

Chapter 7: Support Inclusion

Overview

In order to transition to zero poverty in Oxford County it will require structural shifts on how employment, income and social supports are distributed and used, this process will require **accountability and transparency** in all decision making.^{5,6} It will require a responsive and adaptive approach to a rapidly changing world and economy.⁶ The complete transformation to zero poverty is not merely substituting one social support for another - it needs to be an inclusive and democratic process.⁵ The community needs to become engaged and see the benefits associated with the recommendations derived from the Zero Poverty Oxford Plan, **inclusive communication and outreach** is essential.. There are a wide range of zero poverty initiatives that are needed to impact individuals and the community such as housing, income, food security, social inclusion, social support, community development, access to services and health care, education, transportation, employment and recreation.¹ Impacting systems and policies to improve wellbeing is a key element of an effective strategy.⁷ As previously mentioned in Section 1, the Collective Impact framework is an approach towards community change that includes five key areas: developing a common agenda, using shared measurements to understand progress, building on mutually reinforcing activities, engaging in continuous communications, and providing a backbone to move the work forward.⁷ Poverty is multi-faceted issue interwoven together with many far-reaching impacts and causes .⁶ It is essential to have a **diversified poverty transition** and activate as many community members as possible to adopt the process as their own. The ultimate goal as Oxford County transitions towards zero poverty is an equitable, inclusive and fair society and the plan aims to **safeguard a social just transition**.⁵

Ensure Accountability and Transparency

Political and stakeholder accountability along with building trust within the community is essential to raising and maintaining public engagement. Underpinning values and principles of the collective impact approach include transparency and accountability.⁴ Accountability and transparency are important when considering staff and hiring, funding allocation, building political will and communicating and advancing the policy agenda.⁴ Accountability helps ensure that the best interest of the community are in mind. Mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency help legitimize political, stakeholder and community commitment.⁵ The Oxford County situation table -where a large group of community partners meet weekly to provide immediate wrap-around services to individuals and families who are at extreme risk and slipping through the cracks - is a great example where high levels of accountability and transparency has harnessed trust to ensure effective collaboration to mitigate risk for those most vulnerable in Oxford County.

Key Actions

Develop appropriate tools that ensure accountability that allow people to see if the suggestions are making a difference. For example, a testimony could be provided by an individual that gives a transparent description of how well something is or is not working.

Promote Inclusive Communication and Outreach

Strategic communication is more than disseminating information to people to inform them about the zero poverty initiative. It is the active engagement of community perspectives to help the formulation of policy, and to ensure that the mechanisms are in place for ongoing communication between stakeholders and community. Consultations with the community both promote awareness and increase engagement in the process. It is important to inform citizens about how they can be involved throughout the development process.⁵

Key Actions

Develop an inclusive consultation process that involves stakeholders, community members and people with lived experience. Consideration should be given to communications to ensure ease of comprehension.

Empower a Diversified Poverty Transition

There are a diversity of needs and contributing factors that lead to poverty.⁸ No one single approach will address all needs.¹ Community consultations are important for informing and guiding the direction of the zero poverty initiative. Measures needed to support those in generational poverty versus those in situational poverty are different, as are the measures required for supporting the working poor versus those receiving social assistance. An inclusive zero poverty strategy includes inclusive policy framework and long term investment and considers local needs while looking upstream to address the way social supports are distributed and advocating for new policies.^{1,5} An inclusive process will *strengthen cooperation and collective impact.*⁴

Key Actions

Explore opportunities for community members, those with lived experience and other sectors to become part of the move towards zero poverty.

Safeguard a Socially Just Transition

Working towards zero poverty will require a broad approach that considers many different population groups within our community. The most vulnerable members of the community must be part of the innovation and transformation process.⁵ In order to ensure that this initiative benefits the greatest number of people, community engagement, accountability and transparency is vital.⁵ Policies should protect vulnerable populations without excluding others. Proportionate universalism is an approach that aims to achieve equity in service delivery and policy development.

“Proportionate universalism recognizes that, across the health gradient, programs, services and policies must include a range of responses to address different levels of disadvantage within the population, as opposed to solely targeting the least disadvantaged groups”.⁹

Key Actions

To ensure a socially just transition, future drafts of the plan will focus on strategies to work within these vulnerable populations.

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