

Community Cross-Sector Collaboration Report

November 28, 2019

food
security

poverty
reduction

education
& literacy

income
security

housing
security

healthy
aging

diversity

employment
& training

social
inclusion

mental
health

drugs &
addiction

crime &
safety

#UNIGNORABLE #COMMUNITY #STRONGERTOGETHER



United Way
Thunder Bay



lakehead
social planning
council



Thunder Bay
Chamber
of Commerce

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This publication is available electronically in the following locations:

United Way of Thunder Bay: <http://www.uwaytbay.ca/>

Lakehead Social Planning Council: <http://www.lspc.ca/cross-collaboration>

Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce: <http://tbchamber.ca/>

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Introduction

The #tbay Cross-Sector Community Collaboration forum, held November 28, 2019 came to fruition in hopes that governments, organizations, businesses, and community members would work collectively to address key social needs in Thunder Bay, and that they might be inspired to explore collaborative opportunities, to support and promote collective impact reaching common goals and advancing shared interests.

To help foster collective action, the United Way of Thunder Bay, the Lakehead Social Planning Council, and the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce partnered to host the Thunder Bay Cross-Sector Collaboration Forum, which included more than 100 individuals from various backgrounds including municipal government, non-profit organizations, the business community various groups and agencies, as well as individual community members. The vision was for these individuals to collectively create goals that would improve lives and build a healthier, more inclusive, prosperous community for all. To achieve this goal, the Forum hosted themed conversations between vested individuals around twelve table topics:



Food Security



Poverty Reduction



Education and Literacy



Housing Security



Diversity



Social Inclusion



Crime and Safety



Drugs and Addiction



Mental Health



Employment and Training



Healthy Aging



Income Security

Cross-Sector Collaboration

No single organization can be responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it. Funders tend to base their decision making upon which organizations can make the greatest contribution to combatting a social problem. This, in turn, encourages grantees to focus on their individual activities, and how the results have produced the greatest impact. Despite the dominance of this approach, there is little evidence that isolated initiatives are the best way to solve many social problems in today's complex and interdependent world.

Substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if non-profit organizations, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact. It doesn't happen often, not because it is impossible, but because it is so rarely attempted. Funders and non-profit organizations alike can overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change.

This was the impetus for creating an event that would foster collective impact in Thunder Bay. The #tbay cross-sector community collaboration forum was held on November 28, 2019 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Urban Abbey. Twelve tables of approximately 10 people were arranged, each facilitated by a lead/co-lead. Participants were able to choose topics of interest and each lead/co-lead had some expertise and knowledge that would help to facilitate conversation. Table members were tasked with reaching one actionable outcome/initiative/proposal related to their respective table topic that could create an impact within the community. The collective impact approach to community-building was emphasized in the spirit of the collaborative event.

Each group participating in the #tbay cross-sector community collaboration forum was tasked with presenting their actionable item to all participants, including a brief summary of the conversation that occurred at their table throughout the afternoon. In one afternoon, twelve incredible plans/ideas/recommendations emerged that, when put into place, have the potential to make Thunder Bay a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous community for all.

Ideas Generated

The #tbay cross-sector community collaboration forum began with introductory remarks from Albert Brule, CEO of United Way of Thunder Bay. He spoke about the importance of collaboration and the excitement that could be generated by an event such as this. This paved the way for organizations to begin their work.

Each group worked for about two hours to develop some outcomes and create a short presentation that would be shared with all participants afterwards. Table leads coordinated the discussion to ensure that everyone was able to give input and offer ideas and suggestions. A representative from each table was allocated three minutes to present their table's outcomes.

Marie Klassen, Director of Services at Lakehead Social Planning Council ended the day with remarks that supported the work of all who attended that day, and offered words of encouragement to those who will be working towards the goals set out at the event.

Charla Robinson, CEO of Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce ended the day by introducing a speaker from each table to discuss their vision with the larger group.

