That Poverty Project

Living Parameters

Phase Two – "Struggles of the Working Poor"

1. That Poverty Guy will have only an average of $7.50 per day to cover the cost of his food, gas (personal use of car) or other transportation, clothing, and all other incidentals after having covered the cost of shelter, home & car insurance, and utilities (incl. TV). This would be similar to the situation of someone who works full-time earning minimum wage (i.e. $1500/mo. in Alberta), paying rent for one-bedroom apartment (i.e. avg. in Calgary - $1,100/mo., Edmonton - $900/mo., Canmore - $958/mo.), paying utilities and insurance, and being left with only about $225 per month for everyone else.

2. The amount of cash available each day will fluctuate daily while averaging $7.50. This parallels the reality faced by many working poor around the world who have a good day in the market one day and then a terrible day the next. The amount each day will be chosen arbitrarily by a third party who will inform That Poverty Guy of the daily amount for the next day each evening.

3. With only two exceptions, That Poverty Guy will have no other spending money. The first exception comes from any savings to utilities based upon reduced usage (compared to previous bills). Of course, if costs go up then this may negatively affect the amount of money available on a daily basis. The second exception would be found money or gifts (as long as any such occurrences are isolated and do not take away from the integrity of the project).

4. Hospitality from others is accepted (within reason and as long as it does not come from immediate family or work against the objectives of the project). In this vein, That Poverty Guy will have a regular Christmas dinner as would one who receives a Christmas hamper.

5. Borrowing. In order to bring awareness to micro-finance initiatives in various parts of the developing world, That Poverty Guy will have access to borrowing throughout the project. During the first month, any borrowing would be done at "loan shark" rates that may be found in the developing world – i.e. 1.5% per day with the loan being repayable the following day, and the interest compounding daily if not repaid. During the second month, the Grameen model will be used – i.e. 2% monthly interest rate with a repayment instalment due every week (including the interest to that day). During the third month, a more flexible micro-finance model will be used – i.e. 3.5% monthly interest (non-compounding) but repayable at any time.