

# COOPER INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES REPORT 2020



*With the support of many generous donors Cooper Institute has been active in the community for more than 35 years.*

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## Social Justice Symposium 2020

Cooper Institute's Social Justice Symposium is an annual event held in memory of Father Andrew Macdonald, a founder of Cooper Institute. In 2020 the symposium, **Protection of PEI Lands and Water as Sources of Life**, was co-hosted by the Trout River Environmental Committee and the Wheatley River Improvement Group. Between 40 and 50 people gathered at the Wheatley River Hall to hear guest speaker Colin Jeffrey, to engage in a community conversation about threats to water and land and to explore ways to build on past and present work to protect land and water in local watersheds.

Participants identified threats to the land, such as inadequate land-use planning, increased residential development and excessive land ownership. Soil loss and reduced organic content, hedgerow removal and clear-cutting of forests were also among the issues raised.

Some of the threats to water that participants identified were excessive nitrates causing widespread anoxic events, pesticides runoff resulting in fishkills, and lack of regulation of holding ponds for irrigation. People were quick to point out that "what's bad for land is also bad for water". Inadequate buffer zones and fields left bare in the winter causing soil erosion were cited as examples.

In his presentation, Colin noted the influence of climate change, including intensification of weather events causing run-off, soil loss and siltation. He acknowledged the many farmers who have moved towards more ecological practices, and the challenges presented by today's economic system of low global commodity prices and high costs of agricultural inputs.

When asked, "*What work for the protection of lands and water in our watersheds are you most proud of?*" participants agreed that a positive highlight was the engagement of young children and students in learning about and caring for their watersheds, including events such as Environmental Fun Day held every year in collaboration with local

schools. Also, they were proud of Island farmers who are working and caring for the land, despite an unfriendly economic system.

Participants were asked "*What are the most urgent things that should be taken on to increase the protection of land and water?*" There was general agreement about the importance of developing a sense of urgency around climate change. And that people might become more involved in actions or efforts to protect land and water if there were more opportunities to deepen our collective understanding of the value of ecosystems and natural landscapes and the importance of preserving them. We would do well to encourage a shift away from the idea that nature needs to be tamed and provide ways for people to connect with nature.



2020 Social Justice Symposium - Wheatley River

## PEI Fight for Affordable Housing

Cooper Institute has been a member and supporter of the [PEI Fight for Affordable Housing](#) since 2018. PEIFAH is based on the belief that that all people deserve safe, affordable and accessible homes and all levels of government have a role to play in ensuring its citizens have access to a healthy and sustainable way of life in their own communities.

Members of the FAH responded to media requests, published op-eds and met with policy-makers. The group consistently made the case for publicly owned and operated affordable housing, for an end to evictions due to repairs or renovations, and for rent controls and a rent registry.

In 2020 the PEI government decided to update its tenant-landlord legislation. Much of the work of the PEIFAH was centred on developing a response to the proposed new Residential Tenancy Act, and to engage tenants in the consultation process. A public meeting for tenants was held in the early spring, before the pandemic forced the group to rely on social media, email and telephone to engage people. Cooper Institute and the FAH made detailed written submissions as part of the consultation process.

One of the changes proposed by the FAH is a new position- a provincial housing planner who would work with landlords when there is a need for a tenant to temporarily relocate, to ensure a plan is made that meets the tenants' needs and maintains the security of their tenancy.

### **PEI Working Group for a Livable Income**

For the [PEI Working Group for a Livable Income](#), 2020 was one of the most outstanding years in its 17-year history, despite restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic which prohibited ordinary in-person meetings which are usually the source of creative collective thinking and planning.

The pandemic uncovered within a matter of weeks the reality of widespread impoverishment of millions of people in Canada who live on the edge economically. Some are one paycheque away from poverty and many are chronically without any regular paycheque. For this large group, COVID-19 involves loss of homes, food insecurity, and/or closures of their small businesses. These threats are magnified for Indigenous peoples who already had unequal access to goods and services, and for others in the BIPOC community who face systemic racism, both before and during the pandemic. It means increased fear for women who already living with the danger of gender-based violence in the home, and now confined with their abuser. It means untold fear among migrant workers who have little protection in this country.

The pandemic also highlighted some of the characteristics of the recognized 1% of the population who managed not only to hold on to their wealth, but in many cases to increase it during this global crisis.