The findings include the ideas generated from the group discussion, including the resources that might be required to fulfill the goal of the recommendation. Collaborative partners are listed as well. These are parties that may have the capacity and the mandate to have an impact on the social issue at hand. The collaborative partners will work together to take the next steps to help bring the ideas to fruition. The following ideas were generated:

Food Security

Ideas Generated



Nourishing Unity in the Community:
Connecting/networking community resources through engagement and needs assessment to bridge gap. Coordination of existing services to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

Collaborative Partners

- Thunder Bay Food Strategy (Current local lead)
- Food Access Working Group
- Feeding programs/food banks
- Funders

Resources Required

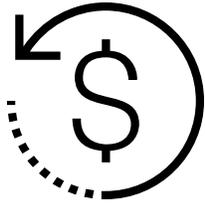
- Funding
- Expertise
- Advocacy

Next Steps

- Invite partners to meeting
- Conduct scan of committed partners and community resources
- Action planning
- Needs assessment

Poverty Reduction

Ideas Generated



Free Public Transit
Basic Income

Collaborative Partners

- Poverty Reduction Strategy (Current local lead)
- Poverty Free Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council
- Thunder Bay Drug Strategy
- People with Lived Experience

Resources Required

- Funding
- Advocacy
- Outreach

Next Steps

- Begin advocacy and lobbying for free transportation and universal basic income
- Work with the Poverty Reduction Strategy to move the table's goals forward

Education and Literacy

Ideas Generated



Education and Literacy Collaborative Service Model Working-Group, which would increase the connectivity between the community, literacy groups, community programs and the mainstream education systems to help create wrap-around systems of learning and literacy.

Collaborative Partners

- Thunder Bay School Boards
- Literacy and community learning organizations
- Funders

Resources Required

- Funding
- Advocacy
- Communication systems
- Outreach

Next Steps

- Begin outreach
- Form a working group

Housing Security

Ideas Generated



Advocate for the redevelopment of cooperative housing in Thunder Bay, including mixed-income, cooperative housing that features co-support, peer mentorship, and authentic relationship building.

Collaborative Partners

- Chamber of Commerce
- United Way
- Thunder Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition Advisory Board (Reaching Home federal funding stream)

Resources Required

- Inclusionary zoning practices
- Partners
- Collaboration
- Advocacy

Next Steps

- Feasibility study
- Advocacy

Diversity

Ideas Generated



"I am an ally campaign"
This campaign will foster
a community in which
everyone becomes an
ally to each other.

Collaborative Partners

- Diversity Thunder Bay (Current local lead)
- Thunder Bay Multicultural Association Service providers
- Community members

Resources Required

- Funding
- Advocacy
- Public Outreach

Next Steps

- Work with current lead agencies
- Consult with relevant community partners and develop a list including ways people can become allies to others
- Secure funding
- Public Outreach

Social Inclusion

Ideas Generated



Develop a Community Action Forum including a recurring open forum to connect services, agencies, government and local supports with members in the community. Make the event barrier free, with an opportunity to listen and create comfortable change. Create a social inclusion working group.

Collaborative Partners

- United Way of Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Lakehead Social Planning Council
- 2-1-1 Ontario North

Resources Required

- Venue with a large space
- Food
- Transportation
- Appreciation gifts for storytellers
- Dedicated day per month for agencies to attend
- Coordinator

Next Steps

- Convene a working group meeting
- Collect a list of community services/supports (2-1-1 Ontario North)
- Establish a plan and a process

Crime and Safety

Ideas Generated



Integrate and Expand Social Navigator and Street Outreach Programs

To create a system of street outreach navigators working within high-risk neighborhoods to help vulnerable individuals access services.

