Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region

Over the summer of 2019 the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) will be focused on developing the 2019-2020 Work Plan and revised Theory of Change to support collectively moving forward to improve the wellbeing of children and youth. The Voting Members of the CYPT were asked to provide input to get a better sense of the landscape during this current climate of change and uncertainty, focusing on organizational and community priorities as well as risk. This document provides a summary of the responses collected via online survey and in-person from the May 28 Voting Member meeting.

Risk and Uncertainty

Child, Youth, and Family

- Impact will be greatest for vulnerable and/or specific populations: First Nation, Inuit, Metis; those living with low income; newcomers; those with special needs
- Needs of children, youth and families are not met
- Delay in diagnosis and wait lists for programs and services are likely to increase
- Fewer supports and programs available for parents and caring adults (including financial support) and lack of choice for parents/caring adults and their children for where and how they receive support
- Reduced and/or fragmented services and systems, leading to gaps and inability to address needs
- A focus on “reaction” rather than “prevention”
- Loss of faith in providers and the system
- Increased mental health challenges and sense of helplessness, decreased sense of hope and wellbeing
- Overall increase in barriers to accessing services
- Lack of a safety net for families

Organization/Service Provider

- Inability to develop and/or follow long-term plans due to uncertainty of funding and priorities from the Provincial government
- Challenge in balancing person-centred approach and the need for data-driven outputs and outcomes
- Reactively rearranging programming and services to fill gaps
- More time being spent applying for grants to fill funding shortfalls
- Decreased value in collaboration and a revert to silos, leading to a duplication of services and decreased understanding of needs at neighbourhood level
- Reduction/elimination of services, and additional pressures on staff leading to compassion fatigue, burnout, and decreased capacity/service potential
- Organizational mismanagement in times of uncertainty and potential absence of consistent leadership
- Weakened infrastructure and lack of long-term planning
- Risk to charitable and not-for-profit status
- Less opportunity to engage target groups in planning for their needs
- Lack of evidence-based decision-making

Network (CYPT)/ System

- Challenge in supporting anything outside of core mandate
- Greater competition for funding between service providers and collaboratives
- Uncertainty regarding changes to government structures which has the potential to impact partnerships and community-wide coordination
- Decreased membership/participation and increased silo-ing, leading to duplication of services and competition for resources
- Losing momentum and current gains of the collaborative
- Loss of local priorities
- Loss of backbone support and financial capacity
- Not engaging with policy makers

Voting Member's Organizational Priorities (from pre meeting survey)

Child, Youth and Family

- Supporting the wellbeing and development of children and youth (e.g., sense of belonging mental and emotional health, physical health, learning, literacy, etc..)
- Engaging and supporting parents, caring adults and families
- Youth engagement, participation and leadership development
- Facilitating meaningful connections between children, youth and families with service providers

Organization/Service Provider

- Facilitating meaningful connections between service providers
- Developing and providing resources and programming to educate and support children, youth and families
- Providing welcoming, safe programs and spaces for children, youth and families
- Grant writing and fundraising to sustain programs and services
- Diversity and inclusion, anti-oppressive lens

Network (CYPT)/System

- Fostering collaboration and partnerships with the system of child and youth providers in promoting wellbeing
- Contributing to the broader community conversations (CYPT, Wellbeing Waterloo Region (WWR), Smart Waterloo Region (SWR), etc…)
- Promoting leadership and excellence in child and youth wellbeing, programs and services
- Strategizing and planning with other partners to ensure community needs are met, children, youth and families do not fall through the gaps and to sustain programs and services
- Advocating for children, youth and families related to funding, program and policy changes and uncertainty

Areas of Energy and Capacity for the CYPT (identified in the meeting)

- Engaging children, youth and families in the work of CYPT
- Connecting service providers to prevent silo-ing and celebrate successes
- Moving SWR and other existing projects/partnerships forward (i.e. UNICEF)
- Moving to action with Collective Impact work
- Serve as a common voice
- Continuing to establish partnerships with business and tech, and leverage existing partnerships
- Community education regarding the needs of children and youth in WR, mobilizing knowledge (i.e. around data pieces), and encouraging upstream thinking

Dotmocracy activity

Priorities for the CYPT Moving Forward (dotmocracy results)

1. Serving as a **common voice** to advocate and educate on the needs, supports, solutions, and successes of children, youth, and families in Waterloo Region
2. Move forward with **Collective Impact** work—refining shared measurements/outcomes and identifying and implementing action
3. **Partner with the technology and business** sectors to leverage momentum, build efficiencies, and educate re. social return on investments
4. Rally the group of community service providers who sit at all of the community table and focus on "**upstream thinking**" (linkages with Wellbeing Waterloo Region and Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council)
5. Come together for opportunities to **understand** known and unknown **implications of changes/new landscape** in Waterloo Region