



Counting Women In: A Toolkit for Rural Action on Poverty

On Line Resources

**The following online resources are a companion to the
Counting Women In Toolkit**

You can view or download the toolkit at
www.endabusenow.ca and www.unitedwaybrucegrey.com

**Changing the Picture of Poverty:
A Report Card on Women and Poverty
in Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce (2008)**
is available in PDF on this website or by emailing cpurdon@bmts.com

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Strategy 1 Gathering Women and Communities

1.1 World Café Facilitation Guide

Women's Gathering – June 6, 2007

“Counting Women In” Café

Purpose:

- To create communities that work for all of us
- To bring the wisdom of many voices together
- To have a meaningful conversation about changing attitudes in our region about rural women and poverty
- To call forth what has heart and meaning for each of us.

Margaret Wheatley

“Our memory of how to work together in healthy, productive ways has been nearly extinguished by the creeping complexity of our lives. People are more polarized, more overwhelmed, more impatient, more easily disappointed in others and more withdrawn than ever. The World Café process reawakens our deep memory of two fundamental beliefs about human life. First we humans want to talk together about things that matter to us. In fact, this is what gives satisfaction and meaning to life. Second, as we talk together we are able to access a greater wisdom that is found only in collective.”

At the Counting Women In Café we will focus our attention on:

- What works
- What brings life and vitality to an experience and keeps it going
- Meaningful exchange
- Cross pollination of ideas
- Possibility thinking

We hope that the Counting Women In Café will

- Show us some new directions and ideas to change attitudes towards women
- Create some new opportunities for work
- Bring forward creative and innovative ideas for change
- Build new relationships and make new connections between people
- Give us an opportunity to share knowledge and our contributions

Café Etiquette - Focus on what matters!

- Contribute your thinking and experience
- Listen and understand diverse perspectives
- Connect ideas, build on one another's ideas
- Listen together, look for new insights,
- Play, doodle, draw

The “Counting Women In” Café Process

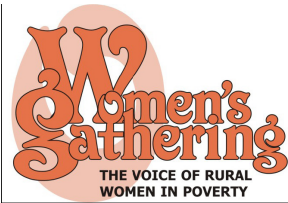
- Go to a table with no fewer than 5 people and no more than 7
- You will be welcomed by your table host (one of the organizing committee members, or someone you choose) who will stay at the table for the café
- Each person introduces themselves and the conversation begins with the first question: *Why is it important to you to change attitudes in your community about rural women and poverty? Why do you care?* There will be about 20 minutes for your table to discuss these questions. You can make notes on the paper on the table, draw pictures, and make notes in your workbook if you choose.
- The Café host will give a signal that the first round is finished and you will then move to another table and join a new group. The table host will remain and greets the next group.
- At your new table you will introduce yourself and the table host will talk a bit about themes, patterns and questions that came from the previous question. Then the group will discuss the second question: *What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity about attitudes and women’s poverty?* You will have about 20 minutes for your table to discuss these questions.
- The Café host will give a signal that the second round is finished and you will go to a third table where you will introduce yourself and then consider the third questions: *What would it take to create changes in attitudes? What challenges may come our way and how can we meet them?* You will have about 20 minutes for this discussion.
- The Café host will give a signal and you then return to your original table for a summary of the whole. Each person can write on a piece of coloured paper an insight gained from the café discussions. The table host will present a summary reflection on the themes, patterns and deeper questions at the table, that anyone can add to.
- The Café Host will make notes on the flip chart of these reflections and post them on the wall. If someone wants to draw pictures from the summary, that would be great too.

At the End of the Café

- Create a knowledge web by posting individual insights on the wall, the reflections from the table hosts, and the “table drawings and notes”
- Notice patterns and themes that emerge
- Discover deeper questions
- Make your own notes on your learning, challenges and deeper questions.
- The Café host will use the information and insights as a resource for the further work of the project.

1.2 Women's Gathering Agenda

Wednesday, June 6, 2007 9:30 - 4:00 Westcast Community Centre in Wingham



Counting Women In

A one-day gathering of women who live with poverty and women's advocates from Grey, Bruce, Huron and Perth Counties

Goals for the Day

- To support the development of leadership for rural women taking action on poverty
- To develop local strategies to change rural community attitudes about women and poverty
- To celebrating women's expertise and contributions to community and family
- To build networks for action across Grey, Bruce, Huron and Perth

Agenda

- 9:30 Opening and Welcome
- 10:00 Short Presentation on the Project and Goals: Colleen Purdon, project coordinator
- 10:15 Keynote: Francesca Dobbyn: Stories to be Told
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 World Café (small discussion groups and four questions)
- 12:30 Lunch and Networking
- 1:30 Coming Together with a Relaxation Exercise: Robin Paul
- 1:45 Concurrent Workshops:
 1. Making Women Visible (Colleen Purdon and Robin Paul)
 2. Celebrating Women (May Tetters and Amy Zoethout)
 3. Community Mobilizing - Changing Attitudes (Pam Hanington and Janice Dunbar)
 4. Advocacy/Legal Rights/SHARE Community Group (Nancy Shular and Glenda Devlin)
 5. Leadership and Women (Arlene Timmins)
 6. Asset Mapping (Carol Rock)
- 2:45 Break
- 3:00 Report Back and Summary from the Day
- 3:30 Closing and Evaluations

Wednesday, June 6, 2007  9:30 - 4:00  Westcast Community Centre in Wingham

About the Workshops & Speakers

Our Keynote Speaker - Francesca Dobbyn is the Executive Director of the United Way of Bruce Grey and author of the Owen Sound Sun Times' bi-monthly column "Running With Scissors". Francesca has built a life's work speaking out for those who cannot or will not be heard. Francesca is mom to a 21-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter. When asked about her personal experience with poverty she had this to say: "I've rebuilt my life 4 times, the first time it took me about 3 years to get out of poverty, the fourth time only took me 4 months, and I'm getting better at it each time."

The Afternoon Workshops

Community Mobilizing and Attitude Change: This workshop will look at ways to mobilize resources in rural communities to address and change attitudes about poverty. Pam Hanington is an educator and researcher who currently works at Women Today of Huron, a rural, community-based women's centre located in Goderich. Janice Dunbar is a community developer who works with the Huron County Health Unit on initiatives to alleviate poverty and food insecurity in Huron County.

Making Women Visible: This workshop will explore messages, visuals and a report card approach to changing community attitudes towards women and poverty. Robin Paul is the lead designer and proprietor of Robin Paul Design and has been involved with the Rural Women and Poverty project since 2001. Colleen Purdon is the project coordinator and will be developing the report card tool kit.

Celebrating Women: This workshop will explore how women are valued and marginalized in rural communities. It will look at possibilities for the next steps in the celebrating women project and possibilities for getting involved. May Tetters is a photographer and has worked for many years as a women's advocate in Grey and Bruce. Amy Zoethout is a photographer and works at Women Today of Huron.

Advocacy/Legal Rights/SHARE Community Group: SHARE is a poverty advocacy group in Grey and Bruce. The workshop will explore how women can work together to make change in their community. Nancy Shular is a single mother of 3 grown children and still lives in poverty. She has advocated for herself and has joined a number of groups including S.H.A.R.E., and is the current First Vice President of The National Anti-Poverty Organization. She has appeared at Senate hearings and is active on other Provincial Organizations as well. Glenda Devlin is a women's advocate and works at the Grey Bruce Legal Clinic.

Leadership and Women: This workshop will explore women's leadership, challenges and opportunities, and the importance of new models of leadership for women and communities. Arlene Timmins is a women's advocate in Huron. She worked for many years with Status of Women Canada and is presently the acting Executive Director at the Women's Centre in Grey Bruce.

Asset Mapping: This workshop looks at an innovative way to approach women's economic security by focusing on her assets instead of deficiencies. Carol Rock worked for many years with Women's Rural Economic Development (WRED) and lives in Stratford.

Wednesday, June 6, 2007  9:30 - 4:00  Westcast Community Centre in Wingham

1.3 Sample Media Release

Women Today of Huron

working with women in Huron County



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 30, 2007

Women from across Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce Counties are taking action against poverty by hosting a Women's Gathering designed to give rural women living with poverty a voice.

Counting Women In – The Voice of Rural Women in Poverty is the theme of the gathering that will be held at the Westcast Community Centre in Wingham on June 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The one-day gathering, hosted by the Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Committee, will bring together women who live with poverty and their advocates from the four counties involved in the project.

"I look forward to hearing the individual and collective voices of rural women," said Pam Hanington, Executive Director of Women Today of Huron, a partner in the project. She added that giving them the opportunity to have their voices heard is key to making social change for the women who live in poverty in our communities.

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty project is phase three of Rural Women in Poverty, a Status of Women Canada funded project to support community action for change.

The goals of the gathering are to develop leadership for rural women taking action on poverty, to develop strategies to change rural community attitudes about women and poverty, to celebrate women's expertise and contributions to community and family, and to build networks for action across Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce.

