

Poster Abstracts

23

L. Hawkins, B. Leach

Engaging for Change: Practicing Collaboration

Social planning and decision-making in local communities is increasingly characterized by complex networks of charities, not-for-profits, non-governmental organizations and a variety of collaborative networks that act to generate policy, deliver services and programs, and influence citizen participation. Guelph-Wellington has seen the development of a large number of these collaborative networks with overlapping purposes, goals and scope. There is commitment to engagement and collaboration at multiple levels, remaining issues include complex dealings with functionality and governance, and the capacity for collaborations to engage widely. Through a series of meetings and activities with broader stakeholders, a core partnership of the City of Guelph, the Guelph-Wellington Poverty task Force, Family & Children's Services, the United Way and the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship/Research Shop devised a program of activities and jointly applied for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding. Activities engage multiple more community partners – the Volunteer Centre, the Guelph Community Health Centre, Immigrant Services, 10 Carden, Trellis Mental Health, and the area Funders Network (GW United Way, City of Guelph, Guelph Community Foundation, Trillium Foundation, Ministry of Immigration and Culture) among others. Identified objectives: to “practice” partnership and new models of collaboration and social planning, to advance emerging community initiatives for greater community impact, and to work towards a more complete community-university research agenda that will incorporate short-term needs of these collaborations with longer-term opportunities and goals.