



From Many Voices:

Learnings from the MISWAA Project Multi-Stakeholder Process

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Introduction

The Task Force for Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults (MISWAA) was an attempt to build bridges between groups with shared concerns and different views about how to address flaws in Canada's income security system for adults. Sponsored by the Toronto City Summit Alliance and St. Christopher's House with mentoring and operational support from The MISWAA Project Core Staff Team, the Task Force brought together over 100 participants with very different lived experiences and representing different and diverse sectors – non-profit, private, and public - in their personal and working lives. MISWAA released its Final Report and Recommendations in June 2006 (available online at www.torontoalliance.ca and at www.stchrishouse.org).

This Research Report presents and discusses the key findings and learnings from a follow-up study of MISWAA's actual multi-stakeholder process: how so many diverse voices came together, how and why they worked well and sometimes disagreed, how and why they worked towards consensus, and what "conditions for success" enabled them to achieve a common vision and set of recommendations about income security and related social policy change. The Report draws from follow-up survey data and key informant interviews with participants, as well as from a review of the current literature on the experience with multi-stakeholder processes to support social policy change.

It is hoped that this Report will contribute to the growing community of practice around multi-stakeholder processes as both a community-building and policymaking asset: raising awareness of the opportunities and challenges in building and facilitating these complex and rich working models, and informing the approach and experience of advocates and other voices as they move forward for social justice and civil society.

Summary of Report Findings

A. What MISWAA Did: Survey and Interview Data

The survey and interview data completed for this Project indicate these six key findings about the MISWAA process:

- MISWAA created “believers” in multi-stakeholder process: 100% of respondents to the survey and 100% of interviewees stated that they would participate in a multi-stakeholder process like MISWAA again
- MISWAA made participants feel satisfied with the outcomes of the work and their contribution to it: 100% of respondents to the survey and 100% of interviewees stated that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their participation in MISWAA
- MISWAA made participants feel valued and respected – facilitation was the key: 100% of respondents to the survey and 100% of interviewees stated that they felt valued and respected; there was strong correlation between this finding and respondents’ emphasis on the strength of MISWAA’s facilitation process and individual facilitators and committee chairs
- It was the problem that counted: the key common ground that brought MISWAA participants together, despite their diversity, was shared concern about the issues and shared understanding of the problem, i.e., shared concerns about flaws in Canada’s income security system for adults living in low income – not shared understanding about the solutions
- It was the “big picture” that made people resolve conflict and work for consensus: 75% of participants to the survey stated that, while they compromised their voice or changed their views during MISWAA, they did so because they believed that working together was more important, i.e., the work required an understanding of and commitment to broader principles, strategies, goals, or solutions that would make change happen
- MISWAA suggested that different participants place different values on the relative weight, outcomes, and time spent on “process/discussion” and “decision/action”:
 - MISWAA’s Community Reference Group: while providing the strongest response rate, CRG respondents did not name “process” or “decision” as key values or indicators of their satisfaction with MISWAA; instead, they spoke of the key importance of “being valued” and “respected”
 - MISWAA’s participants from the employer, business, and financial sectors: respondents suggested that making decisions and moving forward were key values and indicators of satisfaction both as part of their broader work culture

and critical to MISWAA’s specific success; while they acknowledged that process – including learning the lived experiences of others - is valuable they noted that their commitment to MISWAA came with external time constraints

- MISWAA’s participants from the community service, policy institute, and foundation sectors: a significant but minority group of respondents who self-identified as members of community service organizations, policy institutes, and foundations emphasized that the MISWAA process would have benefited from a deliberate focus on more “upfront planning”, e.g., formal orientation retreats or opportunities for diverse voices and values to be heard; for different perspectives and areas of disagreement to be surfaced early and facilitated; for the “conduct of inquiry, committee, and business” to be discussed, facilitated, and decided before work began

B. MISWAA in Context: Literature Review

The literature review indicates five key findings about the dynamics of multi-stakeholder processes, and they are strikingly similar to the five themes extrapolated from the specific survey and interview data for this Project:

<p>Key Process Themes</p> <p>Survey/Interviews, MISWAA</p>	<p>Key Process Themes, Literature Review</p>
<p>Place leadership at the centre: create an environment founded on identifying and supporting strong formal and informal facilitation, recognized and emerging leaders, as core components to policymaking and decisionmaking that actively incorporate diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>Place leadership at the centre: promote leadership at many levels of collaboration and support both formal and informal leaders who, as facilitators, help participants understand how they are interdependent and resolve conflicts in an environment where the level of conflict is traditionally high among more and less powerful partners (generic leadership skills: formal and informal authority, vision, long-term commitment to the collaboration, integrity, relational and political skills)</p>
<p>Practise active community-based inclusion: value and respect all participants and their lived experiences</p>	<p>Practise active community-based inclusion/mix “usual suspects and strange bedfellows”: create an inclusive community of participation that develops a sense of</p>

<p>Mix “usual suspects and strange bedfellows”: look broadly and deeply for participants who reflect and represent the diversity of the people directly and indirectly affected by the specific public policy issues to be reframed and changed</p>	<p>belonging, while recognizing that power differentials among members will affect the quality of their participation, belonging, influence, perceived and actual competence, and satisfaction and must be mitigated</p>
<p>Establish common and uncommon ground early: before setting to work, acknowledge, seek to understand, respect, value, and negotiate the different perspectives and emphasis that participants place on research (how and what data to collect, how to value); organizational structure (the developmental tasks of group work often referred to as “forming, norming, storming, and working” where people get to know each other, establish “rules of engagement/roles and responsibilities,” challenge each other and those rules, and then begin the real work based on this foundation of shared knowledge, trust, and respect); and dialogue/decisionmaking structure (the business tasks and protocols/rules for discussion, debate, disagreement, resolution, and decision)</p>	<p>Planning/establish common and uncommon ground early: develop a shared vision of goals, objectives, actions, and roles/responsibilities, documenting and making strategic use of stakeholders’ diverse interests, strengths and challenges to build trust, capacity, and sustainability</p>
<p>Practise “looking up and out”: create an environment that emphasizes and contextualizes “seeing the big picture” as a strategic imperative in translating research into policy and program action and real change by policymakers and decisionmakers</p>	<p>Vision/practise looking “up and out”: develop a shared vision grounded in the notion of interdependency – “collaboration agreements” documenting shared interests that lead to a common purpose beyond the reach of individual partners and require mutual effort to achieve. Again, the vision process must recognize that power differentials among members will affect the quality of their participation, belonging, influence, perceived and actual competence, and satisfaction and must be mitigated before they become “deal-breakers.” The literature notes the importance of ensuring that a shared vision extends across the pre-planning, planning,</p>

	development, and action phases of the work
<p>Trust - this is the one principle that the literature appears to highlight as a standalone principle, while the survey and interview data from this Project roll it into community-based inclusion: be transparent –create collective learning to “define the problem, identify the data gaps, and develop a strategy to close the gaps” to encourage innovation before confrontation; communicate the real political, financial, and technical constraints; collaborate on an accountability framework that tracks and improves results of the work</p>	

C. Conditions for Success

Extrapolating these findings to multi-stakeholder processes more generally, and considering that they are grounded in a particular process as experienced by specific individuals, it is arguable that these five key themes emerge as foundation elements for multi-stakeholder processes in public policy¹. Findings from the preliminary literature review conducted for this project confirm these themes (see discussion at Section 8, “MISWAA in Context: The Literature Review”):

- **Place leadership at the centre:** create an environment founded on identifying and supporting strong formal and informal facilitation, recognized and emerging leaders, as core components to policymaking and decisionmaking that actively incorporate diversity and inclusion
- **Practise active community-based inclusion:** value and respect all participants and their lived experiences
- **Mix “usual suspects and strange bedfellows”:** look broadly and deeply for participants who reflect and represent the diversity of the people directly and indirectly affected by the specific public policy issues to be reframed and changed
- **Establish common and uncommon ground early:** before setting to work, acknowledge, seek to understand, respect, value, and negotiate the different perspectives and emphasis that participants place on research (how and what data to collect, how to value); organizational structure (the developmental tasks of group work often referred to as “forming, norming, storming, and working” where people get to know each other, establish “rules of engagement/roles and responsibilities,” challenge each other and those rules, and then begin the real work based on this foundation of shared knowledge, trust, and respect);

¹ In reflecting on MISWAA’s process, The MISWAA Project Core Staff Team identify these six conditions for success: a common table, clear structure and pace to advance the work, balance between facilitation and synthesis of views, “offline” follow-up with participants to respond to areas of disagreement, “side tables” to accommodate participant discussion on issues not on the common table or in disagreement with common issues, and development of emerging leaders

and dialogue/decisionmaking structure (the business tasks and protocols/rules for discussion, debate, disagreement, resolution, and decision)

- **Practise “looking up and out”**: create an environment that emphasizes and contextualizes “seeing the big picture” as a strategic imperative in translating research into policy and program action and real change by policymakers and decisionmakers

D. Learning from MISWAA: Next Steps

Based on the findings of this preliminary research, there are several options for applying MISWAA’s learnings that The MISWAA Project Core Staff Team, The Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA), The Wellesley Institute, and/or other partners can consider:

- **Share, validate, and contextualize the MISWAA experience – Rollout Strategy:** collaborate on a rollout strategy to validate and share the results of this Project with diverse communities working in civic engagement, community participation in public policy development, multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest, including a knowledge exchange component (learning roundtables/forums, dissemination of Research Report, separate MISWAA Core Project Staff Team Reflections), inventory/live network of past and current multi-stakeholder public policy projects and best practices analysis, mentor initiative, Web-based/interactive resources
- **Create a comprehensive knowledge and practice base - Supplementary Literature Review:** conduct a supplementary, enriched literature review with four specific research questions:
 - **Jurisdiction:** What is the experience of multi-stakeholder public policy processes in the E.U. and U.K., which have a rich longitudinal history of public policy collaboration in social democratic contexts that have long worked towards ideas of civil society?
 - **Sector:** What is the experience of collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences, and what experiential and analytical links do they provide to multi-stakeholder processes outside the public sector that may be adaptable to public policymaking by multiple stakeholders?
 - **Inclusion Research:** What is the community-based research experience – the so-called “grey literature” — in working from diverse voices towards a common goal in community-based public policymaking?
 - **Outcome Analysis, Selected Case Studies:** Working with selected multi-stakeholder case studies, what are their real outcomes over time, what is the real process behind these results, and what is the detailed action – what worked and what didn’t – that grounds that process, and how can outcomes and process be measured?