The day will feature a keynote speaker, small and large group workshops, discussion groups and plans for action, music, fun, good food and good company. There is space for 80 participants from the four counties.

There is no cost for the event and honourariums are available for women needing assistance with childcare and transportation costs. If you are interested in joining the gathering, call WTH at 519-524-6767/1-888-547-3478, e-mail info@wthuron.ca, or contact Colleen Purdon at 519-376-7145, e-mail cpurdon@bmts.com. Also call if you are in need of transportation.

-30-

For more information, please call Pam Hanington at 519-524-6767 or Colleen Purdon at 519-376-7145

1.4 Sample Registration Form

A Women's Gathering

Counting Women In — The Voice of Rural Women in Poverty

Wednesday, June 6, 9:30 a.m. — 4 p.m.

Wescast Community Centre, Wingham

Registration

Name: _____

Agency (if applicable) _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

(Please circle)

I need transportation	I can offer transportation
Yes No	Yes No
I will need an honorarium for childcare/transportation	Our organization would like to put up a display
Yes No	Yes No

Mail to: Women Today of Huron, 45 West St. Goderich ON N7A 2K5

Fax to: Women Today of Huron (519) 524-1233

Email to: womentoday@hurontel.on.ca

Phone Registration: Colleen at (519) 376-7145 or
Women Today at (519) 524-6767/1-888-547-3478

Questions? Call Colleen Purdon (519) 376-7145 or Pam Hanington at
Women Today of Huron (519) 524-6767/ 1-888-547-3478

1.3 Key Themes from the Women's Gathering June 2007

Women's Gathering

The Voice of Rural Women in Poverty: Counting Women In

1. Summary of event
2. Summary of themes
3. Future directions (June 2007-March 2008)
 - i. Celebrating Women
 - ii. Report Card on Poverty
 - iii. Lobby/advocacy

1. Summary of event: June 6, 2007

A one-day gathering of women who live with poverty and women's advocates from Grey, Bruce, Huron and Perth Counties at the Westcast Community Centre in Wingham

Goals for the Day

- To support the development of leadership for rural women taking action on poverty
- To develop local strategies to change rural community attitudes about women and poverty
- To celebrate women's expertise and contributions to community and family
- To build networks for action across Grey, Bruce, Huron and Perth

Participants

~ 65 participants

~ 10 committee members and presenters

2. Summary of themes

A. Insights (Participants' individual responses after three World Café questions)

Participants were asked to write down ONE main insight that they gleaned from the World Café discussions.¹ The following themes were emphasized (quotes are cited from the participants' responses):

1. Awareness and Education

An overwhelming number of responses dealt with the issue of awareness and education required to put a face to the issue of women and poverty, overcome stigmas associated with poverty (i.e. change attitudes), and empower women to speak out for change. The theme of awareness includes education, recognizing/acknowledging/understanding, and seeing:

- Education (for women, by women, for community and children), skills training
"Educate ourselves – personal is political."

¹ Participants' responses were collected and analysed according to the following themes: Politics and advocacy; Awareness and education; Support programs, networks, and community; Labelling, stigma, and taboos; Leadership, role models, and empowerment; Voice and telling women's stories; Economics; and Uniting. A couple of additional themes that arose occasionally were: Isolation; Family; and the role of men. *Responses often included more than just one theme.*

“Start younger in schools to address attitudes and stigma around poverty”

“More life skills within schools so our children will have a positive influence for the future”

“Ignorance in your community about what is available to help and support and guide us.”

- Recognizing, acknowledging, understanding
“Awareness of what it is like to live in poverty”
- “Seeing” the invisible poor
“People close their eyes to what is really going on”

2. Voice

Women need to speak out and tell their stories about their personal experiences with poverty. This will help lead the way, show other women that they are not alone, create supportive networks, and raise awareness about issues surrounding women’s experiences with poverty.

“Have women who live with poverty tell their stories, rather than just statistics.”

“What is missing? A voice, an accurate portrait of women, education, lack of community connections”

“I am the first voice, I can share my experience and more voices will join me and soon we will roar and everyone will hear.”

3. Leadership

This theme also addresses the fact that women living with poverty lack the confidence and self-esteem required to speak out and take leadership roles. Women’s comments were generally very uplifting and positive.

“It is so important to be a positive role model and validate women in poverty”

“Be selfish enough to think of your own needs!”

“This is not just about me. This is about WE. WE can make a difference.”

“Don’t let others opinions get you down. Keep your chin up. Remember you are important, more important than you think!”

Summary: Raising awareness, speaking out, and taking leadership are three closely interrelated ways to change attitudes toward women in poverty. The theme of leadership also addresses the need for role models, stronger self-perception by women living with poverty, and supportive, united networks of and for women.

B. Why is it important to change attitudes in your community about rural women and poverty? Why do you care?

Main themes:

1. Labelling and stigma
2. Awareness and education
3. Support

The stigma associated with poverty was identified as one of the key roadblocks to women’s empowerment. It creates barriers at the level of women’s self-perception; these internalised labels undermine women’s leadership capacity and create situations in which secrecy and isolation prevail.

“Women are afraid to be known as a poor person – especially farm women.”

“Stigma keeps women in poverty”

“Shame is a barrier for people – the fact that people know you need services sways people from asking.”

Many women at the Gathering offered inspirational and empowering messages – and quotes from Margaret Mead and Gandhi – to counter this stigmatisation:

“Don’t be ashamed of what you have and don’t have. Be grateful. You are who you are!”

“Do not live in fear – stand up for what you believe in”

C. What is missing from the picture so far? What are we not seeing? Where do we need more clarity about attitudes and women’s poverty?

Main themes:

1. Support
2. Awareness and education
3. Labelling and stigma

Support can be understood in two key ways: (1) supportive programs and services and (2) supportive networks. Overall, economic support was mentioned less frequently than support coming through services (e.g.: transportation, shelter, education)² and the need for supportive networks between women:

“Safe unobtrusive places for women to come, share, gain strength, share experiences, find support and solutions, network.”

“Women feel separate and disconnected – struggle to find “hidden supports”

“Networks of community services and networks of women themselves”

D. What would it take to create changes in attitudes? What challenges may come our way and how can we meet them?

Main themes:

1. Awareness and education
2. Support
3. Economics, Voice, and Politics

Awareness and education were identified as central to changing attitudes toward women and poverty.

Suggestions included:

“Local TV show showing the face of poverty”

“Teach kids critical thinking about consumerism”

“Educated ourselves – look at the history of the women’s movement”

“Go to the source – educate people to what the issues are: public forums, town councils”

² Though the need for services to be affordable was clearly indicated (e.g.: affordable education and daycare, no additional school fees).

3. Future directions

A. Celebrating Women

Raising awareness and education (particularly for children in schools) were perceived as essential in changing attitudes. A celebration of women, particularly one that makes effective use of the media in revealing the true face of women living with poverty, would be strategic in changing local attitudes about women and poverty. Incorporating opportunities for women to speak out and take leadership roles in the celebration would also be important components. Access the skills and knowledge possessed by local women living with poverty (“It is important for women who feel undeserving to feel that everything they can finish is a great accomplishment. The things they can do at home – baking, crafts, cooking – are something that someone else may not be able to do”/ “We have real life experience – inspire others, maybe poor people can contribute more than wealthy folks, giving back”).

Key elements of Celebrating Women (derived from World Café notes):

- Women’s voices and stories
- The real faces of women living with poverty
- Uniting, solidarity
- Positive messages, overcoming shame
- Overcoming isolation
- Educating community and children
- Opportunities for developing leadership

B. Report Card on Poverty

Supportive networks and services for women living with poverty were identified as significant barriers and missing elements in present strategies to change attitudes toward women living with poverty. Identifying and assessing the effectiveness of these support systems (and, in particular, how agencies provide coordinated support services) could be a key element of the Report Card on Poverty.

Support Services:

- Education (affordable, accessible, skills training (e.g.: financial management))
- Shelter
- Transportation
- Ontario Works

Support networks:

- Places for women to meet
- Informal and formal networks

The findings of the Report Card should be well publicized in the media in order to raise awareness and change attitudes.

C. Lobby/advocacy

No clear message is evident from the Women's Gathering in terms of possible directions/themes for lobbying or advocacy activities.

Who would be lobbied? For what?

MP Fair Vote, Day care

MPP Funding, Fair Vote

Municipal government Meeting spaces, transportation

Social services work together, not adversarial

School board Curriculum, skills, human rights

Ontario Works

Media

Other community institutions?

Major local employers?

Rural institutions?

Political parties women representatives

When?

Provincial election

Fair vote

1.7 Sample Participant Feedback Form

Women's Gathering - Counting Women In

The Voice of Rural Women in Poverty

June 6th 2007

Wecast Community Centre Wingham

Your feedback on the day is important!

