

Poverty hits up to 30 per cent of Nunavik households: report

Researcher says scope unique to region

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KUUJJUAQ — Nunavimmiut are up to three times more likely to live in poverty than people in southern Quebec, says new research from Gerard Duhaime, a Université Laval sociologist.

As a way of improving conditions, Nunavik-wide public forums should develop and adopt an anti-poverty strategy for the region, Duhaime suggested during his Sept. 17 presentation to the Kativik Regional Government council meeting in Kuujjuaq.

Duhaime's research examined poverty as an economic condition, that is, when a household can't get the goods and services it needs, and, as a result, has a lower standard of living than the norm.

Duhaime found poverty affects 20 to 30 per cent of households in Nunavik, with elders and single parents with more than three children among the most affected.

Similar levels of poverty can be found in some poor neighbourhoods in Montreal, he noted.

"What is perhaps unique about Nunavik is the scope of certain conditions of poverty, such as the low level of education, the proportion of household budgets dedicated to food, the proportion of single-parent households, the high rate of unemployment, the statistically lower remuneration paid to Inuit compared with non-Inuit, the demographic structure, and so on," Duhaime says in his report *Poverty in Nunavik: state of knowledge*.

Duhaime suggests that increasing income is "a necessary element in the fight against poverty in Nunavik" and that old age assistance and social assistance programs must be improved.

That's because remaining above the poverty line in Nunavik takes a much higher household income than in the rest of Quebec— \$39,260 for a family of four instead of \$27,264.

More research is needed to see whether the poor in Nunavik are deprived of food, clothing, transportation, standard consumer goods and appropriate housing conditions, and why, Duhaime told the KRG councillors.

There's no famine in Nunavik and women aren't systematically prevented from getting an education, as is the case in many third world countries.

And some assistance programs are also already in place.

But Dumaine said tackling poverty in Nunavik needs a more coherent and concerted effort.

To this end, he told councillors he has received \$250,000 in federal research money to continue the research and start the consultation process on poverty in Nunavik.