Project Overview

This Overview outlines the Context, Research Objectives, and Scope/Methodology of this preliminary Research Project that explores the real dynamics of the specific multi-stakeholder process used to develop The MISWAA Project. Appendix A: The MISWAA Vision: A Description of MISWAA's Multi-Stakeholder Process, to this Research Report gives a full description of the multi-stakeholder process and community consultations as they were envisioned, structured, worked through, and completed to ground the original MISWAA Project; and should be referred to as a key reference point.

Context

This Research Project is a community-based initiative to explore the dynamics of a multi-stakeholder process in developing a social policy proposal for public policymakers and decisionmakers; specifically, the process that both was planned and evolved as the foundation for the work of The Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults (MISWAA) Project, which released its Final Report and Recommendations in June 2006.

MISWAA's work was done by a diverse group of individuals committed to income security reform in Ontario, representing major employers, labour unions, policy institutes, academia, community organizations, advocacy groups, foundations, governments, and individuals with firsthand experience of income security programs.

Research Objectives

The fundamental goal of this Project is to explore and extrapolate from the process outcomes of a specific multi-stakeholder public policy research and development project, that is, to find out how and why the large and diverse group of people who participated in the MISWAA Project worked together as researchers, policymakers, and decisionmakers: what worked, what could be changed to make it work better, and how could it inform the dialogue and practise of other multi-stakeholder public policy processes.

This Project has three specific objectives:

- in general, to draw lessons learned from MISWAA as a dynamic, interactive process and method and integrate this understanding within the broader context of the current literature on civic engagement, community participation in public policy development, multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest
- specifically, to draw lessons learned from MISWAA as a multi-stakeholder process for identifying, researching, and developing policy alternatives and pushing for their adoption by public policymakers and decisionmakers on pressing social problems

- to ensure this research is done by someone independent of participants in MISWAA. Specific research questions will be developed interactively and collaboratively in consultation with the MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute and form the foundation of the qualitative research methodology (survey and interview instruments)

Scope and Methodology

Research Parameters

This Project has the following research parameters:

- electronic survey sent to all MISWAA participants in the original Project with an option for participants to self-select and also complete an interview
- semi-structured interviews with an estimated 10-15 MISWAA participants broadly representative of different components of the Project (task force, working groups, community reference groups) and, different kinds of stakeholders; selection of interviewees a combination of self-selection through the survey and overall review by the MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute to ensure broad representation
- limited review of key documents from the MISWAA process
- limited review of the literature on civic engagement, community participation in public policy development multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest
- validation of research findings with the MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute and/or participants

Interview Process

Identification of research participants followed a three-step process. First, MISWAA Project participants were invited to complete a brief electronic survey with key questions exploring the MISWAA multi-stakeholder process. Second, the survey invited Project participants to self-identify if they wished to participate in a more in-depth interview. The MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute also reviewed the self-selected interview group with a view to ensuring that it fairly reflected broad representation from the Project and suggested additional interviewees as appropriate and contingent on their consent.

Key Document Review Process

The MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute provided access to the key documents from the MISWAA process for review and analysis in the context of this Project. *Appendix A* contains a full description of the MISWAA process and community consultations.

Literature Review and Synthesis

This is a preliminary research project; therefore, only limited review and synthesis of the existing literature (academic and, where possible, community-based) on civic engagement, community participation in public policy development, multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest was possible. The review parameters were:

- literature published in peer-reviewed, academic journals from 2003 to 2007, inclusive
- primary jurisdictional focus on Ontario/Canada and the U.S., with a secondary focus on E.U. and U.K. sources as resources permitted
- primary sectoral focus on multi-stakeholder consultation/working group processes in social/public policy development, with a secondary focus on collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences

The MISWAA Core Staff Team/The Wellesley Institute provided access to any relevant research material collected as part of MISWAA's work and further research and analysis support as appropriate. Appendix B contains the Literature Review.

Rollout Strategy

Based on the findings of this Project, the MISWAA Core Staff Team and The Wellesley Institute will collaborate on a rollout strategy to validate and share the results of this Project with diverse communities working in civic engagement, community participation in public policy development, multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest, including a knowledge exchange component.

Survey Demographics

In January 2007, an electronic survey was sent to all participants in the original MISWAA project. Table 1 summarizes the sample size and response rate to the survey: red font indicates stronger than average response rates, green font weaker than average.

Table 1: MISWAA Survey Demographics²

Number of MISWAA Participants Surveyed	Response Rate Survey ³	Response Rate Interview ⁴
113	17 (15%)	8 (47%) before supplementary interviews
Distribution of MISWAA Participants by MISWAA Affiliation	Response Rate Survey	Response Rate Interview
MISWAA Task Force & Working Group Members 96 (85%)	10 (11%)	5 (50%) before supplementary interviews
MISWAA Community Reference Group 13 (12%)	4 (31%)	3 (75%)
MISWAA Project Support Team ⁵ 4 (4%)	0	0 (0%)

² General notes to Table 1: based on a sample size constructed using original project membership and affiliation data provided by MISWAA; sector affiliation based on self-identification by survey respondents; percentages rounded and may not add to 100% due to multiple affiliations/sectors.

³ Calculated as the number of MISWAA participants who received the survey and responded to it.

⁴ Calculated as the number of survey respondents who requested a follow-up interview based on the survey question that made this opportunity available.

⁵ The MISWAA Project Support Team provided administrative, not strategic or decisionmaking support, to MISWAA participants.

Distribution of MISWAA Participants by Sector Affiliation (self-identified) ⁶	Response Rate Survey	Response Rate Interview
Employer 2 (2%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Labour union 5 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Policy institute 21 (19%)	3 (14%)	0 (0%)
Policy consultant 11 (10%)	2 (18%)	1 (50%)
Business, finance 11 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Academia (university, college) 9 (8%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
Community service agency 20 (18%)	4 (20%)	2 (50%)
Advocacy group 3 (3%)	3 (100%)	1 (33%)
Foundation 4 (4%)	2 (50%)	1 (50%)
Government 10 (9%)	1 (11%)	1 (100%)
Individual, first-hand experience of income security 4 (4%)	4 (100%)	3 (75%)

⁶ These data are relative, as they depend on self-identification, which often led people to identify under multiple categories of sectors, supplemented by some qualitative analysis about where people likely best fit.

Based on these survey demographic data, the following conclusions are drawn:

- **Overall response rates high:** The overall response rate and follow-up interview rate to the survey were exceptionally strong, given general implementation experience with this type of research methodology, the diverse representation and distribution of the survey sample, and the relatively short survey response and interview times, indicating that original MISWAA participants continued to have a strong interest in the work, the process, and its outcomes six months after the original mandate was completed
- **Strongest response rates from Community Reference Group:** The strongest response rate overall to this research – both to the survey and to the interview opportunity - was from members of the Community Reference Group, indicating that individuals who identified themselves and who were identified by MISWAA as people with first-hand experience of income security programs, usually as users, continued to have the most significant, active interest in the work, the process, and its outcomes. When viewed in the context of data from these respondents, the strong response rate may correlate with the strong interest and importance that they generally place on inputs through process, i.e., the principles of inclusion, participation, ownership, and empowerment (both as concepts and in practice)⁷
- **Strongest sector response rates, some surprises:** By sector affiliation, the strongest response rates were from respondents who self-identified as employers, advocates, foundations, and people with first-hand experience of income security programs. Several factors may explain this, none of which was tested: strong interest and importance placed on inputs through process, i.e., the principles of inclusion, participation, ownership, and empowerment (both as concepts and in practice); interest in project administration and governance; and organizational culture and incentives. However, the sample size here is small and the response rates should therefore be seen as indicative not conclusive.
- **Weaker sector response rates, as expected:** By sector affiliation, the weakest response rates were from respondents who self-identified as members of the labour, business and finance, academia, and government sectors. Several factors may explain this, none of which was tested: time demands; assessment of the relative impact of this research in translating MISWAA into action compared with other competing time demands; organizational culture and constraints; and individual interest. With respect to the business and finance sector in particular and when viewed in the context of what data was received from this sector, the weaker response rate may correlate with the stronger interest and importance that these MISWAA participants/respondents generally place on outputs and outcomes, i.e., the principles of decisionmaking, implementation, and evaluation (both as concepts and in

⁷ A further suggested correlation here is between this strong interest and importance and respondents' personal and/or representative (professional, organizational) values.

practice)⁸. Again, the sample size here is small and the response rates should therefore be seen as indicative not conclusive.

The survey demographic data therefore mirror, to a certain extent, both the lived experiences and personal values that the original MISWAA participants brought to the Task Force's work. Respondents who had personal experience of living in low income, in poverty, in marginal circumstances, and as users of Ontario's income security programs were strongly motivated to participate in this research, reflecting the effects and influences of their lived experiences and often their continuing community and advocacy work in social justice, civil society, and income security reform.

“This society must change...the voices of everybody must come...economic shifts don't respect anybody...poverty reduces all of us.”

“Everybody realized that something needed to change....everybody would be better off, not just poor people...better nutrition, better schools, better paying jobs and training would benefit society overall.”