Please rate the following aspects of the Women's Gathering

(1 is low and 4 is high).

Thanks!

Evaluation of the Day

Low -----High

1. Key Note Speaker 1 2 3 4 N/A

2. The World Café Discussion 1 2 3 4 N/A

3. Workshops (*answer for the one you attended*)

Making Women Visible 1 2 3 4 N/A

Celebrating Women 1 2 3 4 N/A

Community Mobilizing-
Changing Attitudes 1 2 3 4 N/A

Advocacy/SHARE/Legal Rights 1 2 3 4 N/A

Leadership and Women 1 2 3 4 N/A

Asset Mapping 1 2 3 4 N/A

4 How would you rate your overall progress on the goals for the day?

- Development of leadership to change attitudes 1 2 3 4
- Development of strategies to change attitudes 1 2 3 4
- Celebrate women's expertise and contributions 1 2 3 4
- Build networks for action 1 2 3 4

5. Your overall level of satisfaction with the day? 1 2 3 4

We would also appreciate your comments:

What was most helpful?

What could we do differently next time?

Strategy 2 Getting the Facts: Community Report Cards

2.1 Definitions of Poverty:

(from *The Poverty Matrix: Understanding Poverty in Your Community*, Tamarack, 2004)

Defining Terms

(a) Poverty Measure

There is no official measure of poverty in Canada. In fact, there are at least nine different poverty definitions in use in Canada today (for a description of the different poverty lines, see <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/fbpov00/chapter2.pdf>).

For practical purposes, it is probably best to use a measure for which there exists easily accessible information. While such definitions will not be perfect, it is generally quite difficult to secure local statistics on poverty that are accessible and affordable so it is best to try and make do with whatever information is available.

If your group chooses a definition based on the availability of existing data, yet feels that the measure is either too low or high, you have the option of either increasing or decreasing the results of the research by an amount you feel more accurately reflects the poverty picture in your community. The Aspen Institute in the United States, for example, chose to increase their poverty line by 50% in a study of how self-employment programs assist low-income residents to exit poverty.

Poverty Measures

The Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) is the most widely used (though not necessarily universally accepted) operational definition of poverty in Canada, and therefore a most helpful source for consistent data. Research by the Canadian Council on Social Development has found that the LICO comes closest to what the majority of Canadians feel is an appropriate poverty line. Unfortunately, Statistics Canada's LICO statistics are only updated every five years, usually about 1.5 years after the national census.

Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure (LIM) is an indicator slightly lower than the LICO and is based on data submitted through peoples' taxes. While the LIM has a number of limitations, it can be used to develop annual poverty updates and has some ways of capturing the depth of poverty for different demographic groups.

2.2 Changing the Picture of Poverty Report Card 2008

The Final Report Card is available in PDF on this website, or by emailing cpurdon@bmts.com

2.3 Sample Report Card Survey Tool

1. About the Project

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Committee is conducting a Report Card on Poverty in Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce to look at the impact of poverty on rural women, their families, and their communities in 2007. We welcome your participation in this community survey.

Why do a Report Card on Poverty?

The lives of rural women living with poverty are largely unnoticed. The barriers they face are often hidden, and their contributions to their families and communities are largely unrecognized.

We hope the results of this Report Card will:

- change community attitudes about women living with poverty
- help communities develop strategies to end poverty.
- challenge stereotypes about women and poverty.
- provide helpful information for community planning and action.

The Report Card on Poverty is based upon four community benchmarks: Respect, Meeting Basic Needs, Access, and Equality. This survey collects information for each benchmark.

Who should complete this survey?

We are interested in responses from women living with poverty, people who provide services for families dealing with poverty, and from community members.

Please feel free to pass the survey on to anyone you think may be interested in participating.

All information is confidential and no identifying information will appear in the report.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact Colleen at (519) 376-7145 or by email at cpurdon@bmts.com

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Committee will present the Report Card findings, as well as recommendations for action, in the spring of 2008.

In addition, a resource handbook for women and communities on rural poverty will be available in the spring of 2008. The handbook will support community work to build connections and strategies to address poverty in rural areas.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the Report Card or the Resource Handbook, please contact Women Today of Huron at 1-888-547-3478 or check their website at www.wthuron.ca. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you would like a print copy of this survey for distribution, please contact Colleen at cpurdon@bmts.com or (519) 376-7145.

Thanks again!!

* 1. Please let us know what perspective informs your response to this survey by checking the statement that best describes you (please check one only):

☐ woman living with poverty ☐ service provider working with poor women ☐ volunteer working with poor women ☐ person interested in poverty issues ☐ other

Other (please specify)

2. Information about you and your perspective

* 2. What is your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

3. Where do you live?

	Huron	Perth	Grey	Bruce
rural route	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hamlet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
village	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Nations territory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How old are you?

☐ 16-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-59 ☐ over 60

5. Please describe your current sources of income (check as many as apply):

☐ employed full time ☐ employed part time ☐ self employed (business) ☐ self employed (farm) ☐ social assistance (OW) ☐ ODSP ☐ EI ☐ pension ☐ Other

(please specify)

6. What is your total family income for 2007?

☐ under 5,000 ☐ 5,000 - 15,000 ☐ 15,000 - 25,000 ☐ 25,000 - 35,000 ☐ 35,000 - 50,000 ☐ 50,000 - 80,000 ☐ over 80,000

3. Women are treated with respect and dignity

1. How important do you think it is to take action on poverty in your community?

☐ not important ☐ somewhat important ☐ important ☐ very important

Why?

2. What is the impact of poverty on rural women and their families? (choose one answer)

- ☐ very little impact
- ☐ some impact, but no long term harm
- ☐ serious impact on women and their families
- ☐ serious impact on women, their families and the larger community

Comments?

3. What is the best way for service providers to demonstrate respect for women dealing with poverty? (check your top three choices)

- ☐ Listen to her ☐ Work with her as an equal ☐ Connect her with other services that she needs ☐ Follow up on promised action ☐ Advocate for poverty reduction strategies ☐ Provide her with the information she needs ☐ Help her stand up for her rights ☐ Provide her with practical supports

☐ Other (please describe)

4. Please rate how the following organizations treat women dealing with poverty:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Don't Know
Ontario Works	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ODSP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Bank	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children's Aid Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credit Counselling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Early Years/Daycare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services for Abused Women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment Insurance (EI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches/Faith Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments?

4. Basic needs for food, housing, health and safety are met

1. How possible was it for women living with poverty, and their families to meet their basic needs in 2007?

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Don't Know
Nutritious Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decent Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prescription Medication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eye Glasses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Expenses for Children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training/Education Costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retirement Savings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

2. Did you, or a woman you know, experience some form of homelessness in 2007?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Used a women's shelter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moved in with friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evicted because couldn't pay the rent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moved because housing was condemned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evicted because the landlord wanted the place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lived in a car	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="text"/>		

5. Women have access to training, education, information and supports.

1. Women living with poverty in rural communities report that they face many barriers trying to get out of poverty. How serious are the barriers listed below for women in your community?

	not serious	somewhat serious	serious	very serious	Don't Know
Women are blamed, or held responsible for their poverty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural women are isolated and can't access information and supports they need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The welfare system makes it very difficult to get out of poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women are overwhelmed with paperwork and an uncoordinated community response to poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Single women cannot make enough money to support themselves and their family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government cutbacks make it more difficult to get out of poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women struggle with stigma associated with poverty and are reluctant to reach out for help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community charities (food banks, etc.) are not able to meet family needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="text"/>				

2. Please choose the top three things that women need to get out of poverty in your rural community.

☐ Transportation ☐ Better paying jobs ☐ Coordinated services and supports ☐ Affordable and accessible childcare ☐ Retraining/upgrading skills ☐ Further education ☐ Healthcare services ☐ Legal services ☐ Social assistance rates that pay the bills ☐ Other

Comment

6. Equality: Do women and men have equal opportunities and status?

1. More women than men live in poverty in rural communities. Do women need a different approach to poverty reduction than men?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

If yes, what would the approach look like?

2. Why do you believe more women than men are living in poverty in rural communities? (check your top three choices)

- ☐ There are more good paying jobs for men in rural communities.
- ☐ Women work part time, or not at all to care for the family and are not economically self sufficient.
- ☐ Men do not pay their child support payments, leaving women and their children in poverty
- ☐ Women are more likely to work at minimum wage jobs
- ☐ Women abuse is more prevalent in rural communities. When an abused woman leaves her partner she is often left in poverty.
- ☐ Rural women who stay home to care for their families do not have pensions.
- ☐ Government programs do not meet the needs of women who must balance family and work responsibilities
- ☐ Other (please describe in the comment box)

Comments?

7. Thanks for completing this survey!

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty will report on the findings from this survey and focus groups with women in the Spring of 2008.

