

Chapter 8: Nurture Vertical and Horizontal Cooperation and Integration

Overview

Chapter 8 addresses the collaborative effort required to achieve zero poverty.⁵ Zero poverty cannot be achieved by a single stakeholder or sector, rather it requires collective partnership and ownership from stakeholders from all sectors, people with lived experience and all levels of government.^{5,7} Over time, these collaborations should be institutionalized.⁵ Institutional processes require significant effort and human resources and take time to evolve. However, they will work to ensure the effectiveness and appropriate implementation of the Zero Poverty Oxford Plan targets.^{5,10} Additionally, institutionalization will help to formalize and support the coordination across all levels of government.⁵ The two main types of collaboration that will be addressed in this section include a) **vertical cooperation** and b) **horizontal cooperation**.⁵

Further Vertical Cooperation

Vertical cooperation needs to consider how international, national and regional and local levels can build partnerships and increase coordination to ensure there is policy coherence and integration.⁵

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD) acknowledges that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.¹¹ The 2030 ASD's primary priority is to "End poverty in all its forms everywhere."¹¹ There are seven associated targets with the goal to eradicate poverty which will require addressing the root causes and challenges of poverty through coordinated and well-integrated strategies at all level.

Nationally, the "Employment and Social Development Canada" launched a Canada-wide consultation process in February 2017 regarding a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy.⁶ Community consultations are intended to inform the next steps of the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy's development, and will inform funding, resources and policies as it pertains to poverty reduction in Canada. Inadequate income to meet basic needs, precarious employment, physical and mental illness, housing, inequality, access to services and government programs and lack of measurable targets are among the many concerns of Canadians.⁶ On November 22, 2017, in response to a comprehensive consultation process that included all levels of government, all sectors and community members, the Government of Canada announced the National Housing Strategy.⁶

According to the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Annual Report 2017, there are many strides the Ontario government is making to reduce poverty.¹² The Canada Child Benefit which is delivered in partnership with the Ontario Child benefit will now be indexed to the cost of living Furthermore, the province launched the Renewed Early Years Child Care Policy Framework, which aims to increase access to early years licensed childcare and before and after school programs, as well increase

affordability and subsidy for childcare and establish an early years workforce strategy/ Ontario is also investing \$55 million over three years to expand youth development programs, while OHIP is completely covered for all children and youth up to age 24. Additionally, The Fair Workplace Better Jobs Act was passed in Nov 2017, minimum wage was increased to \$14/hr in January 2018 and the Ontario Basic Income pilot is underway.¹²

These are few of the highlights of the intentional step the Ontario government has taken towards poverty reduction in the last couple of years.

On November 22, 2017, Oxford County Council committed to achieving zero poverty in Oxford County.¹³ This framework highlights the good work already being done within Oxford County in the aim to reduce poverty while highlighting opportunities and next steps as the County moves towards their goal of zero poverty.

Key Actions

In order to achieve zero poverty, developing constructive dialogue, strengthening alliances and aligning policies across different levels of government is recommended.⁵ Now is a timely opportunity to align Oxford's initiative with the provincial and national strategy and to advocate for appropriate federal and provincial support, programming and finances to strengthen the movement of individuals and families out of poverty.⁵

Cultivate Horizontal Cooperation

When initializing the zero poverty initiative, it is important to ensure the broadest coalition of stakeholders are included in the process.⁵ Some of the key stakeholders to consider are: local government and administrators, city managers, indigenous population, business sector, community groups and not-for-profits, public sector, research bodies, people with lived experience and the community at large.⁵ The earlier the stakeholders are engaged in the process, the easier it is to mitigate barriers. Furthermore, the process of collaboration should be institutionalized.⁵

In 2015, County Council adopted the Future Oxford Community Sustainability Plan. This plan recognized that addressing poverty in our community is fundamental to enhanced community well-being and vitality.¹³ The dialogue around poverty continued over the following years, leading to a town hall focused on poverty reduction hosted by Operation Sharing. This town hall was also an opportunity for key stakeholders and leaders to draft a declaration on poverty elimination in Oxford County. On November 22, 2017, the Oxford County committed to achieving zero poverty.¹³ Since then, the Zero Poverty Action Committee was established as well as a poverty support team to aid in the development of the Zero Poverty Framework.

Key Actions

Broader range engagement of city and county officials, community members, business sector, researchers and people with lived experience is required to support and strengthen the strategy. The more diverse the community participation, the more engaged, far-reaching and reliable the strategy will be.5 A primary recommendation is to develop a community engagement strategy.