“There was nothing there [when I needed welfare]...worse than nothing...I needed to have a voice...my concern is the experience lived by people in poverty...MISWAA is about people living in poverty, not about compartmentalization...I educate people from the level I'm at...poverty is becoming a big business except for the people stuck in it.”

Respondents who had little or no personal experience with poverty, income security, or socio-economic exclusion had lower response rates; however, the survey and interview data also indicate a range of variables that explain this fact and that move beyond any conclusion at first instance that these respondents “care less” about poverty, marginalization, social justice, or building a civil society. Respondents spoke to these reasons:

“My agreement to participate and actively work in the original MISWAA Task Force is evidence of my commitment to income security reform and social justice.”

⁸ Again, a further suggested correlation here is between this strong interest and importance and respondents' personal and/or representative (professional, organizational) values.

“The MISWAA Report of June 2006 reflects what I have to say.”

“My lived experience is different from that of other participants, and I recognize and respect that I can’t bring the same authenticity to the work.”

“I have significant work and/or other community commitments, some of which complement the concerns and themes that MISWAA reflects, and do not have as much time as other participants to continue MISWAA’s work.”

“I am more interested in making and implementing decisions than in rethinking or evaluating a decisionmaking process.”

What the survey demographic data do demonstrate is that the original MISWAA Project contained key elements of community-based and inclusion research: a Community Reference Group of committed, active individuals who are of the community of income security users and whose lived experiences inform the research, analysis, policymaking, and advocacy strategies of the project, often challenging the norms of, as one respondent described, “the conduct of inquiry, committee, and business.”

The data also indicate that MISWAA identified “community” broadly and deeply: the community-based and inclusion research included voices from sectors represented by those with lived experience as users of income security programs, such as the Community Reference Group, as well as voices from the employer, business, and financial sectors who, while not users, have a different kind of “lived experience” with these programs.

One specific issue and a response are raised with reference to the Survey Demographics reported in Table 1. It should be noted that participation in the survey and interview process was distributed, in some cases, unevenly across specific sectors represented around the original MISWAA Project table. MISWAA participants who self-identified as affiliated with the business sector, for example, had lower participation rates relative to participants from some other sectors. The tight time constraints associated with the survey and interview may have

been a factor in this outcome, as may cultural perspectives on learning from process outcomes as opposed to firm, documented decisions that result in measurable change.

While it is probable that other comments and perspectives would have been added to the research data – for example, participants may have noted more often the preparation and presentation of social policy data to support evidence-based policy options by the MISWAA Core Staff Team, or responded differently to the MISWAA governance structure - overall, it appears likely that these observations would have added depth but not significantly changed the key research findings. The key findings from the Literature Review confirm this view. Despite this conclusion, however, this Report recognizes that this additional depth would have been valuable and suggests that similar work on multi-stakeholder processes be sensitive to this gap.

What MISWAA Participants Said

In January 2007, an electronic survey was sent to all participants in the original MISWAA Project and followed up with interviews from January to April 2007. The six primary, significant findings from these data are found on pp.2-3 of this Report. What follows are more specific responses, with participants' words in Comment Boxes, that explain the context and meaning of these key findings. Note these cautions about the data or data reporting:

- these are preliminary research data, therefore indicative but not conclusive
- what respondents identified as “most important” reflects the greatest degree of consensus
- text to “bridge” sections of oral interviews, which were informal, are indicated by square brackets and are used sparingly to enhance readability

A. Outcomes: “Why I would do it again”

In answering the question, “Why would I participate again?” respondents gave five key reasons:

- Sense of inclusion, presence, purpose of the work, and empowerment
- Opportunity to get at the “root causes” of problems
- Opportunity to express individual social conscience or corporate social responsibility
- Opportunity for diverse participants to learn more about what motivates each other, build networks
- Belief in the value of multi-jurisdictional, non-partisan approach to solving complex problems

“The more input I have, the more likely people will listen to me.”

“We’re ‘in the soup’...[MISWAA] gave us ownership.”

“No one group had all the answers, nor could any one group make an honest assessment of the whole picture without the input of the others.”

“They [business] have an audience.”

“Sharp edges [of social policy issues] must be rounded/smoothed out.”

“[MISWAA’s] important in shaping public policy.”

“It was fun, interesting, and inspiring.”

Related to their responses to why they would participate in a multi-stakeholder process again, respondents also rated their own sense of “satisfaction” about their MISWAA experience, and gave some insight into their reasons for their feelings. Table 2 shows the five key reasons respondents gave for feeling “satisfied” with MISWAA:

Table 2: “How do you feel about your participation in MISWAA; why do you feel this way?”

Key Responses	Note: 100% of respondents report being “very satisfied” to “satisfied” with their MISWAA experience	Most Important	Very to Somewhat Important
My voice and views were heard		X	
I learned different ways of thinking about or solving problems		X	
I made a valuable contribution to our work		X	
Our work will influence public policy or set a precedent for future projects			X
There was room to disagree			X

Respondents reported highly variable responses to how important meeting people outside their usual network and forming new working relationships were, from “very to not important,” consistent with responses to other but similar questions that imply an element of individual interest, preference, choice, and experience that may influence responses.

Respondents also gave insight into what “being heard” meant to them. This line of inquiry produced two distinct interpretations of “being heard” voiced by two distinct groups of respondents. The first group, those who self-identified as people with direct experience using income security programs, interpreted “being heard” as “respect” – the key process value for them.

“Respect means listen to me, appreciate my comments, don’t criticize or tell me that I’m wrong, don’t put people down.”

“Respect is listening, giving the floor to others,...people get when they’re being shut down...no one voice is greater than another and is equally accepted.”

The second group of respondents self-identified as members of community service organizations, policy institutes, and/or foundations. These respondents suggested that the MISWAA process would have benefited from a deliberate focus on more “upfront planning”, e.g., formal orientation retreats or opportunities for diverse voices and values to be heard; for different perspectives and areas of disagreement to be surfaced early and facilitated; for the “conduct of inquiry, committee, and business” to be discussed, facilitated, and decided before work began.

“MISWAA used a known methodology – large Task Force, large working groups of experts - which was well-known and also its weakness....it needed a beginning that set the course for the group...so everyone knows what we’re there for...we didn’t reflect on our conduct of inquiry, committee, or business.”

“Agenda was tightly controlled...used an operational principle that business members were ‘busy’...there are alternate ways [to engage] busy people...couldn’t get beneath the surface and things emerged at the end, tension, stuff didn’t get said.”

“[on the idea of orientation] ‘Come on in, there’s lots of time to hear your story, explain your biases’... take unsolved issues offside with a mediator.. that wasn’t done.”

“I would have been sceptical about a full-day orientation meeting before...for someone like me a two-hour meeting is about all I can do and it might have limited my participation... but having been through

the process, I'd be more open to it now...one-off meetings did happen but if you asked you were invited in."

"Business members expected draft [material] in advance, slides, decisions...activists expected deliberations, a writing and revising process, the ability to change decisions....So we'd draft stuff in advance as an article of faith that this is how things are done, and others would say, 'Where'd this come from?...a sense that the process had been violated, the fix was in...And then there was legitimate surprise that a group formed to respond to the drafters."

"For example, research indicates that raising the minimum wage is not an effective anti-poverty measure, but it's a moral standard, a bellweather....so fact-based evidence of this was seen as heretical by some, seen as part of having an agenda...what 'evidence' is, how to collect it, what to collect, how to value it was never discussed....activists often preferred a 'rallying cry' or qualitative evidence...business was interested in measurable quantitative evidence...a bridge could have been 'evidence-based storytelling'...when to incorporate strategic communications and its role, at the start or at the end, wasn't resolved...."

A. Outcomes: "What would make me reconsider"

In answering the question, "*What would make you reconsider participating in MISWAA again?*", respondents reframed the question to focus instead on what challenges MISWAA presented or what made it hard to move MISWAA's work forward. However, they made it clear that they would still participate again, that these were not "deal breakers," and that "MISWAA was hard but worth it." They gave three key reasons:

- different values, beliefs, or perspectives about the project's issues
- different understandings about the project's goals
- different approaches to building relationships, reaching consensus, resolving conflict, or making decisions

[on the first meetings] “It’s hardest to hear from the people in the system....when people take over you have to persevere...there were challenges...people who had real experience did get to speak.”

[on attending the larger policy meetings as a member of the Community Reference Group] “We’re nobodies here...our experience counted less because it was a higher level of discussion, about policy...there were literacy issues for some community members around reading documents...but it was the logic of the way it was done...we did send a document in to the larger group but had no planning function, no part in making that agenda.”

“You could ask questions...it was more technical at this point, about politics and policy, financial and legal, program changes...I didn’t talk as much...a lot of information. I didn’t need to know all of it...different people had different skills, they were the experts.”

“There was a premise that we’d be ‘sitting and watching’...it didn’t work that way...there would be a ‘scrimmage,’ a dispute, short-term, a good debate...it’s a necessary part of the process.”

“If you speak up and ask, you got answers.”

“Most times my opinions were respected, but my volunteer work was looked down on because it’s unpaid.”

[on attending the larger policy meetings generally] “Some of the non-profit social service members had problems and would stop discussions based on ‘principle’...MISWAA is about people in poverty,

not compartmentalization...some in social services and government didn't take people struggling monthly with poverty seriously."

"I didn't have the expertise at the bigger table but it informed my opinions and the language wasn't above my head, I could follow the flow of the discussion."

Respondents also reported variable responses from "most to somewhat important" to two other reasons MISWAA worked: commitment of participants to their own directions/agendas; and varying levels of credibility/influence with government decisionmakers. While these data are inconclusive due to their variability, it may suggest that participants came to MISWAA as part of existing public policy alliances that were not significantly affected by MISWAA's process or outcomes, at least at the time of response.

One finding from this line of inquiry stands out: again, respondents gave a broad and inconclusive range of responses – from "most to not important" - about the influence of different life or work experiences related to the project's work on their ability to work together. While this variability may again reflect an element of individual interest, preference, choice, and experience, it may also suggest that, given the strong facilitation strength also identified by respondents, MISWAA participants had less reason to focus on differences in background.