If you would like a copy of the Report Card on Poverty, or a copy of the Resource Kit for Women and Communities on Poverty, please contact:

Women Today of Huron
www.wthuron.ca
1-888-547-3478

For more information about the Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Committee and its work contact Colleen Purdon at cpurdon@bmts.com

2.4 Sample Focus Group Guide

Report Card on Poverty in Grey Bruce Huron and Perth Focus Group/Workshop Guide

Background

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Committee is conducting a Report Card on Poverty in the four counties. The lives of women living with poverty are largely unnoticed in our rural communities. The barriers they face are often hidden women's contributions to their families and communities are largely unrecognized.

We hope the Report Card will:

- Change community attitudes about women living with poverty
- Help communities develop strategies to end poverty
- Challenge stereotypes about women and poverty
- Provide helpful information for community planning and action

The Report Card is collecting information under four 'benchmarks':

1. Women are treated with respect and dignity
2. Basic needs for food, housing, health and safety are met
3. Women have access to training, education, information and supports
4. Equality: Women and men have equal opportunities and status

For each benchmark we are collecting information about women's experiences and recommendations for action.

The Purpose of this Meeting

This focus group/workshop brings women together to talk in some detail about their experiences dealing with poverty, from the perspective of women living with the issues, and those providing services. It is also an opportunity to work with women face to face to develop recommendations for action to address poverty in our community.

Format of the Focus Group/Workshop

The format for the focus group will depend on the number of women who attend.

1. **Focus Group Format:** If there is a small group (8-10 women, or less) a large circle and full group discussion will be used. There are four main questions for the focus group, based on the four benchmarks we are using for the report card. The group ends with a summary of the most important recommendations or points from the entire discussion.
2. **Workshop Model:** If there are more than 10 women present you can use a workshop model instead of 'focus group' approach. Begin with an introduction with everyone, and then ask women to break into small groups (try to have 4-5 women in each small group, with a facilitator for each). Each group will discuss the four benchmarks and their recommendations for action, then they will report back to the full group with a summary of the discussion and action items.

Both the focus group format and the workshop model will require two hours of time to complete the following agenda:

- Introductions (facilitators say a bit about themselves, why they are interested in the project, ask women to introduce themselves – first names)
- Overview of the Report Card project (see background)
- Overview of the Purpose and Instructions to the group including: what to expect, honorariums, answering questions, consent, what happens with their information, keeping a focus on diverse input (not finding agreement), ground rules (respectful, only say what you want to say, listen, do bring forward diverse or different perspectives, there is no right or wrong answer to a question)
- Discussion on the Focus Group Questions
- Summary and Thank You! (Include a reminder that women can get copies of the report card and handbook by contacting Women Today, the United Way, etc.)

Housekeeping Details

- Women who are dealing with poverty will get an honorarium to cover their childcare and transportation costs. We will provide \$25.00 for women, and this needs to be organized ahead of time, so it is available for women at the focus group. Women sign a sheet when they receive the honorarium so we can verify the expense.
- The Owen Sound workshop includes a lunch, with thanks to the United Way. The Stratford focus group will need to organize some drinks and snacks to have available to women during the focus group.
- At the beginning of the focus group tell women that they are not required to answer any of the questions, and that their participation is voluntary. They can leave at anytime (please let us know though) or chose not to answer a question. Let women know that the information they provide will be used to prepare a report on the report card that will be presented in all four counties, and it will also be part of a handbook we are preparing to support community work to address poverty in rural communities. **No names or identifying information about any participant in the report card will appear in any reports or documentation.**
- One person should facilitate the focus group (leading the group through the questions, making sure everyone has a chance to participate, probing and going for more detail where necessary, thanking people for their contributions, making sure one or two people don't dominate the discussion, etc.) and one person should take notes of the discussion and any recommendations. The notes need to be clear enough that we can use them, so the person with the best handwriting and note taking ability should do that job.
- If possible use a flip chart to post the recommendations for action that women suggest, so they can see them as well. If there is time, the facilitator can ask women which of the recommendations are the most important for them.
- Let all of the participants know that they can get a copy of the report card online or a print copy if they request it (Contact Women Today to get copies). When the handbook is complete, they can get a copy of that by contacting Women Today.

Focus Group/Workshop

Benchmark: Respect (women are treated with respect and dignity)

- How do you think women dealing with poverty are treated in their communities? (Do you have an example of an experience where there was no respect because of your poverty, or because a woman, or both. What did you do? What would have liked to do?)
- How is respect demonstrated to you – what do need to see, hear, experience?
- What action is needed to ensure women dealing with poverty are always treated with respect

Benchmark: Basic Needs (basic needs for food, house, health and safety are met)

- How well are women living with poverty able to meet their basic needs? What works and what doesn't?
- How do women living with poverty manage to care for their families and themselves?
- What action or program would be most helpful for women struggling to meet their basic needs?

Benchmark: Access (women have access to training, education, information and supports)

- What are the barriers women living with poverty face while trying to get ahead in a rural community?
- How do they overcome barriers - what have you learned yourself or from other women? What would you recommend to other women?
- Do you think agencies, organizations, and community members should help women overcome barriers, or should they be doing more to remove the barriers that women face?

Benchmark: Equality (women and men have equal opportunities and status)

- What does inequality between women and men look like in rural communities? ours?
- What is the most important way that rural communities demonstrate equality between women and men?
- What is needed to improve women's equality and their status in rural communities?

2.5 Additional Report Cards and Resources on Poverty

Report Cards

- Campaign 2000 2007 National Report Card www.campaign2000.ca
- Child and Youth Poverty Report 2006 <http://www.ccsd.ca>
- Poverty in Thunder Bay 2007, The Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee www.kalc.ca/tbejc.htm
- Including Low Income Women with Children, Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence, www.pwhce.ca
- PEI Equality Report Card 2008, Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women, www.gov.pe.ca/acsw

Additional Resources

25 in 5 Network, www.25in5.ca

Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, www.ontario.ca/breakingthecycle

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women,

<http://www.actew.org/about/index.html>

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) is a network of agencies dedicated to improving women's economic self-sufficiency. This web site has resources for career development, fact sheets on women's employment, and policy analysis reports regarding women's rights and women's employment.

Canadian Council on Social Development, <http://www.ccsd.ca/home.htm>

The Canadian Council on Social Development offers statistics, fact sheets, research reports, and policy briefs on many social justice issues, including poverty. Issues such as the pay equity, economic barriers, and domestic violence are discussed in some of the reports.

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Disentangling the Web of Women's Poverty and Exclusion,

http://www.criaw-icref.ca/pubs/publicationDetails_e.asp?id=121

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) is focused on positive social change and has web links to many related organizations, publications, and fact sheets. A publication of interest is entitled, "Disentangling the Web of Women's Poverty and Exclusion." CRIAW recognizes that multiple factors combine to fortify inequality and exclusion. Some general recommendations, challenges, and strategies in creating greater equity are described. Although the report is free of cost, there is a charge for shipping. This report can be found at,

Disabled Women's Network Ontario, <http://dawn.thot.net/>

DAWN Ontario is a feminist women's cross-disability organization which works towards creating more inclusive communities via cross-sectoral networks. This organization has a number of links, fact sheets, and tool kits on its website, including a toolkit about using the media effectively.

Huron Community Matters, "Community Priorities Initiative: Engaging Community, Building Community",

http://www.huron.unitedway.ca/Local_images/huron/CommunityPrioritiesInitiative.pdf

This document illustrates how a local initiative collected data about what the priorities for the locality were. This document briefly provides some ideas about questions to ask, as well as whom to involve when launching a fact-finding process geared towards strengthening community.

Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children, “No Cherries Grow on Our Trees”, <http://www.metrac.org/programs/info/take.action.report.dec08.pdf>

This report describes the experiences of women living in poverty, with emphasis on the links between forms of violence and women’s poverty. The framework used in the report recognizes the many ways that poverty results in “poor living” and reinforces social inequalities. Several recommendations for the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction are listed.

National Council on Welfare, <http://www.ncwcnbes.net/en/home.html>

The National Council of Welfare advises the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development about the issues facing low-income Canadians. The Council produces publications and reports, produces fact sheets, and provides web links to Canadian media reporting of poverty-related issues.

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, <http://www.ocap.ca/>

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) is an advocacy organization committed to resistance against policies and actions which serve to marginalize people. This organization’s website has links to many related organizations and posts recent information on current struggles, meetings, and protest gatherings.

Vibrant Communities, <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2.php>

Vibrant Communities is a cross-Canada organization which has identified partnerships of people, organizations, businesses and governments as the most important step in a community-driven response to eradicating poverty. The organization has used gender based analyses, and has some links to reports about rural poverty.

Strategy 3 Celebrating Women: Community Arts Project

3.1 Photos of the Travel Trunk of Poverty



Travel Trunk of Poverty

Rural Women Take Action on Poverty Project

Raising awareness of the issues facing rural women living with poverty through a travelling trunk featuring items that represent both women's challenges of living with poverty as well as their triumphs



Goderich Library
June 11—July 3

Official launch
June 11, 1 p.m.