We are rightly proud of how quickly our governments sprang into action to make money

quickly available for those most affected by the shutdowns. We have seen that governments are capable of recognizing that all people have the right to have basic needs met. We are encouraged that most policy makers now know that many people live in precarious situations and have at least a minimal awareness that many people still remain invisible or do not qualify for any survival payments. They now know that mechanisms are in place to establish basic income for the country. They also now know that many diverse sectors across the country are strongly in favour of establishing a system of basic income.

During this year the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income carried on its ordinary task of engaging with the community, policy makers, media and with national connections.

**Community:** As COVID shut things down in March and as Zoom became a way of life, there was ample opportunity to participate in online events to discuss the root causes of poverty and the right of all people to have their basic needs met. The Working Group maintained online communication with many people in the community, at least those with access to reliable and affordable internet.

**Policy Makers:** There was opportunity for dialogue with policy makers including PEI MLAs, MPs and senators. The Working Group also made its annual submission to the Employment Standards Board, emphasizing the urgency of that body moving decisively to create social justice-based policy for the protection of migrant workers in PEI.

**Media:** The conventional media coverage of the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income was worthy of note with the publication of a letter to the editor, five lengthy opinion pieces, including one entitled *P.E.I. beacon for BIG movement*, from Ontario Senator Kim Pate, and three recorded media interviews. The Working Group made great progress in social media with the reconstruction of a web site and a Facebook page.

**National Connections:** Six months before COVID 19 appeared, a non-governmental organization promoting basic income guarantee was forming. *Coalition Canada: basic income/revenue de base* includes representatives from nine provinces and one territory. A member of the PEI Working group for a Livable Income represents PEI. The founders of Coalition Canada were motivated by the political reality of minority governments in both Ottawa and Charlottetown to recommend PEI as an ideal launching place for a national basic income system. Its proposal is for a full-province basic income federal-provincial program.

## Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands

The [Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands](#) is a community network which monitors all aspects of PEI land ownership, control and use. It aims to engage politicians, the media, and residents in actions to protect PEI lands from all forms of threat or aggression. Coalition members come from diverse groups and interests and share an overarching concern for the earth and all of its inhabitants. We are all promoters of social justice-based public policy that has the power to reverse the damage done by economic plans which favour the few at the top. We are all on the alert about a political system that is often controlled from corporate boardrooms.

In early 2020 the Coalition began preparing and organizing for the Government's promised review of the Lands Protection Act. There was agreement of the need first and foremost to identify the spirit and intent of the Act. There was clarity about ceasing to use the phrase "loopholes in the Act" which in itself provided a pretense that the Act is flawed when in fact it is simply being contravened. Groups and individuals point to the power of current modes of capitalism, as expressed by vertically integrated corporations which endorse industrial agriculture.

During the year the Coalition had two frank meetings with Premier Dennis King, who made it clear that he remains constant in the need to follow the spirit of the Lands Protection Act. He reaffirmed his pre-election commitments made at the Leaders forum organized by the Coalition, where he promised to correct the past violations of the Act.

The Coalition, always conscious that land and water are inseparable, protested a *seven million gallon holding pond* when it was being constructed in Shamrock and the proliferation of holding ponds in many communities during and since that time.

Coalition members kept close watch on the slow progress of the expected consultation on the Lands Protection Act and of IRAC's land transactions study. The Consultation, called *PEI Land Matters* began during the summer with an online survey. There was a wide participation in that survey, the responses being positive around the need to enact real protection of PEI lands.

A number of opinion pieces were published, including a letter to the editor concerning the inappropriateness of the PEI Government making emergency funds available to the Irvings, emphasizing that as long as Irvings have such a close alliance with government that PEI lands are always in jeopardy. Two more op-eds commented on the inaction of government in their stalled Land Matters

Project consultation and responded to Minister Thompson's announcement of IRAC's findings around dubious land acquisitions, with special attention to the Irving interest's infamous Brendel/Red Fox Acres land transaction.

During the fall sitting of the Legislature, the Coalition promoted a lobby to support MLAs, expected to speak out for lands protection before the end of the session. However, there was no serious debate about the land before the Legislature adjourned. The IRAC study which was put in the hands of the Privacy Commissioner was still on hold and out of sight for Islanders.

In the last months of 2020, the Coalition launched a fundraising campaign to raise money to develop social media and eventually hire someone to do a search of land transactions.

## Islanders for Proportional Representation

[Islanders for Proportional Representation](#) (IPR) continues to promote proportional representation (PR) as the most democratic path to electoral reform.

Members of IPR met with Wayne Easter MP to discuss establishing a national Citizen's Assembly for Electoral Reform.

