

Human beings have struggled for economic equality, and equality of freedom and respect, throughout their history. Despite Canada's loudly proclaimed commitments to human rights, social welfare and multiculturalism, however, these struggles have become harder in recent decades.

The Green Party under Dimitri is committed to advancing these struggles radically, towards a new culmination.

Poverty has persisted and economic inequality has reached levels unprecedented in modern times. Diverse forms of social prejudice, disrespect and exclusion are intricately intertwined with poverty and economic inequality. On the one hand, their rise has deepened the discrimination faced by already marginalised groups in society. These groups include women, Indigenous people, racialized Canadians, 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual people and other gender and sexual minorities), the old, the young, migrants and mentally ill and differently abled people (We refer to all these groups as equity-seeking groups). On the other, though some members of these groups may be privileged in some or another way, equity-seeking groups are disproportionately represented among the poor, the homeless and those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder.

The neoliberal policies of recent decades lie at the root of the rise in inequality, the persistence of poverty and rising prejudice against, disrespect for and exclusion of equity-seeking groups. Privatization, regressive taxation, deregulation and cutbacks to social services, including health and education, have all directly increased poverty and inequality while enriching the already wealthy. When such policies increase the number of disadvantaged socio-economic positions in society, individuals from equity-seeking groups tend to populate them. Inequality and poverty become more entrenched and linked with discrimination, prejudice and exclusion. Other processes contribute to this linkage. Responsibility for compensating for the loss of social services falls disproportionately on equity seeking groups, disadvantaging them further. Rising inequality has also been driving house prices up, far beyond the reach of many Canadians and homelessness too affects equity-seeking groups disproportionately. Too much of this is regarded as acceptable in too many quarters. No wonder, despite these setbacks, far right movements are emerging as a backlash against equity seeking groups.

The response of successive governments on the economic front has been limited to poverty reduction programs. Not only do they ignore the larger issue of inequality, their success is limited because they do. On matters of prejudice, disrespect and exclusion, the official approach has been to treat them as 'cultural' problems unrelated to economic inequality and poverty inequalities. It calls only for better education of citizens, appeals to "tolerance," or pursues 'affirmative action' through the appointment of a small number of selected members of equity seeking groups to high-profile positions. Such affirmative action cannot, on its own, address the underlying social, economic, and institutional causes of inequality and exclusion of whole sections of society. Members of equity seeking groups who do manage to get through the barriers to employment and advancement in various fields are often subjected to hostile work environments in which their credentials are questioned or dismissed. The problems of

the larger equity seeking groups remain intact and even acquire new dimensions as members of the dominant groups often view them as recipients of special favours.

The Green Party under Dimitri's leadership recognises that well over half the population faces discriminatory and inequitable practices, including inequality, poverty, violence, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation and hate speech. The Green Party under Dimitri's leadership also recognises that the struggles of Indigenous Peoples in Canada are special and unique and deals with advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples in a separate document: 'Indigenous Land, Indigenous Sovereignty, Indigenous Rights.' The present document deals with all the other equity-seeking groups.

The Green Party recognises that the reasons why inequality, poverty, discrimination and exclusion persist are many. They include

1. the cross-party neoliberal policy consensus that has increased economic inequality and kept an unconscionably high proportion of Canadians, disproportionately from the equity seeking groups, in poverty or on low incomes;
2. limited efforts to reduce economic inequality and poverty and an empty multiculturalism confines the redress of inequality to rhetoric and symbolism;
3. A piecemeal approach to each equity-seeking group that ignores their overlap, leading to many individuals falling between stools.
4. A refusal to enact Canada's international human rights commitments into Canadian law, making them justiciable here;
5. The persistence of legal loopholes that contradict the anti-discrimination thrust of Canadian law;
6. Under-representation of equity seeking groups in elected office, in government, in corporations and in other powerful social institutions.
7. The persistence of archaic attitudes that consider hierarchy and inequality normal and ignorance of the real histories, social roles and contributions of equity seeking groups.

In light of this, Green Party under Dimitri will approach the historic task of tackling the many-sided problem of redressing inequality, poverty and the rightful demands of equity-seeking groups with an approach based on the following fundamental principles:

1. Inequality, poverty, discrimination and exclusion are not just the problems of those who suffer them but for the whole of society.
2. Equity-seeking groups overlap and we must design solutions not for each individual equity-seeking group but for each of the various fronts along which many or all of them suffer discrimination and exclusion.

They are the following:

3. We must manage the economy such that it does not systematically generate inequality and poverty.

4. Inequality and poverty cannot be addressed unless equity seeking groups are heard from and this cannot happen unless they represent themselves, and are adequately represented, in society's governance and other institutions.
5. Social services, such as health, education, community, recreation services and the like, are core components of well-being and must be universally accessible without discrimination, are the core components of ending discrimination and exclusion across the range of equity-seeking groups.
6. To design policy to address inequality, poverty, discrimination and marginalisation, we need information and data.
7. The legal system is critical in ensuring discrimination is made illegal and justiciable.
8. No society where might is right can rectify problems of inequality, poverty, discrimination and exclusion. There should be a comprehensive strategy to ending violence and intimidation, from schoolyard bullying to police violence towards all equity-seeking groups, including education, appropriate penalties and the re-education and rehabilitation of offenders.
9. Poverty, inequality, discrimination and marginalization cannot be addressed unless we stop subscribing to understandings and narratives that portray equity seeking groups as making little or no contribution to, and even a burden on, society. Knowledge must be expanded beyond its present limits.
10. It is critical to ensure that the recovery from the pandemic is not only strong but egalitarian, inclusive and non-discriminatory.