A. Foundations: Finding Common Ground

Table 3 shows the four key responses to the question, "*What was the common ground that brought MISWAA participants together to work on this project?*" along a range of "most to somewhat important." While the data for some responses are variable, they clearly indicate the consensus that shared concerns about the issues and shared understanding that working together was part of an advocacy strategy to changing public policy was the key common ground – not shared understanding about how to fix the problems. Respondents made it clear that arriving at shared solutions was part of the MISWAA process and experience: it was what they were there for. As one respondent said, "We're concerned, confused, or living in it."

Table 3: Key “Common Ground” in MISWAA “What was the common ground that brought MISWAA participants together?”⁹

Common Ground	Most Important	Very to Somewhat Important	Somewhat Important
shared concerns about flaws in Canada’s income security system for adults living in low income	X		
shared understanding that working together was part of an advocacy strategy for changing public policy, that this process could achieve results	X		
shared understanding about how to fix these flaws		X	
shared beliefs about social justice or civil society			X

The data indicate two other findings of note. First, consistent with their responses to other questions, respondents appear to place a highly variable value on their interest in working with people with different perspectives or skills; for some, it was a very important criterion to achieve common ground on the task, while to others it was not important at all.

⁹ The MISWAA Project Core Staff Team note that, although participants were provided with quantitative and qualitative research materials to establish an objective “evidence base” to ground their discussion and recommendations, they did not rank this highly as an instrument to establish common ground.

Second, overall, respondents did not value shared beliefs about socio-economic policy, or compatibility between the project’s interests or goals and their own or those of their organizations, as a key indicator of common ground. While this response is inconclusive, it may suggest that participants came to MISWAA as part of existing public policy alliances that were not significantly affected by MISWAA’s process or outcomes, at least at the time of response. It is also consistent with reported responses to other questions about the influence of participants’ commitment to their own directions/agendas and varying levels of credibility/influence with government decision makers, neither of which respondents valued highly.

A. Foundations: Resolving Conflict

Table 4 shows the three key conflict resolution mechanisms. The data are variable – the data do not clearly indicate consensus on any one mechanism - indicating a range of difference among respondents in how they weighted what worked best.

Table 4: MISWAA Conflict Resolution Mechanisms “When MISWAA participants disagreed, what helped resolve the conflict?”

Conflict Resolution Mechanism	Most Important	Most to Somewhat Important
Willingness to compromise in good faith		X
Seeing the “bigger picture”		X
Respecting diversity of voices and views		X

Respondents, particularly those who self-identified as members of the Community Reference Group and from community service organizations, stressed the importance of facilitation generally and the skills of the specific MISWAA facilitators and chairs in anticipating, moderating, and resolving conflict.

“Facilitators were very good...ensured a respectful, civilized process....It’s hard to change someone’s mind, you have to pressure, be compelling.”

“Professional facilitation is key...MISWAA facilitators ‘reframed’ problems and recognized the value of your contribution.”

“Be careful not to move the discussion forward too rapidly toward the beginning, when differences that may loom very large later deserve a good hearing. This is a delicate task, because the same techniques that can be very effective in maintaining the momentum of a diverse and possibly fractious group are the same techniques that can cause important differences to get glossed over too early.”

“I felt I grew from this experience by developing a broader understanding without compromise.”

Contrary to what was expected and introducing even more variability into this line of inquiry, respondents gave highly variable responses to the effectiveness of three other conflict resolution mechanisms, rating them from “most to not important”: relying on participants who acted as mentors or mediators; intervention by another MISWAA group, e.g., MISWAA staff ; and using the MISWAA process of “rules”. There was clear consensus, however, that “backing down under pressure from other participants” was not a factor at all in how they experienced their participation.

Building on this last important finding, the idea of “backing down,” respondents also gave insight into why they compromised or changed their views while participating in MISWAA. Table 5 shows the 3 key reasons:

Table 5: Why MISWAA Participants Changed their Minds “If you compromised or changed your views, why did you make this decision?”

Why I changed my mind	Note: 50% of respondents indicated they changed their mind during MISWAA; the balance did not	Most Important	Most to Somewhat Important
I believed that consensus among the group was a better strategy than dissent		X	
I was willing to compromise on one issue because I felt my views were accepted on another		X	X
I saw the issue from a different perspective and changed my views		X	X

As noted earlier in the Findings, some respondents drew a clear connection between the presence and degree of conflict, the outcomes of conflict resolution mechanisms, and the presence (or absence) of orientation or “upfront planning,” suggesting that some conflict could have been minimized or avoided if different perspectives and areas of disagreement had been identified more intensively earlier in MISWAA’s process.

E. Foundations: Key Structural Components

Table 6 shows the structural components that MISWAA respondents identified as “most to somewhat important” when asked “*What made MISWAA work well?*”

Table 6: Key Structural Components of MISWAA “What made MISWAA work well”

Structural Component	Most Important	Very to Somewhat Important	Somewhat Important
Common purpose	X		
Strategic support from MISWAA Project Team staff, e.g., ideas, problem-solving, focus	X		
Organizational support from MISWAA Project Team staff, e.g., set up meetings, research assistance, project coordination	X		
Had terms of reference or “rules” to guide mandate, goals, discussion and decisionmaking		X	
Willing to collaborate and mentor		X	X
Willing to mediate and compromise		X	X
<i>Minority response:</i> Did solid research and/or had access to technical expertise	X		

The data indicate three other findings of note. First, interestingly and contrary to what was expected, the data do not strongly indicate that willingness to collaborate, mentor, mediate, and compromise were among the most important structural components that made MISWAA work well. What, if any, relationship this finding has with respondents’ strong statements that

facilitation and the use of skilled facilitators and committee chairs was key to MISWAA's process and that, in the view of the majority of respondents, MISWAA had strong facilitation and facilitators/chairs, is an open question but correlations are suggested. Several explanations are possible: it may be that, given the facilitation strength, MISWAA participants saw less individual responsibility existing for mentoring and mediation; or that disagreements were resolved expeditiously and respectfully at or away from the table and so were less apparent. Similarly, a minority of respondents did not view having "rules" as important, perhaps, again, an outcome of having strong facilitation and facilitators who made the presence of rules less obvious as they navigated the MISWAA process.

Second, respondents rated their interest in working with people with different perspectives or skills variably from "most to not important" at all, suggesting that this criterion invites a response that is highly individual and influenced by personal interests, preferences, choices, and experiences. Similarly, respondents rated being part of a project that took a new approach to old problems variably; this experience mattered a lot to some, not at all to others. These outcomes are consistent with the variability respondents reported about the influence of different life and work experiences on their view of MISWAA's process and overall outcomes.

Third, and contrary to what was expected, respondents did not view having complementary agendas as participants as an important structural component. Again, this may suggest that participants came to MISWAA as part of existing public policy alliances that were not significantly affected by MISWAA's process or outcomes, at least at the time of response. It is also consistent with reported responses to the influence of participants' commitment to their own directions/agendas and varying levels of credibility/influence with government decisionmakers, neither of which was rated as significant.

Learnings and Advice

Tables 7 and 8 summarize the analysis along key themes that emerge from all the data. Again, note the caution that these conclusions are preliminary and, while identified and strongly endorsed by some respondents, not all respondents raised them or responded to supplementary questions to validate from their perspective. The outcomes below best represent, therefore, preliminary or suggestive strengths and challenges that could be investigated further.

Table 7: MISWAA Key Learnings and Advice “The most important thing I learned from MISWAA, and the best advice I’d give”

<p style="text-align: center;">Key Learnings</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MISWAA’s process was...</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Key Advice</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Multi-stakeholder process should be...</i></p>
<p>Inclusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we can make positive change if we’re willing to work together • multi-disciplinary, non-partisan, evidence-based approach adds value to solving large social justice issues • people with money and power are willing to work with the poor to fix the income security system <p>Based on - yet challenged by - common/uncommon ground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic organizational structures and processes are seen very differently by different groups of people, spend time upfront <p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/agreement can be made when people with differing interests and beliefs come together, agree on a common fact base and on a plan for advancing the agenda they share • partnership matters • realization that what needs action now can take years, change takes resources, and you can only ask for so much • arriving at a deal seemed more important than comprehensive adjustments that need to be 	<p>Incremental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persevere, be patient (“slow but sure”) <p>Inclusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include people from all sectors of society, including the poor <p>Grounded in establishing common ground upfront, maintaining throughout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start from common ground (i.e., agreement that a problem exists), clear agenda, stay focused • start with a retreat to establish common values, set basic rules of engagement • understand and validate that different groups arrive at consensus in very different but legitimate ways, and also accept or reject evidence in different but legitimate ways • reaffirm commitment to the process and outcome as the work continues and agendas surface <p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be willing to compromise to achieve consensus • recognize that multisector groups have more clout • “look up and out” - create an environment that emphasizes and contextualizes “seeing the big picture”

<p>addressed, e.g., minimum wage, EI, children's benefit</p> <p>Grounded in leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership matters, takes huge energy to sustain momentum <p>Facilitated personal, professional growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps define what business you are in as a participant, e.g., brokering consensus, setting direction, the value placed or not placed on consensus, individual social conscience/corporate social responsibility, what it takes to move something forward, balancing "getting a piece of work done" with exploring and challenging the broader and deeper issues 	<p>as a strategic imperative in translating research into policy and program action and real change by policymakers and decisionmakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • move research to action (get it "under somebody's nose" politically) • rebalance mandates/funding realities of non-profit service organizations with their social justice imperative • recognize that it takes time and there may be no immediate "pay-off" in terms of sector benefits as compensation for time not spent on other things <p>Grounded in leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong facilitation founded on identifying and supporting strong formal and informal facilitation, recognized and emerging leaders, as core components to policymaking and decisionmaking that actively incorporate diversity and inclusion
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Table 8: MISWAA Key Strengths and Challenges “What made MISWAA work, and what could change”