At the beginning of the year, besides the Federal Government there were four minority provincial governments: New Brunswick, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. It seemed like an opportune time to translate the cooperation and collaboration necessary in these jurisdictions into patterns of a permanent PR way of governing.

In October, IPR held an online forum, with a presentation by Willie Sullivan of the Scottish branch of Electoral Reform Society. He was involved in establishing Proportional Representation in Scotland. He spoke about the history PR in Scotland, how it is working, how difficulties are being addressed, and how a great many of people's prior fears about PR are proving to be unfounded. IPR organizers felt it was a good time for PEI to recognize the role of fear mongering which influenced voters in the 2019 Referendum.

Islanders for Proportional Representation, aware that elections can be called at any time, is preparing its strategy for ensuring that proportional representation be brought to the fore. A high percentage of voters across the country know that First Past the Post elections do not serve the needs of the majority of people. Proportional Representation will elect legislatures which reflect our communities and represent their interests.

## Migrant Workers

In Canada, in 2020, migrant workers were among those most affected by COVID-19. Their increased vulnerability during the pandemic highlighted some longstanding issues: crowded and inadequate living conditions; systemic disempowerment and fear of speaking out about unhealthy or unsafe work environments; inconsistent access to healthcare. At the root of it all is the precarious situation of migrant workers which is created by the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program and exacerbated by gaps in provincial policies and services. As workers and advocates redoubled their efforts in advocating for permanent status for all migrant workers, Cooper Institute and the PEI Action Team for Migrant Workers' Rights joined in campaigns in 2020 for Status for All, universal access to healthcare, and access to COVID-related emergency benefits.

*Individual Support:* Thanks to Cooper Institute supporters, United Way of PEI, BIPOC-USHR and Island Musicians for Migrant Workers' Relief, we provided funds to migrant workers who were experiencing loss of income due to the pandemic. We also supported several workers to affirm their rights, and to gain access to needed information.

*Legislation:* For almost a decade, Cooper Institute has been calling for legislation to protect migrant workers in Prince Edward Island. We have met with elected and other government officials to promote the idea of regulation and registration of recruiters and registration of employers among other things. Finally, the province is developing legislation. The first step was to ask "key informants" to provide input, which Cooper Institute and allies - the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and UPSE - have done.

*Information Guides:* We received COVID emergency response funding from the Community Foundation to update our information guides for migrant workers and make them more user-friendly online, in English, Spanish and Chinese.

*Research Project:* Cooper Institute is a partner in a research project looking at the impacts of COVID on migrant workers in the Maritimes. Interviews have been conducted with workers in PEI and results should be published in 2021.

*Status for All:* The call for status for all migrants is being amplified and is coming from many quarters. A letter composed by the Migrant Rights Network (Cooper Institute is a member) was signed by many organizations including several of our allies in PEI – the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Federation of Labour, Council of Canadians, Breaking the Silence, Women's Network. Without

status, migrants are vulnerable - fearful of speaking up about abuse, unhealthy and unsafe working and living conditions. The only way to ensure that migrant workers can defend their rights without fear of reprisal, the only way to ensure their access to necessary services and supports is for them to be provided permanent immigration status on arrival.

## Take Back the Night

Cooper Institute was contracted by the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to organize *Take Back the Night* in September. Take Back the Night marches gained popularity around the world in the 1980s. An advisory committee of representatives from 11 local groups met monthly to plan. The focus of the event and the preceding media campaign was gender-based violence, and how this is compounded by marginalization, both in public, at work, and at home. Importantly, women and gender minorities face violence in their homes – a reality that became starkly apparent during the COVID19 lockdown(s).



Following a social media campaign, the event took place on September 17. An opening was provided by Elder Marlene Thomas. About 150 people and socially distanced marchers chanted as they marched from the Coles Building to the pavilion in Victoria Park, with performances by Heartbeat of Epekwitk and Kierrah Celeste, and impassioned messages were offered from Elder Judy Clarke, Action Femmes, Black Cultural Society, BIPOC USHR, PRIDE PEI, and PEI Rape & Sexual Assault Centre. In addition, the following groups offered short informational announcements about their services: PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Blooming House, PEI Family Violence Prevention, PEERS Alliance, and UPEI's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator. The project was funded by the Interministerial Women's Secretariat. The PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre hopes that *Take Back the Night* will once again become an annual event in PEI.

