized how many mothers of children with disabilities provide care for their adult children or grandchildren sometimes well into their old age; and that people caring for their *own* health and wellness is sometimes a fulltime job, and that this work is vitally important to society, families and to individuals. Learning from those who have an acute awareness of the fragility of wellness and who consciously and generously expressed care for others, added valuable perspective to this project. Also working with co-members of Livable Income For Everyone provided insight, support and analysis.

Cindy L'Hirondelle, Coordinator, Women's Economic Justice Project

About the Women interviewed

Coordinator's Note: All women interviewed either currently, or formerly, have experience of low-incomes; all live in Victoria except for Mary Billy (Squamish, BC) and Perpetua Alfazema (Ontario) who were interviewed by telephone. If only a first name is given, it indicates that the interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

Anna is a young woman with knowledge of the concerns of immigrant women.

Aletheia is a young woman with environmental and indigenous perspectives.

Bernice is a grandmother with indigenous perspectives.

Brenda is a mother, a health worker and union activist.

Claire is wise about poverty and older women, disability and the welfare system.

Cecia has knowledge of the true costs of low-wage work and the welfare system.

Dawn is wise about women with invisible disabilities, poverty and the search for meaningful work.

Debie O'Connell is a grandmother and grassroots activist, knowledgeable about poverty, disability, community.

Donna Furnival is knowledgeable about poverty and struggling to survive.

Eva has experience of raising children on a low-income and is originally from Eastern Europe.

Elizabeth is knowledgeable about invisible disabilities and the effects of workplace stress.

Evelyn Batamuliza is a young woman from Rwanda with knowledge about women's situation in many countries.

Faith is knowledgeable on the issues of racism, poverty and women's equality.

Florence knows about eldercare, inadequate housing and low income.

Gabrielle is wise on being true to yourself and finding the courage to do so.

Hilda is a mother with a working-class perspective from South America.

Janine Bandcroft publishes the Victoria Street Newz, the Left Coast e-news & co-hosts CFUV's Winds of Change.

Jennifer has spent years as a part-time office worker and is originally from the U.S.

Jessy is a young mother who abandoned middle-class roots to follow her values.

Kyla is a grade 11 student with a minimum wage job.

Kathy recently moved to Victoria after spending years in a rural BC community.

Kym Hothead is a two-spirited Metis writer and activist, wise about health and disability.

Linda is a single mother who is very familiar with life on low-income.

Lyudmyla recently moved to BC from the Ukraine.

Mary Billy has been active for decades on women's rights.

Mary Collins is an active Metis elder and grandmother.

Meshum Prey is a young mother, a student and a low-wage worker.

Naomi is a young mother with knowledge of racism, classism and sexism.

Olive is a former business person wise about health and disability

Olga is a mother and is originally from Eastern Europe.

Perpetua Alfazema was born in central Mozambique and currently lives in Ontario.

Rachel is a university student knowledgeable about poverty and multiple discriminations.

Rita is an elder activist wise about poverty and disability.

Rose Henry is a Coast Salish women's activist and a pillar in the social justice community.

Ruth moved here years ago from a northern country and is a student and mother.

Samantha is knowledgeable about poverty and First Nations women's health.

Sasha is a young mother with knowledge about poverty and community work.

Sharon is knowledgeable about impacts of poverty on health and education.

Sol Kinnis is a young mother active in the co-op movement.

Stephanie Lovatt is from Ireland and is president of Victoria Status of Women Action Group

Suzanne is a community worker and mother with indigenous perspectives.

Susan teaches at university, is an author and has had experiences of poverty

Terry is a grandmother with experiences of poverty

Valerie has done decades of community work in Western Canada

Additional Material:

Diane Bernard (pg. 44)

JS Larochelle (pg. 15, 36)

Patricia Grinstead (pg 65)

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income

*Freedom, independence and healing are the first benefits I think of.
—Olive*

*The whole thing is about money and for me, not enough,
and for 60% of the population in Canada, that's what it's about.
—Donna*

Coordinator's Note: The numbered points under each theme were derived from interviews.

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Health

- 1.** Less anxiety, stress and insecurity
- 2.** Life-long benefits for children's health
- 3.** Less addiction
- 4.** Better mental health
- 5.** Less isolation
- 6.** Better nutrition
- 7.** Ability to buy organic food
- 8.** Opportunity to focus more on nutrition and exercise
- 9.** More preventative health; problems addressed sooner and less use of emergency health services
- 10.** Less consumption of fast foods and unhealthy products
- 11.** GLI would enable more community supports & less institutional/pharmaceutical response to health problems
- 12.** Better dental and eye care
- 13.** Healthier caregivers and helpers (paid & unpaid)
- 14.** Healthier housing conditions with less overcrowding
- 15.** More time for counseling and healing
- 16.** Stability: able to think long term
- 17.** Less aggression and violence
- 18.** More dignity; positive self-worth; feeling included
- 19.** Fewer jobs that damage the environment (water, air quality)
- 20.** Less stress and pollution from commuting
- 21.** Fewer public health disasters
- 22.** Less accidents when workers (drivers) aren't sleep deprived
- 23.** Less stress from overwork
- 24.** Longer, healthier, happier lives

"Health" Quotes

Look at children that are undernourished and suffer because of living in poverty; it affects them mentally and physically. With a GLI, society will reap long term economic benefits. Society will be a heck of a lot healthier when everybody isn't stigmatized, people will be able to grow up with dignity. The contributions will be mind-boggling. It would be wonderful to just see people smiling. —Bernice

In the short term, a GLI means life. A longer and better quality of life because the stress of not having enough money is beyond describing. Sometimes, I get emotional even talking about it. —Cecia

The biggest benefit with GLI is it will impact on health. I don't think we even realize the amount of health problems people have when you can't get proper nutrition. Immediately people will be able to deal with their own and their children's health issues. —Claire

In the short term you'd see a lot fewer anxiety-related illnesses and conditions. I think about half of the diseases that people see doctors for are related to stress. People could take care of their health better, if they were not making sacrifices for economic reasons. You'd see fewer things such as fibromyalgia related to people working themselves into the ground. People can't take time off work to get their eyes checked and have an auto accident, or they don't get their brakes repaired on their car... Little things that don't seem important, because people are scrimping and cutting corners, later become big problems. Poor people die sooner; they have more chronic ailments. And some of the drug use, I'm sure, is a way to alleviate stress, despair and the lack of attention to medical conditions. There is also stress from overcrowded living conditions. —Jennifer

I can only see the GLI as benefiting everybody for the good. We have a system without a GLI, and we have people that are dying on the streets. We've seen the negative side. —Rose

I believe the GLI would enable women to focus on things that are of real importance to them, rather than having to put their energy and focus on how they are going to survive. They would be healthier. Stress has all sorts of effects on the body and health and well-being. —Ruth

We would have less alcoholism, less addiction. People don't start drinking and doing drugs because they feel good about themselves, or feel healthy and fine and have a bright outlook on life. —Brenda

If you had a GLI, you would not be stressed as much about having to get a job that you don't like or that makes you ill. People in general too wouldn't be stuck in jobs they hate, which really affects their stress level, which affects their productivity and their health. —Dawn

The number one benefit is stability. You know you will have the necessities. Less physical and emotional stress. Money is the highest stress cause ever. —Sasha

If income is stable, it goes a long way to alleviate anxiety. The GLI system could go a long, long way to prevent numerous health concerns which we know are extremely expensive—chronic health problems, suicides in young people from the pressure to support yourself. —Elizabeth

We would have a chance to actually be able to heal and not be forced into a situation where you have to go out and find a 5-day-a-week job to fit in. —Olive

With a GLI and more community drop-ins, with people more able to listen to each other, more community-based preventative health care and treatment, more exploration of traditional healing methods away from institutionalized medical care, most mental health breakdowns could be preventable. —Focus group, Jan. 13, 2006

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Food

- 1.** People would have time to start food co-ops, community gardens, seed exchanges and to hold nutrition and food security workshops
- 2.** More ability to buy local organic produce
- 3.** Less tendency to hoard

"Food" Quotes

A GLI would help with community gardens. There are lots of fruit trees in the neighborhood; people could work together. We could have people growing stuff on balconies or doing barrel gardens. To get people started, we would have to go back to doing food clubs. This would be easier to do with a GLI, because they would know exactly how much money they would have every month. —Mary C

It should produce a better quality of life, access to healthier food and maybe even purchase or rent plots of land to grow vegetables. So often we have to live in substandard conditions, and this affects health. Putting all your money into rent affects eating habits. You have to buy cheap processed food just to put something in your tummy, instead of healthy vegetables and organic food. —Dawn

If we had more money we could buy local organic. Local farmers are really on the edge. —Rita

Maybe digestion problems, which are on the increase, are because we cannot digest genetically engineered food. Pepto-Bismol (cherry flavour) is not the answer. Most of what is called food in our "supermarkets" is nothing but a chemical stew and should not be consumed. —Valerie

If I had enough money, I could buy the food I need to eat—vegetables and fruit and grain, all the expensive stuff—instead of depending on the food bank and eating white pasta. I'm on a white diet: white bread, white rice, white pasta—you can only eat so much of that before you bloat. —Donna

I think that a lot of local organic farming is done by people who are landless. People are sort of like serfs again. A GLI might give collectives the ability to purchase a small piece of land instead of each individually working on someone else's land. We could purchase good organic food in large quantities, but you do have to have the cash outlay. So if people knew they would get a cheque every month, then they could take those sort of risks. —Janine

I can see maybe people could get together in co-ops and purchase things in bulk because they would have the money to do that. Or groups of mothers could have a community kitchen. There would be more initiative to work together if there was a livable income; people wouldn't always be struggling to get by. —Dawn

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: For Women

- 1.** A GLI would create a new level of equality and quality of life
- 2.** A GLI would acknowledge and value unpaid care work
- 3.** Liberation through changing the economic system
- 4.** Mothers would be able to be with their children and everything would be easier for mothers
- 5.** Women would be less vulnerable to violence; more ability to leave abusive or violent relationships
- 6.** More ability for women to organize and be involved in political processes
- 7.** A GLI makes it easier for women to leave the sex trade; women not forced into prostitution out of economic necessity
- 8.** Fewer dangerous situations due to economic desperation; more safety for all women
- 9.** Men might have to be nicer
- 10.** It would take the pressure off women about how they look
- 11.** Women would not be measured according to free market indicators, ideology and political whims
- 12.** It would acknowledge that capitalism (in all its forms) runs on the unpaid labour of women

Coordinator's Note: All the women interviewed want a Guaranteed Livable Income for everyone; however, they also recognize that women face more poverty, stress, violence, unpaid and underpaid work, while also carrying primary responsibility and worry for the well-being of the world's children.

"For Women" Quotes

Did women create the system? No, I don't think they had any part of it, and that is the major problem: they weren't included, weren't even recognized. Obviously it costs women more than anyone in society because they are the ones to actually bear the burden of bearing the children and raising the children. Quite honestly, I don't see the majority of men doing it. —Faith

I look at [GLI] as recognition for work in the home, especially for women who are looking after their children. It means that somebody appreciates the work they are doing; they are being recognized. —Evelyn

As a society we should do all we can to alleviate the stress of mothers. —Elizabeth

It's has to do with money. We need money to live; we have to have enough, and a GLI would make it so much easier for mothers. —Cecia

Women could have a family life, especially women without husband or income, especially women new to Canada. I see a lot of young women who want to have children but can't afford to have children. It is hard for women to have a job and kids at the same time. —Anna

If women want to be at home, they should be supported to be at home. They don't pay family members to care for people with disabilities, but other people can be paid big bucks to do that job. —Samantha

It would relive stress, give women dignity and ability to plan. Women would probably be able to triple their GLI, because women are really creative and able to make a dollar work more than it should. Just feeling equal and not inferior is really important. —Bernice

With a GLI, there would be a much stronger unity of mothers, which means stronger, healthier children. Mothers who are isolated will become more united with other women in the community, because they will realize they are not alone. It would enhance communication with women in cities. They will become aware of their own power, how they can be instrumental in creating changes for not only themselves but also their community. —Rose

Mothers at home? I know what that is like; it is not a menial job. People don't realize what you have to do in a day. For women there would be freedom and independence [with a GLI]. For so many women I've known, their husbands control the income and just give the wives an allowance. —Olive

[With a GLI] women would have an income that wasn't dependent on a man. Women's safety would benefit, choosing whether or not to stay in relationships. Women wouldn't have to do prostitution, either in marriage or outside of it. Women would have a way to live with children that wouldn't depend on a relationship with a man. —Samantha

The GLI would free up the women from abusive situations; they would not have dependency on partners or husbands. They would be able to leave when they want and would be guaranteed a livable income and would not have to subject themselves or their children to violence and abuse and so on. That would be one great thing for women. You would not have to resort to selling yourself or going homeless. —Ruth

Women's safety is a big issue, especially for women considered disenfranchised based on skin colour, age, or abilities. There is economic violence on women. This is happening to women, and that affects everybody. A GLI would decrease the violence if women felt they had an avenue to leave the violence, and if they knew there were community members who wouldn't judge them. —Rose

Think of some of the women in the Downtown East Side [in Vancouver]. If they had had a GLI, maybe some would have been saved. Instead, [the government] was more than willing to spend \$10 million after they were murdered. Why is no money spent on prevention? —Claire

The work is there to be done; the women are doing it regardless of GLI or not. But it would allow women to hire someone else to do that work, or if they wanted to stay home, they wouldn't be penalized for it. The paid work out there is not so great that people are so eager to do it for its own sake anymore. When a woman is at the mercy of her working husband, in a poverty situation, the husband is in a frazzle and resents his family because it looks like they are doing nothing. Family stresses are set up; he controls the money and the woman is like his employee. GLI would put women on an equal footing to stay home or not stay home. A lot of women are staying in abusive situation because they can't afford to leave. That would be put to an end quickly. —Jennifer

Women wouldn't have to worry about stretching their limited incomes to meet their needs each month. It would allow women to have a little room to breathe. (Keep the dogs from howling at the door.) When I was poor and on welfare, a single parent, every month the same questions came up, would there be enough money to feed us all month? Would I be able to pay the heating bill? If any small problem occurred—lost coat, lost bus pass, or rent increase—it was a major disaster because there was no way to recover the loss. Over a period of months and years, disasters do occur and clothing and towels and sheets and furniture wear out and welfare benefits and low wages cannot cover the cost of these things (let alone rent and food) and protect families. So you are always on edge, worrying, balancing, negotiating, trying to make ends meet. A GLI would alleviate the stress by providing a stable, livable income. Women and children would have a healthy environment to live in and they would know that they are valued rather than vilified by society. —Susan

Women could be more confident because of not having to submit to places they don't want to be, where they've been beaten down, even if not directly. Better health, to be able to buy more food and better nutrition... Even if they still live marginal lifestyles, they would not have to be so vulnerable to discrimination and ignorance from society. They could have safer situations, even if they were still working in the sex trade. Hopefully, women wouldn't have to do that, but they could have safer, healthier working conditions. They wouldn't be as looked down upon. —Aletheia

With GLI there will be a lot less prostitution, and it will be less risky and more healthy, way safer. People take risks when they are oppressed and need the money, and why do you have men going to find women on the streets in the first place? Shame is built into this economic system. With a GLI, can you imagine, Holy mackerel! —Kym

Because of cultural issues [in Mozambique], women don't own land. If parents die, they don't have ownership of anything, even their children; they belong to the husband. If we can empower the women to have ownership so they don't need to sell their body and come back sick and die.... If they can have money to buy land and start a small business, because if you feed a woman, you feed the whole family. If you help a woman, you help the whole family. That idea is really, really important, and GLI can really play a big part. —Perpetua

With a GLI women wouldn't get caught in the marriage trap. When they can't find work after finishing high school, the first guy that comes around—off they go—and then they have a baby, and next thing you know, the man is gone and she's on welfare with one or two kids. A GLI would allow women to get out of a bad marriage without being beaten to death. —Mary B

I think a GLI in the short term would make a really big difference. Women wouldn't be economically challenged and would not have to stay with abusive partners, whether it is a female or male partner who is doing the abusing. —Dawn

For a high percentage of women in violence, it is in their own homes. But when they are at such a low poverty level, they end up staying in their home because they can't afford to leave it. There are not enough transition homes, so where else are they going to go? And there is still a huge stigma to leaving your home, even if there is violence in it, because we are still supposed to make it work. If there was a higher income, maybe women would feel more stability to leave. —Debie

You are always going to have some sex work; a GLI is not a cure-all. But it would certainly slow down the process of the problems that we have right now and the number of women going in to it. Women take the risk of losing their kids, but they have to do this to feed their kids or get an education. So the population of sex trade workers would drop significantly with a GLI. This would increase the earning level and make a safer environment for those who still are working in the sex trade. —Mary C

Once a woman enters the sex trade, that has pretty much stigmatized her for life—having a police record, and the shame of trying to get past the impacts of that. Women enter the sex trade to support their families; it's a proven fact. And if women had the opportunity to live a life that is not so below the poverty line and stay home, they would not enter the sex trade. That is a huge one, especially for Aboriginal women. With a GLI, that impact on society alone would be tremendous. —Suzanne

Women could afford to be with their kids at night instead of going on the street to sell their body, so they can have their dignity. It is very, very important. —Perpetua

If women are in the sex trade and are thinking about getting out of it, knowing they have the money would definitely help. It might be the extra nudge to help them get out of doing that. —Sasha

A GLI would stop a lot of violence in the community. When women objectify themselves, offering their body parts, they are divorcing themselves from their complete spiritual wholeness and doing something to their psyche that will have an impact on them forever. This translates into violence against women, because men see women offering themselves and they assume that other women will do that as well. This extends into advertising too, the scantily clad women, Cosmo magazine looks like Playboy looked like I was a kid. A GLI would help end prostitution. I think relations between men and women could be egalitarian, even though we live in a society that doesn't encourage that. Sex is an expression of love and should never be exploited, but I understand that women get in positions where they feel they don't have any options, and I'd support anything that would provide them with other viable options. If women had a GLI, then they might feel like they have other options [than to work in the sex trade]. And if men feel threatened by the idea that a woman can choose, maybe they could turn into nicer guys and they could get some for free [laughter]. —Janine