Key Strengths: What Worked	Key Challenges: What Could Change
<p>Practising Respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sense of inclusion, presence, purpose of the work, and empowerment <p>Shared Concern: Seeing the Problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it was the problem that counted - shared concern about the issues and shared understanding of the problem, i.e., shared concerns about flaws in Canada’s income security system for adults living in low income – <i>not shared understanding about the solutions</i> <p>Compromise as a change agent in the “big picture”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> willingness to change one’s voice and views strategically to move change forward <p>Facilitation/Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> worked hard at the beginning to define everyone’s role facilitate well: “If you have answers already, there’s no room for discussion.” regular communications opportunities for input at the table and away people learned what other people value, how they do business 	<p>Vision – “Change the Narrative”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a bold visionary blueprint for change instead of reform based on what the market will bear and what parameters government sets <p>Orientation/Defining the Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adapt the known methodology to make it more inclusive and cognizant of different perspectives upfront (“forming, norming, storming” before working) build smaller steering group, working groups (“people can hide in a group of 50”) build more committees for “fringe players” interested in broader social justice issues and grassroots work (smaller organizations can feel the work is “getting away from issues of the heart” when an evidence-based approach is taken) <p>Greater focus on “root causes,” drilling down to more specific changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work more deeply to connect the work with broader social justice issues e.g., socio-economic determinants of health that lead to health disparities link with more space for “fringe players”

<p>Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having business at the table, multi-disciplinary representation, activists seldom have a forum like this for influence <p>Organizational structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having a known methodology 	
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MISWAA in Context: The Literature Review

Research Parameters

To place the MISWAA experience in a broader context, this Project completed a limited review of the literature on civic engagement, community participation in public policy development multi-stakeholder processes, and related, relevant areas of interest. These were the parameters of the literature reviewed:

- literature published in peer-reviewed, academic journals from 2003 to 2007, inclusive
- primary jurisdictional focus on Ontario/Canada and the U.S., with a secondary focus on E.U. and U.K. sources as resources permitted
- primary sectoral focus on multi-stakeholder consultation/working group processes in social/public policy development, with a secondary focus on collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences as resources permitted

Appendix B: Literature Review gives a full description and analysis of the literature reviewed. What follows are the key findings from that literature; note that, given the preliminary nature of the review, it is a sketch only of how multi-stakeholder processes actually work, as the lived experiences recorded by communities themselves – the so-called “grey literature,” whether oral or written - could not be reviewed. As the genesis and therefore both history and currency of intentional coalition-building among diverse voices often lies more within communities than with academic-based researchers and public policymakers, community-based perspectives would greatly inform this discussion.

Conditions for Success – Key Themes

Five key themes emerge from the literature reviewed as foundation elements for multi-stakeholder processes in public policy, and they are strikingly similar to the five themes extrapolated from the specific survey and interview data for this Project:

- **Place leadership at the centre:** promote leadership at many levels of collaboration and support both formal and informal leaders who, as facilitators, help participants understand how they are interdependent and resolve conflicts in an environment where the level of conflict is traditionally high among more and less powerful partners (generic leadership skills: formal and informal authority, vision, long-term commitment to the collaboration, integrity, relational and political skills)
- **Practise active community-based inclusion/mix “usual suspects and strange bedfellows”:** create an inclusive community of participation that develops a sense of belonging, while recognizing that power differentials among members will affect the quality of their participation, belonging, influence, perceived and actual competence, and satisfaction and must be mitigated
- **Planning/establish common and uncommon ground early:** develop a shared vision of goals, objectives, actions, and roles/responsibilities, documenting and making strategic use of stakeholders’ diverse interests, strengths and challenges to build trust, capacity, and sustainability
- **Vision/practise looking “up and out”:** develop a shared vision grounded in the notion of interdependency – “collaboration agreements” documenting shared interests that lead to a common purpose beyond the reach of individual partners and require mutual effort to achieve. Again, the vision process must recognize that power differentials among members will affect the quality of their participation, belonging, influence, perceived and actual competence, and satisfaction and must be mitigated before they become “deal-breakers.” The literature notes the importance of ensuring that a shared vision extends across the pre-planning, planning, development, and action phases of the work
- **Trust - this is the one principle that the literature appears to highlight as a standalone principle, while the survey and interview data from this Project roll it into community-based inclusion:** be transparent –create collective learning to “define the problem, identify the data gaps, and develop a strategy to close the gaps” to encourage innovation before confrontation; communicate the real political, financial, and technical constraints; collaborate on an accountability framework that tracks and improves results of the work

The Pragmatic Politics of Governance and Cross-Sector Collaboration

The focus of the literature reviewed is primarily on the concept of “governance” of complex social issues in modern societies, and what benefits and challenges “cross-sector collaboration” brings to that governance (Literature Review, 1). It first defines this collaboration as “finding consensus by means of collective learning, changing views, identifying and clarifying policy preferences, and affecting public policy outcomes.” (Literature Review, 1) It then finds three advantages in what it calls “collaborative governance”:

- makes government more responsive to citizen needs
- encourages government to address the issues of marginalized communities
- engages the creativity, participation and ownership of greater numbers of citizens from diverse communities in public policymaking (Literature Review, 1)

However, what the literature concludes, ironically, is that “there is a dearth of recent research that analyzes elements of collaborative success”:

Government/community/non-profit collaborations do not get a lot of attention from researchers, even though collaboration is believed to be a valuable instrument of new governance, assisting in resolving complex societal problems....Whereas the reviewed literature shows the feasibility of a successful partnership process, some issues remain unaddressed. Measures of collaboration success, generalizable beyond a particular study, still need developing. When discussing collaborative success, authors mostly rely on subjective notions of success, as perceived by participating groups. Absence of measures of collaboration success makes it hard to estimate the relative effect of the essential factors. (Literature Review, p.10)

In addition, with respect to the primary focus on Ontario/Canada and the U.S., most of the case studies reported in the literature are from the U.S. Again, it should be noted that these conclusions are drawn from what is likely the more limited experience of academic-based researchers and public policymakers; and that a review of community-based experience could result in different conclusions. In particular, this preliminary review could be expanded to include four research questions:

- **Jurisdiction:** What is the experience of multi-stakeholder public policy processes in the E.U. and U.K., which have a rich longitudinal history of public policy collaboration in social democratic contexts that have long worked towards ideas of civil society?
- **Sector:** What is the experience of collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences, and what experiential and analytical links do they provide to multi-stakeholder

processes outside the public sector that may be adaptable to public policymaking by multiple stakeholders?

- **Inclusion Research:** What is the community-based research experience – the so-called “grey literature - in working from diverse voices towards a common goal in community-based public policymaking?
- **Outcome Analysis, Selected Case Studies:** Working with selected multi-stakeholder case studies, what are their real outcomes over time, what is the real process behind these results, what is the detailed action – what worked and what didn’t – that grounds that process, and how can outcomes and process be measured?

From Many Voices: Where We Go From Here

Finally, respondents reflected on what impact Time for a Fair Deal has had, e.g., with government, media, and communities. A sample of their words express a diversity of views and, generally, speak more to the influence of the Report’s recommendations than to the consequences of the process that led to its creation.

“Positive. We will continue to see the trickle down effect, hopefully real change will happen.”

“Difficult to tell at this time. A report like Transitions had a long-term impact, but was a more systematic piece of work that had more resources (funding, consultations, etc.). Certainly Time for a Fair Deal has raised the issue of poverty and public policy in a number of fora and this good.”

“Raised awareness, changed minds.”

“Tremendous media coverage, in Toronto and across Canada. Serious government attention to developing OCB and WITB, and other MISWAA

issues. New interest from community groups, including those previously not engaged in issue.”

“Still needs episodic check-in with Task Force members to assure progress to broader goals....The key issues remain unresolved, e.g., EI, need for a new Canadian Social Transfer, ongoing role of the federal government to set targets, new income security scaffolding, etc.”

“It’s on the radar...hard to ask for more than that.”

“Modest but important...it takes time to move people to a common set of concepts and terms in such a complex and disputed field.”

Appendix A

The MISWAA Vision: A Description of MISWAA's Multi-Stakeholder Process

Prepared by The MISWAA Project Core Staff Team

MISWAA Process Description

The multi-stakeholder Task Force for Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults (MISWAA) represented an attempt to build bridges between groups with shared concerns and different views about how to address flaws in Canada's income security system for adults. MISWAA was able to generate sufficient interest and goodwill early on so that over 50 opinion-leaders from diverse sectors came together to form the Task Force. Many members of the Task Force were relatively new to the complexities of income security policy but were quickly convinced of the need for action.

The Task Force was co-chaired by David Pecaut, Chair of the Toronto City Summit Alliance, and Susan Pigott, CEO of St. Christopher House, and supported by a small Secretariat consisting of a Project Director, Research Director, and Administrative Coordinator.

A Working Group supported the Task Force by drawing on the expertise and research of over forty people active in social policy. Organizations involved contributed in different ways. For example, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy shared work in development, while the TD Bank Financial Group contributed the time of one of its senior economists for research and analysis to produce its own paper. MISWAA also commissioned working papers summarizing relevant existing research and supported research being carried out by member organizations, such as the Vulnerable Worker Series of the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN).

To ensure that MISWAA's deliberations were grounded in the lived experience of low-income people, St Christopher House staff organized and supported a Community Reference Group of low-income adults. Members included people who work for low wages as well as people on social assistance or receiving benefits from other income security programs. The Community Reference Group met monthly starting early in the MISWAA process and members were very involved with the Working Group in the iterative process of developing recommendations.

Perspectives of low-income people were also sought in extensive consultations supported by St. Christopher House staff throughout the year that involved over 250 diverse low-income people in 14 group meetings around the Toronto region. In addition, over 250 staff and volunteers from frontline community organizations and groups were consulted. The input and feedback from these groups, on issues and possible actions, was incorporated into Working Group and Task Force discussions, and into draft reports that were circulated for feedback.