## BIPOC-USHR

In the Summer of 2020, Cooper Institute partnered with [BIPOC-USHR](#) to create a unique position funded by United Way. Two Black women were hired as community navigators, a first for the province. Initially, we were reacting to situations as they arose, running around putting out little fires everywhere. Over time, the underlying systemic issues became apparent. As we spent time in the community responding to calls of varying needs and urgency, we gained a better understanding of the issues our BIPOC community faces. We are now ready to solve these issues.

At the halfway point of the navigator contract, there are some clear, ready-to-implement solutions to some of the Island's race issues. These solutions are unique because they are by the BIPOC community for the BIPOC community, something unheard of in PEI. There are four primary areas of concern that will be addressed, they are: Education, Justice, Healthcare and Safety.

Over the next three months we plan to implement solutions in partnership with the province and other provincial and national non-governmental organizations. These include proactive solutions to address underlying systemic issues and community vulnerabilities before further harm and trauma takes place. These solutions will raise consciousness across the Island; create safer environments for BIPOC folx; ensure adequate, equitable services are available for ALL Islanders; and deepen relationships among and within BIPOC communities.

Something that has been clear throughout this work is that when BIPOC folx are given agency and funding to heal, educate, support, and protect their own communities, they do so with a lens and skillset that no white organization ever could. BIPOC presence is vital when it comes to building safer and healthier collective communities.

## Social Justice in Public Transit

In the fall, Cooper Institute brought together representatives of PEI Council of People with Disabilities, PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Environmental Coalition of PEI, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI, PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, as well as several interested individuals to plan a campaign to promote public transit as an issue of social justice. Activities were aimed at engaging the community, media and stakeholders in public transit.

To encourage people to use public transit, for 10 days in October, guided community bus tours were offered, and bus riders took part in a survey and played transit bingo.

The goals of this project were to hear from and engage diverse Island communities around their public transit needs and the barriers they experience, to reframe the

conversation about public transit, orienting it toward social-ecological change, and to determine and take the next steps for a new wave of rural-urban public transit advocacy for PEI based on the principle 'nothing about us without us'.

We heard from the community that changes are needed. With this feedback in mind, the coordinating committee believes that PEI's public transit system must be made more accessible, inclusive, and community led. This means that people using wheelchairs or pushing strollers can get on and off, that people with visual or auditory impairments can easily use the system, that the schedule is comprehensive and easy to understand, that the buses are frequent and reliable, that the whole system is well-promoted, that the bus drivers receive sensitivity, trauma-informed, and anti-racism training, and that it feels safe to use in general. Safety and reliability of public transit services is a social justice issue. An accessible and inclusive public transit system must serve all people living in Epekwitk, including those in rural areas.

A truly public transit system must have a guiding body that includes the lived experience of a diversity of public transit users. The system must include a mechanism for riders (and potential riders) to easily register their transit needs and feedback. It must *be* and *feel* publicly owned and administered.

In the New Year, the coordinating committee will compile a list of recommendations based on feedback from community members and share them with municipalities, the provincial government, and transit operators. The recommendations will be used for further public transit activism.



## Trade Justice PEI

For the past seven years Cooper Institute members have been actively involved in Trade Justice PEI, a coalition of groups and individuals convinced of the need for a model of international trade that is more democratic and environmentally sustainable, more supportive of a transition to a carbon neutral economy in which workers receive their fair share of the benefits, and which is more respectful of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

As was the case for so many organizations in 2020, Trade Justice soon found itself responding to longstanding issues that became more evident and critical with COVID-19. The pandemic revealed the need to improve and standardize long-term care in this country, the need for a publicly funded and operated childcare system and the need for better protections for the poorly paid essential workers who have kept the economy going in a time of crisis.

In June an open letter to the Premier called on the PEI Government to develop a recovery plan with a vision of the future that boldly addresses broad social and environmental issues, as opposed to a plan based on the assumption of a “return to business as usual”. We published a series of op-eds calling for increased investment in public services, standards and reform to long-term care, and social justice-based approaches to climate change and food and agriculture policy.

Towards the end of the year, Trade Justice members, including several members of Cooper Institute, met with Island MPs to ask them to do their best to convince the PM and colleagues in Ottawa to support a proposal by India and South Africa to the WTO for a “Waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19.” The waiver would increase access - for all countries regardless of size and wealth - to vaccines and medical equipment needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. To date Canada has still not openly supported the waiver, and we are continuing our advocacy efforts.

## Gender & Trauma in PEI Politics

The PEI Coalition for Women in Government contracted Cooper Institute to conduct research into Trauma Informed policy for political organizations in PEI. This involved a literature review, interviews with PEI women who had been involved in electoral politics, and creation of a final report. The research was conducted over the spring and summer months. Each interview was attended by a Trauma Informed practitioner to support the research participants.