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Nature

- 1.** GLI is an environmental idea; people would be able to reject environmentally destructive work
- 2.** Less commuting =less polluting
- 3.** People would have more time to be connected to and appreciate nature
- 4.** People would have more time to get involved in green initiatives, recycling, and using non-harmful cleaning products
- 5.** People would not forced to buy the cheapest disposable products (less waste from planned obsolescence)
- 6.** People would have more time and money to support local organic food production
- 7.** There would be less over-harvesting of natural resources due to desperation from poverty
- 8.** There would be less waste of natural resources with the elimination of economic activities that serve no purpose beyond generating income

Coordinator's Note: This category might be one of the most important given the increasing signs of major environmental changes. One interviewee noted that even if we don't want to change our system, we will have to, as is evidenced by increasing numbers of environmental disasters. However, many women interviewed did not make the connection as to how a GLI would impact on the environment. Yet as writer JS Larochelle (a founding member of Livable Income For Everyone) has stated: *"Without a GLI, you are forced to harvest natural resources and turn them into products to sell in the free market to make money. Without a GLI loggers have no choice but to log. Fishers have no choice but to fish. If you are a welfare worker you have no choice but to go to that office, use electricity, use paper, use computers—all of which would have no function in a society where there is a GLI. This would free up everybody to do work that is socially beneficial."* (Interview, March, 2006)

"Nature" Quotes

The people who are easiest on the planet are the homeless, many of whom work very hard. They should all get the first GLI cheques as a symbolic, "We are very sorry and thank you." —Valerie

People really have to open their eyes. If we continue this way, we are not going to have a planet to worry about. We're going to destroy ourselves with these chemical plants and everything else, because they are trying to create more jobs —that's all we hear, "create more jobs" —when it is not necessary. We are not back in 1960, and we are in deep trouble, and we need to make a huge change. Yes, a lot people will be angry with change, but we won't have to keep building and destroying in order to put up more buildings and cutting down more trees ad infinitum. When I looked at job production, with every job they have to create, there is something that is being taken away from nature. When you look at the land—oh my God! I looked at the city where I grew up back east, and there are no trees, in the name of creating more work, more business towers, Holy cow, folks, we need these trees to breathe! If we did have GLI, that would make a huge, huge difference. We are at the crossroads, and if we don't make a right decision, I'm awful afraid of what will happen to all of us a human species, because we are destroying things left, right and centre. Certainly the biggest benefit is healing—not only ourselves, but allowing our planet to heal at the same time. —Olive

Nature? You would see a lot fewer things that are done just to make money, that don't have any particular benefit. In Georgia there's a movement to save gas by not going into work or school one day a week. —Jennifer

With a GLI, we would become a lot more human and fair; less dog-eat-dog and do-or-die. Once we move away from that type of survival, there will be a ripple effect on nature. The companies, whether small or large, will take more responsibility for impacts on human beings. If a person is not forced to work full time, this will have impact on a lot of things, like the environment. They won't have to run their car and will have more time with kids. Commuting, the 8-hour day is more like a 12-hour day. The migration patterns will change in terms of where people will live and how they live. —Faith

I never thought about the definitions of productive and unproductive before. I don't understand how people could not value clean air and clean water. —Aletheia

Cleaning houses using natural cleaners is more labour-intensive, but it's possible. The trouble is, many people have to worry about going to three jobs to feed the kids. GLI would help the environment as long as people learn to understand that it's not just about being able to buy stuff. —Janine

Low-income people are less polluting, most don't go around in cars. —Claire

A GLI would encourage us to look at each other more equally and to take time to think about nature and the spiritual realm and the universe and our place in it. —Janine

I advocate a GLI because it's important that we eat live food, organic food. People would have more time to notice nature, notice the trees—we are not robots. —Kym

Families will spend more time at home and won't spend so much gas on going to work. They won't spend so much on over-consumption to make up for lack of time with kids. —Anna

We are programmed to compete with each other. Imagine the things we could do with each other and what we could do for the environment if we weren't competing. If people weren't in this rat race, looking at how they get their next buck in order to live, they would say, "Wait a second; how are we destroying our planet?" With GLI, people could be freed up to turn their attention to nature. I would hope it would totally shift the whole consumer balance [in a healthy way]. —Rachel

If people have GLI, then it frees us up to think of what we need. How do we create a sustainable place to live? Coming at it from that end, I can see how it would have an impact on the environment, but I don't think those other [high-paying but harmful] jobs will disappear right away. —Sol

We need Guaranteed Livable Income for a Guaranteed Livable World. If the Planet Earth were a patient in a hospital at this moment, she would be in the ICU in critical condition, with life support being withheld by ideology. The condition in which we find our planet is a direct result of misguided economic activity where the preservation of the planet counts for nothing —yet without the planet, none of us would be here. We are in big trouble, and it is not because we don't have enough skilled labour. We may have already passed the point of planetary exploitation (rape of Mother Earth) and are starting to experience the domino effect of extinctions. As the planet goes, as our brother and sister species go, so do we. Our own local areas are toxic waste. So are we. Cancer, anyone? It's from what we breathe, eat, drink and think. Not only are we removed from nature today, [but] it has become an enemy. This is absurd; this is wrong. It is our home. It is not the natural laws that are the problem; it is us behaving like unconscious robots, swallowing propaganda hook, line and sinker. One of the main arguments against GLI has been that people are lazy; well, now is the time for laziness!! The deep ocean fish need 100 years of being left alone in order to find out whether or not we've already driven them to extinction. Canada, North America, the planet, need low-impact human activity if we want a planet 100 years from now. We do not need any more of anything currently being produced, unless it's life-enhancing/affirming. We do not need any more golf courses, ski resorts, mega-developments. We need to care for the planet. We could probably keep the economy strong by simply recycling all the stuff we already have for the next 500 years. No more clearcuts. No more oil, no more diamond mines, no more uranium mines, no more destruction. No more damn jobs—surely we can do better than that. GLI means: "Hello, welcome to Earth. Your basic needs are taken care of for life; we look forward to watching your genius unfold." —Valerie

To me it is the ripple effect. More people are trying to work on that job, but it could be a very bad job for the environment, like the oil industry. [With a GLI] there would be less exhaust in the air because you are not driving back and forth to work. Less fast food services—we could have a community garden. All of this affects the environment, which costs us more in the long run. We have to start thinking of the long-term effects. —Debie

With a GLI, they could choose work according to their beliefs and morals—work that is better for nature. With a GLI, people will be able to live and make their own choices. And people who do not believe in the system, and who want to opt out of living in society as it is, could have the ability to live how they seek to live and not be labeled. A GLI would include women who choose to work in their homes. It would include everybody. A GLI... it's a must. —Ruth

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Choice

- 1.** Choice to raise your own kids; to work in the home or outside of it
- 2.** More ability to choose to provide care for family, friends or self
- 3.** More ability to choose to start a family
- 4.** Productive choice; ability to choose work that does not conflict with your ethics
- 5.** Ability to choose part time work
- 6.** More choice and ability to live in smaller or rural communities
- 7.** Choice to pool resources with others to create your own community
- 8.** Choice to spread work out over your lifetime
- 9.** Choice to do volunteer work
- 10.** Ability to try out different kinds of work and skills; to travel and learn about diverse cultures
- 11.** Choice for more learning, education, and interests
- 12.** More ability to find mentors or to be a mentor
- 13.** Ability to spend more time with elders or mentors
- 14.** Community choice to decide what is productive from the point of view of “us,” not “me”

Coordinator's Note: The word “choice” was used frequently during interviews, especially for the ability to choose meaningful work. One interviewee said it was great that women fought for access to jobs, but now it is no longer a choice. Women are forced into jobs because they need the money; many women have two or three jobs, in addition to raising their children. This lack of productive choice has left women exhausted.

"Choice" Quotes

I would love to look after my kids, but I can't. There is no choice. Ever since I was six years old, I wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. I would be most happy in my life if I could stay home and raise my kids. But there is no choice. I have to go to school, and I am now thousands of dollars in debt.
—Meshum

Benefits of GLI for women? It gives them more freedom of choice. Now that I have a small pension, I can make choices based on quality of life instead of doing something I hate or something that takes hours away from my family because I have to have the money. A secure income gives me more flexibility. My choices are no longer based on financial fear and how to pay the shelter and feed the kids. I remember when I would be out of work, my whole focus was finding a job. I was stressed out. "How am I going to live? How am I going to get diapers?" Then when I'd get the job, I'd just be making ends meet, then trying keeping the job, too. I see a difference in my kids now that I am more relaxed. We had more emotional arguments when kids were younger than now, even though they are teenagers. Now I can sit down and reason with them. They are more relaxed because I am. —Brenda

Women want the option of raising their own children. —Samantha

It would transform women's choices around whether or not they can stay home to raise children. A GLI would eliminate a level of concern, and having that choice is so critical. —Jennifer

If you have a GLI, perhaps for those who choose to work outside the home, you could maybe have a 3 or 4-day work-week and engage in the other activities that have been hitherto considered unproductive but that are so essential to the human spirit; that nurtures us and keeps us healthy—emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally. And how amazing that could be, just to have the opportunity to find our true motivation and our true inspiration and fulfillment. —Naomi

It would definitely increase options [for work], and that would only be for the best. In the early 1970's as you saw computers coming in and more jobs being automated, it looked like people were being freed up, not put out of work. We had the human potential movement, and we were very optimistic that soon we would be working part-time and pursuing our hobbies. —Jennifer

I think that is a woman's choice, whether to work in the home or not. I know some women who have fantastic education and experience, but they love children, and they know there is a certain time frame in their life when they can have and enjoy those children. They would prefer to do that until they and their children are ready for a change. There are women who love being mothers; not all people have children just to farm them out to daycare. Some people have to send their kids to daycare and some people don't. A GLI opens up more choices. It would definitely encourage a more positive value system. That is what it is all about: what would work for them or their family. Nowadays there is just a blanket system where you have to fit in and you are being controlled with limited choices. —Faith

Lots of people talk about wanting to be away from the urban setting, and with a GLI, they could make that happen. —Jessy

More choices, more free time. People would be more thoughtful of what is going on; more able to look at the world around them rather than trying to think about what to do about tomorrow. They would be out enjoying life a little bit more, and would take kids out to nature more. —Florence

It costs kids, too, when mothers are forced to go out to work and don't really have the choice about staying home and raising their child—which I think is awful, because that's one of the most important jobs. And that applies to men, too. —Dawn

My grandfather always said to me, whoever started the feminist movement must have been a man, because now not only do women have to do all the cooking and cleaning and taking care of the children, but they have to work 8 to 10 hours a day as well. So where's the liberation in that? I get to go work and that's great; I get to have the choice. But now it's not just a choice; we are forced to. Providing income monthly and a choice of going to work or not and being able to raise your children would lead to reaching out to other people in the community, to other moms to join together to pool their resources I don't know what I did yesterday because I'm just running all the time. —Sasha

Women certainly wouldn't be staying in an abusive marriage because of the money, which is still very common because when women do leave, no matter what people say, it is still women and children that end up in poverty, not the men. You'd just have another choice. —Valerie

If we all had opportunity to do what we loved, the world would change overnight. Instead we are forced to be these little robots and be "productive." But it is not working and the system is failing. What's the solution? To me, a GLI. With GLI, each person can use our gifts instead of people being stuck working where they're unhappy. Then the community is affected: crime increases, more illness, more hospitalization. —Olive

With the GLI, if you want to go live off the land and get a plough and horse and do crops, that is your choice. You are not excluding people. With a GLI, difference is okay. For me to live, I need a certain amount of technology. I need accessibility; I need electricity. For me, back to the land is not a solution. GLI lets people be the difference that they want, and make friends with who they want. If you want to go to school, go for it, or go into business, that's fine too. So many choices, and it is not about being left or right but about being human. Equal opportunity, but you can still be different if your basic rights are taken care of. —Rachel

Women wouldn't be forced to participate in industries and businesses that they didn't morally agree with but are forced to do to support themselves. —Samantha

Spending is choosing, so the way we spend money as a government is a choice. What is life-sustaining? What enhances life on the planet? What produces less toxic waste? We consumers need to ask the same questions. —Valerie

It's not like giving a GLI and it disappears. It goes back into the economy. But it gives people a choice and a chance to say, "I'm going to buy locally, and something that is healthy." It's like each dollar is a vote for something that you believe in. For me it's a huge social value, not just to individuals. —Kathy

[We should be] encouraging and supportive of each other to look at other choices. That's where our power should be, but that's hard to do when we are not on a GLI. —Faith

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Time

- 1.** Time to dream, create, innovate, plan for the future, to think of different ways of living
- 2.** Time to get involved in politics; and community problem-solving
- 3.** Time for healthy spirituality
- 4.** Time to practice and learn culture; more art, music and fun
- 5.** Time to be with those we love
- 6.** Time for healing; caring for our health; to be physically active
- 7.** Time to organize for equality
- 8.** Time to build trust between people and get to know our neighbors and community
- 9.** Time to save the environment

Coordinator's note: The word "time" was also used repeatedly during interviews. It was seen as a key resource that was needed to fulfill community, family, personal, social and environmental goals.

"Time" Quotes

It's about time; all of it comes down to time. There is not enough time to work in the ways we are expected to work, especially when you are working at minimum wage or just above minimum wage. When you are the primary caregiver as well as trying to support your family, there is just not enough time. So when you eliminate that intense pressure to work so hard, for so little, it would free up some time and you could explore what you have to bring to your culture, to spiritual life, to family. —Naomi

What I would want is more time. Less time spent on trying to make money, on going to school while raising two kids—there isn't enough time to do all that. —Meshum

You'd certainly have more time with a GLI. You would see a lot more organizing taking place. Time is a big factor whether a woman works or not. Both parents are tired and want a break but the man might feel more entitled to a break because he was out working [for pay]. —Jennifer

Because of technology, everything is happening much faster. But we haven't saved any time. A GLI would free up time to be able to do community problem-solving. —Faith

[A GLI would mean] more time for culture, especially for people new to Canada, and more time for everyone to learn about different cultures. —Anna

If you are in a rush, your mind is only on working and income and you forget everything else. No time and no breaks mean no time for culture. —Olga

There is no vacation from poverty. But a GLI would give people a vacation from poverty. —Donna

If you have GLI and can put in fewer hours working, you can put more hours into having your garden and canning your food, because all that takes time and energy. People work now and they go buy fast food and it has no nutrition in it. Go into most grocery stores, and you can hardly buy real food to put together an authentic real-food meal. It all comes pre-prepared for these people who don't have the time because they are working. Everything is energy; if you want food, which is energy, then you have to put energy into raising it. And if you're putting energy into making a living and trying to find a way to pay your way, you can't have energy for gardens and canning and staying home making meals from scratch, which takes 2 or 3 hours and not 5 minutes in the microwave. You don't have the energy to cook when you get home. People put themselves under great stress to try to do everything and take care of their health, and then it manifests itself physically and we end up in surgeries with cancer and with every kind of ailment you can imagine. The pendulum has to start swinging back to agriculture; we have to start providing people with food close to where they live. I'd love to see a project where every boulevard is filled with fruit trees and nut trees and community gardens. —Kathy

If you have more time, you can have a better quality of food, not all geared toward fast food. Why fast food? Because I can stop there on the way home from work. If I had more time, I'd go to the farmers' market instead. I have no time for gardening. —Meshum

I've been involved in two community gardens. I put a lot of time in that, but once I started working full-time, the time got less and less and less, and pretty soon I had to give it up, which I really didn't want to do because I loved doing it. I could work with people I enjoyed. I got to learn a lot. —Debie

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Equality

- 1.** Less competition and division
- 2.** Less discrimination based on economic fear
- 3.** Would eliminate welfare stigma
- 4.** More participation and less isolation, means coming into contact with more diverse people
- 5.** People would be less vulnerable to discrimination
- 6.** Bigger movement to address racism and sexism and other forms of discrimination
- 7.** People would not have to deal with poor-bashing on top of other discriminations
- 8.** We could see what we have in common with one another instead of looking for who is more oppressed

"Equality" Quotes

With a GLI, people would start to realize that they are all in the same boat together. There would be less judgment based on class, race, ableism. —Rose

If basic needs are taken care of, it does provide for a community of people who are striving to do anti-racism work, anti-homophobia work. For the individuals who are called to do community-building, it means being able to focus on that, instead of having to do it on top of their 16-hour day. —Naomi

People will be forced to look at themselves more than looking at others. There'd be no one to gaze at, no charity dinners. We won't have to go counting the homeless; there won't be millions of dollars spent on these groups that do research on homeless. People would have to go: "Oh my god, I have to look at myself, instead of looking at others as being the problem," or looking at fixing others. I'd have to look at me."—Rachel

With a GLI, the biggest word is, "independence." We wouldn't have go on welfare or have to be degraded by these people who look at us as losers. —Olive

Parts of racism and sexism would be addressed with a GLI. Just by having more money, people would be less vulnerable. Women would be less vulnerable, and older people would be less vulnerable. People have to get over the idea that "because I can exploit a person, I can have a comfortable life." In Native communities too, things are done in different ways, and because of racism it was seen as not as good. Well maybe people will start opening their eyes a little bit more, or the people who are doing the oppressing won't have quite as much power. A GLI would be a value shift. —Claire

People would have more resources to organize on racism. Certainly, having an income would make a huge difference, because you wouldn't have a class of poor people to point to who are visibly different. It would go a long way to eliminate classism, if it was an across-the-board income that everybody got, like a GST cheque, rather than something you had to qualify for. Disadvantaged people wouldn't have to compete with one another for jobs. —Jennifer

In terms of discrimination, a GLI does decrease it a lot. It cuts across all the "isms," because no human is immune to poverty and starvation. So if we guaranteed that we are not going to be looked down upon, not standing in line ups being embarrassed and shamed, it takes away that whole classism thing, not eliminating it, but it will reduce that kind of discrimination enormously. —Faith

There would be less classism with a GLI. Even within homophobia, there is classism. There are people who don't like poor street youth, and there are women who don't like poor women. A GLI would level things off a bit; they wouldn't hate people for being poor. But many people don't want to open their minds, so I don't know how much it would help. —Aletheia

I think it would have a huge impact on discrimination. People would have higher self-esteem. If they are in survival mode, they are in a negative perspective and quicker to attack people. If they are more secure, they would be more charitable towards people. —Suzanne