Excerpt from “Time for a Fair Deal”: Report of the Task Force for Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults

Appendix II: Multi-stakeholder Process and Community Consultations

The Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA) and St. Christopher House (St. Chris) began their effort to develop interest in an initiative to reform the income security system for adults with the following problem statement. It sets out three fundamental issues faced by working-age adults living in low income:

- Minimum wage no longer pays enough to enable people to realistically meet their costs of living, especially in urban Canada.
- Existing programs make it difficult to escape poverty and the “welfare trap.” Many social assistance recipients have to earn extra income to survive, but the penalties for earning income often make it more economically rational to choose welfare over working.
- There is little public or political pressure to change the situation. Since the early to mid-1990s, minimum wages, employment insurance, and social assistance benefits have all declined significantly while eligibility for benefits has been tightened.

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation provided the seed money to set up the Task Force for Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults (MISWAA). Three objectives were established at the outset:

- To provide a clear, soundly supported assessment of Ontario and Canada’s income security system and programs, grounded in the experience of those affected.
- To develop pragmatic proposals for policy and program changes for governments to improve the economic security of working age adults living in low income, focusing on Ontario in a national context.
- To design Ontario and pan-Canadian communication campaigns to help ensure that proposals for governments are put into motion, ideally over a two-year time frame.

The infrastructure and process for the initiative consisted of three parts: a multi-stakeholder Task Force of civic leaders, an expert Working Group (also multi-stakeholder), and an extensive community involvement and consultation process.

Task Force

The multi-stakeholder Task Force represented an attempt to build bridges between groups with shared concerns and different views about how to address flaws in Canada’s income security

system for adults. MISWAA was able to generate sufficient interest and good will early on so that over 50 opinion-leaders from diverse sectors came together to form the Task Force. (See beginning of report for Task Force membership). Many members of the Task Force were relatively new to the complexities of income security policy but were quickly convinced of the need for action.

The Task Force has been co-chaired by David Pecaut, the Chair of the TCSA, and Susan Pigott, CEO of St. Chris, and supported by a small Secretariat consisting of a Project Director, Research Director, and Administrative Coordinator. (See Exhibit A for structure and roles). Throughout the process, the co-chairs and members of the Task Force consulted regularly with a wide range of leaders from civil society and governments to test ideas and gather preliminary feedback.

Working Group

A Working Group was formed to support the Task Force by drawing on the expertise and research of people active in social policy. (See beginning of report for Working Group membership). Organizations involved contributed in different ways. For example, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy shared work in development, while the TD Bank Financial Group contributed the time of one of its senior economists for research and analysis to produce its own paper. MISWAA also commissioned working papers summarizing relevant existing research and supported research being carried out by member organizations, such as the Vulnerable Worker Series of the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN).

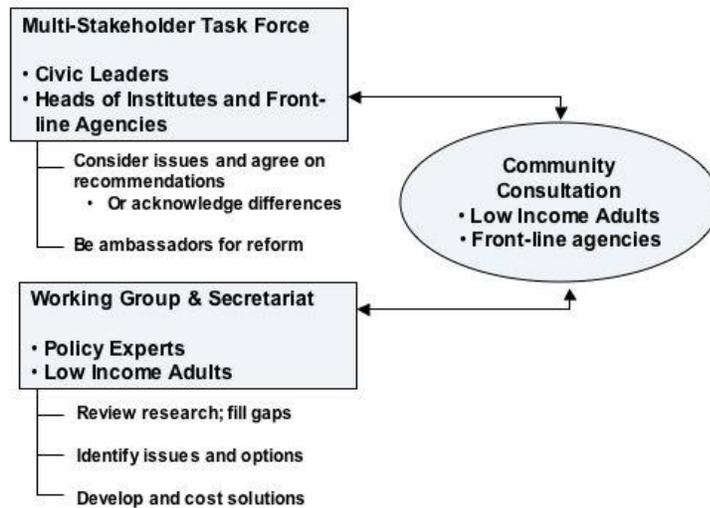
The papers that were produced or sourced by Working Group members reflect different perspectives on a range of issues, both broad (for example, identifying who is living in low-income) and specific (such as issues facing youth leaving the child welfare system). The information and analysis in the papers provided valuable background. The Task Force's report draws from, but does not summarize all of the Working Group submissions, nor the large body of additional evidence that was reviewed.

Process for Community Involvement and Consultation

To ensure that MISWAA's deliberations were grounded in the lived experience of low-income people, a Community Reference Group was formed of low-income adults. Members included: people who work for low wages, short-term unemployed, long-term unemployed, people on social assistance (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program), and people living on child support and child tax benefits. The Community Reference Group was very involved with the Working Group in the iterative process of developing recommendations. It met monthly starting early in the MISWAA process and several of its members joined the Working Group or participated in working sessions organized to discuss specific issues.

Perspectives of low-income people were also sought in extensive consultations throughout the year that involved over 250 diverse low-income people in 14 group meetings around the Toronto region. Groups included: English-as-a-Second Language classes, unemployed youth, women at a drop-in centre, teen parents' group, tenants in social housing, older unemployed adults (55 to 65 years old), people with mental health and addictions, as well as diverse ethno-racial groups. In addition, over 250 staff and volunteers from frontline community organizations and groups were consulted. (See end of Appendix II for a list of groups consulted). The input and feedback from these groups, on issues and possible actions, was incorporated into Working Group and Task Force discussions, and into draft reports that were circulated for feedback.

Exhibit A: MISWAA's Multi-Stakeholder Process



The involvement of a large group of diverse stakeholders made MISWAA's process unique relative to many past efforts at income security reform. It produced significant benefits as well as challenges that are described briefly below. It is important to recognize that despite the challenges, MISWAA was able to reach consensus on issues and goals, and broad agreement on a package of recommendations that address the most significant problems with the income security system for working-age adults.

Benefits

The primary benefit of the MISWAA process was that it significantly raised the importance of reforming the income security system for adults to a range of opinion-leaders and community members. Other benefits include:

- Achieved general agreement that the current income security system is deeply flawed, which proved to be the common ground for everyone involved.
- Distinctly improved the dialogue between different stakeholders who had little prior knowledge of each other's work and, in some cases, histories of distrust and disagreement. The growing sophistication of the discussions will contribute to making future joint work and consultations possible.
- Finding agreement on issues and potential solutions across the range of stakeholders involved with MISWAA reflects more likely acceptance and support from the broader public.

Challenges

A Toronto-based initiative cannot necessarily reflect all of the income security issues facing working-age adults in the province of Ontario, or across the country. MISWAA did make considerable effort to ensure that its findings and recommendations were relevant to the rest of Ontario, other provinces, and Canada.

Many significant issues that affect the economic security of working-age adults lie outside the income security system. Some of these issues, such as lack of affordable housing and limited access to quality childcare, have had longstanding advocacy campaigns. The most MISWAA could do was to recognize the value of that work. Other issues, such as income security needs of specific populations like Aboriginal people, require more in-depth research and consultations than MISWAA was able to undertake. Similarly, the large issue of labour market changes, and need to reform labour market development policies and programs, require substantial further research and consultations.

Multi-sector membership from many ideologies limited MISWAA's ability to reach agreement on some matters of principle such as: What is the standard of living that can be considered adequate and for whom? The prevailing view was that any person should be financially better off working than not working. Task Force members could not agree on what constitutes an adequate income for people who are not working and who rely on social assistance. Multi-sector membership also made it difficult to achieve consensus on some proposed solutions such as: preferred sources of income to improve the situations of low-income adults (e.g., higher minimum wages, income supplements or both). There was agreement that income security programs and policies have eroded since the early 1990s, and that incomes at the very

bottom of the income scale are unacceptably low¹⁰. But members of the Task Force were not always unanimous in their views on the best possible solutions.

The proposals in this report call for the changing the current punitive approach to low-income people to an approach that is supportive of their aspirations and recognizes their capacities. Areas of disagreement are acknowledged and options for solutions are presented where the Task Force did not achieve consensus. For some MISWAA members, the result is a very small step towards improving income security, whereas for others it is a generous one. Some MIWSAA members view the recommendations as a down payment on what is long overdue. Others believe that these steps are sufficient.

This report represents an important set of compromises and trade-offs that the Task Force believes could set a new direction and, if implemented, would be a major breakthrough in social policy in Canada.

Community Consultations: List of Meetings and Groups Consulted

a) Community Consultation Meetings (locations, dates – all meetings took place in 2005 - and attendees)

1. Agincourt Community Services Association: August 9 with a group of 12 people in Scarborough, mostly Canadian-born and on ODSP or long-term OW
2. Centennial College JobConnect Program (Scarborough): August 29 with a group of 13 unemployed young adults, approximately half people of colour, most had worked in temp jobs
3. Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre (DPNC): June 2 with 22 people in a mixed group (predominately younger adults and visible minorities)
4. East Scarborough Storefront: August 26 with very mixed group of 21 people, including older unemployed immigrant adults, mostly people of colour
5. Fred Victor Centre: June 7 with 20 people in a mixed group, mostly men
6. Jane Finch Community Centre: June 21 with 24 women, mostly of colour
7. Jessie's: August 23 with 20 young women and 3 young men from a parenting group, mostly people of colour, most seemed to be on OW
8. LAMP (Etobicoke): June 20 with 21 people, mostly people on ODSP
9. Nellie's: September 8 with 16 women, many on ODSP or long-term Ontario Works

¹⁰ Someone who works at minimum wage for the average hours for a typical minimum wage worker (32 hours a week) in Ontario lives on less than \$13,000/year. The same person who loses that job and receives social assistance (Ontario Works) has to live on \$6,432/year.