"Poverty does not diminish the importance or value of women's contributions to their families and communities, but it does make their lives much more difficult."

Funded by Status of Women Canada

3.2 Sample Media Release

Women Today of Huron

working with women in Huron County



May 30, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rural Women Take Action on Poverty project has created "The Travel Trunk of Poverty" which is ready to make its first stop of the summer at the Goderich Library, where it will help raise public awareness of the issues facing rural women living with poverty.

Members of the public are invited to join us at the library for the official launch of this community arts project June 11 at 1 p.m. The library is located at 52 Montreal St., just off The Square.

Over the last several months, women from across Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce Counties have brought together items that represent both their challenges of living with poverty as well as their triumphs. Artist Mary MacCarl, of Durham, has put together the items in an old traveling trunk that will make its way through the four counties over the course of the summer. Along with the visual display, an audio component will accompany the trunk for the public to hear the voices of women expressing their experiences with poverty. The goal of the project is to counter some of the negative attitudes about women and poverty, as well as to celebrate women's accomplishments regardless of their economic status.

Rural Women Take Action on Poverty is funded through Status of Women Canada. Started in 2001, the group has produced the research report Rural Women Speak About the Face of Poverty which was followed up in 2005 with the production of How We Count: A Handbook for Rural Women and Rural Communities on Poverty. Phase three of the project was launched in 2007 and is focused on changing rural community attitudes towards women living with poverty. The travel trunk is one of four components of phase three, which also include a community report card on poverty, making change in the community by using women's knowledge, leadership and power, and gathering women, which was held last June in Wingham and brought women together from the four counties to connect with one another for growth and change.

-30-

For more information about the project, please call project coordinator May Tetters at 519-369-2026, or Amy Zoethout at Women Today of Huron at 519-524-6767/888-547-3478.

Strategy 4 Engaging Municipal Government

4.1 Tools for Mapping Municipal Processes

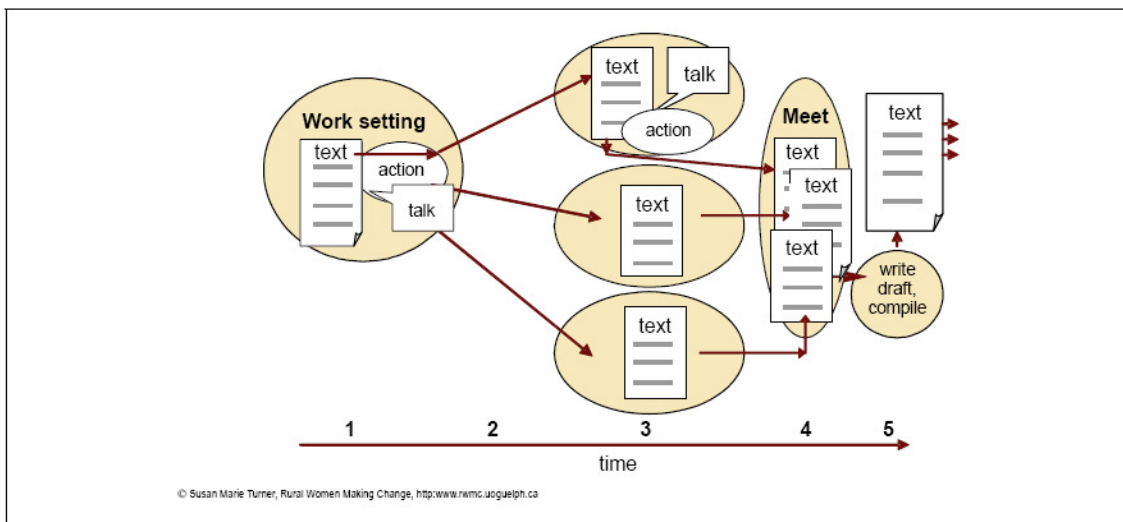
MAPPING POLICY PROCESSES



A GUIDE FOR TRACKING & ASSESSING POLICY WORK & IDENTIFYING SITES FOR MAKING CHANGE

(Please note that this guide is a work in progress. I would appreciate your feedback on how it works for you. Please send your comments to: susantur@uoguelph.ca. Thank you.)

WHAT YOU LOOK FOR: A WORK-TEXT-WORK SEQUENCE OF ACTION



TO MAP A SEQUENCE – QUESTIONS TO ASK



- What is your **START** work setting? (1)
- What is your '**problem**' work/action?
- What is the **key text** in that?
- Who produces the text? Where? How?
- Who gets the text **next** (2)?
- How do they use it? (3)
- Who does it go to next? (4) How do they use it? (5) Etc.

IDENTIFY AND ASK

- Problems, links, people to ask, involve
- Specific unfamiliar or problematic language used in text's sections
- How is it linked to language used in other texts? (Identify "behind the scenes" texts – manual, legislation, model being followed, "Speech from the Throne," budget – where they are situated, who produced them.)
- How are wordings in a text changed in their move from one setting to next (someone's work = compilation, draft to action plan, etc)?
- Who exactly does what exactly in a sequence of work-text-work action?

© Susan Marie Turner, Rural Women Making Change, <http://www.rwmc.uoguelph.ca>

GETTING TO THE MAP

-  = document, memo, email, form, legislation, draft report, letter, this work sheet
-  = action, discussion, write, read, meet, draft, compile, edit, fill in.

INDIVIDUAL MAPPING

- What is the scenario/problem/issue?
- Mapping has to come out of a real situation – what do you want the map to make visible?
- Scope: take sections, steps, process, *not an entire system*
- Focus: work conditions, what people do

N.B.: IT IS NOT INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES; IT IS WHAT IS IN PROCESS. LOOK FOR SEQUENCE OF ACTION

- Sketch, change as you observe and ask questions
- Key: If you don't know, ask. (e.g.: *Phone, ask at meeting, "How do you do this?" "Who in your unit does this?" "What exactly do they do with it?" "Who do you send it to next?"*)

GROUP MAPPING

- What's the scenario/problem/issue?
- Mapping has to come out of a real situation – what do you want the map to make visible?
- Getting buy in – need decision to conduct mapping together
- Once decision of group, decide scope
- Scope: take sections, steps, process, cannot map an entire system
- Pick a site and something that is do-able
- Focus: work conditions, what people do

N.B. IT IS NOT INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES; IT IS WHAT IS IN PROCESS. LOOK FOR SEQUENCE OF ACTION

- Sketch, change as you observe and discover:
 - a) actual work activity
 - b) conditions of workers' actions (*resources, texts, regulations, legislation, agreements, training procedures, standardized tools and texts, forms*)
 - c) more, concrete, details of setting and work.

ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A MAP & DOING MAPPING

- ✓ Provides a simple way to make complex work processes visible
- ✓ Individuals can bring the **big picture** to the table, and be able to give evidence of understanding 'how things work'
- ✓ Task oriented – people work together
- ✓ Focuses on positives and possibilities
- ✓ Brings together people whose work is connected or who want to connect their work
- ✓ Illustrates work procedures that do/could connect, or sites where problems/gaps exist
- ✓ Gets people to the table on common ground
- ✓ Shows big picture – there is no one person who knows it all
- ✓ Gets to problem solving that is do-able, based on knowing work and work context.

4.2 Sample Community Presentation to Council

SAMPLE PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

Thank you Your Worship (mayor). I am the Director of the Women's Employment Resource Centre of Oxford County (WERC). WERC provides employment assistance services to all women of Oxford County as well as outreach employment services for both men and women in smaller, more rural locations - Plattsville, Princeton, Tavistock and Thamesford. Research shows that women's employment is particularly important to community vitality and is strongly linked to population retention in rural communities in particular. Currently, the unemployment rate for women in Oxford is at 5.5%. It could be lower.

WERC is actively meeting the needs of women seeking employment and training. Our programs prepare women so that when they leave they can enter employment directly, or pursue further education whether that is finishing high school, entering college or university programs to acquire a specific set of employment-related skills. As well as providing courses in job search techniques, we also offer short and long term programming in skill development in a wide variety of essential workplace competencies such as Essential Workplace Communication, computer usage, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Boundaries in the Workplace, Workplace culture and a simulated manufacturing setting called Industrial Sewing and Manufacturing. Women work with counsellors and in workshops to identify skills they need to develop for the workplace.

We have a core staff of seven people. Five of our staff work directly with women coaching and preparing them to enter the job market. WERC staff always follow up and track the women who have used our services. One third secured full-time employment. 25% secured part-time employment. More than 20% went on to take additional training. The remaining 10% includes women we could not contact, or who have physical or mental health issues preventing them from moving further towards employment. These results show WERC's direct contribution to the economic well being of women, *AND* to the well being of our community.