Getting rid of desperation and fear of poverty would reduce fighting between different groups and possibly begin to end racism. Poverty makes people think they don't belong. [With a GLI] upper class people wouldn't feel the fear either and be so defensive. But they would have to treat the humans around them with dignity and wouldn't be able to have slaves. —Kym

It would be an eradication of poverty, where there is not this great divide where some people own a monopoly of the world and everybody else has to work for them or suffer deep poverty and homelessness. The stigma from being poor as a child really stays with you as an adult, and if you have other oppressions, it just heightens it. If people weren't so worried about status, then we could look at the larger situation of how we relate to each other. —Rachel

With GLI, you'd be on level playing field and not finding fault all the time in ourselves and others. We would have a more positive energy. —Sharon

A GLI would address the stigma from poverty by having dignity and respect for the individual. It would erase this poverty-bashing and the extra stress that goes with it. —Rita

A GLI would be a leveler. One example of that is how people want to know what you do, and that's how they decide whether you are worth talking to or not. It's mainly to be able to maintain your dignity and not be begging for an income, not having to prove you are worthy-no longer the shame of being identified as a burden on society. —Samantha

If society asks to judge ourselves based on how much \$ in our bank account, and people fall for that and do value themselves based on that then it would be beneficial to everyone to have an equal starting place. —Janine

In the Constitution, Section 7, we are guaranteed security of person. That is part of our legal rights. But it is more than just a legal right. A GLI would give a person the ability to have a roof over their head and food in their belly, but it would also give them dignity and give their life value. —Donna*

**"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."*

http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/const/annex_e.html

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Family

- 1.** Stability for families
- 2.** More contact between generations
- 3.** Less stress in the family; happier parents means happier kids
- 4.** Fathers spending more time with their kids; more househusbands
- 5.** More ability to do essential care work for self and family
- 6.** Less stress from overwork
- 7.** Many fewer child apprehensions
- 8.** Fewer children witnessing violence
- 9.** Fewer caregiving problems from not having enough money
- 10.** More ability to care for our elders
- 11.** Less institutionalized care
- 12.** Positive long-term effects over many generations
- 13.** Time to spend on creating a nicer home
- 14.** Less family conflict
- 15.** More ability for adult children living at home due to economics to move out
- 16.** More ability to provide compassionate care for terminally ill family members
- 17.** More time just to be with our loved ones
- 18.** More time for parents and children to be together
- 19.** No more genocide* of families from poverty
- 20.** Happier families means happier neighborhoods

*Note: the term "genocide" was purposefully used by a Metis elder during an interview

"Family" Quotes

Hopefully, it will take pressure off families and more men will be involved with their families, helping in their kids' schools and stuff like that. Kids would have both parents more involved, more balanced parents who aren't desperate. There is a rise in family violence and mental illness when there is economic pressure. Having free time, maybe if both parents work part-time, maybe there would be more time shared between generations and time for dropping in on elderly neighbors. Seniors are quite isolated. —Claire

I think it would get more men doing the househusband work. Fathers tend to put a lot of value on their work as it translates into income. If we had a GLI, there would be a lot more dads staying home and the livable income would have that much greater impact. —Suzanne

It would be a huge benefit to everything if you could stay at home and raise your kids. The dilemma that single parents always face [is that], we have to go out in the workforce and leave a daycare to raise our children. —Sasha

[Benefits of GLI would be] caring for, or just being with, our loved ones. I have family in Montreal; they are the very core and roots of my treasured history that I want to learn more about, but I will never get to be with them in the way I want to be. —Naomi

TV gives one-sided opinions. Violent games and TV have an impact on violence because there is no mom to teach them what is good and what is bad. —Anna

A GLI in a household would help release the pressure and stress of financial basic need. That does open the door so men could have more time with their children. —Faith

A GLI would have nothing but a positive impact on multiple generations. —Rose

There would be fewer child apprehensions. —Ruth

GLI would allow men and women to heal. There would not be so much pressure on the man: "You are responsible for your family, so when it breaks, it's your fault." The emotional toll on men is huge. Patriarchy is lying to men that they will have this and that. Then they end up with zero self-esteem, then abuse. —Kym

Getting seniors getting more involved with youth would be a good thing. I think that is how it used to be. If youth and seniors could get together and hear the stories of how things were, that would help youth to appreciate what they've got now. I think that would be very beneficial. —Dawn

GLI would mean corporations wouldn't have so much power over families. —Kym

We have a rhythm in life, so this system with GLI would accommodate life's transitions: being a mother, looking after aging parents, or looking after a disabled sibling. This will make this proposal viable. We can't have a homogenized society; we can't all be Albertans! —Elizabeth

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Children

- 1.** Children would grow up healthier and with less stress
- 2.** Happier parents = happier kids
- 3.** Positive impacts for multiple generations
- 4.** Less competitiveness
- 5.** No poverty related stigma
- 6.** Children would be safer and feel more secure
- 7.** Many fewer children would be living with abuse
- 8.** Less pressure on children to excel in school just to ensure they can make money as adults
- 9.** Youth more able to plan for the future; less feeling of hopelessness
- 10.** Youth would feel society cared about them; less attraction to gangs, less aggression
- 11.** Children would be better nourished and more able to learn
- 12.** More ability for children to learn about their culture
- 13.** Potential for more sports, arts, recreation and nature outings
- 14.** Children and youth less manipulated by corporations when families are stronger
- 15.** Many fewer children would be left in unsafe situations where they could be abused
- 16.** Babies could get more time and attention from less stressed out parents; babies could breastfeed longer
- 17.** No more genocide* of the family from poverty and child apprehension

*Note: the term "genocide" was purposefully used by a Metis elder during an interview

"Children" Quotes

Children wouldn't feel so pressured from a young age that if they don't do good in school, they will end up being a homeless bum on the street. I probably wouldn't be going to school fulltime, I would only take courses I was interested in. Right now my friends feel like they are going to be such failures, just a few people have a set plan, all the rest feel all this pressure from their parents to grow up and be rich. If there was a GLI, it would take a big weight off their shoulders. At first they would want to rest, but you can only do nothing for so long before you get bored and want to do more activities. —Kyla

Children are directly affected by the happiness and the environment of their home. So if they have a mom who is stressed out, hasn't got enough money to buy them new shoes, is barely making it day-to-day, has barely any food in the fridge, that gets changed with a GLI. —Linda

[Poor] children, they don't get to have recreation because they can't afford it. That's half the reason why they hang around the streets and get in trouble. The criminal element will always welcome them. Poor kids feel excluded from the fun things that are going on. Costs of poverty to children are extremely high. Parents and kids know that the government doesn't give a damn about them. —Mary B

The stress of poverty can change even the best mother in to a raving lunatic. GLI is a wonderful idea, and we need to have it, because the long-term benefit will far outweigh the short term costs. —Suzanne

Children need to have enough of everything for their childhood, especially food and vitamins to grow well. Other necessities are to be in groups with other children, sports, recreation, and ways to develop their talents in childhood. Women have to be protected because usually they have children. GLI would mean women would be protected; it is very important. —Lyudmila

The most important thing that a child needs is guidance from mothers. Mothers are the backbone of society, and mothers do not have a place in this society. They are never recognized for the amount of work they contribute to society, and it is really, really sad. Society as a whole would be better-off if mothers were given supports. I've always had to work, but resent that, because women raising children is a full-time job, and it should be looked at with respect and honour. Women are raising the next generation, and if they don't have the tools, it just creates more problems than it's worth. —Bernice

People don't have kids because they fear for the future. —Focus group, Jan. 13, 2006

Kids are the ones that are really hurt by the way we do things. They are third class citizens. Women are second class, but kids are third class. To have GLI would benefit children enormously. —Olive

It would be better for mothers; it will provide security and help to raise their children. Children will have more opportunities to explore the world and do more after-school activities, and the mothers will be able to afford activities which are right now very expensive: art, sports, music. —Eva

The cycle of poverty and the abuse that goes with it... If there is a way to combat that, and this sounds like it will, then it's worth it. For that alone, just to save children from cycle of abuse and poverty—that is enough to get this going! —Rachel

If you have GLI, you can do part-time work and can take more time to find trusted caregivers. —Sol

It is the children that are going to benefit from this. The stigmatization, knowing you are coming home to an empty house with no food and no fire to warm yourself—that is a very bad thing for the long-term for the children. There is also anger with kids that comes from poverty. They don't value things and they destroy things because they feel hatred from the community. They don't really care. —Perpetua

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Communities

- 1.** More safety; less crime, theft, drug-dealing, violence
- 2.** More customers for local businesses
- 3.** Much less begging
- 4.** Opportunity for co-ops, cottage industries and crafts
- 5.** Time and energy for community problem-solving
- 6.** More time to build trust
- 7.** Fewer stressed people create a happier community
- 8.** More opportunities to participate in community events that many people currently can't afford
- 9.** More volunteering to create stronger non-profit and citizen's organizations
- 10.** People would be more human; live at a slower pace
- 11.** Society could be more creative, artistic and innovative
- 12.** More contact between young and old and ability to keep cultural heritage alive
- 13.** More people in the neighborhoods, means more company and help for elders, people with disabilities, and parents with young children
- 14.** Easier to move to, and rejuvenate, small communities
- 15.** More people could afford to be caregivers
- 16.** People could be more thoughtful and involved about what is going on in the world
- 17.** When people feel good, and have essential needs met, they want to give back to the community
- 18.** We could imagine a different way of living
- 19.** We would be investing in our human resources

"Communities" Quotes

I don't think we have any idea of what the impact would be [of having a GLI]. Maybe entire other faculties of the brain would open up, I don't think we have a clue what it means to be a human being. We really don't know. I think there would be bursts of creativity and joy, and I don't know what that means. I don't think anybody knows what that means, because we haven't tried it yet. —Valerie

We could get involved with our community. There would be more time to volunteer at the school and at neighborhood houses. Helping people and empowering them and giving them a sense of security for a roof over their head and the necessities of life —what more is there? Then you can concentrate on other things, because if you don't have those, then what have you got? —Sasha

People would be free to participate as volunteers in a number of areas because their income is looked after. People can contribute to society in ways that are meaningful and ways in which they use their strengths. Then they receive positive feedback and feel valuable, and the community benefits from their gifts and they can do that to the extent that they have the time and energy. It's kind of exciting, because you can see the idea of community rising with that more level playing field, less competitiveness. Cooperatives come to mind, ways for people to work together, connected to creating community, pooling of resources—financial or just talents—to create the kind of community they want to live in. —Samantha

It is a very important thing to help women so they can feed themselves and their family. You are giving them a positive token without any conditions. And from that, they will know they belong to the society and will feel a responsibility to contribute to the society, either grow a garden or do volunteer work. A lot want to do volunteer work, but they are worried. "Do I volunteer or find food?" This money is to empower them to see themselves as part of the community and not isolated. —Perpetua

I imagine that if half of the [housing] complex decided to take a year off with a GLI to concentrate on family, I guarantee within six months we would be a lot closer, we'd be out watching our kids. We would have more of a community, in closeness and safeness, and would be working on different issues. For me? I'd know I'd find babysitters. Now there is no one I know well enough, because there is no time to build the trust at all. People nowadays are too scared to get to know people. —Sasha

There would be more family and community, absolutely. How amazing it would be if you eliminated the stress of the basic needs of life. How much more creative people could become in caring and generating community and being much more present in our day-to-day lives in order to care for each other better. —Naomi

A GLI would free up time to be able to sit down and do community problem-solving, but right now we have no time now to do that. Instead, we look at obstacles when we get together instead of solving things. Whenever groups get together, they are trying to meet the basic needs rather than go beyond that, because that is what we are left with. —Faith

It would enhance family and community because you'd be able to spend time with people. You wouldn't have to work all the time and be too wound up and too tired when you get home. Having money, people are less likely to sit around because they are not fed up and frustrated; they have easier steps to attain their goals, solidify their dreams and to get away from being stuck. —Aletheia

When the GST cheque comes, people are happier. The whole feel of the street changes when they know there is money on its way. —Janine

Currently there's this spectre hovering over people: "If I don't get a job and get food on the table tonight, we'll all be evicted tomorrow." If you didn't have that hovering over you, just think what a wonderful community it could be. [GLI] would enrich and enhance community. —Rita

All of a sudden, a GLI would give people and community independence. —Rose

You wouldn't have all these people sitting in doorways with their hands out begging. People feel sorry for them, but are often only getting by themselves; what are they supposed to do? [A GLI] would eliminate that; there would be a lot less people sitting around begging. —Linda.

Theoretically, if you've got some sort of an income that you know is always going to be there, you can budget better. You can set aside some money to get your homegrown business up and going. If you are going to be making soaps and candles or moccasins or whatever, you've got that money to get yourself going. Having a bit more money in your life just makes everything easier. Every thing goes smoother; people are generally happier, and you can get creative so you can give something back to the community. It's as simple as that. —Linda

For inspiration I look to tribal societies. I don't think they were perfect, but they had a lot going for them, and they survived much longer than the industrial revolution is going to survive. —Janine

It would free up energy, and no doubt people could then focus on community problem solving, creativity, innovation; those things would be opened up. —Ruth

A less stressful workload and a GLI will bring balance to personal needs and to the arts, which seems to be viewed as a privileged pursuit. But people should nurture it, especially for children. —Elizabeth

My hopeful vision is that we don't live in a world with the structure of the corporation, but one where [enterprises] are more localized and sustainable. And for that we have members of our community that create things that we need, and then we have a more fulfilling way of living our life. If you are providing for a certain area, and creating the whole thing, you would not need mass production and an assembly line. A GLI would help people create more fulfilling employment. —Jessy

Even safety issues would be easier. The poor stealing from the poor—I would hope there would be a reduction of that because people would have what they needed. —Dawn

With a GLI, I would have been really enthusiastic about doing community projects when I was young. I spent a lot of years trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I didn't want institutional learning and tried learning other skills, but I was feeling exhausted and anxious. If I had the income then, I would have been glad to be doing community work and developing new skills and would have been able to figure out what it is I'm good at. —Jessy

Elderly women need access to homemakers. More matching of people's needs with people's gifts will especially help elderly women, as there will be more younger women around to help them. —Focus group, Jan. 13, 2006

There would be less crime, less victimization of society if the kids spend more time with their families. Crime comes from not enough attention or attachment for kids. We won't need so much money for the court system if we can prevent the crime from the start instead. —Anna

People will want to help when they've been helped. This will not kill the willingness of people to work, or look for jobs. It will open the door to the greater need that every human being has: to give something to society, to work, to be useful, to be helpful, to mean something to the rest of the world. If their basic needs are covered, that will not eliminate their need for meaning in their lives. —Eva

It would allow society to grow more artistically and creatively. —Aletheia

With GLI, probably people will work more doing the unpaid work that needs to get done, no matter what. —Sol

All the community initiatives have all been done. It's all in place already. Just give the people the money and let them live and die with it. If you want to see homelessness drop to zero, that's how you are going to do it. —Donna

The majority of us do have the intention to think of others. With a GLI they could volunteer, help their neighbors, nurture their vitality, tune into the kids. —Elizabeth

A GLI would help volunteers. People like to do volunteer work. It is interesting; people feel very devoted to their volunteer jobs, people organize their lives around their volunteer work. Work gives a sense of self-pride, but that could come from a variety of places, not just paid workforce. I earn a lot less now than before, but I have a sense of doing something that is beneficial. People feel good when they feel like they are helping people. —Janine

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Politics

- 1.** Less apathy and frustration
- 2.** Women, especially mothers, more able to participate in politics
- 3.** More time to get informed about the issues
- 4.** Economic barriers to political participation would be reduced or removed. (lack of money for bus fare, childcare, etc.)
- 5.** People would be less cynical about politicians and the political process

"Politics" Quotes

When you give people enough money to liberate them they will be able to start resisting more—a lot more ability to resist, less apathy. People could band together more easily. They don't want people to start thinking. Heaven forbid, a GLI could create revolutionaries. —Rachel

This whole GLI— this isn't business as usual; this means rethinking everything. If our basics are covered, we may be less robotic and we may actually start to think for ourselves. Many people want to put time into the issues, but simply don't have the time because they are too busy keeping a roof over their head. —Valerie

More moms could go to community meetings, and could actually pay a baby-sitter. They could actually say their piece, as opposed to not being able to go to a public meeting. With more time, maybe more women would get involved in local politics. —Claire

To get more women's participation, organizations need to recognize parent's needs and not just slam a meeting on you at last minute. But with GLI, you are more able to long-term plan, which is especially important for families. —Sol

With a GLI, people would have more time and energy; that's what it boils down to. We wouldn't have so much stress, and we could actually stop have to coffee in the afternoon with someone rather than racing through 'til 5 o'clock and then racing home and stressing out on the kids. And we would have time to go the public meeting, meet our neighbors, and discuss important things about how our community is developing. Nowadays people work so hard and don't have time or energy at the end of the day to anything for the greater good. Some people want to do that, and some manage to do all those things, and then they get burned out. —Janine

If people feel more stable, they can have a solid place in the community and can be more connected with others. There is more ability to build up networks, the longer you are in a place. If that stress is taken off—the constant moving around, or being worried about where your income is coming from—then people can work together, and that is where solutions are. —Sol

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Spirituality

- 1.** Once basic needs are met, people can embrace a spiritual purpose
- 2.** Ability to follow more positive value system and have a broader definition of a "successful" life
- 3.** Hope for the future
- 4.** People less susceptible to exploitation or manipulation from negative aspects of organized religion
- 5.** We could be introspective about our lives, our place in the world and our relationship with nature
- 6.** GLI is a way for people to show they value each another

"Spirituality" Quotes

With a GLI we would have time to examine: What would be a meaningful, fulfilling way for me to contribute to the regeneration of the planet? Who am I? Why am I here? What is important to me? What is spirituality? What is sacred? What is good for me – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually? –Valerie

A GLI is a way for people to know that they are valued and that all of their labour [like unpaid work] is valued. It is telling people this is part of citizenship; people have a responsibility as citizens and they are valued as citizens. People would feel included. –Claire