Interested parties

- Crime Prevention Council (Current local lead)
- Police and Emergency Services
- Various Service Providers
- Situation Table

Resources Required

- Funding
- Expertise
- Organizations with the capacity to lead the project

Next Steps

- Organize a meeting with interested parties
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Leverage strengths in the community to find resources and capacity to expand outreach programs

Drugs and Addiction

Ideas Generated



Provide training for businesses, media, and service providers around effective responses to challenges with substance abuse. Create a full campaign by 2020 for National Addiction Awareness Week

Collaborative Partners

- Thunder Bay Drug Strategy (Current local lead)
- Thunder Bay School Boards
- First Responders
- Street Outreach Services
- JMCRT (?)
- City Council
- Thunder Bay Police
- Thunder Bay EMS

Resources Required

- Access to funding ??? These organizations have secure funding.

Next Steps

- Look for opportunities to access funding
- Explore other campaigns in other communities
- Develop education tools for target audiences
- Engage key stakeholders to develop a plan
- Establish a steering committee

Mental Health

Ideas Generated



Development of a Holistic Mental Health Planning/Strategy Table, to create a round table dialogue and plan to create a holistic mental health strategy.

Collaborative Partners

- Children's Centre Thunder Bay
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Thunder Bay Counselling
- Service providers
- Funders

Resources Required

- United Way of Thunder Bay
- Funding
- Advocacy
- Sponsors

Next Steps

- Look for opportunities to access funding
- Explore other campaigns in other communities
- Develop education tools for target audiences
- Engage key stakeholders to develop a plan
- Establish a steering committee

Healthy Aging

Ideas Generated



Seniors Agency and Services Fair/Forum that would inform seniors of service providers/businesses in one location at a set time and date to ease access to services

Collaborative Partners

- Age-Friendly Thunder Bay
- 2-1-1 Ontario North
- Lakehead Social Planning Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Various Seniors groups

Resources Required

- Venue
- Transportation
- Advertising

Next Steps

- Organize a sub-committee
- Gather input from seniors
- Find funding

Income Security

Ideas Generated



Services Connect - a low-income goods and services forum.

Create a way for people living with low-income to access services that are impossible to afford on a limited income.

Creation of a new coalition.

Collaborative Partners

- Poverty-Free Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Chamber of Commerce
-

Resources Required

- Funding for promotion and outreach
- Venue

Next Steps

- Strike a Committee
- Reach out to businesses and service providers
- Secure participants
- Pick a date and location
- Promote Event

Findings

Participants were invited to provide feedback on the the proceedings and outcomes of the event. Overall, the majority of participants agreed that the Forum was a valuable experience (n=73%). There was a great deal of positive feedback received after the event. Feedback was mostly focused on collaboration and the learning that can arise from having service providers and others work collectively.

“It was advantageous to learn the opinions and hear the opinions of all the agencies. It was an education. There is so much energy keeping and improving this community it is quite amazing.”

“networking and collaboration with the community. Bringing so many community partners and organizations together under one roof.”

“I liked that there were a diversity of voices in the room. It was great to have people from the business, education, policing, etc. sectors who are sometimes not at the same table as people from non-profits and other service agencies.”

“I liked the networking opportunities. I liked that there were representatives from many organizations (business, private providers, etc), not just service providers. I liked that the focus of the event was on creating a plan of action, not just talking.”

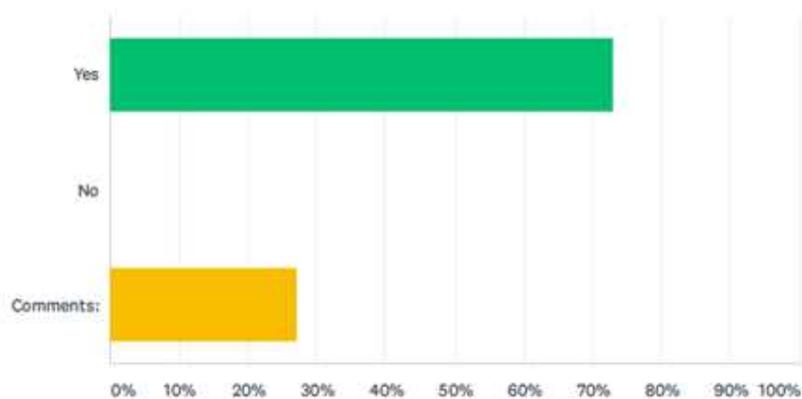
“I liked interacting with others working in my field from different sectors. I felt like we gathered some valuable information and I was able to learn tremendously from my group. We didn't have anything overly actionable come from our discussions, but it was definitely a good learning opportunity.”