Other local organizations such as Community Employment Services and Fanshawe College Employment Services also can assist women with job search. One of the main differences between them and WERC is that we pay particular attention to the unique barriers women face such as the affects of abuse on employment. WERC provides both the time and the one-on-one staffing needed for women to be able to move past their barriers to employment. Women who have never worked, not worked in some time, or who have recently lost their jobs typically need to refresh skills and learn new ones. Many *also need* personal feedback and support to prepare them for employment seeking.

WERC also provides women with up to date information on local labour market information, workplace trends and the current needs of employers. We train and coach women so they are prepared for the demands and expectations of *the current workplace*.

For the last nineteen years we've provided local women with the tools they need to work towards their economic well being in this community. Our success rate is 80%, with success defined as women securing work or education that will lead them to specialized careers. As council members know, unemployment has serious negative consequences for the community. At present, WERC faces challenges of uncertainty in continued funding for our core programming and the need for additional financial support for specialized programming for targeted groups such as lower skilled marginalized and immigrant women.

I hope we can count on your support to be able to continue preparing Woodstock and Oxford County women for employment. You will see in your package a kit, my card, and a pamphlet about our organization and our website for further information. Thank you for your time.

4.3 Sample Brief to Council

SAMPLE BRIEF TO COUNCIL: RURAL TRANSPORTATION, POVERTY & ACCESS TO TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Thank you, members of [county council/social services/ Transportation Committee], for your time. My name is X and I am a member of the X Committee. We are a group of volunteers working to attract attention and implement solutions to address poverty in the communities of X, X and X.

I am here today to bring to your attention the persistent concern of transportation in the county and the impact this has on women living in poverty in our community. Without access to transportation, low-income women face obstacles in their efforts to find a job or access services, training and education to prepare them for employment. I will briefly present facts on this issue, options for addressing it and the recommendation our group would like the committee to consider.

Our county has no public transportation services and operating a vehicle is not affordable for many low-income women. A recent survey on women and transportation in rural Ontario (RWMC) indicated that 35% of women have no or poor access to a vehicle. This is substantially higher than the Statistics Canada report that found 11% of low income households do not own a car, but nearly all high income households do. CAA estimates the cost of operating a vehicle is an average of \$8,500 in 2007. This is beyond the reach of low-income women.

The Ontario Poverty Report identified transportation as a key barrier to employment for low-income families and one that is best addressed by municipalities. The RWMC research found that women had difficulty finding and maintaining employment when they did not have access to transportation. As a result, women were likely only to apply for jobs that they could walk to, placing a constraint on the type of jobs available to them. These jobs are largely in the service sector, often part time and at lower wages.

Being transportation disadvantaged affects other members of the family as well. Children are affected by not having a ride for them to participate in social, sport and recreational activities that are important to their social development. Women's key role in care giving for parents and elderly family members is affected, as is their participation in social and community activities. A healthy community encourages all members to be active participants. Women who are transportation disadvantaged are unable to participate to the

Improved transportation for women and other transportation-disadvantaged groups (seniors, youth) will have a positive impact on the community. Our community like many other Canadian rural communities, is aging faster than urban communities. As women and men age they drive less, or give up driving completely for economic, health or safety reasons. As their ability to travel decreases, many seniors move out of rural communities to towns or cities where they have access to public transportation. In order to keep our senior in our community they need to have an affordable and safe way to travel for shopping, social and recreation activities, and appointments. Improving access to services in the community supports them to live independently. Youth will have a safe option for traveling to work and recreation activities when a parent is not able to drive them. Improving accessibility to the services offered in the community improves the quality of life for everyone. Not to mention the environmental benefit of having fewer vehicles on the road, reducing our carbon footprint.

Public transportation is expensive and in most cases, the low population density of rural areas is an obstacle to conventional bus transportation. However, there are successful transportation innovations operating in Ontario and other parts of Canada. These alternatives have been successful in getting rural women to the services they need and helping them find and maintain employment.

The most popular innovation is called 'Dial a ride' and has been operating for some time in rural Quebec (Rimouski) and more recently in parts of Ontario (Bancroft, Wawa, Centre Wellington). Riders call at least 24 hours ahead to book a ride and are quoted a rate based on the distance of the trip. Drivers may be community volunteers who use their own vehicle (mileage paid), taxis or a mini-bus. The systems are funded through a blend of public and private support as well as fares charged for rides.

Other communities are developing inter-municipal transit programs designed for rural residents who commute to towns or cities for employment. Transit Eastern Ontario has set up a system using coaches travelling from pick up points in rural areas to and from Ottawa. Chatham-Kent is currently looking at expanding their existing inter-municipal service. These systems can accommodate both daily commuters and occasional riders who need to access services outside of their community. The sales of tickets and passes, along with government funding cover the cost of the service. If a monthly pass is purchased the amount is eligible for the new federal public transportation tax credit.

Public transit is the exclusive domain of municipalities, downloaded by the Province in 1997. Transportation is critical to the social and economic development of individuals and communities. This has been recognized by the Province in the recent Places to Grow Act (2005) and growth plans like the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan, which requires communities to develop a plan for providing alternatives to cars. Although our community lies outside of this current growth plan, it would be wise for council to be proactive and start the process of improving transportation options that will result in improving the quality of life for all residents.

Municipalities are eligible to apply for funds to develop and expand public transportation through the Dedicated Gas Tax Fund for Public Transportation program. Accessing these funds requires a plan and an application to the Ministry of Transportation, which can only be made by Council. For this reason, involvement of municipal government is critical to developing and supporting transit options in our community.

Transportation affects the lives of everyone in the community and the specific needs are unique to each community. For that reason there should be diligence in assuring ample opportunities for community organizations and individuals to participate in the development of a transportation innovation. Our organization is offering our services, networks and resources to assist municipal staff in identifying our community's transportation needs and solutions.

5. OUR COMMITMENT As concerned citizens and professionals, we will work with staff to set up and report on community consultations. We will provide support to develop a pilot program and monitor the results. We have contacts in other rural communities who have successfully started and maintained transportation alternatives. These contacts have offered to share their experiences with us and Council

4.4 Annotated Bibliography

Bibliography and Resources

Annotated Bibliography of references & resources, Rural Municipalities & Gender Analysis For the Rural Women Making Change Municipalities Project

Prepared by Kristie O'Neill

This bibliography reviews selected recent policy documents, research reports, resource and training tools and academic articles. Each is in some way related to the work of organizations, branches of government and to municipalities' work and the daily lives of rural women and their organizations. Our overarching concern is how knowledge is produced by and for municipalities, and how this affects the lives and work of women within these municipalities. Our research focus is municipal decision making processes, and how women's organizations can access local governing processes and effectively collaborate with municipal governments to make change in their communities.

Policy Documents

Matthews, Deb, Chair, Ontario Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction. (2008). *Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Retrieved February 1, 2009 from http://www.growingstronger.ca/english/pdf/Ontario's_Poverty_Report_EN.pdf

This report identifies strategies to move 25% of Ontarians out of poverty in 5 years. Strategies to improve the economic self-sufficiency of women are broadly described, and include programs aimed at providing training for women in skilled trades, and supports for women in transition from domestic violence. Municipalities are acknowledged as having an important role in poverty reduction via providing transportation, service hubs, and recreational opportunities that meet the needs of locals living in poverty.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. (2006). *Strong Rural Communities – Working Together For Success...and Achieving It: Ontario's Rural Plan February 2006 Update*. Retrieved February 17, 2006, from http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/rural_plan/downloads/rural_plan06.pdf

This brief report describes *Ontario's Rural Plan* (created in 2004), and progress in achieving *Ontario's Rural Plan* goals. Innovation and partnerships are highlighted as ways for communities to maintain strong economies while investing in citizens. Women are absent from this report, indicative of a gender-neutral approach.

Research Reports

Canadian Women's Foundation. (2004). *From Poverty to Empowerment*. Retrieved January 28, 2009 from <http://www.cdnwomen.org/PDFs/EN/CWF-frompoverty-report.pdf>

The need for women-centred Community Economic Development (CED) is explored within the context of government policies in terms of women's experiences of poverty, and case study successes of CED initiatives. Gendering policy analysis and policy development is stated to be a means of eradicating poverty because solutions would be addressed to meet the particular needs of women, and consequently would represent a tangible method for moving women out of

poverty. Municipal restrictions on women's participation in CED programs are identified as preventing some women living in poverty from moving to economic self-sufficiency. The need to partner with municipal governments is mentioned as a way of strengthening CED networks.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2008). Getting to 30% by 2026. A report on getting more women in local government. Retrieved from www.fcm.ca

A 16 page guide to a strategy that involves local governments and outlines actions for improving access to political decision making process and promoting gender equality.

(Purdon, Colleen for Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2004). *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making*. Catalogue No. FCM I047E. Ottawa: ON.