The premise of the research was that many women are survivors of trauma from sexualized, gender-based harassment and/or assault.

Electoral politics is (re)traumatizing on these counts. A number of recurring barriers and inequities were identified including systemic barriers, attrition of women, poor conflict management, class inequity, tokenism, internal harassment, and external harassment. Many of these themes are consistent with national trends and are reflected in research by national organizations. Marginalized women were underrepresented among the interview participants because they are underrepresented among PEI’s political organizations. The report can be found at: [www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/projects-and-resources](http://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/projects-and-resources)

## Seeds of Community

With the help of community members and librarians, Cooper Institute coordinated seed exchanges and seed-saving workshops (presented by Carina Phillips) in Charlottetown and Summerside. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March, events in Montague and Breadalbane were cancelled.



Instead, a mail-out seed exchange was organized, and saved seeds were placed in Tiny Lending Libraries around Charlottetown. The pandemic highlighted the need for communities to organize around seed sovereignty and food sovereignty. Community food resilience is vital, especially in times of disruption to the global-industrial food supply chain.

The **PEI Seed Alliance** had a banner year, partly due to COVID-19. New enthusiasm for home gardening resulted in increased sales of seeds, grown by Lorna McMaster of Pembroke Farms and Tina Davies of Emmerdale Eden Farms. Cooper Institute offered technical support. By making locally-adapted, organic, open-pollinated varieties of seeds available, the Alliance is helping to preserve biodiversity and increase resilience in our food system.

## Organizational Support

Members of the Cooper Institute collective work with and support many organizations in various ways:

**Société Saint-Thomas d'Acquin**

**Parkinson Society Maritime Region (PEI)**

**Breaking the Silence Maritimes-Guatemala Solidarity Network**

**P.E.I. Supported Decision-Making Coalition**

**Voluntary Resource Council**

**National Farmers Union**

**Save Our Seas and Shores PEI**

**Atlantic Council for International Cooperation**

**Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water**

**Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands**

**Coalition Canada: basic income/revenue de base**

**Latin American Mission Program (LAMP)**

**Canadian Council for Refugees**

**Lennon House Association**

**PEI Fight for Affordable Housing**

**Cinema Politica Charlottetown**

**Partners for Change**

## Fundraising Committee

Two members of the Cooper Institute Fundraising Committee continue to dedicate themselves to raising the profile of Cooper Institute and to raising money to support Cooper Institute's work to better the life of Islanders. They are Des Duffy, with his spouse Yvonne Gallant, and Irene Burge. The Duffy-Gallant team, counting their own contribution, raised **\$40,400. Thank you, Des and Yvonne!**

Irene Burge is responsible for an annual mailout in which she encourages people to sign up as sustaining monthly donors. This effort over the years results in an assured revenue of **\$16,100** per year which covers our overhead costs. As well, this year Irene raised a substantial donation for Cooper Foundation, which helps to provide long term support for Cooper Institute's work. **Thank you, Irene!**

Cooper Institute thanks again all our contributors who continue to make many generous donations. We invite other interested people to donate. More than

half of the funding for our work in the community comes from private sources. Cooper Institute Fundraising Committee encourages donors to continue with their generosity. With your help we can continue our current work and expand it when needed.

Donations can be made by using the "donate" button on our website [www.cooperinstitute.ca](http://www.cooperinstitute.ca). Contributions can also be made in the following ways: pre-authorized monthly donations; an annual contribution; a memorial for a deceased family member or friend; a bequest in your Last Will and Testament. Cooper Institute is a registered charity (Registration #10114 4541 RR0001). For information on donating to Cooper Foundation, which is also a registered charity, contact [burgeirene@hotmail.com](mailto:burgeirene@hotmail.com).

## About Coalitions

Cooper Institute is fortunate to be able to carry out our work in collaboration with many groups and people who are also committed to social justice. This style of work promotes cooperation and provides opportunities for sharing knowledge and strategies. It is an environment in which we learn with, and from, each other. And it is an efficient use of time and energy. In this way we are privileged to work with organized labour, and migrant workers. We are united with equality-seeking women, including those who fight for reproductive rights for women. We are with people with disabilities seeking fairness. We are with environmentalists and with food producers who value the ecosystem and who work toward people-centered food systems. We appreciate and thank all our associates. Together we can contribute to the creation of new and equitable solutions.

