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ISARC NEWS

Fall 2015 Update

Hello! There is a lot going on with Ontario's interfaith anti-poverty coalition, ISARC (Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition).

Registration Open:

Queen's Park Forum Nov.18.

Our fall Religious Leaders' Forum at Queen's Park, Toronto will focus on an exciting new initiative: *Voices From the Margins*, a series of hearings on poverty in communities across Ontario during 2016. Our keynote speaker is one of Canada's top progressive economists, Armine Yalnizyan, from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Tools for mobilizing people of faith, information on the hearings, table discussions and comments from MPPs will also be featured.

The forum runs from **9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov.18.**



Armine Yalnizyan

[Register Now](#)

Since capacity is limited, please register soon. Registration, which includes lunch, is \$40, and \$20 for students.

Community Hearings on Poverty: Can You Help?

Six years into an Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, what difference has it made for 1.3 million Ontarians living in poverty? Are their lives better? How can we sustain the momentum to improve life for people trapped in poverty?

As noted above, our coalition is launching a dynamic new initiative to find some answers to these urgent questions, called *Voices From the Margins*. It involves local events across Ontario next spring at which the real poverty experts — low-income people themselves — will be able to speak of their lives and goals, in a safe environment. Members of local churches, mosques, synagogues and other faith communities will also take part.

If you're an ISARC "veteran", you'll know that we've held hearings like this several times before, which have involved hundreds of people each time, sparked local discussions and media coverage, led to follow-up advocacy at Queen's Park, and produced books such as *Persistent Poverty* and *Lives Still in the Balance*. We'll be working for similar outcomes through the *Voices* project, but will use social media and involve more community work and social work students in this round of hearings.

The success of the *Voices* project depends on ISARC's network across the province — people like you! Already people in Orillia, Kingston, Peterborough, Kitchener-Waterloo and other communities have offered to help with local events.

Can you work with others in your community to host a local hearing?

Would you like to learn more? Let us know — email coordinator@isarc.ca.

Speaking Out for Vulnerable Workers

Tens of thousands of temporary, contract and other vulnerable workers in Ontario need stronger protection to defend their rights, and to be able to enjoy a decent standard of living. ISARC brought this message home to the Ontario government's Changing Workplaces Review in a presentation in Scarborough on Sept. 11. Rabbi Shalom Schachter, a veteran labour lawyer and member of the ISARC Steering Committee, presented the brief to the review's Special Advisors.

“We are deeply concerned about current employment practises that are deepening poverty, uncertainty and stress for tens of thousands of Ontario workers and their families,” said ISARC, referring to the fact that 40 percent of work in Ontario involves temporary, contract and other precarious jobs, and that temp workers on average make 33 percent less per hour than full-time employees. Measures to improve the lives of these vulnerable workers are outlined in the brief.

You can read our [full report here](#).

Changes at ISARC

Elin Goulden has moved on as ISARC’s Program Coordinator, replaced by Murray MacAdam, who has been involved with our coalition for 15 years in various ways. We’re grateful to Elin for her hard work during the past two years.



Elin Goulden



Murray MacAdam

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