I think spirituality probably goes hand-in-hand with the little person and the mother developing a bond and that creative energy that they have. To me that is spiritual, because just for a child and a mother to understand what brought the two of them together, how they interact with the world, is so important. If mother and child were given that opportunity, society would be a lot healthier place to live. Women already know that everything really, really needs to stop. By creating a GLI, then children would grow up not so fast paced, and without the edge that society has right now. –Bernice

It breaks my heart to see people sleeping on the street. What happened that society does not even care about you? Everybody deserves opportunity to have dignity in their life. Offering them a GLI, however that looks—society can afford it. There's no way they can afford not to do it, but they choose not to. I think it is probably the most immoral thing that society can do to itself, short of wars. How do people sleep at night? –Bernice

Spirituality would be a positive process for women, for their children and for the community. If you are feeling happy, you usually feeling happy because you have a warm bed, warm clothes, nutritious food. You feel good in yourself and you want to give more to your community. –Rose

A GLI would most definitely help cultural and spiritual goals. With stress levels down, there would be more introspection to find out what your goals are. —Suzanne

There would be more time for spiritual retreats. It would accommodate spiritual days and would nurture a well-rounded lifestyle. —Elizabeth

Yes, [with a GLI] there would be more time for exploring that and thinking about it. We don't have time to think about it cause we need to think about the almighty dollar. That is the spiritual life now. And it is not gratifying. It is instant gratification. But with real spirituality, that is gratifying. —Debie

You can't be grounded in spirit if you wonder if you will have a roof over your head or food to eat. Have you ever tried to pray or mediate when you wonder if everything is going down the drain? We've gone into separateness, become divided. Hello people! The wealth needs to be shared to come back to a sense of unity. Pockets of people are so rich it's sickening, then so many other people worth nothing. The GLI—people won't take it kindly, especially in high echelons, but what's the answer? If people can't get to that realization, we will not have a planet to worry about. What will they do when we run out of food because of what we are doing? Are they going to eat money? I don't think you can. —Olive

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Peace

1. Fewer people would enlist in the military for purely economic reasons

2. War wouldn't be required to get the economy going

3. Possibility for peace because millions of people worldwide would not have to rely on the military or arms industry for their income

If a GLI were to become a reality—it's not just about giving money to people—it would completely unseat the ruling class, because where would you get slaves from? Where would you get workers for horrible, harmful jobs? How would you get people to go in the army? "Now, go over here to kill or be killed?" They'd say, "Hey, I've got a guaranteed livable income, what do I need to go off and kill other people in foreign places for?" The lack of income is turning young men into killers and turning women into a shadow of what women are. With the unseating of the old hierarchies, if that were to change—and GLI would change that—then the whole structure of our planet would change. This whole system of slavery would be over. —Stephanie

What we went through in my country in 1994, if women had a chance to be on this program they would be not so much affected. They could have tried to reduce the suffering. Women could play a big role in peacemaking if they were empowered. —Evelyn

Benefits of a Guaranteed Livable Income: Financial

Coordinator's Note: This section is short because arguing for a guaranteed income purely in terms of monetary savings, seems logical, but is deeply problematic. (See also pages 39 and 67). It would not challenge economic definitions of what is considered economically "productive" and what is not. In Marilyn Waring's 1988 book, "Counting for Nothing", in the chapter "The Value of Death" she states: "*While women, children and the environment are counted as nothing, the entire international economic system calls war productive and valuable.*"

If we accept that the money supply is created by "production", and who has money, and who does not is based on how "productive" you are, then we had better examine these definitions and assumptions closely. For this reason, I spoke to JS Larochelle, a writer from the group *Livable Income For Everyone*, (of which I am also a member), which has a website advocating Guaranteed Livable Income: "*Everybody thinks that because you have a job, money is automatically printed and ends up in the person's bank account. That somehow you've done something productive, and therefore you are deserving of money. This is obviously not the case. For example, there is no mathematical equation that can somehow equate being a politician, a professor or a police officer with a growth in the money supply. This is a political decision we have made to give staggering numbers of people a guaranteed livable income. The reason why this isn't extended to everybody in society, is because of a historical misunderstanding of the concept of money.*" (Interview, March, 2006)

"Financial" Quotes

Every four years the government can change their priorities for money. Why can't we say the money is not in destroying the planet anymore, it's in health? —Kym

With GLI we can meet people's basic needs very easily by choosing to spend money differently and restructure – dissolve – harmful institutions. There is lots of money around; it's just not available to all. There is no monetary reason for poverty. The money is there in Canada. The money is there globally. Distribution is the problem and the notion that some are more deserving than others. —Valerie

Canada legally has the right to issue its own currency. A GLI could be viewed as working capital for the nation's human resources. It would NOT need to be raised by taxes, which always infuriates people in all brackets. It would automatically represent something of intrinsic value: Canada's human resources. —Jennifer

How would your life have been affected by a Guaranteed Livable Income?

My mother had to farm me out to people so she could make a living. It was okay who I was with, but I wasn't with my mother. My alcoholic father—she would have left him years earlier if she had had a GLI, maybe even when she was pregnant with me and he was kicking her in the stomach. But she wasn't willing to lose the roof over our head. I felt like I should leave home when I was young. I got a job and from then on was a nervous wreck. At one point I didn't have money for the bus, and I was hitchhiking and was raped and thrown out of a car. These kinds of things happen to a lot of young women without money. I would go from job to job, and I would have nervous breakdowns from the anxiety when I didn't have a job. I was suicidal even. My body finally gave out in my 50's, and now I have no pension from these minimum-wage jobs and am on welfare. I should be on disability, but the government has made it so difficult. About my mother—she had children before she was married, and in the 1930's that was a big sin. She had to flee from an unwed mothers home because they wanted her to give up her child for adoption. Then she had to room and board, and work on this farm for this man while her parents looked after her child. She had to lock herself into her room every night to protect herself from this old geezer. And her parents thought she should marry him: "This is your lot in life, so just be grateful." She put up with this until she had saved enough money to leave and get her kids back. With a GLI she could have looked after her own child; instead, her parents resented her. —Cecia

Wow, that actually makes me want to cry, that's my immediate physical response to that question. I imagine that I wouldn't be a child sexual abuse and child rape victim. I imagine that my mom wouldn't have had to put me in the care of men offering to care for her children for free, which wasn't for free, obviously. There would be far less rage and anger in my family history. I've have had to dedicate a lot of energy and time to dealing with anger and rage in effective ways; whereas, if I didn't have to invest all that time in the healing work then maybe that it would have freed up time for other things. —Naomi

I would have spent more time with my kids. I wouldn't have been so stressed out. When I sit down and think about it, I cringe over some of the ways I handled things. How did that affect them? My kids are relatively self-confident, but when things come up, I say, "what are you afraid of?" Well they are probably afraid because I told them many times, "Be afraid, be very afraid," just from the way I acted or things I got flipped out about. —Brenda

God, that will make me cry. My mom was a single mom living in poverty with three kids under the age of five. We grew up being the kids going to school in the ratty shoes. I would not have been targeted and made fun of in elementary school. My mother would not have had the constant shame and guilt, and I would have had a healthier upbringing. Imagine how much better we would have done. The impact of the GLI on my family alone—I can't imagine the ripple effect in this world. —Suzanne

I would have been able to take time off when my sister was dying. I would have been there differently, rather than in the stressed-out way that I was; I'd sleep in the hospital and go to work. I probably was not much use at work for that six-month period. —Naomi

There was not one situation in my life that wasn't affected by income stress—in my marriages, having to work full time, being exhausted. On the other hand, I've known people who are independently wealthy, and none of them seemed terribly happy. Ideally, you want a bit of money dispersed in smaller amounts that you can count on, not a huge amount all at once. —Jennifer

I was never in poverty until recently. It is ironic that I'm in my late 40's with a masters degree, and I don't have work. Some people think, "She has all this education, so she wants a \$20 or \$30/hour job." But I've been applying for housekeeping jobs. It feels like nobody wants my contribution. —Faith

If there was a GLI—my God, the stress it would have saved me! When you've already survived cancer, then you're told you have heart disease caused by the medicines, then they tell you you're not getting welfare.... I ended up back in the hospital. My doctors were telling me I need to heal, instead I was frantic. They make you feel like you're some sort of criminal, just for needing welfare. I swear to God, they are trying to kill us. I feel that if I have to die for my rights, let me go out trying to make a change for the world, rather than going postal at someone at [the Ministry of Human Resources] —Olive

I would have a lot more freedom in my mind. You stop worrying about the coins in your wallet, when you know you have enough to survive to the end of the month. I could be more generous to my children and friends, and work on myself, explore more options for education. That would make me a better citizen. We need more of those if we want a healthy society. —Eva

There have been so many boundaries to education for me based on economics. —Sharon

I could have looked after my own health better. When I got out of UVic, I was pretty exhausted, related to age and health conditions. I could have taken time, with dignity, to concentrate on my health for a while before I went out in the working world. With [my] tendency to depression, that really snowballed in the shame and the frustration. —Samantha

I would live somewhere healthier. For me, that means the country. I need to be in nature regularly, where I can't hear traffic, and I will notice my body pain go away and my mind calms. —Valerie

I wouldn't have to worry about juggling a lot of low-paying jobs. If you have something to fall back on, you are not as worried and can concentrate on the situation that's before you, such as an elderly mother who needs constant care, or a disabled child who needs constant care. Homecare only comes in for a few hours a day, unless you have friends and family members who can help. —Florence

If there had been a GLI, my mom and I might have been closer. She worked during the day; she worked really hard for me to have all the things she didn't have when she was a kid. I'd have a wider education, more places to learn. I would probably travel, maybe go back to see my grandpa on the reserve. Maybe I'd have more connection to family and my community. Maybe there would have been a bigger movement in the First Nations to deal with white culture. —Aletheia

When I left home at 19, if I'd had a GLI at that time, I would not have ended up on the street and living in motels and hotels. I wouldn't have been exposed to violence that I was subjected to. —Rose

How would I personally have been affected with a GLI? See all my grey hair? [laughter]. It would have alleviated so much stress and enabled me to care for my children in a better way. I wouldn't have endured the stress of the Human Resources system. It is so degrading, demeaning. —Ruth

I was so worried about the abuse from welfare workers and what they would do to me and my children. Now I'm almost a 60-year-old woman with disability status. A GLI at this point in my life would help my health. I suffer from extreme anxiety and other major health issues as my body breaks down. Until I reach age 65, I'm still in this cycle. If I had a GLI, I'd be in an acceptable category and wouldn't have to deal with the abusive welfare workers that I've gone through for the last few years. —Terry

I had a phase in my life where I depended on men and jumped from one abusive man to another. If I'd had a GLI, I would have stayed by myself with my kids. That would have helped with my mental illness, with healthy relationships, even social life. I've lived in poverty all my life. I tend to isolate from the so-called beautiful people because I feel so alienated from them, because we are on different ends of the scale. We tend to stick together with people at our own level because other people feel superior and tend to dismiss us. I would have had more confidence with GLI and would have been treated with more respect by others. I think the GLI is a good movement. —Dawn

THE COSTS OF POVERTY



The costs of NOT having a Guaranteed Livable Income

*It is tremendously costly,
and not just monetarily,
but also spiritually.
As a society,
how are we going to be judged?
"They did what with the poor people?"
—Janine*

Coordinator's Note: As stated on page 36, discussing GLI in terms of "cost savings" is deeply problematic. How can we put a cost on a life shortened because of poverty? How can we put a cost on the loss of natural resources from the relentless pursuit of economic growth and jobs? Or social and family breakdown? Several of the women interviewed, emphasized that we are all connected. When individuals are weakened, so are their friends, family, and larger community. The lost human potential, the loss of health and happiness, the loss of nature, ability to connect with nature, and the loss of other species, is staggering. So it would be extremely shallow, dangerous and almost impossible to try to do a purely monetary cost-benefit analysis in regards to Guaranteed Livable Income. For this reason, this section attempts to examine the broadest definition of the costs of poverty and pursuing jobs as a solution to poverty. For this reason, more people are looking to develop other tools—like the Gross Progress Indicator or the Gross National Happiness—to evaluate a country's health. The accounting used for the Gross Domestic Product is a kind of scorched earth policy because it counts destructive activities as "productive" and counts activities where money is not exchanged—like looking after your health, growing a garden, caring for your children, or looking after and preserving the environment—as "unproductive."

In addition, is there any other life and death situation were people would argue that we need to do a price analysis before any action can be taken to save people? No one would do a "costing out" if it were their life, or their child's life on the line. Many people think that a GLI would be "too costly" because the current costs of the economic system are mostly hidden. However, as this section clearly shows, the true "costs" are getting less and less hidden.

GENERAL "COSTS" QUOTES

The cost of poverty is so high that the GLI is actually so low in comparison. —Olive

To me the costs of poverty are greater than anything else. GLI, people think of giving people money for free and becoming lazy. That's not true. It's the long-term goal, and this affects the children for generations. —Perpetua

Biggest cost of poverty? Health and malnutrition. The government is doing things backwards. If you want to fix the health care system, then feed the people. Proper nutrition leads to good health. —Donna

Everybody deserves opportunity to have dignity in their life. [A] GLI, however that looks—society can afford it. There's no way they can afford not to do it, but they choose not to. —Bernice

I feel like crying when I think about it. Basic health things that you can't fix, is penny-wise pound foolish. The government, by trying to save money, is costing them tens of thousands more. The costs of poverty to society are huge: homelessness, health costs, or the costs of one woman who is attacked because she can't afford a taxi. Anxiety problems, especially when living in poverty, lead to other disabilities—enormous health costs. And there would be savings of all the job clubs and resume prep places that don't really go anywhere. That is a huge waste of money. It's a big problem with people being threatened with the idea of GLI. People don't think big enough, don't think outside the box. If something is important enough, especially if it is preventative, you find the money; you pay for it. Do we really want a public health disaster, or the loss of a generation? —Claire

The thing that struck me the most is the extreme stress that goes with poverty. It is like a palpable disease that you carry on your back when you are on welfare. It drags everything down, it drags the children down, being teased when they are in school. And the kids get so angry that they end up going into drugs or crime to get what they can't get otherwise. —Mary B

Financial costs of poverty right now are horrendous: mental health, addictions.... It causes a lot of stress leading to substance abuse. Look at the millions spent on prevention and recovery programs. A lot of that could go right to the families and hit it at the core. Parents can't afford to meet the needs of the child, but the government will pay a foster parent much more. The average costs of kids in care is thought to be \$1.2 million per child. Look at the costs to society. Instead give the mom a GLI and keep the family together. It will reduce all the other costs from having a child in poverty. Another cost is people living in poverty that end up in criminal activity. There would be much less money put into police patrols, prosecution, incarceration. —Suzanne

As long as people are limited and stuck in a tight little box, how can they know their potential? How will they even know who they are without room to grow? The costs are huge. They will end up in the medical system or the criminal justice system. They are stuck in a system and become cost to society rather than enhancing our society. And what I worry about the most: what's the cost to that individual? Their energy, their spirituality, who they are, is part of who their children and their friends are, and it has a huge impact on a lot of people. —Faith

There are always going to be glitches in the system, but on the whole, if you gave everyone opportunity for decent education and livable income, society would be a lot better off, and in the long run it would cost far less than what it is costing society today. They only look at a tiny window and not the big picture. —Bernice

THE COSTS OF POVERTY: HEALTH

- 1.** Long-term negative health impacts on children
- 2.** Poverty related premature deaths
- 3.** Health problems from stress, anxiety and insecurity
- 4.** Negative health impacts from inequality, isolation, inability to fully participate in society and stigma from poverty
- 5.** Health problems from poor nutrition from (cheaper) processed food
- 6.** Illness and public health problems from poverty and overcrowding
- 7.** High use of emergency health services as untreated health problems become crises
- 8.** People forced to stay in jobs that are destructive to their health or others' health
- 9.** High health costs from consumption of unhealthy products (jobs rely consumption of these products)
- 10.** Health problems from bad air and water quality due to industries that are kept going only to keep jobs
- 11.** Substance abuse related to poverty, pain, hopelessness
- 12.** Substance abuse and harmful consumption due to job stress; or wanting to 'reward' yourself for tedious or exhausting work
- 13.** Health and safety problems from dangerous or poor working conditions, overwork or lack of sleep
- 14.** Mental health problems from hating your job and/or the inability to do meaningful work
- 15.** Mental illness made worse by poverty

"HEALTH" QUOTES

The health industry is a money-maker and that's why it's being privatized.... It's not advantageous to be healthy in a system that makes money off of people being sick. —Janine

The fast food industry is killing us; it's like genocide on the poor. You really see it in the Aboriginal community... diabetes and heart disease. How much of it is a choice when people are really, really poor? I don't think there is much of a choice. The food from the food bank, is it healthy? And all the free bakery products... People are living on sweet breads; that's their main food. Poverty is a social determinant of health and also mental health. It affects spiritually in terms of how the person values themselves and feels they have something to give. —Samantha

I think it costs a lot more to keep people poor than with a GLI. In so many ways, the medical system is overrun because of so much illness caused by poor diet. —Mary B

In Africa, so many women have been exposed to sickness because of poverty. They are being used. Women, to get 5 kg of rice to feed their children, men ask to sleep with them, sometimes without a condom, and then they get HIV or some other diseases. Because of struggling with poverty, women just end up doing all sorts of things, survival things. So poverty contributes to many problems at home, to war, to the spread of HIV. Women are being recruited to join soldiers, then being raped. There are a lot of problems that poverty is creating for women. —Evelyn

Most people below poverty level have problems, knowing you can't compete. If you have health problems, you are on the outside looking in, with no options. This can lead to substance abuse. Like in the Robots movie, I'm on the scrap heap. There is no retraining for people who are terminally ill. I was told to do volunteer work, but that doesn't pay your bills. —Sharon

If you wake up in the morning stressing: "How am I going to pay my rent today?"—it's the first thing! "How am I going to pay my hydro? How am I going to feed my kids tonight?" How can you think about going for a stroll in the park and being merry when that is on your mind? It is mental health; it is emotional health, it is everything. Women take it all inward; depression is huge, and anxiety leads to irritability and leads to abuse to the children. Nine times out of ten that is how it starts. —Sasha

Living in poverty is detrimental to everything in your being: spiritual, physical, mental. It takes a long time to get over, lots of counseling and therapy. —Sasha

When people are poor, they prolong getting help and their health conditions get worse. —Aletheia