10. Parents for Action Now: July 7 with 10 people who were parents, including working poor and people with ESL
11. Parkdale Parents Group: May 19 with 10 parents in a mixed group
12. South Asian Family Services (Scarborough): August 9 with combined ESL classes totalling 20 newcomers to Canada from all parts of the world, almost all unemployed, some living on savings
13. Joseph's Women's Health Centre, Parkdale Parents Primary Prevention Project: August 30 with 26 mothers with children aged 0 to 6, mixed group with many immigrant women and many women on OW
14. Stonegate Community Health Centre (Etobicoke): June 8 with 20 people in a mixed group, mostly women

Total: 14 forums with 258 low-income community members

b) Community Reference Group Meetings

Total of 16 members, with 8 to 10 core members who were able to participate consistently.

1. February 8
2. March 10
3. April 7
4. May 12
5. June 22
6. July 28
7. September 15
8. October 20

(Plus, several Community Reference Group members joined Working Group and hot topic discussion groups)

c) Agency/Group Consultations (locations, dates, attendees)

1. ACORN: April 21 with 4 people
2. Agincourt Community Services Association: December 9, 2005 (2 staff from 2 agencies – attendance affected by a snowstorm)

3. Centre for Social Justice: March 3 with 3 staff
4. Daily Bread Food Bank: June 7 with 60 people from member agencies
5. East Scarborough Storefront: December 7 with 6 staff from 5 agencies
6. Family Service Association and Campaign 2000: July 21 with 6 staff from mixed agencies
7. Family Service Association: September 9 with 30 child poverty activists and welfare administrators
8. LearnSave Consortium: April 22 with 8 staff from mixed agencies
9. LIFT: September 30 with 4 staff
10. Maytree Foundation: January 28 with 10 staff
11. Parkdale Community Health Centre: July 11 with 5 staff
12. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: March 30 with approx 8 staff from different agencies
13. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: May 17 with approx 12 staff from different agencies
14. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: May 18 with approx 6 staff from different agencies
15. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: June 9 with approx 4 staff from different agencies
16. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: October 25 with 6 staff from different agencies and groups
17. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: November 4 with 13 staff from different agencies

18. St. Christopher House with mixed agencies: November 10 with 11 staff from different agencies
19. St. Chris All-Staff meeting: May 13 with 50 staff
20. St. Chris staff retreat workshop: October 28 with 20 staff
21. St. Chris Children and Youth Unit: October 7 with 12 staff
22. St. Chris Community Services (Adult) Unit: October 7 with 15 staff
23. St. Chris CUSP Technical Committee: September 28 with 10 volunteer advisors from finance and business sector
24. STOP Community Food Centre: May 24 with 8 people
25. Toronto Community Housing/Parkdale: June 29 with 3 staff

Total: 25 forums with 286 frontline staff and volunteers (some duplication)

d) Related Presentations and Communications

- e) Concordia University Community Development Summer School: June 14 presentation and discussion with 35 conference participants including CD/health promotion workers, funders from Canada and United States
- f) Ideas That Matter Conference (April 5): workshop panel with approximately 20 participants from mixed agencies
- g) ISAC: May 16 meeting with anti-poverty activists and MISWAA members re: the “irreducible minimum”
- h) ISSWAA Callback: community consultation for MISWAA, November 18 and 19, 2004 with agency staff and community members
- i) Laidlaw Conference, Social Inclusion Workshop: panel presentation to 75 people

- j) Metropolis Conference: October 19 presentation to 28 conference participants
- k) National Association of Visible Minority and Immigrant Women (Ottawa, December 2 and 3) presentation on MISWAA process with 20 immigrant women from across Canada
- l) Ontario Alternative Budget, Income Security: January 24 with 12 people
- m) March 11: poverty activists and MISWAA ctte members
- n) May 3 meeting with disability activists and MISWAA members
- o) May 13 meeting with ODSP activists and MISWAA (at Mary Louise Dixon's office)
- p) May 26: forum in Scarborough on ODSP (we didn't present but participated in small groups)
- q) September 6: meeting on training with employment training sector staff and MISWAA members
- r) ODSP Roundtable meetings January 20, February 10
- s) ODSP Action Group: March 18, April 22, August 19, August 25, September 30

Total: Minimum of 190 people, mostly from community services sector, policy or funding

Appendix B

Literature Review

Prepared by Inna Romanovska and Margot Lettner

Introduction

The complexity of social problems in modern societies calls for advanced methods of governance. As scholars and practitioners test and evaluate new methods of governance, they demonstrate that cross-sector collaboration could be an important instrument facilitating dialogue among the state and citizens. The collaborative process may involve different actors, such as government, non-profit organizations, communities, business structures, or other members of civil society. In contrast to traditional decision-making hierarchies, actors involved in coalitions participate in multilateral decision-making structures that are often fluid and non-formalized. They “interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions” (Thomson 2006: 23).

Certain aspects of collaborative governance make it particularly valuable for democratic societies. First and foremost, it assists in making government more responsive to the needs of its citizens. Second, it stimulates government to address the issues of disadvantaged population groups. Third, it engages great numbers of citizens from all layers of society in the process of finding solutions to existing problems (Asen and Brouwer, 2003). Being a large-scale negotiation process, collaboration aims at finding consensus by means of collective learning, changing views, identifying and clarifying policy preferences, and affecting public policy outcomes.

Although collaboration is believed to be an important instrument for new governance, there is a dearth of recent research analyzing the elements of collaborative success. Some research primarily focused on the collaboration process, while other literature addressed issues of collaboration sustainability and outcomes. Drawing from the literature on collaboration pertaining to Canada, the US and UK, a preliminary overview of research on factors contributing to effective collaborative process will be presented¹¹. The parameters of the literature review were:

- literature published in peer-reviewed, academic journals from 2003 to 2007, inclusive
- primary jurisdictional focus on Ontario/Canada and the U.S., with a secondary focus on E.U. and U.K. sources as resources permitted
- primary sectoral focus on multi-stakeholder consultation/working group processes in social/public policy development, with a secondary focus on collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences

¹¹ Search engines used: CSA Sociological Abstracts, Political Science Abstracts and Scholars Portal Databases. Keywords used: public policy, community participation, community engagement, community involvement, public participation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, collaborative governance, inter-agency collaboration, deliberative democracy.

The most important components of successful collaboration processes as documented in refereed journals published within the last five years will be outlined, as will the limitations of the research findings.

The authors stress that this is a preliminary literature review only, and suggest areas for supplementary work that would build a more comprehensive and critical picture of multi-stakeholder processes as a research and learning tool later in this paper.

Conditions for Success - Key Themes

Overall, government/community/non-government collaborations do not get a lot of attention from researchers, particularly academic-based researchers, even though collaboration is believed to be a valuable instrument of new governance, assisting in resolving complex societal problems. As analysis of the available literature demonstrates, there are five major factors contributing to collaboration success:

- Shared vision on the collaborative mission is a crucial element. Organizations with different interests collaborate successfully when they realize their interdependency stemming from inability to solve their problems on their own. Identifying shared vision at the earlier stages of the process, as well as sustaining it through the whole process leads to positive collaborating experiences
- Careful planning provides partnerships with the frame for development of actions. It reduces possibility of misunderstanding, uncoordinated actions, disagreement and other problems that can inhibit effective coalition functioning
- Creating an inclusive and representative community of participation is another key to collaborative success. Inclusiveness equalizes power, shifting it from one powerful member to all members, which results in more open and productive discussion. Representativeness gives opportunity to the less powerful members to voice their interests and defend their position on the issue
- Leadership is among the most important elements of an efficient multi-stakeholder collaborative process. The formal and informal leaders' role is crucial for the collaborative process as they plan, support and manage coalitions' move toward its strategic goals. Moreover, good leaders prevent and resolve conflicts, balancing the interests of all parties
- Trust is crucial for a fruitful collaboration process, as accountability and transparency assist in better mutual understanding and confidence. Even though all aforementioned elements of successful collaboration have significance on their own, their overall effect is dependent on how well they contribute to building trust among parties.

Scope for Further Work – Key Learning Gaps

Whereas the reviewed literature shows the feasibility of a successful partnership process, some issues remain unaddressed and the literature therefore presents several significant gaps:

- Measurability, or measures of collaboration success generalizable beyond a particular study, still needs developing. When discussing collaborative success, authors mostly rely on subjective notions of success, as perceived by participating groups. Absence of measures of collaboration success makes it hard to estimate the relative effect of the essential factors affecting it. It is not an easy task to come up with measures, since collaborations are in place in and across many sectors. The issue of common factors that affect collaboration success across multiple domains still has to be addressed.
- Comprehensive case studies, as much of the literature often raises more questions than it answers: often, it focuses on the expected outputs rather than on the real outcomes of the case studies over time; or on the outcomes to the relative exclusion of the real process and people behind those results; or on the “big picture” the process creates at the expense of the detailed, behind-the-scenes action – what worked and what didn’t – that grounds that process. Often the literature makes the reader want to sit down with the people who actually lived the case study, ask how they did it, and watch them work.
- Community-based experience and language, as noted in the research parameters, comprehensive case studies would include community-based research perspectives on working from diverse voices towards a common goal, expressed in the real words of community as a counterbalance to the more formal requirements of academic review/publication
- Experiential and analytical links to multi-stakeholder processes outside the public sector, specifically collaborative, consultative private sector models and experiences that may inform and/or adapt to public sector, community-based policymaking processes¹²

¹² The authors stress that the value of looking at private sector models and experiences lies in their possible adaptability to the public policymaking environment, not in their probable or assumed suitability or success. The translation of private sector models into the public sector is not automatic but highly variable, and influenced by the different structures, functions, and ethics particular to each sector. Understanding private sector explorations of multi-stakeholder processes also recognizes and respects the work and personal culture of many participants who, although not public servants, advocates or activists, participate in public policymaking, and so is an aspect of broader community building.