Post-survey results showed that almost 73% of participants felt the event was a valuable experience.

Q3 Overall, was this event a valuable experience?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.92%	35
No	0.00%	0
Comments:	27.08%	13
TOTAL		48

Participants were also offered the opportunity to share challenges encountered throughout the day. Criticism revolved largely around three areas: the space and its acoustics, the lack of a clear next step(s), and tables being too large to adequately discuss the issues and work towards a concrete action plan.

Examples of critical feedback include:

“As above, it was not useful to be at a table with three people from the same office and two others from the same group. The facilitation did not adequately move the conversation forward, too much time was allotted to introductions. Other than a written report, the follow-up plan was not clear. It is not realistic to expect that people will come up with a project and be able to commit to it in two hours. The ideas that the groups came up with are great, but I wonder how many of them will actually move forward.”

“The space was not acoustically designed for this activity, as there was a lot of echo and it was very difficult to hear people at our table...folks had to talk very loudly to be heard. The furnishings were also not ideal as the table was long and narrow.”

“The venue was nice; however so many of us in one space made it very difficult to hear everyone at our table. People were shouting, that's how loud they needed to speak. We also had some very quiet speakers at our table which made it even more of a challenge. A space with break-out rooms would have been better.”

“There was no clear follow up plan shared with the attendees. What are the next steps? Are we going to be getting together again to continue this work? We all seem to know that collaboration is the key...but how are we going to do this moving forward.”

“It would have been nice to have input or dialogue at more tables which affects us whether it be mental health, food security, income security, housing, diversity, poverty reduction, social inclusion to name a few.”

Participants were also given the opportunity to suggest “table topics” that were not addressed at the forum, but could be brought to a follow-up forum. The overwhelmingly popular response was that there should be a table conversation devoted to the topic of “racism”. The second most popular answer was “youth engagement.”

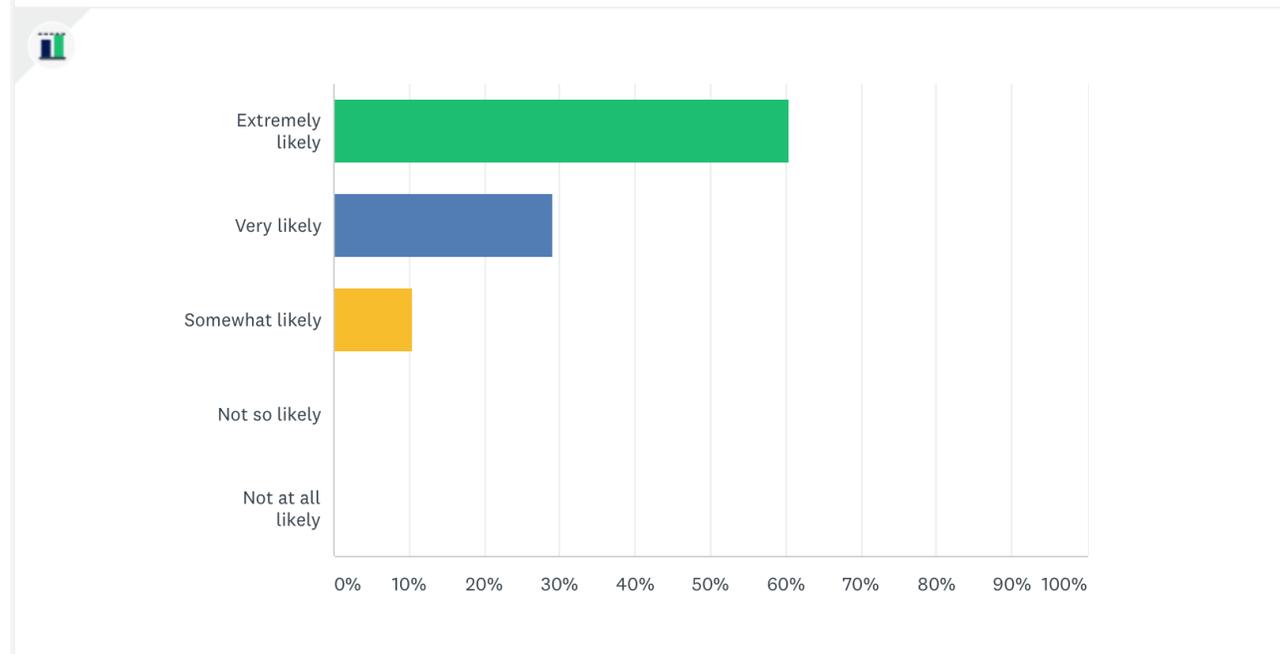
Despite the challenges faced in the execution of the forum, 60% of attendees reported that they would be “extremely likely” to attend a similar event in the future.