Retrieved January 20, 2009 from

<http://www.fcm.ca/CMFiles/increase1UBZ-3262008-9823.pdf>

Women are under-represented in municipal decision-making. This under-representation results from barriers including lack of information, discrimination, under-utilized gender mainstreaming tools, and under-utilized partnerships. Having women participate in local decision-making would benefit communities and women, would help form successful partnerships, and could help with the mentoring of women in general. Recommendations and strategies for increasing women's participation are provided.

Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. (2008). Beyond Freefall: Halting Rural Poverty. Retrieved February 3, 2009 from

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/agri-e/rep-e/rep09jun08-e.pdf>

This report looks at some of the issues rural areas are faced with, including rural homelessness, access to health care, and industry declines. This report recognizes the need to coordinate social services in order to provide positive spin-off impacts, yet, an explicit gender analysis is lacking.

Resource Manuals/Toolkits

City of Ottawa. (2008). Gender Equality Lens: promoting equality and inclusion for the full diversity of women in the City of Ottawa. Retrieved March 01, 2009 from

www.casi-ivtf.org

This City for All Women Initiative is a collective effort and demonstrates the potential of civic-city-academic partnerships in areas of policy development and service delivery that are possible in Canada. While this is a major city, the resource is a good one for rural governments and organizations wanting to include gender equality in their agendas.

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. (2003). Communities and Local Government: Working Together, A Resource Manual. Retrieved January 30, 2009 from

http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/webfm_send/185

This manual provides information as to how interested groups and individuals can get on their local governments' agendas, approach local governments to address community issues and needs, and work with government in innovative ways. A detailed overview about local government and about the responsibilities of various sectors of local government is provided.

Purdon, Colleen for Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2004). *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making: Resource Kit*. Catalogue No. FCM I047E. Ottawa: ON. Retrieved January 20, 2009 from <http://www.fcm.ca/CMFiles/toolkit1UCU-3262008-8944.pdf>

This kit was intended to complement the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM's) research report on the same-titled issue. When doing the research for this report, it was found that Canada had no central organization, which collected and distributed information on women and local government. Also, the author found that there were several barriers preventing women from participating in local government. By identifying an inner, middle, and outer circle of work, target strategies have been developed that identify the challenges facing women and serve to offer solutions to increase women's participation in municipal decision making.

Training Material

Turner, Susan. (2008). Mapping Policy Processes Guide. Retrieved January 30, 2009 from http://www.rwmc.uoguelph.ca/cms/documents/179/Mapping_Guide2.pdf

This brief document provides a visual illustration of what a mapped policy process looks like, as well as the steps in tracking a policy process. Mapping documents the process of texts and action involved in a policy process and is a way for interested parties to determine how work is connected and constrained, and what entry points in the process exist for interested parties.

Turner, Susan. (2005). Institutional Ethnography and Rural Women's Research. *IE Newsletter*, 2(1), Society for the Study of Social Problems.

For the Rural Women Making Change project, Susan Turner, Dorothy Smith, and Marie Campbell provided a workshop on institutional ethnography. Attendants included members from the National Farmers' Union Women's Community, Canadian Auto Workers Local 88 Women's Committee, Women Today of Huron, Women's Employment Resources Centre of Woodstock, government employees in policy-related functions, and academics from five Canadian universities. The project for which everyone met is dedicated to rural women and their experiences arising from trans-national processes.

Articles

Ames, Barbara D, Brosi, Whitney A, and Damiano-Teixeira, Karla M. (2006). "I'm Just Glad My Three Jobs Could be During the Day": Women and Work in a Rural Community. *Family Relations*, 55, 119-131.

The authors use anecdotes to help convey the experiences of non-salaried wage-working women in rural areas when economic restructuring is occurring. Low wages, lack of benefits, long commutes, and childcare availability were described as some of the problems these women faced.

Frisby, Wendy, Thibault, Lucy, and Kikulis, Lisa. (2004). The Organizational Dynamics of Under-Managed Partnerships in Leisure Service Departments. *Leisure Studies*, 23(2): 109-126.

Partnerships amongst nonprofits, commercial enterprises, and municipal governments are not uniform; partnership regulation, coordination, power dynamics, competing values, training, staffing, and administration affect the success of partnerships. While parties may engage in

creating partnerships, once formed the commitment to the partnerships and strategies for working together are often neglected. This article tracks some of the challenges in maintaining partnerships.

Gazley, Beth. (2008). Beyond the Contract: The Scope and Nature of Informal Government-Nonprofit Partnerships. *Public Administration Review*: January/February 2008: 141-154.

In this article, the author examines government and non-profit partnerships in the state of Georgia. Partnerships are not necessarily restricted to contracted services as they are demonstrated at times to be very informal. The areas in which such collaborations occur and how such collaborations can occur (i.e. sharing staff, joint advocacy, etc) are discussed.

Hornosty, Jennie and Doherty, Deborah. (2004). Resistance and Change: Building a Framework For Helping Abused Rural Women. *Rural Social Work* (9).

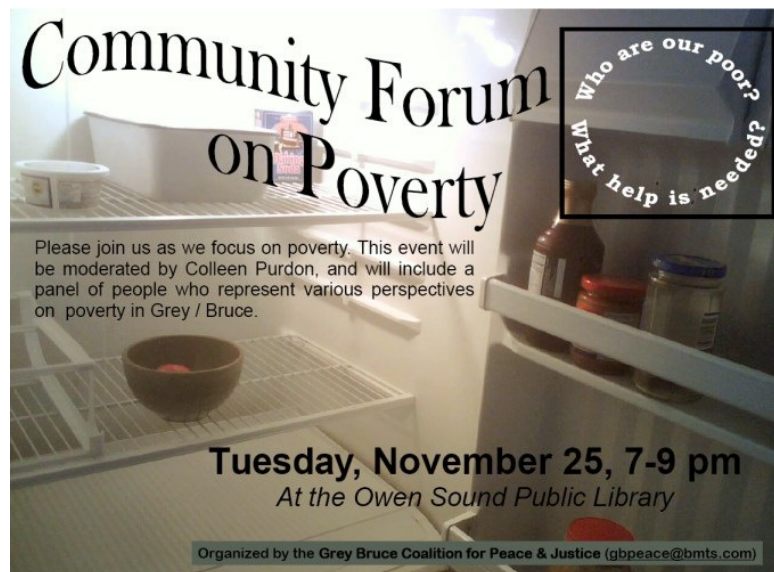
The authors report their findings of the study of New Brunswick rural social services providers. Unique attributes arising from the manifestation of social and geographic isolation which policy does not always address, such as the lack of telephone access, or the inability to walk to a neighbouring home, are presented as being challenges to disseminating information and providing services to abused women. Lack of funding often renders programs inadequate for rural women and the social ties and beliefs of the community often make it difficult to provide and/or accept help.

Ranasinghe, Prashan and Valverde, Mariana. (2006). Governing Homelessness Through Land-use: A Sociolegal Study of the Toronto Shelter Zoning By-law. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 31(3): 325-349.

Social justice issues are increasingly becoming the responsibility of municipalities; yet, municipalities are not always equipped to implement effective strategies and solutions. In Toronto, homeless shelters were needed. To meet this need, the city responded by challenging zoning laws to accommodate housing needs. This was a complex time-consuming task that took more than 5 years, and did not result in the full completion of adequate housing. Also, the importance of political will is underscored as the process involved much debate from councillors and the public.

Strategy 5 Building Partnerships

5.1 Poster for the Community Forum on Poverty



5.2 World Café Outline for Community Forum on Poverty

Poverty Forum 2 – February 24, 2009

“Building Connections – Taking Action”

Purpose:

- To create communities that work for all of us
- To bring the wisdom of many voices together
- To have a meaningful conversation about priorities and action to address poverty in our communities
- To find call forth what has heart and meaning for each of us.

Margaret Wheatley

“Our memory of how to work together in healthy, productive ways has been nearly extinguished by the creeping complexity of our lives. People are more polarized, more overwhelmed, more impatient, more easily disappointed in others and more withdrawn than ever. The World Café process reawakens our deep memory of two fundamental beliefs about human life. First we humans want to talk together about things that matter to us. In fact, this is what gives satisfaction and meaning to life. Second, as we talk together we are able to access a greater wisdom that is found only in collective.”

At the Café we will focus our attention on:

- What works
- What brings life and vitality to an experience and keeps it going
- Meaningful exchange
- Cross pollination of ideas
- Possibility thinking

We hope that the Café will

- Show us some new directions and ideas on how to make connections that will make change
- Bring forward creative and innovative ideas and build hope
- Build new relationships and make new connections between people
- Reveal personal and community priorities for action and agendas for moving forward

Café Etiquette - Focus on what matters!

- Contribute your thinking and experience
- Listen and understand diverse perspectives
- Connect ideas, build on one another's ideas
- Listen together, look for new insights,
- Play, doodle, draw

The Process

- Go to a table with no fewer than 5 people and no more than 7
- You will be welcomed by your table host (one of the organizing committee members, or someone you choose) who will stay at the table for the café
- Each person introduces themselves and the conversation begins with the first question:

How does poverty connect us? Why do you care about taking action to address poverty?