## Members of the Cooper Institute Collective

Paola Flores	Maureen Larkin
Irene Burge	Leah MacLeod
Marie Burge	Reg Phelan
Joe Byrne	Selvi Roy
Eddie Cormier	Debbie Theuerkauf
Irene Doyle	Ann Wheatley
Michelle Pineau	Paul Hines
Shelby Downe	Josie Baker
Natasha Chambers	Kendi Tarichia

## Connect with Cooper Institute

You can find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cooperinstitute) or visit our website – [www.cooperinstitute.ca](http://www.cooperinstitute.ca)

## Basic Income Guarantee—New Visibility, New Horizons

The formation of *Coalition Canada: basic income/revenue de base* in November of 2019 provided a cohesive national voice for basic income advocacy. This initiative involved the active engagement of basic income non-governmental groups in nine provinces and one territory. The Coalition began with a shared description of Basic Income Guarantee that it is a direct payment from government to ensure that **everyone** has sufficient income to meet their basic needs, participate in society, and live with dignity regardless of work status.

The member groups agreed on the following principles. BIG is universally accessible and available to everyone when needed. It is unconditional, subject only to residency and income, regardless of work or relationship status and sufficient to live in dignity and security; indexed to the cost of living. BIG is part of and complementary to a broad social safety net of universal supports and services, not a replacement. BIG respects autonomy it is payable to individuals to be used at their sole discretion. Free of stigma and oversight. It is reliable, delivered monthly or bi-weekly and is responsive to changing circumstances.

While the Coalition was forming the Special Committee on Poverty in PEI was already in operation. One of the Special Committee's mandates was to devise **recommendations regarding the creation of a Basic Income Guarantee pilot for Prince Edward Island**. It is significant that the committee developed its statement of principles similar to the one guiding the work of the Coalition. The committee presented these principles twice to the Legislature, first as part of its interim report and second as part of the final report (December 1, 2020). Each time the principles were accepted by unanimous vote.

The first campaign of *Coalition Canada: basic income/revenue de base* was in support of Prince Edward Island as an ideal location in which to launch the implementation of Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) as an important step towards establishing BIG as a national Federal-Provincial system. The first part of this campaign was to write letters to the Premier, the leaders of the other three parties and the Chair of the Special Committee on Poverty in PEI. Members of the Coalition sent 47 letters. In the second part of the PEI campaign, Coalition members wrote 185 letters to a selection of MPs and senators soliciting support for PEI with a province-wide BIG program serving as an ideal launching of a hoped for nationwide Basic Income Guarantee.

The second campaign of the *Coalition Canada: basic income/revenue de base* was to help organizing national lobby days in October designed to engage MPs and Senators to support the concept of Basic Income and the possibilities for implementing it. In all, the Coalition members sent 1,100 promotional messages to all Liberal, NDP and the Bloc MPs and a wide range of interested senators.

Ironically, while the pandemic restricted some of the work around Basic Income Guarantee, it also served as a catalyst. COVID 19 revealed many realities kept hidden in ordinary times. It became clear that millions of Canadians are living on the edge. Some are one pay cheque away from poverty or many are chronically without any regular pay cheque. For this large group, the virus involves loss of homes, rental spaces, food, and/or their small businesses. These threats are magnified for Indigenous peoples who already had unequal access to goods and services. As well, the threats are amplified for people of various racial origins who face systemic racism, both before and during the pandemic. It means increased fear for women who have already lived with the danger of gender-based violence in the home. It means untold fear among migrant workers who have little protection in this country.

Another clarification during this year is that income inequality continues to rise. In Canada 43 billionaires own the equivalent of half the Canada's wealth. More people are realizing that with very little pressure on this class, Basic Income Guarantee is affordable.

In response to the pandemic's revelation of the dire situation of so many Canadians, the internet was crowded with town halls and webinars. Many new voices are raised in favor of basic income. The Prime Minister and his closest decision makers received letters promoting basic income as a post-pandemic vision. Some examples are: fifty Canadian senators; the Bishops of the Anglican and Lutheran churches of Canada; 150 health professionals; and a Basic Income Canada Youth Network, a new organization formed during the year.

Finally, people are seeing new directions which are based on the recognition of three grassroots movements which grew in strength in the first months of COVID -19. These three movements highlighted the following: that basic income is a right of all people so that all can have their basic needs met with dignity; that anti-racism is systemic, requiring deep systemic changes; and that global warming is the Definitive Emergency. ***The movements have expressed in multiple ways that their issues and goals logically and intentionally intersect.***