Most participants would be interested in attending a follow-up event in the future.

How likely are you to attend a similar event again in the future?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



***"If you want to walk fast,
walk alone.
If you want to walk far,
walk together."***

African Proverb

To capture the spirit of the event, before and after reactions to the event were recorded. The results can be found in the word clouds below.

Before

A word cloud for the 'Before' period. The most prominent word is 'Overwhelmed' in large black font. Other significant words include 'Curious' in yellow, 'Excited' in yellow, 'Frustrated' in black, 'Alone' in red, 'Unaware' in blue, 'Potential' in yellow, and 'Interested' in yellow. Smaller words include 'Pervasive', 'Apprehensive', 'Aware', 'Informed', 'Apathetic', 'Concerned', 'Poor', 'Uncertain', 'Defeated', 'Conflicted', 'Puzzled', 'Sad', 'Unsure', 'Passionate', 'Un-collaborative', 'Complacent', 'Hopeful', and 'Interested'.

After

A word cloud for the 'After' period. The most prominent words are 'Hopeful' in black and 'Committed' in red. Other significant words include 'Satisfied' in yellow, 'Excited for the next one!' in yellow, 'Determined' in black, 'Frustrated' in blue, 'Potential' in yellow, 'More hopeful' in red, 'Enlightened' in blue, 'Inspired!' in blue, 'Optimistic' in yellow, 'Energized' in red, 'Skeptical' in red, 'Interested' in yellow, 'Aware' in black, 'Connected' in blue, 'Heard' in blue, 'Emboldened' in blue, 'Great' in black, 'Unsure' in red, 'Hopeful' in red, 'Aware' in blue, 'Apathetic' in black, 'Uncertain' in black, and 'Very hopeful' in red.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The #tbay cross-sector community collaboration forum helped to foster a collaborative spirit in Thunder Bay as community organizations and leaders, from a wide variety of sectors continue to search for ways to work more effectively and collectively. The United Way of Thunder Bay, the Lakehead Social Planning Council, and the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce are committed to holding another collaborative forum in the closing months of 2020 to continue to support collective impact approaches to service-delivery in Thunder Bay.

In recognizing the challenges and missed opportunities of the first #tbay cross-sector community collaboration forum, necessary steps such as generating dialogue and integrating business into social impact ventures proved valuable to the involved organizations and the community as a whole. The United Way of Thunder Bay is willing to liaise between interested community members or organizations, and any of the working-groups that are beginning or have begun to put their table outcomes into place. The United Way of Thunder Bay, the Lakehead Social Planning Council, and the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce thank you for your participation, constructive criticism, and we look forward to hosting a bigger and better event in 2020!