If we are always set up with systems that only look at short term, this will have a huge cost. We're not going to be thinking that down the road we will be eating vegetables filled with chemicals. Another huge cost is what stress does to people. It is unbelievable — to people's health, to their whole well-being. Problems compound, so the cost to detox and healthcare goes on and on and on. —Faith

It is a major step between what you can live on if you are forced to, and what you need for well-being. Poor people die sooner and have more chronic ailments. A lot of this is from stress, not eating properly, not having health problems attended to in a timely fashion. And some of the drug use, I'm sure, is a way to alleviate the stress, despair and lack of attention to medical conditions. There is stress from living in crowded conditions. Looking at infectious diseases, there is a lot of TB and STDs in the street community. What is that going to do when it spreads? It's just a matter of time when you have population groups side-by-side, where some people can't take care of their basic needs. —Jennifer

When a child faces losses—loss of parents, loss of grandparents, loss of the ability to have their needs met, physically, emotionally, mentally—that makes the child angry and aggressive. The child goes to school; the child can't learn, because of the emotional trauma due to the multiple losses. So then you have a child with multiple issues. The frontal cortex, the front part of brain, does not form properly. This where the aggression comes from. The kids that come up impoverished don't have the tools to control their emotions. They are put with other kids that are the same and that is where all of this negative shit comes from. That's where the gangs come from. Whereas, if the kids had a stable environment, and parents had a stable environment, you wouldn't get all this. Let's start with mom. So mom has the baby; she is poor, and she can't get proper nutrition. I'm not saying she can't provide food, but she can't provide nutrition; there's a difference. And she has to work long and hard hours. So the child is raised up nutrient-poor, fed sub-standard foods—and that is a big one, because if we don't have certain nutrients, our bodies do not form properly. If you don't have the money, you feed the kids [reduced] bread, milk past its due date, or powered milk. A lot who are impoverished live as if they are in a third world country. How can you expect those children to be at a comparable level to a child who comes from the upper middle-class? —Mary C

I don't think that it is unusual for people to be working from a really young age and this is just going to get worse. The effects are staggering. There is only so much energy that any one person has to give. And when you slave away doing work that is not fulfilling your potential, it makes us sick. —Naomi

Fast food is because both parents are working. There's no way to do a roast dinner if you are working, you have to grab something from the store. And that's part of the ill health. —Claire

When I had medical conditions, I was told to get out there and work. I even had cancer once and was taking stuff for pain, but I had to put food on the table and still made myself work, even though the quality of my work would not be good—which, in my case, affected the safety of others. —Dawn

Everyone knows everybody is really sick. You can't get people together in a room and say any one individual is truly healthy; we are all sick. We don't have a shortage of anything other than health—planetary health, community health, individual health. Not enough people ask why things are a certain way. They just blindly accept it. This is not a healthy way of being. —Valerie

I was raised in poverty, but I always thought I could overcome that, and for the most part of my life I did. But now I seem to be short on energy. I dropped off 85 applications in the past year and didn't get any jobs, and your self-esteem starts to go in the toilet. I'd wake up in the middle of the night in total anxiety about what my future is going to be. I tried to make an opportunity, but out of our group of 18 who did a training program to be self-employed, no one has really succeeded. —Kathy

I like the term "livable". To take that stress off the parent, knowing they would have a livable income, then the savings even to the country would be enormous in terms of mental health, physical health, crime and so many other things. Even with social assistance the majority of the money goes to the people working in the system and the least to the people who require it. If they just gave the money to the poor people, they could manage it better than all these so-called experts. For example a foster parent gets three times more money to care for a child than the parents do if they are on assistance. It would cost less in the long run because the cost of problems are so high: health care, mental health, courts, juvenile programs. I'm not saying that those problems would never happen, but a GLI would have the benefit of having stability and a softer landing place, time to look at your options, whereas welfare is more like punishment. —Mary B

THE COSTS: SOCIAL BREAKDOWN

- 1.** Children scarred for life from poverty: mental, physical health
- 2.** Families broken by poverty
- 3.** Child apprehensions from poverty (courts, social workers, lawyers, foster parents)
- 4.** People shunned by their families because they are poor
- 5.** Destruction of culture from families living in poverty
- 6.** Aggression and violence from stress, frustration and anger
- 7.** Women with children trapped in abusive or violent relationships to provide for their children
- 8.** Children affected by living with violence in the home
- 9.** Systemic violence against women
- 10.** People, family and community only in survival mode
- 11.** People without income are targets of violence
- 12.** Police, courts, prisons and youth detention costs relating to poverty
- 13.** Escalating security costs
- 14.** Drug use, drug-dealing and prostitution relating to poverty
- 15.** Wars, big and small, over natural resources

Coordinator's Note: During this project, I had the opportunity to talk with Diane Bernard who worked for many years a probation officer in the 1980's. She related that during her 10 years of doing this work, all but one of her women clients lived in poverty: *"The number one factor that they were involved in this stuff was because they were facing the poverty crunch. If they had the stability of reasonable income to count on, they wouldn't necessarily have been involved with these characters [men with criminal records]. If they just had decent work, or a decent job, or a decent income, decent money—not even a lot of money, but just the assurance that they didn't have to panic about rent or food [it would have changed things]. And that is what the panic was about. There would be this acting out. They had so much on their plate, all stemming from the fact that they couldn't rely on money coming in. For women [income stability] means an immediate reduction in involvement in institutions."* (Interview, April, 2006)

"BREAKDOWN" QUOTES

There is total genocide of family, number one. Because family does not work under the current rule, if you are impoverished, you lose your kid because of your inability to provide. And if you can provide, you could lose your child because of negligence, because you're not there because you are out providing for them. This gets into intergenerational stuff. —Mary C

If a woman is in a bad situation in BC today, an abusive situation, and she leaves, the minute she walks out of the bad situation, the first time she goes to a transition house, the Children and Families Ministry are notified and she has no income, and probably can't get welfare. So she has a choice to make: stay in the bad relationship, kids will have a home, she won't lose them, and her kids eat; or leave and lose her kids and everything else. So what will she do? She will stay and take the beating to sacrifice for children and home, and that is what happens everyday in Victoria. —Mary C

It's incredible what being a mother and having children will do to you when you have to think about having rent money, food, clothing. It's so ridiculous with the current system; it just breaks people. The [welfare] system just perpetuates nothing but negative life for people, really puts down people and is degrading and disrespectful. It has nothing to do with supporting people at all. People are existing just to survive with the current system, not even to live, just surviving—no, not even barely surviving. It's not living; it's abusive. They are being abused by the system. It's sadistic. Working all these jobs to try to meet the needs of your family; neglected children may end up in the wrong circumstances, situations that are not healthy for them that can lead to abuse. It can have psychological, physical consequences. It has a domino effect. —Ruth

A lot of women will enter the sex trade to avoid living on the street. Look at the hospitalization costs alone, whether the women get HIV or Hep C or get beat up. Look at how often they are victimized, whether they are targeted for murder, abuse or rape and the investigation costs. You can see the effects of poverty on society when you look at the women entering the sex trade. —Suzanne

You see young kids bullying one another. Do you think they are coming from a happy home that is well adjusted and has time to deal with whatever issues? —Brenda

Not having GLI is violating people's security of person and creates crime. Can't they figure it out? Over a generation, maybe we wouldn't have jails anymore. —Donna

If you look at the police budget, it is huge, because you are paying them around \$70,000 a year each, And then the running of it. If you took that money and transferred it to social programs, would you need the police? It's mind-boggling. As taxpayers we okay it for the protection of property, but not the protection of human life. If you murder somebody, that is a different story, but it is okay if they die of hunger or homelessness. —Brenda

If we want to survive in the current system we have to learn to lie or figure out smart ways to of doing things, get more cunning. People have to do what they have to do to survive. —Faith

They make you criminal, and there is no two ways around it. I know people doing grow ops just to make money; it's the least harmful thing they could be doing. —Rachel

In poverty people do what they can to survive, and sometimes that does gets them in trouble with the justice system. People self-medicate, plus they don't feel good about themselves and become targets for other people to prey on them. —Samantha

Violence—cops cost so much money, and people do things out of desperation. The whole legal system is a cost. —Aletheia

Stress from lack of income affects our whole community. With children, it can lead to other issues that have a big impact on their community. Is there anything that can be more stressful than to be able to keep your children fed? If you are on welfare how can you pay for extracurricular activities for your kids? That's expected now, because they are cutting back on those extras in school. —Sol

There are often children in violent situations [because of the mother not being financially able to leave]. The woman is trying to raise them to be nonviolent, but you can't do that in a violent home. So she feels bad and guilty, but she still feels she has no choice. —Debie

You can't raise happy kids if you aren't happy. They learn from you. —Meshum

Even with adequate day care, mothers have in essence two jobs: a full-time job as mom and a parent, and then another job taken under duress and stress. —Rita

Nobody has time for the kids anymore. —Jennifer

How many families do I know who are split up because of poverty and jobs? —Kym

I would imagine health costs are pretty huge. There are a lot of uncalculated costs, like policing, but is that poverty or social control? —Sol

Addictions are based on trying to not feel the way you really feel. If people weren't desperate and hungry, and needing to change how they feel, they wouldn't need to do drugs, go gamble, drink, all the other addictions, because if they felt okay, they wouldn't need to change that. It might take a while for the diehards, but eventually people would go— "I have enough money for food..." —Donna

Right now, because you don't know your neighbor, you are defensive, you feel aggression, and there is more violence. Look at the costs, if people had a decent income and community involvement, as compared to that child getting in trouble, foster care, drug habits, car accidents, etc. —Meshum

The worry about what you are going to do after high school affects kids in a big way. I think about the stress all the time. It feels like you have to be super, super smart to get a good job. You have to jump through hoops because there is so much competition. Obviously something is not right when grade 9 girls are coming to school and doing E [ecstasy] in the bathroom. Taking drugs makes kids forget about the pressure. —Kyla

THE COSTS: POVERTY INDUSTRY

1. Welfare bureaucracy, bogus job training and poverty charities

2. Professionals to manage the poor, including all types of think tanks (both anti-poor and "help" the poor)

3. Social workers, lawyers, foster parents, court costs for child apprehensions due to poverty

4. Self-help industry that blames poverty on individual shortcomings

"POVERTY INDUSTRY" QUOTES

[Poverty] creates money for people; it creates jobs for people. That is what I don't like about social work: I would be paid because someone is suffering. —Rachel

All the red tape would be taken away. One department would look after it instead of having 12 separate provincial /territorial governments doing their own scrutinizing. —Florence

There are job creation projects on the back of marginalized people. How many businesses are built on health, crime, courts, hospitals, mental illness, jails and hundreds of thousands employed due to poverty? You keep them poor, and these other people have work. —Mary C

The fact that foster parents get more money than the actual parents; they are making an economy on disabling parents to care for their children. —Ruth

Child apprehension is a billion-dollar business. Without child welfare, half the lawyers in this city would be put out of business. —Suzanne

Who cares about people who are poor? It is always about the other people out there that are earning incomes off of the poor. It's all about them. We could get rid of all the welfare workers and other people involved that all have jobs because of people like me and others who have disabilities, who have been mowed down by society in general. —Terry

Non-profits piss me off. It's almost as if they exist only to give themselves employment. They sell the idea that people are "A person in need." They go through the motions of helping, but implicitly they say: "You are a person in need. If you don't have us, you have nothing." It is the biggest lie of all. Very little of the money is spent on helping the poor. I don't need a social worker telling me what I need. —Gabrielle

Charities keep us segregated and perpetuate the idea of superior and inferior. —Jessy

Poverty pimping has to come into it; middle-class people get jobs to put bandaids on the poor. —Kym

The cost of administering the programs, and the one-shot deals that are highly expensive; all the buildings and the people that work in that field—that's a huge cost that wouldn't be there, and I'd love to see the statistics on those costs. —Samantha

This whole GLI, this isn't business as usual; this means rethinking everything. We will likely find we can close down jails and other harmful constructs. Given the resources, people can usually take care of themselves in a lawful manner and will likely thrive. —Valerie

THE COST OF JOBS

Coordinator's note: Millions of people work directly and indirectly in industries that create ill health and social problems, such as junk food, tobacco, alcohol and gambling. Others have jobs in the medical, pharmaceutical industries from the resulting health problems. Since there is no differentiation between beneficial or destructive jobs, using “jobs” as the method of income distribution has very high costs to health, community and environment.

- 1.** Unemployed people are used to keep wages low
- 2.** Advertising (to boost consumption)
- 3.** Moms forced to leave babies and toddlers to take any job
- 4.** People often must compromise ethics to get and keep jobs
- 5.** Divide and conquer; overworked and exhausted workers resent unemployed
- 6.** No job equals no value as a human being; outcast by society
- 7.** People have regret and pain from time not spent with children when they were young because of needing a job to survive
- 8.** No time for politics, means giving our consent through inaction
- 9.** Attempting to solve world poverty with economic growth and jobs is insane and impossible
- 10.** There is intense competition for the 'real' jobs
- 11.** Many people cannot fit into formal job structures
- 12.** No reason to produce more when we have surplus goods
- 13.** Many jobs involve unhealthy work or unhealthy products
- 14.** Long work hours means neglecting kids (can lead to crime and other problems)
- 15.** Laziness is considered a cardinal sin; people will take any job regardless of harm to self or others to avoid shame
- 16.** Education system and jobs system takes away cultural diversity
- 17.** Overwork creates grumpy, resentful people who isolate themselves
- 18.** People don't have kids because they fear for the future

"JOBS" QUOTES

*JOBS stands for **J**ust **O**bliteration of the planet **B**ecause of **S**hort-sighted stupidity. Or, **J**eopardizing **O**ur **B**odies and **S**ouls. Most of the stuff we produce in our jobs isn't healthy for us or our planet. Most of the stuff we produce is pre-planned obsolete, not needed, not even wanted. We do not need more jobs – nor more babies, for that matter. We have many babies that need parents, and people need meaningful activities, not jobs. And we do not need more fast food. The sooner we take people out of overproduction and the production and consumption of harmful products – i.e., jobs for the sake of jobs, when it isn't a job that's needed; it's money – the better off we'll be. –Valerie*

Many jobs make money for big business but don't really contribute anything of true value. –Samantha

The working job mindset—I may be racist in saying this, but I'm going to say it anyhow—it is a white mode of thinking: it is British. We are living in Victoria, the most British city in Canada. Jobs are not the solution. Not everybody wants to work full-time, and why should they have to? And what about the people who can't work? That's why we end up with the slave system. That whole work ethic puts more stress on people, which in turn affects their health which in turn affects their family relationships, which would also affect the quality of work they do, and that in turn is more stress on our health system. So it is more costly. They end up taking pharmaceuticals or seeing psychiatrists. Then there is the depression and problems in spousal relationship. They end up getting divorced more; then the lawyers are making more money. It is a ripple effect, it affects everybody around you. –Debie

When I think about the goal of jobs, I feel despair. All of this interview I've been speaking as a mother. As a mother, I have a job, and that job literally is 24 hours a day. My child doesn't sleep. And she is not happy that I am doing childcare; she wants to hang out and have fun. The work of children is play. That is the root of learning, all aspects of being, from self-fulfillment to how to engage with others. The fact that I need to work and do childcare is no fucking piece of cake. My job starts at 8 in the morning when children start to arrive. They are here until 5:30, and then I have all the cleaning and all the preparation, all the rest of the work that goes on when the kids aren't here. Once my child goes to bed at 10 p.m., I'm exhausted, she's grumpy, and she's awake during the night because she's not getting her needs met. She wants her time with me and she can't have it. I work 14 to 16 hours a day towards my paid work even though I am with my daughter. All women at home with their kids are working. So pursuing the goal of jobs as a solution... it's crushing on individuals, family and children. –Naomi

Costs? My health. I get headaches because I'm always going: food for my kids, living healthy, putting time into raising them properly. But they are in somebody else's home all day instead of mine. I come home, make them dinner, put them to bed, wake them up, take them to school, and I feel guilty. They demand attention from me, and then you are more stressed out and then you want to work harder to make more money so you can get some time. –Meshum

There is a lot of work that is not recognized, a lot of invisible work. Like childcare, eldercare, housework, home care, gardening, maintaining a home—all that kind of stuff is necessary work but isn't valued. If people said, "We will acknowledge child and elder care"... What we call a job, I think of as the tip of the iceberg. Structured jobs may not be able to exist without exploiting unpaid work and exploiting the environment. There are many people who would be threatened by this kind of movement in the beginning. But the whole idea of full-time jobs for people is insane, because many people are already working full-time doing things that are not acknowledged. What are you going to do, abandon your kids or Alzheimer's dad? –Claire

Women are a non-stop machine. Over 80% of our job is unpaid work, and it is unrecognized by the community. –Rose

Everybody knows the biggest pain for a corporation is to have low unemployment, because they might have to pay a decent wage. I don't care if you are making 30 bucks, 60 bucks or 6 bucks an hour, if any one of those positions could pay less, they would. So we're going to depend on capitalism to save us? Their whole main goal is profit, not to make sure you have a decent paying job with good benefits. There are even laws that the corporations have more rights in law than we do! And we're human beings! Somewhere along the line we've all agreed with that, or been brainwashed to believe in that. You see it today with workers who are making \$10 per hour and are being brutalized by a supervisors who's making \$50,000 a year. You try say to them: "You need to take back the power here. Quite frankly, when the supervisor goes away on holidays, nobody even notices; the place keeps running. But if you phone in sick one day, the whole bloody place is in chaos. And yet you are considered unskilled and useless!" —Brenda

Fighting for rights of workers to sell walmart shit? In the long term we need to stop selling shit to the poor. Jobs are often destructive. We sell our own souls and we toss and turn. —Kym

The ones who are in the top of the pyramid get away with doing nothing and make us feel afraid, that we will go to hell if we don't do the right things. The people at the top of the pyramid are laughing in the end. And who suffers most with disasters? It is not the people at the top at the pyramid. It's the poor people who suffer, and they are not the ones to cause the damage. —Hilda

I just can't imagine not being forced to go to work. It is so ingrained in us now, as soon as our children are 3 years old. How many single moms do I know who don't have time to get involved with anything, don't even have time to say hi to their neighbors? On the whole the neighborhood and community suffers. —Sasha