Literature Highlights - Discussion and Analysis

Vision

Research on successful collaborations demonstrate that the collaboration process is successful when parties have a shared vision on the purpose of the partnership, agreeing to work together to reach common goals. Even though collaborating organizations have different interests, their common goal is to find mutually beneficial solutions to a given problem. The shared vision is best described by the notion of interdependency that stems from differing or shared interests and common purpose of partners. The issue that brought partners together usually goes far beyond the reach of individual organizations and requires their mutual efforts. In the case of the Chattanooga Tennessee Collaboration, US, the local community was dissatisfied with government's ability to address city problems, such as bad air quality and strained racial relationships. Since the government was unable to respond to the problems facing the community, a group of local officials, business and civic leaders came together to form a collaboration. Working together to address city problems, stakeholders realized that a shared vision of the city's future helped them to join their resources and efforts. As a result of this collaboration, many local problems were addressed. The downtown area was rejuvenated, the tourism industry received a boost, and some environment and social service programs have been implemented (Booher 2004).

Some collaboration brings together partners whose interests and views on problem-solving solutions differ significantly. However, as long as stakeholders recognize their mutual purpose, they can work together to solve the conflicts that arrive in a manner that benefits all parties. For instance, in the case of Los Angeles County Family Preservation Program, jointly identified commonalities among organizations and an understanding of the mutuality of interests were the most important factors explaining positive collaboration outcomes (Thomson & Perry).

Identifying a shared vision early in the process is crucial for collaborative success. Dowling et al (2004) and Bryson (2006) document that fruitful partnerships clarified the interests of each organization during the pre-planning phase. Partners determine the scope of their investments in resolving the social problem and acknowledge conditions under which a coalition can be formed. These agreements can be formal or informal. Formal agreements are more detailed and might include information about purpose, goals and objectives, commitment of resources, designation of formal leadership and decision-making structure. Informal agreements about collaborations' composition, mission and process are as important as formal agreements, yet might be less well developed. It is crucial to come to agreement at the earlier stages of partnership, for if partners do not agree on a shared purpose and individual contributions, it could eventually undermine their ability to work together.

A shared vision is important not only at the beginning, but also through all phases of collaboration. Examining the collaboration of US health policy officials, the Wood Johnson foundation, the Kellogg foundation, community leaders, community-based social service

organisations and educational institutions planning changes in the local health system, Berkovitz (2000) demonstrates that a shared vision is equally important in the pre-planning, planning, development and action phases. Without a shared vision across all stages of the project collaboration would not be successful, as it could be undermined by differing visions at each stage of a process.

Discussing the purpose of collaboration is sometimes difficult as it may bring up tense disagreements among partners, especially in the early phases of partnership. However, articulating the core goals of participants is crucial for finding a shared vision, even though these goals might significantly diverge from partner to partner. For instance, interests of city agencies and neighbourhood councils cooperating under Learning and Design Forum were significantly different, yet this did not prevent them from successfully cooperating. Key to their success was discussing the crucial interests of all participants in the preplanning stage and documenting them in collaboration agreements, formal and non-formal (Kathi & Cooper). Articulating “deal breakers” at the earlier phase of cooperation is equally important. To assist in civilized and productive articulation of partners’ interests and deal breakers, the aforementioned collaboration used a rigorous negotiation method. Each party was asked to articulate and advocate their counterparts’ interests. As a result, parties gained greater understanding of their counterparts’ fundamental interests and constraints. It created a basis for mutual trust and successful work.

Planning

A shared vision makes it easy to proceed to the planning phase of the collaboration process. Careful planning of goals, objectives and actions is an important key to success. In mandatory collaborations roles and responsibilities of participants are clearly defined at the planning phase of the process. However, when collaboration is not mandated, planning occurs in the course of collaboration, as trusts builds up among the parties. Careful attention to stakeholders’ interests and incorporating them into planning is one of the foundations for a successful planning process. It helps to build trust and capacity to manage conflict (Bryson 2006).

Formalizing a collaborative relationship in the planning phase provides a frame for the development of actions. As study of the School-to-Work Coalition in the US demonstrates, planning increases the ability of stakeholders to decide upon the desired outcomes of the process, what actions the coalition will be taking, and how their objectives will be achieved. Planning leads to setting up clear rules and policies of collaboration that is helpful for sustainability. Planning reduces possible misunderstandings, uncoordinated actions, disagreements and other problems that can inhibit effective coalition functioning. To be effective, plans should be supported by all stakeholders, including community groups holding less power. Only when interests of all groups are documented in the planning phase can a sustainable collaboration be created (Legler 2003).

Inclusion and Representativeness

Analysing lessons of the West Coast City Collaborative Project in the US, Feldman (2007) discovered that creating an inclusive community of participation is key to success. The West Coast City coalition embarked on a complex and controversial city development project in an urban area characterized by urban sprawl. As a result of the collaborative process among politicians, government planners, businesses, members of public interest groups and neighbourhood residents, the project was successfully implemented. The inclusiveness of the West Coast City Collaborative has been ensured by public managers who developed a sense of belonging among all groups of participants. All stakeholders were treated as equally valuable members of the group, with equally legitimate perspectives, and their different interests were explored to enhance their joint ability to solve problems.

Since collaborations involve stakeholders from different societal strata including members of disadvantaged groups, power imbalances between groups should be mitigated to ensure inclusiveness. Less powerful partners often lack the competence to participate, since they do not have sufficient education, confidence in public speaking or capacity to intake complex specialized knowledge. To help them advocate for their interests, collaboration leaders use a variety of techniques to equalize power between groups. For instance, successful partnerships employed information translation processes (Feldman 2007). Information that is hard to understand was translated in a way that was comprehensible to those who are lacking specialized knowledge.

Everyone who wants to participate should be given the right to participate or elect a representative. As the Collaborative Watershed Management project in the US demonstrates, successful collaboration guarantees the representativeness of all groups whose interests might be affected by the project. It speaks to the ability of collaboration to find ways of advocating the interests of all affected individuals and groups, either in person or through elected representatives. The Collaborative Watershed Management included federal officials, representatives of a water-supply agency, resource users and environmental advocates, who were able to successfully change water use policies to accommodate the interests of all groups. (Leach 2006)

Legler (2003) acknowledges the importance of inclusiveness for the quality of a collaboration process. Inclusiveness facilitates an environment infused with creative ideas and resources where each voice is equally valuable. The collaborative process is more successful under the conditions of inclusiveness, since empowered stakeholders bring about positive outcomes of the process.

Trust

Trust is a crucial element of successful collaboration that emerges as a result of open dialog. Communicating clearly and openly the political, financial, and technical constraints of the process helps to appraise collaboration barriers, estimate available resources and plan for

action (Feldman 2007). Trust also emerges as a result of collective learning, when collaborators “define the problem, identify data gaps and pursue a strategy to address these gaps through analysis” (Leach 2006: 103). The process of collective learning creates a non-confrontational environment where innovative approaches can be discussed without constraints before they encounter criticism (Leach 2006).

Accountability is an important component for building trust. Developing an accountability framework is the first important step in making collaboration sustainable and bringing significant value to citizens. However, holding collaboration accountable is challenging. In the absence of clear-cut structures, it is hard to estimate for whom and for what the stakeholders should be held accountable. Moreover, it is hard to trace collaboration failures back to the specific actors who caused them. However, there is some data on successfully implemented accountability. Analyzing results of 10 collaborations in the US, Page (2004) maintains that successful collaborators could develop the capacity for accountability that assists in tracking and improving the results of their work. Some partnerships were able to implement a measurement system, tracing and documenting results that are used to improve performance. However, there are some conditions for successful implementation of accountability: “To be accountable for results, collaborative need strong relationships with key political and professional constituencies as well as the capacity to measure results and use that information strategically to improve performance” (Page 2004: 593).

Another important component in building trust is the overall transparency of collaborative work. Analyzing successful collaborations, Dowling (2004) maintains that it includes accountability arrangements, audits, assessments and monitoring of partnerships. All of that engenders a feeling of trust and transparency.

Leadership

The significance of collaborative leadership and management cannot be overstated. How well the collaboration is directed toward strategic goals and how well management activities are designed to achieve strategic goals will eventually define the outcomes of collaborative processes (Dowling 2004).

The leader is somebody who can “convince stakeholders of the need to collaborate and provide leadership during the formation of the coalition” (Legler 2003: 57). At the initial stage of collaboration, the leader is a facilitator who promotes understanding of interdependency among stakeholders and encourages them to act together. Analyzing results of case studies, particularly a coalition formed for the purpose of recommending changes to a state school system in 16 US states, Legler documents that coalitions are successful if their leaders take a very proactive part in organizing and supporting the coalition (Legler 2003).

Talking about successful coalitions, Bryson (2006) maintains that informal coalition leaders are as important as formal ones. Leadership in coalition can be dispersed, since coalitions do not always have a clear-cut, easily enforced, and centralized structure. Sometimes stakeholders

who are formal leaders in their respective organization cannot play a formal leadership role in the collaboration, however, they successfully play role of informal leaders ensuring the accomplishments of coalition work. As practice demonstrates, leader turnover is a problem for long-term coalitions. To solve this problem, successful collaborations have build in mechanism to manage the collaboration during changes in leadership. As a result, cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when they promote leadership at many levels of collaboration and support formal and informal leadership.

Competent leadership is important for conflict resolution, as conflicts are inevitable in collaborations where different stakeholders bring their own priorities, interests and problems. In collaborations formed to achieve public policy changes, the level of conflict is traditionally high. Stakeholders attempt to control the process and emphasize their priorities. Power issues arise as stakeholders try to influence actions and decisions. Managing conflict effectively in such an environment is key to a successful collaboration management. In successful collaborations, leaders balance interests of less powerful partners and more powerful partners and assist in fair and efficient conflict resolution. Productive collaborations are remarkable for leaders who have formal and informal authority, vision, long-term commitment to the collaboration, integrity, and relational and political skills (Bryson 2006).

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