There will be about 20 minutes for your table to discuss these questions. You can make notes on the paper on the table, draw pictures, and make notes in your workbook if you choose.

- The Café host will give a signal that the first round is finished and you will then move to another table and join a new group. The table host will remain and greets the next group.
- At your new table you will introduce yourself and the table host will talk a bit about themes, patterns and questions that came from the previous question. Then the group will discuss the second question:

What are the priorities for action to address poverty in our community? What projects or work needs to move forward today? What would have the biggest impact on the quality of life for people? You will have about 20 minutes for your table to discuss these questions.

- The Moderator will do a take up from the discussion, and several theme tables will be established (housing, transportation, communication, political action, all of the above)
- Go to the table of your choice and chose a note taker/host. Introduce yourself and then consider the third questions:

What action is needed? What is a reasonable goal? How will we get there? How can we work together and what will I contribute? You will have about 20 minutes for this discussion.

- The Café host will give a signal and you then return to your original table for a summary of the whole. Each person can write on a piece of coloured paper their personal action plan to address poverty that they take home with him or her. The table host will present a summary reflection on the themes, patterns and deeper questions at the table that anyone can add to.
- The Moderator will make notes on the flip chart of actions and next steps

At the End of the Café

- Create a knowledge web by posting individual insights on the wall, the reflections from the table hosts, and the “table drawings and notes”
- Notice patterns and themes that emerge
- Discover deeper questions
- Make your own notes on your learning, challenges and deeper questions.
- The Café host will use the information and insights as a resource for the further work of the project.

5.3 Report and Action Items from the Community Forum on Poverty

Community Forum 2 on Poverty

February 24, 2009

Organized by the Grey Bruce Coalition for Peace & Justice
Facilitation and Notes by Colleen Purdon

Introduction

This short report captures the key discussion and action items from the second Community Forum on Poverty on February 24th, 2009. A broad cross section of community agencies and individuals attended this forum, with about 50 participants in total.

The evening began with a short presentation from Colleen Purdon with a review of key themes and critical issues from the first Community Forum on Poverty, held on November 25th, 2008, and a review of research and reports on poverty:

Change Attitudes: to end discrimination, sexism and racism directed towards people living with poverty (women, racial minorities, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues); to ensure people living with poverty are treated respectfully by communities services and supports; to educate service providers and the community on the reality and impact of poverty; to recognize that everyone is vulnerable to poverty in rural communities like ours.

Plan and Take Action: advocate for the federal government to develop a national poverty reduction plan; advocate that provincial government implements the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy as a minimum; develop local and regional poverty reduction plans and strategies; include people living in poverty in the planning and implementation process.

Connect and Coordinate: improve service coordination, information sharing, communication and connections; create opportunities for the community to come together to develop broad and specific poverty strategies.

Provide Better Supports and More Money: to address specific needs in this area (affordable housing, childcare, transportation, healthcare, equitable education and opportunities for children living in poverty); to increase social assistance and minimum wage levels to levels that provide for basic needs.

Evaluate Success and Make Change: look at what action works; evaluate initiatives; base funding on what works; include people living with poverty in evaluation; make changes based on evaluation (to avoid continuing with services/supports that meet the needs of providers, but not of users).

World Café Discussion

The World Café discussion brought participants together in diverse small and large groups to have ‘a conversation that matters’ about Making Connections and Taking Action on poverty. The summary below comes from notes taken in the small groups and from the take up flip chart notes that everyone contributed to.

How does poverty connect us? Why do we care?

We realize we are not alone. Empathy
We see poverty. The connections between those living in poverty and those not living in poverty are growing.
We learn together about problem solving
Poverty is part of our community, and affects everyone.
There is a human and social cost to poverty.
We worry about the children, about the kids on the street.
We recognize the need for better services, more fairness.
The recession increases our understanding and solidarity with the poor. People living in poverty always suffer the greatest.
We provide services for the poor. We volunteer in the food bank, in the schools,
The fear of poverty connects us. We see that it can happen to all of us.
Our personal experience of poverty connects us.
We care because they are like us.
Poverty reveals our systems of power
We all have a responsibility to address poverty
Ending poverty is in our best interest.
We are looking for ways to make a contribution, make a difference, make things better in our community
We all share common needs not matter what our socio-economic status is.
We can act a voice for people living with poverty
Poverty closes doors of opportunity.
We are not empowering the poor – our system seems to be built to keep people down.
We are ashamed that we live in a society and communities with poverty.
The issues and problems that arise as a result of poverty connect us and represent weak links in our system and community.
The problem lies in that we are not connected – there is a disconnect between the people that ‘have’ and those that don’t. We assume ‘someone else’ is taking care of the issue.
We are concerned about the attitudes and myths about poverty and the way services tend to strip away dignity.

What are our priorities for action to address poverty in our communities?

The small groups discussed priorities for action in our communities, and then the larger group focused on the key priority items.

The following priorities for action were identified in the small group discussion:

- Affordable Housing
- Improved Access to Transportation
- Address Hunger and Lack of Quality Food
- Funding for Utilities
- Adequate Incomes to Meet Basic Needs
- Education (about poverty, rights, responsibilities, life skills, surviving poverty)
- Collective Voice (strong, directed at government, makes a big noise)
- Networking, Communication, Community Collaboration (to identify and meet specific community needs)
- Increased Government Responsibility and Accountability
- Engage Municipalities in Poverty Issues
- Grassroots Strategies to Address Systemic and Grassroots Issues
- Policy and Action to Address Root Causes of Poverty

- Service Coordination and Service Reform
- Change Community Attitudes about Poverty

The large group agreed to focus the next round of discussion on six key issues:

- 1) Affordable Housing
- 2) Transportation and Access Issues
- 3) Action to Address Systemic Issues
- 4) Hunger and Food
- 5) Networking, Communication,
- 6) Collective Voice for Advocacy and Lobby

How can we work together to move our priorities for action forward?

The small groups worked on action strategies for each of the key issues and reported back:

1) Affordable Housing

- Better connections are needed between the various housing agencies, organizations, programs and industry. Bring people together.
- Coordinate the need for housing with the present housing stock available. We need better planning with all the stakeholders present and engaged (government, landlords, consumers, citizens, etc.)
- Establish a Community Task Force on Housing to conduct housing audits, identify gaps, plan. Ensure all stakeholders are present.
- Priority issue is homelessness

2) Transportation and Access Issues

- There are current models of volunteers drive programs where drivers are paid modest amounts so people can access services. Fragmented at this time, but could be coordinated in a transportation network. Coordinate this with Red Cross Transportation study and LHIN Planning
- Need more 'one stop' service centres to improve access. Consider churches as the 'one stop' location (there is a church in every community)
- Build a network of community volunteers to provide information, help people with access issues and assist with filling out forms.
- Take services closer to where the people are, and recognize that personal connections and support are critical to solve access issues.

3) Action to Address Systemic Issues

- Create a community task force to look at issues and strategies
- Short term focus on changing the framework and way we think about the issue of poverty. Focus on building self esteem, respect, belonging for all, shared common needs, regardless of economic status
- Build on people's strengths and the strengths of our communities (farming, industry, people), with a focus on sustainability.
- Move from 'me' to 'we' thinking, where everyone belongs and has a voice. Address the power imbalances created by inequities in economic status.
- Build relationships and build on relationships to make change
- Long term focus on sustainability and economic reform

4) Hunger and Food

- There is food available – need to make information available about Good Food Box and local food banks.
- Develop and support Community Gardens
- Look at implementing a “Food for Friends’ concept where customers give a “quarter for food’ at local grocery stores that can be used to provide vouchers for people who need them, and allow people to do their own shopping.
- Education about food preparation and nutrition
- Look at ways to get food to the people who need it. There is a great deal of waste of food. There are people who cannot access food because of transportation barriers, as well as poverty.

5) Networking, Communication

- Use central places (i.e. Tim Horton’s) to as communication hubs for information about poverty issues, plans, meetings, etc.
- Use ‘word of mouth’ approach to reach people
- Work from a concept of our community as a ‘village’ and reach out to everyone, using a proactive approach.

6) Collective Voice for Advocacy and Lobby

- Work as a group to advocate for poverty strategies with government, and to raise awareness, build support and change attitudes on poverty and the need for poverty reduction
- Individual advocacy and lobby is also needed
- Beware of a narrow focus on child poverty (Province of Ontario’s 5 year plan) and keep focus on broad issue of poverty and how it affects everyone.
- Look at models from the past (Council of Consumers, 1990’s) that were effective and use this expertise

Next Steps:

Participants were asked to commit to personal action on the priorities identified above.

An email list will be together by the Grey Bruce Peace and Justice Network.

The notes from this meeting will be sent out to everyone on the mailing list.