When my son was 3 months old I got one cheque from welfare and thought, "I don't think so." I thought the welfare cheque was a mistake; it was \$450. I phoned them and said to them, "\$450 for all month?" And they said, "Yes." I went out the next day to find a job. And now I totally regret it. I should have struggled. I should have done that until he was six. Now that I'm working full-time, I have no time to volunteer at the school. How many times my son wants me to be there for him, or I want to help out at the school but I can't do it. —Sasha

If you have GLI, the humanity of the person could be nurtured. If you don't have GLI, it goes against humanity, is more stressful, and there is a lot of pressure to try to follow the full-time career track. People are so stressed out —people aren't designed for the 40-hour week that feels like a 60-hour week. I am happiest working part-time. We could redesign the workweek. I've seen people so tired-looking, like some instructors I've had. I feel like telling them, "Go and retire, you are too tired to help me." Some people only 45 and 50, and they are so tired. Two weeks holiday is not enough to recuperate. In the government office setting, people in their late 30's are getting all kinds of ailments. Again, the full-time job and that stress goes against what is humanly reasonable. I notice people who are able to cope with long hours. They are living for the future, looking forward to their retirement day, because their lives aren't so great. I can see the pervasive effects it has on your personality. You've heard of poisonous workplaces. Those who can cope and thrive in long workweeks, their personalities seem to go down. They are so depleted. We need to do research to see if there is a link with higher smoking, drinking and gambling from full-time positions. People stay in them for the money. With a GLI, they could volunteer, help their neighbors, nurture their vitality, tune into the kids. The freedom it gives you allows you to be healthier.—Elizabeth

People get so burnt out, but they are tied up financially, and end up hating their life. —Sharon

When I started a full time job, I stopped cooking meals and bought more junk food, packaged stuff, canned and frozen stuff. And that's got to affect health. —Brenda

I would go from job to job and have a nervous breakdown practically, and even suicidal sometimes, not knowing where I was going to work. I waitressed until my body burnt out and I couldn't do it anymore. And now I have no pension—nothing to fall back on. —Cecia

We are like these little robotrons trying to produce with the top echelon looking down: "You are our slaves, now produce!" —Olive

It would be good to have more jobs and give people a chance to work, but the free market economy will always leave people with no jobs. So the bigger picture is that there is still the need for stable incomes for every family. —Eva

All you have to do is look, look around Victoria and what you'll see is all the greenspace disappearing and concrete and buildings going up—lots of jobs, but are we going to be able actually breathe? If everybody had a job, if everybody had a car and a TV, or whatever it is you are supposed to want, you'd need more than one planet. There's never been full employment policy under any political party because it is not workable. And a) the jobs are trashing the planet, and b) there are fewer and fewer jobs all the time (moving into tech and robotics). Yet the answer is jobs, jobs, jobs! There are already statistics out that most people hate their jobs, and that has got to be taking a toll on health. Is that the kind of society we want? Just getting people to talk about what's important is hard to do when you are brainwashed into thinking the job is most important. I've gone through that myself. —Valerie

I had a job where I had nothing to do. There were five receptionists for one executive director. They were paying me \$18 per hour, and I didn't do anything. I asked, "Why am I being paid 18 per hour?" and was told, "Just be happy that you are there." I quit, and people thought I was crazy, but there is only so much my soul can do, and I cannot sell out on that level. Jobs are not a solution; they are for capitalism maybe, but not for the individual. They will give you jobs, but not something that can feed your soul, or where you feel good about yourself at the end of the day. —Rachel

A lot people can only work part-time due to physical, mental or emotional illness. —Dawn

[Jobs] pretend that the measure of your worth is the money you bring in, whereas most money now is completely irrelevant to social benefit. Certainly the most valuable things that happens, taking care of children and ill people, are mostly done without pay. To the extent that people have to have jobs, it's going to actually distract from the real work that they need to be doing. I don't see why we now think somebody's goofing off if they choose to not work full time and are raising their kids. —Jennifer

Jobs for all as a solution? There is no such thing as jobs for all people on this planet. If anything, all the research has proven that there are less and less jobs, and it will continue to go that way. —Faith

THE COSTS OF POVERTY: NATURE

- 1.** Many jobs are destructive to the environment, to water, air and forests and to other species
- 2.** Industrialization will cause more environmental disasters
- 3.** Over-harvesting often provoked by poverty, or fear of poverty, for yourself or your children

We don't need to produce more. The earth has enough stuff right now. We don't need to be making more stuff; we just need to share what's already here. People could do job-sharing or just work part-time and then the world would slow down a bit and we wouldn't be producing so many things that just get dumped in the landfill —Janine

The level and kind of consumption that we feel we need to use as compensation for the shit jobs and the long hours and the exhaustion.... I think those are tied together. When do I buy the prepackaged food, or do things that are destructive to my health? When I am most maxed out. The kind of consumption that is destructive to the environment is the kind of consumption that those of us who are so-call "most productive" engage in to reward yourself for the 9-to-5 day. I am so horrified at what we are doing to the planet. More people having gardens and having the time to be able to garden contributes to the health of the environment. I'm not talking about mega-farming, but creating more green spaces even within cities. But again that is about time. —Naomi

We tend to overwork and it can be wasteful and polluting. —Claire

Some of the jobs people need to do to be productive destroy nature and health. People are hurt because of seeing what's happening to their mother [earth]. —Aletheia

We have to stop producing the bad stuff in society; we are losing the balance with nature. —Hilda

With the current capitalist system, people are forced to do work at McDonald's, or work at pulpmills.... There are so many types of work that are not good for the environment and pollute. The garbage from McDonalds, the food isn't healthy. The whole system is really bad for nature; the overproduction in the economy is not good for nature at all. —Ruth

With a basic income, you wouldn't need to find a job that was destructive to the planet, to yourself and your community, just to pay your rent and put food on the table. Many people don't think, "How is this job impacting my body, my planet?" We need vast tracts of our planet left alone. I grew up in Saskatchewan. When I was really small all the chemical farming was just starting. That was coming out of the universities: "This is how you farm." Now, in my lifetime, a lot of the land is dead, mostly in the southern part of the province and it is radioactive in the north. Not much of how we behave economically sustains the planet. But there are indigenous people everywhere. That knowledge is still around, but it is underground, and it's not part of our everyday way of looking at things. If anybody was living a spiritual life right now, the planet would not be on its last legs. —Valerie

If you look at women in Africa, they go and chop firewood because they don't have anything else to sell, just so they can get some extra money. Maybe if they get the extra money, it would help save the environment. —Evelyn

THE COSTS: COMMUNITY/ DEMOCRACY

- 1.** Everyone is afraid; people are afraid to get to know anyone
- 2.** Poverty makes people move frequently, breaking community connections
- 3.** Small (or no) living quarters means no way to socialize
- 4.** Isolation—people with a bit more money avoid you
- 5.** People don't have time to think or participate in problem-solving
- 6.** Lack of economic security creates a dog-eat-dog environment at all levels; groups and individuals forced to compete with one another for funding and jobs
- 7.** Society goes into denial and resorts to blaming, shaming and scapegoating people in poverty
- 8.** Disposable people are the first ones conscripted into war
- 9.** Poverty deadens community life and wastes human potential
- 10.** People too busy to get involved politically (give passive consent through inaction)
- 11.** People don't have free speech on the job and can't rock the boat
- 12.** People unable to participate in their community without money (difficult to attend events, join groups or to contribute)

QUOTES: "COMMUNITY/ DEMOCRACY"

There is so much that we lose on every front: family, community, culturally, individually—from the legacy of poverty. By the time I was 30, I'd moved 40 times. It is so expensive to move, it is akin to a death, it is so stressful. But you do what you can with what you have. But there are so many ties in the community that you can never make. —Naomi

I passed a binner on the way here. He told me there is more competition for the resources out in the back alleys. With increased poverty there's more crime in the streets. If I was out there and I had money to buy a bottle of something that would keep me from freezing to death, I'd probably go for it. I can see how that would become addictive. —Janine

I would have friends calling me wanting to chat, but I had only two hours a day after work that I could do anything in. So I became very unfriendly to the people in my social network, because I didn't have time and they did, and I became resentful. I'd be feeling like there wasn't any time, foregoing constructive things that I would like to be doing, even giving short shrift to my mother, because at the end of the day I was just too tired to hear her out. When I'm energetic, I'm an outgoing and generous person, but when I'm tired and exhausted, you don't want to be around me. And that spills over into the community. Just multiply that by how many people are out there, and you've got family violence, and you've got people shut in their rooms, not going out. —Jennifer

In poverty, people only think in the hand-to-mouth, the immediate—a sandwich or a sleeping bag. That takes up the whole day; there is no time to think of next week or next year. —Faith

Those who could contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of our culture and subculture are squelched because people are working way too much to have any energy to contribute. —Naomi

People start getting the attitude that these people cost money; they are problem people. That becomes that cycle of discrimination without looking at underlying issues. So we are forever in denial. Diverting attention and shaming and blaming other people, instead of actually looking at the real problems. I think that's a huge cost. We are afraid to even help our neighbors because of crime. That whole sense of trust and respect is really warped now. We have all these groups that are segregated and labeled. When we get together and try to have one strong voice, instead we say, "I have an owie that is bigger than your owie," and we never move beyond that. There's no movement. —Faith

Drug use is frustration with society, wanting to step away from it but not knowing how. —Aletheia

That goes back to genocide. It didn't die with residential schools; it's just taken a new form: how to kill poor people the easy way. Eventually the poor people will start to rebel; culture will get angrier and angrier. We see that now with crystal meth, the poor man's drug—all you get is aggression. Jails are overflowing. You can't walk out the street with outthinking, "God, am I going to make it home or not?" Aggression is really high, and when people get hungry, they go crazy, have knee jerk reactions [from being] hungry and cold and having no self-worth. You have nothin' to lose, so what does it matter if you kill someone? Because then you'll get three square meals a day in jail and a warm bed. —Mary C

Welfare has never been constructed as a right. Rather it is benefit that women have to apply for and they can be denied. The criteria changes according to the political ideas embraced by those in government. So today, women are seen as employable and unwilling to join the free market. Therefore, if women are reluctant to leave their children in daycare or alone, they are depicted as unwilling and undeserving of welfare. Today, poor-bashing has taken on a new viciousness and rather than look at the roots of poverty and other forms of inequality and oppression, we blame women for many of societies ills. And welfare rates get lower and lower and fewer women and children are able to receive welfare benefits. This is an old story. —Susan

Because we are so busy working, we don't call our MLA's. Some people don't even know who their MLA is. We are giving consent to all sorts of atrocities by our inaction. —Janine

You can't do anything when you are struggling to get the basics. —Evelyn

People are so worried about making ends meet that they can't contribute to community. —Sol

Your ability to participate in anything limited by your income. Say, you want to be on the powwow circuit, or things you might do for your health; if you are too poor, you can't do them. —Samantha

THE COSTS: URBAN MIGRATION

I was part of a beautiful little community, but because of lack of resources and employment, I had to move to the city. If I'd had a GLI, that money would have gone directly back into the community. It would have given me security and stability. I could have kept my home, my half-acre of land that I raised garden produce on. It would have given me a better lifestyle if I could have stayed there. I would have remained an integral part of my community.

I was one of the people that the elderly people relied on. There were 24 widows, living in alone their own homes for sometimes 30 years until they died in their 80's or 90's. They were on a guaranteed income, so they were able to hire younger people to help them stay in their homes. That gave us work, and they relied on younger people like me to keep their houses clean, to put their gardens in, to help them with their daily living. But there was not enough work for a stable income. That's a great service that you provide, but you can't make a living off it because they are living on a fixed income, too. There were paid homemakers, but that was cut back, and a lot had to leave because there was no income. I also had other seasonal jobs. If I could have had my living topped up during the winter, I could have remained in my community. It was a healthy place to live. I knew all the young people, the old people, the babies. I babysat two boys after school for a single mother. You don't mind working for \$8 an hour if you have some way at the end of the year to know that your income will have some balance to it. I saw a lot of people leave the community because they didn't have a stable income. Young people could settle there because a house is \$50,000. Your house is inexpensive, but you are always looking for work. People struggle. They are subsistent, have their own gardens and live off the land a bit, help each other out, and somehow they make it through.

But why do we stress people to the point of breaking? Why don't we stabilize our economy everywhere by a GLI? We could stabilize people in the countryside and not have everybody move to the cities. When does Victoria reach its breaking point and cities start gobbling up agricultural land? I had a beautiful home and beautiful garden. It took me 10 years to build it up and then I had to leave it because I couldn't afford to stay there and maintain it. It would have been nice to have stability and stay there, be part of my community and encourage other people to come there too. I sold food; I had so much of it on just a half acre. I made about \$2,000 a year out of my garden, but that was not enough to live on, even though my mortgage was paid because I built my own house. I needed at least \$800 a month for electricity, taxes, insurance, house maintenance, seeds, and paying for a vehicle [even with] car co-ops and sharing of rides. I was always worried, and that wrecks havoc on you physically, mentally and emotionally.

I was there for 10 years struggling with income, and it made my life stressful, which affects your health. I felt I better leave while I can physically do it. It is a vicious circle. My hope now is to get retrained in something. If I'd had a GLI, I could have stayed and helped a lot of older people that I knew and they would have had quality of life and dignity until their death. Now that I'm gone, they told me they feel the loss.

Are they starving people out of rural areas? A GLI would sure help farmers. Most of them are too proud to take it, but boy, that would sure save their bacon. People are committing suicide over not being able to keep the family farm. In Saskatchewan about 4 years ago farmer suicide was very bad. We need agriculture; they feed us. We especially need to support organic farmers. And if they go down, the big farmers can say, "See, organic farming doesn't work." That's who we need, people who don't want to over fertilize and overspray their crops; people who keep the land alive and produce food that is nutritious. My brother is an organic farmer, but if he goes under, there is one less choice for us to go for organic food. Then big-business farming has another foothold. We have to stop that. A GLI would be a good way. —Kathy

Farms are collapsing. The small farms are all turning into corporate businesses. We don't value the food or the farmer, the rural life or the environment. It is very dangerous—that is the backbone of life. We need the farmers. If we don't help him or her, where are we then? If we don't keep the environment pristine, that will affect our quality of life. We will be drinking dirty water; we already are to a degree, but it will only get worse. —Debie

Urban migration in Mozambique is a big problem. Women leave their young children to go to the city and become maids, live there for six months and get a one-month leave to see their kids. Most of the time the husband will marry a second wife to look after the children. And they might get abused by the person who employs them or end up pregnant, and they will get fired and have to go home pregnant and then that's it. Or they will give birth and go back to the city and leave kids with the grandmother and send money home. Then kids grow up not knowing their real mother. Maybe the women will get HIV and come back home to die, and that is the only time the kids will get to know their mother—when they are taking care of her when she is dying. For the people in the village [in Mozambique], it would benefit a lot. Always people think western things and things found in the city are easy to acquire and they are the best. So people who are very, very poor, their mind is to achieve things faster, because that's what they see from the rich people, from the well-to-do people. Well-to-do people show it doesn't take a lot to achieve these materialist things. It's so easy, "Look at me, I have chains made out of gold from Europe. Those are the best, not the beaded things you local people spend hours and hours making. You tire your eyes, your hands beading those things— those things don't have value." They think the things from the west are attractive, easy to achieve, and they are the best. So poor people will leave their villages. If someone is gifted in craft-making, but they don't have tools, they say: "Why should I waste my time here with no proper tools or no electricity?" So they will abandon that because there is no help. She or he will go to the city and get any useless job, and start buying artificial things from the west and bring them back to the village. Then nobody is there to teach them about the old ways, the indigenous ways of making things. And everybody looks at this person, "He was trying to make these crafts and didn't go nowhere; now look at him from the city with fancy things." So who wants to waste time on doing these indigenous things? It is very important to find these people who are gifted in this way, women or men. Especially with women, ask them what do they need to advance in this kind of business. Help them with guaranteed income so they can take their business farther. Promote the business for them, maybe set up a little shop for them. Also, create a job for them to teach the young community to take on after they are gone. They are not supported enough to see the value of what they are doing. —Perpetua

A lot of the moves to the city are fueled by lack of jobs in the country. Even back-to-the-land people reach a point where they have to come back to the city to make money. A GLI would rejuvenate the outlying communities which are really important to maintain our cultural heritage. —Jennifer

GLI would make a difference to where people live. A lot of Aboriginal migration to cities has to do with hoping to find work. —Samantha

People would not have to move from home communities. A GLI would slow or even reverse the rush to cities. In rural areas people can have a higher quality of life for less money. GLI would help Aboriginal kids who flee reserves —Focus group, Jan. 13, 06

90% of my income goes to my rent. [With a GLI] I think there would be some moving out of the city. People are in the city for the jobs. I'd rather live on the outskirts. —Meshum

THE COSTS OF POVERTY: INEQUALITY

- 1.** People feel like their government wants them dead
- 2.** Loss of hope and dignity
- 3.** Living with shame and blame
- 4.** Discrimination made worse by being poor, especially in small communities
- 5.** High numbers of women, people with disabilities, people new to Canada and First Nations in poverty
- 6.** Disproportionate number of First Nations people in jail
- 7.** Poor kids feel like no one cares
- 8.** Many women too ashamed, or afraid, to use charities
- 9.** Much less access to justice or advocacy for people in poverty
- 10.** Immigrants target of discrimination and hate when there is fear of job loss
- 11.** People feel they must hide poverty and put on happy face
- 12.** Bad bosses only get away with so much because there is no GLI

