

Learning Themes

Shared Leadership – Collaborative Governance: The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

A number of issues emerge from the story of government-community collaboration through the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. These questions are likely not unique to Hamilton's experience. The following themes may point to helpful lessons and important considerations in other contexts, as well.

How can local governance arrangements like the Roundtable impact upon specific policy and program levers that are important to poverty reduction?

- Is the Roundtable an appropriate mechanism by which to connect the community to specific policy and program levers?
- The City of Hamilton's decision to end the municipal portion of the Canada Child Benefit required political championing. Are some opportunities likely to arise by working with public servants, with others arising through engagement of elected representatives? Are there more or less appropriate roles for each?

City officials have played a number of roles with regards to the Roundtable – including facilitator, champion and partner. Are such roles unique to municipal governments?

- What have been the conditions that have led to such extensive engagement at the municipal level? Can other government orders emulate these proactive roles?

What creates a supportive environment for public servants to pursue the work of place-based, collaborative approaches?

- The Roundtable has sought to foster an environment of co-ownership, with members accepting responsibility for being a part of the solution. What enables co-ownership?
- Community (resident) mobilization is a key factor in compelling government action; at the same time, government representatives may seek out safe spaces. How might residents be included in local governance arrangements?
- What are some of the key factors that enable public servants to accept risk?

Engagement of the provincial and federal governments in the Roundtable's work has been more challenging. What might be some responses to this?

- Roundtable members have demonstrated a values-based leadership, relating both to a goal-orientation and a sense of commitment to the Hamilton community. How might this be further instilled in provincial and federal officials and ministries?
- What might be the advantages for the provincial and federal governments in participating? How might incentives to their participation be created?