"INEQUALITY" QUOTES

I will never forget that. [BC hospital workers] didn't know if they were going to be contracted out and then their own government was saying that they are just glorified toilet-bowl cleaners, and just a bunch of women earning pin money so their husbands can go on their benefits. A lot were single mothers. Some families that were affected were dual earners; both were working in healthcare. That whole thing affected the rest of the membership; for the last four years it was duck and cover, [people saying] "At least I didn't lose my job." They were not even standing up for their basic rights, not wanting to file grievances. [The threat of being poor] makes people bow down and cower. The whole attitude changed overnight with the threat. Let's not forget that the government did two things at once, they threw people off of welfare and gave them time limits while they were firing people. Also, at one time you could collect 52 weeks [of unemployment insurance], but they changed all that. Your weeks were based on whether you were full-time or part-time. So if you were full-time, you would get approximately 40 weeks, but a part-time got 29 weeks. And guess who had most of the part-time work? Women. It was discriminatory. If you were only one or two days a week because of staying home with kids, you didn't even qualify for EI, but you had to pay into it! There are some workers who went back and took jobs for \$10 an hour —almost half of what they had before. If you talked to them, they said, "I had no choice, welfare was going to cut me off." It was the fear of not having a job—or, if they waited till EI ran out, that all the jobs would be taken. It was a plan, "Where can we get 10/hr workers? Cut these people off welfare." Most who went back had children; that is why they felt they couldn't afford to take the risk. Trades recently got a 32% increase [mostly men], and LPNs [mostly women], only got 16%, but the trades were organized. It could be that they had more time to organize, and the women had less because of looking after their kids. —Brenda

Everyone is divided. As long as they think they have their job, they think they are okay. We even have division in the welfare system where people feel secure on their disability. I've asked union people: "If you had a GLI right now, you wouldn't be forced to go back and work for nothing." Union jobs are being replaced with low-paying jobs; this has been happening for years. We need to wipe out these levels of classism... and have a Guaranteed Livable Income. —Cecia

*A lot of non-union workers hate unions, but they hate them for the wrong reason. It's not what we have, but what they don't have. They turn that around and say, "You have so much; you're greedy." —Brenda
It's almost as if people would like to blame themselves. "If I worked a little harder, if I tried a little harder, I'd get that job." —Claire*

There is tremendous ageism. There are more unemployed women in their 40s and 50s than ever before. It's sad when we see ageism and throw-away disposable people. As soon as women get older, we're considered nothing; we're worthless. —Faith

Mothers do not have a place in this society. They are never recognized for the amount of work they do to contribute to society, and it is really, really sad. —Bernice

I am on a disability pension. I am not allowed to have fun, because there is no money to have fun. I am being punished for being disabled. Also, if you get married and are on disability benefits, then you only get a very small amount. Or if two people on disability benefits get married, one gets cut off and they are put onto one cheque for less money than for two. —Debie

I remember my mother crying all the 10 blocks to the welfare office. She cried while we sat in the office and cried while we did the interview. She was poor, black and a single mom, and that was the context that I felt since I was 8—that everything that happened to us was because she was a woman and she was black and she was poor. —Naomi

Why should somebody, because they suddenly can't get up and go to work in a structured way, as hard as they can full-tilt, 8 hours a day, be made to feel their life has no value? —Jennifer

On welfare you can't say, "I had a good week", you have to say, "I have these MULTI barriers." That kind of stuff sinks in. It's pretty sad that we learn the way to survive is to play these games when we have to put down ourselves and each other. —Faith

Women are so terrified of being humiliated, being put down, being made to feel worse, that they will do anything to avoid welfare. Never, never should anyone have to go through that. —Rita

It's difficult in a small town. Everybody knows you. You try and act as though everything is just fine, while I felt like falling on the sidewalk and bawling my brains out. I was a sixty-year-old woman, and I felt like the government would just as soon I died.... My own country that I had lived and worked and volunteered in, and raised 3 children in...! And this was the result? —Mary B.

*My box of food had a dented can of yellow wax beans, and I started to sob. To me that can of beans was how society looked at me; that this is how I deserved to be treated. It was devastating. If you had any dignity when you walked in [to the food bank], you sure didn't when you walked out. —Bernice
When unemployment starts to rise, the first group of people affected are immigrants. They are attacked: people say, "They are taking my job away from me." —Brenda*

My own brother said to me I had had a free ride, even though I had done all the caregiving for our mother. —Rita

Complementary to a Guaranteed Livable Income

- 1.** Create (non-coercive) ways for people to find activities of interest and places to volunteer
- 2.** Workshops on co-operatives and gardening; green consumption and ecology; health and nutrition
- 3.** Support and encourage diversity of small local businesses/co-ops
- 4.** Encourage informal community helpers; informal & formal counseling
- 5.** Initiatives to help people transition to unstructured time (deinstitutionalize our minds)
- 6.** Community-based preventative health care and treatment; explore traditional healing methods
- 7.** Less institutionalized response to problems and more long-term community supports instead
- 8.** Community resources for parents: respite, retreat homes for parents in crisis; mentoring
- 9.** Supports for women during transition to GLI in case of backlash

For people who maybe come from several generations of poverty and don't have a view of a way out, I think that maybe there need to be ways to show they do have something to contribute. —Samantha

I worked and worked and worked, and burnt out and had a job suddenly disappear. All I did was work. I know first-hand, people might go into shock initially. There needs to be some kind of educational component. —Valerie

When people receive [GLI], the community still should support each other so people won't be isolated. Women still could be taken advantage of. If they are with a man who might take their money and use it for drinking, the family would still be shattered. Of course, this happens even with wealthy people. We need to be aware of and take control of it, and get out of that relationship. It shouldn't mean you get your GLI, and you are on your own. —Perpetua

GLI would immediately lift millions out of poverty. That's got to be good, but blind consumerism is not. Not that only the poor have a responsibility to be conscious consumers – we all do. It would be nice if, with that first cheque, there's a list of local food producers, fair trade organizations, etc. —Valerie

The maximum wage is also very important. There is a limited amount of resources, how much am I entitled to, we all need think like that if we are going to survive. GLI would have to go hand in hand with an educational campaign, people don't understand how the products they buy and use are damaging to the environment. GLI will give people the power to buy, but at the same time, it is important to help people understand the impact of products. —Janine

Concerns: What might go wrong?

- 1.** It must be universal or it would end up like welfare; it must not involve in personal judgments
- 2.** Important to emphasize that GLI is needed in each country in the world
- 3.** People new to Canada would have to access the GLI too
- 3.** It would have to be simple to administer and to apply for
- 4.** Have an option for teenagers to access their GLI if they need to leave home due to abuse
- 5.** Watch for more violence when women become more independent; some men may feel threatened by change in power dynamics
- 6.** Watch for GLI being set up to fail
- 7.** Initiatives needed to help people make transition
- 8.** Watch for identity fraud
- 9.** People might continue with destructive types of consumption
- 10.** It is better for young adults to live with their families for guidance, with a GLI they would leave and be more susceptible to bad influences
- 11.** Regressive/exploitive communities (sexist or racist groups) might develop in isolation

"Concerns" Quotes

We could look at it like this: we don't know what to do, but we know what not to do. So far nothing has worked, so why not just try it? As problems arise, monitor it, work with it, but don't say from the beginning that there will be problems, because they just don't know. —Sharon

We definitely need guaranteed income for living, that's number one. What might go wrong? No it would be perfect. With GLI, there is no risk of homelessness or dieing from of health problems. —Olga

I don't think things can go wrong with a GLI, as they don't go wrong when we help people so they can function in a normal way. We can see a reaction from people who are being helped, to go and try to realize themselves in society and to contribute. —Eva

I don't think much could go wrong. [Laughter] GLI would be such a positive step for so many people. It would free up their anxiety and would overall help people's health big-time. Talk about a preventative type of solution to many, many people out there who live in extreme poverty! —Terry

We have to try it and stop worrying about the concerns. It's better than what we have now, and whatever concerns come up, deal with them when they come up. Don't say we can't do it because, people will become lazy, take advantage, won't compete. They don't think about why it is they believe for a person to have money, or not, is a measure of their success. Why not try it, there is nothing to lose, what ever comes from it deal with it when it comes up. I'm sure they didn't think what are the costs of capitalism when they brought that in from feudalism. I'm sure they didn't say lets just think about this for a while, what's the costs of capitalism? With GLI, more could profit, can't go too wrong to appease more masses than less. —Rachel

People would be stumped, and they might still try to manage people to keep their [social work] jobs going. But people from poverty will be liberated to say, "I don't need you, I don't need to be managed, and if you want to talk to me, talk to me about being a human being, not being a case." It would be a real eye-opener for people who spew off and say they want to empower people. They will see people being empowered on their own and they won't be needed anymore. GLI might make people feel really uncomfortable. We've grown so accustomed to needing to have problems, needing people to have problems. —Rachel

I think [GLI] it's pretty straightforward; can't think of any reason why not. To me, it really is like changing attitudes. —Samantha

What could go wrong? Well, all kinds of things could, quote, 'go wrong', but all kinds of things are already wrong! It doesn't make sense not to try something else, because what we are doing now isn't working. The argument is that people won't do anything, that the economy will grind to a halt. But the way we are behaving is not sustainable; there are limits to growth. Things are going to grind to a halt unless we choose a different path. [GLI] needs to be tried. I remember all the early arguments of Aboriginal self-government: "Oh, they're not ready yet, not organized," not this or not that. You can say those things forever. Let people try things, but don't set it up to fail. —Valerie

The only negative thing I can see if substance abuse might still happen. People need to counsel each other—not necessarily professional, but indigenous help from other women who have lived life. Hearing from them, how to raise kids, how to make ends meet, how to grow a garden—all those things would help a lot. If women could really have women's groups that they can go to, meeting someone at the community garden for example, and then establish friendships. —Perpetua

There are no lazy people. People go snaky when they have nothing to do. People like to be able to say they are busy, busy bees. —Claire

If people are on GLI, they wouldn't worry as much about jobs, and would be out trying to volunteer more. But after a couple of years of GLI, people might get into a rut. —Florence

Barriers to achieving Guaranteed Livable Income

- 1.** People think money comes from production
- 2.** Many don't want women or low income people to have more power
- 3.** People think that GLI is giving away "their" money
- 4.** Idea that you would be rewarding people for doing nothing
- 5.** Mass worship of productivity and the macho idea of being a worker
- 6.** Many jobs depend on poverty, inequality, ill health, violence
- 7.** Economics considered boring
- 8.** Apathy, cynicism, lack of voting; people in survival mode;
- 9.** People think "my ship will come in" (prosperity around the corner)
- 10.** People too poor to participate; no resources to organize
- 11.** Individualist thinking; people don't see we are all connected
- 12.** People and groups compete and lie to survive
- 13.** People want to stay in their comfort zone (no problems)
- 14.** People wonder who will serve them (want slaves, not equality)
- 15.** Workers pitted against non-workers (jobless or unpaid)
- 16.** People might find it difficult to embrace the universality of GLI; that the rich would get it too even though it will be taxed back from them
- 17.** Media promoting idea that poor are parasites; false ideas of how people live from TV
- 18.** Laziness (associated with GLI) considered a cardinal sin
- 19.** Even women don't see the value of their unpaid work
- 20.** False scarcity used to justify poverty
- 21.** Mistrust of government
- 22.** The rich won't allow it (even though there are few rich)
- 23.** Difficult for people to change their values

"Barriers" Quotes

There's the belief, "I'm going to be supporting all these people who are poor and enable them to sit around, watch TV and get fat. And here I am, working everyday, killing myself just so these layabouts can continue." This is a belief system. Yet it is government policy that is responsible for poverty, not individuals. People's sense of self is usually related to net worth, not self-worth: "I did all these things to get to where I am today. If everybody were given money that I had to work so hard to get, then were does that leave me?" Of course, they forget about the hard unpaid work of women. —Stephanie

The whole idea: "I can get a job, why can't they?" The mentality, we can't have a GLI: "No one will work!" I've said if someone wants to sit around and be lazy, that's great, I'll take the job. —Brenda

The biggest barrier is attitudes. I really think it is that sort of business attitude that people who don't make money aren't really trying hard enough and they deserve what they've got: "I've dragged my self up from nothing, and no reason why you can't." —Samantha

Some people say, that if everyone had some money no one would want to work. I say to them, "Where do you get that information from?" That information comes from capitalism. It has set itself so deeply in our society that people believe they have to work and have to strive for money all the time, and that if you are given money, you become lazy. But there are only a handful of people who control everything. They spend a lot of money brainwashing. —Rachel

People will say that people will be lazy, but I don't think that is in our nature. I think we are born curious, loving and cooperative and all of that stuff slowly gets whacked out of us. Lazy? You have to define the term. Does it mean staying at home and reading a library book instead of being out buying something? That's what gets drilled into us, that we are basically lazy. Even models of managing people say that, but that's not how we are at all. Somehow the majority have bought into that we are greedy and mean. None of that is true. Believing it is some sort of brainwashing. Examine a situation for any length of time.... You'll find it's natural to want to help each other and cooperate. That is what gets the job done. It's in our genes. —Valerie

Why don't women organize? They are afraid of losing what little they have, of being in a worse position than they had before. They are reminded of that daily. It is a whole system of separating people and turning them against one another so they don't want to unite. But at this point if you are fearless or not fearless, you're going to be up against the same thing. So are you going to go out like a mouse, or are you going to start fighting back? —Stephanie

I want to understand GLI on the economic end—how in a cash society it would work. It seems to me GLI would change the whole of economics completely, and why would anyone go for it who is in a position of power? I want to see how it would work in a larger macroeconomic scale. That's my stumbling block. Three quarters of the country would have an interest in this. There needs to be more education about the power we have. I don't know how we could convince those in power to do it. Whereas, if there is a real grassroots movement —because we do want a major shift in how the economy runs. It's not just a simple change, it's a revolutionary change in how our economy works. Could there be a referendum on the GLI? The push can really only come from the grassroots cause there is a huge number of people who would be interested in it. —Sol

"Us and them" mentality is ingrained in our culture, when in fact we are all one big organism. Quantum physics has shown this is not [a figure of speech], we are actually all one. This is a natural law. The more we separate, the more violence we get. —Valerie

[Unions are not advocating for GLI.] You are calling yourself labour, but you are excluding the majority of people who actually labour! Yes, women would have more time to organize if they have a GLI, and that's why we'll probably never get it. They talk about ending poverty and ending child poverty. If they really wanted to, they could, and they damn well know it. —Brenda

Because of all the propaganda of service and service provision, of customers and clients, it is hard for people to get their head around the idea: "Yes, as a person, I can do something." —Stephanie

Placing myself in a class is very difficult. There is a certain amount of [class] fluidity, so it's hard to create a firm class consciousness, although most people don't move up. Usually, if you are poor, you stay poor. It's hard to work on [GLI] when there is a perception of [class] fluidity, even though it's not realistic for everyone. The idea that you can rise to a higher class through education was part of my cultural upbringing. —Sol

Other Ideas

Coordinator's note: Some people have other ideas similar to, but significantly different from, a GLI. In the U.S. there is a group promoting a caregiver credit. I asked some women about this idea.

I disagree with a credit just for caregivers. It creates a division. What we are trying to do is avoid this division. Sometimes people who don't have anybody still have problems and can't find a job. —Evelyn

What if my family has all left home and I'm not caring for anybody any more? When my kids were young I might have advocated something like that but that would have been short sighted. —Brenda

A caregiver credit creates more divisions and could cause more strife when families break up, especially if the men have no other income. It could even be dangerous for women. —Focus group, Jan. 13, 2006

Coordinator's note: One interviewee strongly felt she wanted a one-time lump sum credit (like a citizen's grant) to start a small business instead of a monthly Guaranteed Livable Income.

Rather than getting a small amount of money spread out over a long time. I'd rather get a large amount of money but over a short period of time. I think the citizen's grant is a great idea. Then the onus is on me to make it or break it and that way I'm not a victim, except to myself. —Gabrielle

Strategies for achieving Guaranteed Livable Income

Education

- Create a school of GLI
- Workshops & discussion groups
- Make presentations
- Make a film
- Tailor educational material for each organization

Research

- Find out actual numbers of unemployed and under-employed and the number of livable wage jobs that are not destructive or make-work jobs
- Find out true poverty related costs

Emphasis

- “Livable” is very important
- Make economic arguments
- GLI as a universal initiative
- Educate on economic surpluses
- Educate on economic meaning of "productive"

Organize

- Start a constitutional challenge under Section 7: Security of Person
- Create networks from bottom to top
- Petitions & letter writing
- Don't underestimate word of mouth
- Use posters with small leaflets that people can take home to read
- Mobilize to vote in a GLI

Publicity

- Use the media and get publicity
- Find a famous spokesperson
- Train women speakers on GLI

Solidarity

- Involve academia
- Women with stable incomes need to support the movement to win a GLI

Inspiration

- We need courage to defend our ideas and to create change without waiting for others to do it for us
- Women need to use their brains to organize a better world instead of worrying about their appearances

Outreach

- Market the idea to non-poor and to local business (since they'll have more customers, less shoplifting)
- Schools, students, teachers
- Food banks, charities, churches
- Organic farmers & rural people
- Community co-operatives
- Politicians
- Artists, musicians, writers, crafters
- Neighborhood & community centres
- Transition houses
- Criminal justice professionals
- Immigrants new to Canada
- Parent, family & caregiver groups

"Strategies" Quotes

We can change the rules; we are more than them. —Hilda

There is a change coming; I can feel it. It is sort of like the sixties. It's happening in small corners and coming from different places, and then all of a sudden the critical mass happens. I just hope they don't blow us up before that happens. —Mary B

We are on the brink, there are a lot of ordinary people who are disgruntled. To change something, you have to have numbers, and the numbers are out there and growing. —Jessy

If everybody stands up together and speaks up and not be shy: tell the government what changes we need. But if you don't open your mouth, nothing will change. —Olga

A GLI is not something that can be shelved again; it has to start now. —Olive

Canada is a multicultural country; maybe this idea will find a good soil to grow on. —Eva

Keep on talking and making noise until our voices are heard. The best strategy is what you are doing, hearing how it's affecting people here and in Africa, and bringing these ideas together. —Perpetua

But we need to take the power that we already have. That's why I don't think of myself as a victim anymore. Like that old Bob Marley song, "Stand Up For Your Rights"! Don't expect people to give you your rights cause they ain't. People need courage and willingness to face criticism. People need to understand it is up to them to create change and not expect others to do it for them. —Gabrielle

A GLI would empower the citizenry of Canada. That's why we are going to have to fight hard to get it, because they want to walk all over our civil rights. The solution to Canada's woes is where you're heading: everybody getting their fair share of the pie, instead of 3% of getting all the pie. —Donna

One way to make it happen fast, would be if people who do unpaid work would stop. But people don't want to strike; they are scared they are going to lose their jobs. But people don't realize the number of people that work in the unpaid sector. We need to strike in mass. The city would literally stop. —Debie

Global capitalism is crushing everything from the bottom up. So how far up are you right now from ground level? How long do you think you're going to last when you see all the people underneath you get taken out? We are out of time, this is about survival. Women must mount a defense and take a stand for women and children worldwide. If we don't, it is at our peril. If we are not heard at this point, after being silenced for so long, we will never be heard again, and neither will anybody else. —Stephanie

So many of us [in the sixties] were opposed to the word "Demand." This often hostile debate went on for many months. Young feminists were very strong in their arguments for "Abortion on Demand," and so it was passed. Finally, decriminalization of all abortion laws became effective by law in 1985—the process that had begun in 1966. Eventually I came to admire those younger women who led that confrontation. We could not have done it any other way. Now, we have a similar societal confrontation over the word "Guaranteed", as in our movement to access a Guaranteed Livable Income for all persons. "Demand" emits a strong sound as its meaning. Likewise, "Guaranteed" is the same thing... words and sounds that cannot be ignored too easily. Hence, politicians and business men turn off when they hear such strong statements from highly intelligent women. The time has come for us now to "Demand a Guaranteed Livable Income." —Patricia Grinstead, letter to SWAG, February 2006

Coordinator's Findings

Health was the first and most frequent benefit of Guaranteed Livable Income identified during interviews. Benefits to nature and peace were the least mentioned. Also, I expected that thinking about the costs of jobs would be unfamiliar to many women, however, as the quotes show on pages 48 to 51, there was no shortage criticism of the jobs system. People are starting to look beyond jobs as a solution to poverty.

Poverty and the impact on democracy, also emerged during interviews. Many women did not want their real names used; no doubt fear negative consequences from family, bosses or welfare workers. This indicates a serious impact of poverty on participation in political processes of all kinds. Based on the interviews, I think it is safe to say people would easily vote in a GLI—they want a GLI to "happen"—but the fear of censure, lack of time, and ironically, lack of money is a barrier for organizing.

During the project there were several instances where it became evident that women feel urgency to help others, but don't see the same urgency to work on long-term solutions. Possibly, the situation for low-income women (and subsequently all women) could deteriorate, since there is no time for organizing for systemic change because of the demands, and rewards, of doing immediate humanitarian charitable work.

Another block to the movement for a Guaranteed Livable Income, is an understanding of money. A key finding of this project is that most people assume there must be a scientific rationale for the money supply, because the thought that millions of people are dying, or living in misery for no reason, is just too abhorrent to contemplate. However, the money system has no relation to "productive" activity. The very definition of economic production is totally skewed. Many destructive activities are counted as "productive" because they add to "economic growth," yet beneficial things, like unpaid care of family members, are not counted as being economically "productive". (See also pages 36, 39 and 68 for more analysis on this point) During interviews women frequently used the word "productive" saying they want to be "more productive" or that a GLI would make people "more productive." After asking them what their definition of productive was, they said it meant things that are beneficial and meaningful to themselves and the community. This vastly different from the narrow economic definition of "productive" that you can find in economic textbooks such as, *"The rewards of a market system are linked to productivity..."* — *"Principles of Economics", Prentice-Hall, 1996*. Since this particular word is the arbitrator of who lives well, and who dies in misery, it is a key word to define. The question is, how did the word "productive" fall into common and frequent use especially when the word constructive would be more accurate to what people want to say? In his 1988 book, "Plastic Words," Uwe Pöerksen states: *"Experts molded public discussion; and, wherever people talked, the words they used aligned themselves with a higher realm... The language of the elite colonized and ruled the vernacular."* It is not surprising that people want to emphasize their productivity. Many women interviewed said that societies biggest taboo was against "lazy people." This explains the current obsession with production and the overwhelming tendency for people to want to produce things, without an examination of *what* would be produced; whether it is beneficial to nature, people, community; whether it is harmful; or whether there is already a surplus of it.

During focus groups, participants asked for facts about (a) exactly how many low-income people are there, and how many of those are women (see chart at: <http://pacificcoast.net/~swag/womenfactsChart.htm>); and (b) economic surpluses—they were shocked by newspaper clippings showing gluts of everything from electronic gadgets to beer.

Other findings occurred when I made presentations on Guaranteed Livable Income at various conferences. Academics were very concerned about their concerns. I was told by the head of one "progressive" think tank, that there was simply not enough money for a GLI, because all money comes from production. A law professor had concerns that women might be entrenched in the home. Other prominent poverty thinkers said they are in favor of it, but, "It will never happen." Another said we need to have "credibility" before we argue for it; and another that they weren't working on it because union leaders don't want it. But, as you will see from both this report and the evidence compiled in the following article, the case for a GLI is so strong, that we may be surprised by the momentum it might gain, as the problems with the current economic system become even more evident. For people around the world living in poverty, problems are already too evident. As Mary Billy stated, positive change is coming, but, "I hope they just don't blow us up first."

The Strong Case for a Guaranteed Livable Income

by Cindy L'Hirondelle, Coordinator, Women's Economic Justice Project

"Reasons given by men for their failure to account for women's work are (1) conceptual problems and (2) the practical difficulties of collecting data. It does not seem to occur to them that if you have a conceptual problem about the activity of half the human species, you then have a conceptual problem about the whole." —Marilyn Waring, "Counting for Nothing", 1988

"For being in a position to know and nevertheless shunning knowledge creates direct responsibilities for the consequences from the very beginning." —Albert Speer, "Inside the Third Reich", 1970

"There are no right answers to wrong questions." —Ursula K. Le Guin, "Planet of Exile," 1966

Over the last five years, I have organized, spoken and presented at hundreds of community meetings to express the urgency of providing a Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) to all world citizens. However, even after presenting irrefutable statistical evidence that poverty is killing many people every day—including mothers and children—the question people repeatedly ask is: "Where will the money come from to pay for a GLI?"

This question is not really shocking. Centuries of relentless social, political and economic propaganda has created almost unanimous consent to blame 'the poor' for causing their own poverty, and that it would be too 'costly' to end systemic poverty and 'we' might not be able afford it. This idea is deeply-rooted in the historic fallacy that 'the poor' are inferior and that 'others' have learned to escape the ravages of poverty through hard work: producing their own food, housing, fuel and so forth.

Not only is this easily proven false; it has become even more obviously false since 1776, when Scottish moral philosopher Adam Smith published his famous economic treatise *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. In regards to 'who is dependant on whom,' Smith wrote: "When the division of labour has been once thoroughly established, *it is but a very small part of a man's wants which the produce of his own labour can supply.*" [emphasis added]

"Division of labour" means that people must specialize to produce enough products to sell to make a living. For example, Smith was a professor, tutor, government employee and writer. If he had to produce his own food, fuel, clothing and everything else he needed to survive, his time to devote to thinking, teaching and writing would have been greatly reduced.

What is even more crucial to the economic survival of social theorists like Smith, is that if everyone (including children) were forced to be self-sufficient, no one would have the time to consume, or money to purchase Smith's lectures or books. As he stated, "Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer. The maxim is so perfectly self-evident, that it would be absurd to attempt to prove it."

When we take into account how producers are economically dependent on 'consumers,' it becomes very apparent that the 'division of labour' itself is a sufficient argument for legislating a universal guaranteed income. More production becomes a loss if there is not an equivalent increase in consumption. But because society has an almost religious obsession with production, the essential role

of consumer to producer is obscured. At the same time there is an imperative for industry to cut costs through technological innovation whenever possible.

“the economic goal of any nation as of any individual, is to get the greatest results with the least effort...It is for this reason that men use their ingenuity to develop 100,000 labour saving inventions. ...The progress of civilization has meant the reduction of its employment not its increase.” —Henry Hazlitt "Economics in One Lesson", 1944

The end result? *“A global surplus of everything from food to videos co-exists with hundreds of millions of people living in destitution... astonishingly large and increasing number of people are not needed or wanted to make goods or to provide the services that the paying customers of the world can afford.” —Jamie Swift, "Civil Society in Question", 1999*

“Global oversupply of commodities is a direct consequence of the decline in purchasing power and rising levels of poverty.” —Michel Chossudovsky, "The Globalization of Poverty", 2003

"Under the market system, there is demand for a product if a lot of people want it - but that demand counts for nothing if those people have no money." —Linda McQuaig, "All You Can Eat", 2001

Without money, people can't consume, and without enough consumers, businesses go bankrupt. So without a GLI, Smith's 'division of labour' sinks the economy regardless of the increased productivity due to industrial innovations. If the number of products being produced rises (e.g., digital products) then either people will need more money to buy them with, or the prices of these products will fall until people have enough money to buy them.

"We have come to the point where we must make the nonproducer a consumer or we will find ourselves drowning in a sea of consumer goods. We have so energetically mastered production that we now must give attention to distribution... I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective —the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income. " —Martin Luther King Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?", 1967

To further complicate the economic problems caused by 'free market' economic theory, there is no scientific or ethical principle that compels anyone to 'consume' goods or services other the life-giving necessities. In fact, the opposite is true for there is rapidly growing scientific evidence that the 'goods' and 'services' being produced are destroying peoples' health and that of other species while severely damaging the air, water and soil that make life possible.

Next, but most importantly, 'the division of labour' into paid and unpaid work has meant that vast numbers of mothers and children have lived and died in abject and humiliating poverty even while free market social theorist have been well-paid to maintain the fiction that mothers and children are a 'cost' to the productive members of society. If this were true and women stopped having babies altogether then everyone should become increasingly wealthy. But in reality, if all women stopped having babies so they could do paid productive labour, the world's economy would collapse and the human species would go extinct. This gross reversal of 'dependency' can be revealed by simply asking "Where do consumers come from?" For, in addition to needing money to consume, consumers need first to be born. However, instead of recognizing the essential economic role of women's unpaid work, women are vilified for making "bad choices."

*"It is hard to understand why so many women are having babies that they cannot support. Many suspect the welfare system has been an enabling factor in these women's bad choices..." —Isabel V. Sawhill, "The Behavioral Aspects of Poverty", *The Public Interest*, Fall 2003.*

"They need to sterilize those that have children and are on welfare." —Crystal, April 17, 2005, (U.S.) internet forum, Hannity.com.

"Others have to work, so single mothers on welfare shouldn't expect a long sojourn at home." —Shelley Fralic, Vancouver Sun, Dec. 17, 2001.

"One of the reasons that women aren't climbing the ladder as fast as men is simple: C-H-I-L-D-R-E-N." —Rush Limbaugh, "The Way Things Ought to Be", 1992.

"Productive work is the central purpose of a rational man's life...." —Ayn Rand, "The Virtue of Selfishness", 1961.

"The rewards of a market system are linked to productivity..." —Karl E. Case, Wellesley College, Ray C. Fair, Yale University, "Principles of Economics", Prentice-Hall, 1996.

"Conventional economic statistics, such as the national accounts and employment measures, are largely designed to measure the market economy and exclude (in developed economies at least) most of the non-market **productive** activities occurring within the household." —Malika Hamdad, "Valuing Households Unpaid Work in Canada, 1992 and 1998: Trends and Sources of Change", Statistics Canada, 2003.

"Why have children at all (or more than just one or two), especially when there are so many reasons not to?" Eric Cohen, "Where have all the children gone?" The Public Interest, Spring 2005.

"Motherhood is the single biggest risk factor for poverty in old age." —Ann Crittenden, "The Price of Motherhood", 2001.

"Relative to other kinds of applicants, mothers were rated as less competent, less committed, less suitable for hire, promotion, and management training, and deserving of lower salaries. Mothers were also held to higher performance and punctuality standards. Men were not penalized for being a parent, and in fact, appeared to benefit from having children on some measures." Shelley J. Correll, Stephan Bernard, Cornell University, "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?", 2005

The consequences are twofold: fewer women will make the "bad" economic choice to have a child which translates into economic problems for the 'producers'. "Never in history has there been economic growth without population growth", (European Population Conference, 2005). Over the last few years, more and more news articles raise the alarm: "Not enough babies: Report fingers new threat to economy" (Wall Street Journal, August 23, 2005) and "If we are not producing more citizens who will ultimately consume, that is a problem" (Alan Mirabelli, Vanier Institute of the Family, quoted in Globe & Mail, Aug. 12, 2003), and concern over the dropping birth rate took up four and a half full pages and one editorial in the National Post's series on "Canada's Baby Gap" (Feb. 18-22, 2006).

The evidence for a strong argument for a Guaranteed Livable Income is mounting:

- 1) A GLI is necessary to stop the killing of poor people; and more babies and children will continue to die from easily preventable poverty-related causes despite the obvious fact they can't take paid jobs and yet need income with which to consume.
- 2) As long as money is used as means of exchange, everyone needs enough to consume to prevent businesses from going bankrupt.
- 3) Without a GLI, more women will have no choice but to not have children (and all non-market activities, including all types of unpaid care work and volunteering, will dwindle).

4) Without a GLI, increasing ecocide is inevitable because every citizen will have no choice but to produce unnecessary products regardless of the impact on life as whole and on the planet.

Despite the life-and-death urgency and irrefutable evidence, many people will still ask, "Where is the money going to come from?" This is due to the belief that money magically comes from 'working.' However, all money originates from government legislation allowing bankers to produce money, while forbidding all others from producing it — or face going to prison for the crime of counterfeiting.

"We often speak of someone 'making money,' when we really mean that he or she is receiving an income. We do not mean that he or she has a printing press in the basement churning out greenbacked pieces of paper." —Milton Friedman, "Money Mischief," 1992

Some free market economic theorists (politicians, university professors, etc.) will insist a GLI is unscientific and 'inflationary' even while they cash the taxpayer-provided guaranteed livable income cheques they get paid to produce 'thoughts' *refuting* the need for GLI. *Thus they exempt themselves from the very scientific laws they insist that others must obey or live and die in poverty.* They embody the expression: "The essence of immorality is the tendency to make an exception of myself." (Jane Addams, 1860-1935). By way of comparison, people living on farms with wells, wood lots and so forth can at least be self-sufficient in the necessities.

Given their own obvious economic dependency and their need to be supplied with a guaranteed income from the government either directly (politicians) or indirectly (university professors), it becomes understandable that most so-called free market social theorists are categorically opposed to the concept of universal guaranteed income. After all, if social theorists publicly acknowledged that they are not economically independent, then their social theory collapses. The reasons for this are not difficult to fathom.

"By this time, we should be familiar with the sincerity with which people will protect the economic territory which provides them their livelihood and wealth. Besides the necessity of a job or other source of income for survival, people need to feel they are good and useful to society. Few ever admit even to themselves that their hard work may not be fully productive. This emotional shield requires most people to say with equal sincerity that those on welfare are lazy ignorant and non-functional." — J.W. Smith, "The World's Wasted Wealth 2", Institute for Economic Democracy, 1994.

In all the worry about the costs of a GLI, it is ironic that the most costly thing we can be doing—to the environment, to health, to democracy, to peace and to justice for those needlessly living and dying of lack in the era of grotesque waste and luxury—is to try to produce our way to full employment.

"We find all the no-life-support-wealth-producing people going to their 1980 jobs in their cars or buses, spending trillions of dollar's worth of petroleum daily to get to their no-wealth-producing jobs. It doesn't take a computer to tell you that it will save both Universe and humanity trillions of dollars a day to pay them handsomely to stay at home." —Buckminster Fuller, Critical Path, 1981

There is no difference between voting for a law providing a government service, than voting to legislate a guaranteed livable income. After all, we give our consent to allow the government to authorize banks to print money; therefore, using the very same logic, we could vote for GLI. Without it, genocide, ecocide, and war will continue to be the norm.

This article is on the websites: www.livableincome.org and www.pacificcoast.net/~swag

Women & Poverty Facts

* One in five Canadian women lives in poverty (2.8 million women). *Stats Canada, 2000*

* 56% of lone parent families headed by women are poor, compared with 24% of those headed by men. *Stats Canada, 2000*

* 49% of single, widowed and divorced women over 65 are poor. *Stats Canada, 2000*

* 23.9% of women age 65 and older were poor vs. 12.4% of men over 65. *Stats Canada*

* Women and youth account for 83% of Canada's minimum wage workers. *Stats Canada, 1998*

* 70% of people living in abject poverty in the world are women. *UN Development Programme 1999*

* Rural women constitute the majority of the 1.5 billion people who live in absolute poverty... women own only around 1 percent of all land. *Food And Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002*

* In the past decade the number of women living in poverty has increased

disproportionately to the number of men, particularly in the developing countries. *The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women*

* On a global scale, women produce more than half of all the food that is grown. In sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, they produce up to 80% of basic foodstuffs. In Asia, they provide from 50 to 90% of the labour for rice cultivation. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2001*

* Women, on average around the world, work up to two hours longer than men each day. *The World's Women, 1995, a UN publication*

* Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food, but earn only 10 percent of the world's income and own less than one percent of the world's property. *Attributed to three sources: Estimates from World Development Indicators, Barber B. Conable, Jr., US Congressman and L. Leghorn and K. Parker in Sexual Economics and the World of Women*

Learn more & get involved

To request a **GLI Reader** with quotes about guaranteed income from over 100 sources both current and historic, or to request a **presentation** (groups of 10 or more people), phone: (250) 383-7322 or email: swag@pacificcoast.net. See Also **Livable Income For Everyone**: www.livableincome.org

Sources for information cited in the Introduction (pg.4):

Canadian Association for Sexual Assault Centres, see "**The Pictou Statement**" at <http://www.casac.ca/english/pictou.statement.htm>

TD Economics Special Report: "Welfare to Work in Ontario; still the road less traveled" <http://www.td.com/economics/special/welfare05.jsp>

"The Town With No Poverty: The long-term consequences of a Canadian guaranteed annual income social experiment" CIHR research project by Dr. Evelyn Forget, University of Manitoba <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/30016.html>

"Whither Goes Prairie Agriculture" by Professor Hartley Furtan, University of Saskatchewan. <http://www.usask.ca/research/news/read.php?id=526>

Senator Hugh Segal, member of the **Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry** <http://www.atlanticfarmfocus.ca/index.cfm?iid=1123&sid=7670>

"Getting the Balance Right", Saskatchewan Alternative Budget 2006-7, CCPA Saskatchewan Office http://www.policyalternatives.ca/index.cfm?act=news&office_ID=6&do=list&call=BB736455&pa=BB736455