

# United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries & United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area



## Focusing for Community Impact 2007



## Acknowledgements



During times of change we tend to feel a little unsettled, sometimes we pretend it isn't happening but usually we find some way to accommodate and integrate the changes to find a new beginning: a new direction. In recent years, as United Ways have been sorting through these changes, we realize that we don't have all the answers. We also realize that having all the answers may not be as important as asking the right questions. Further, we have come to understand even more fully that the answers to the right questions come from talking and engaging a broad cross-section of people in our community.

This report represents the work of many people in our community over 2007. It started with the leadership of both of the boards of each respective United Way in the Region of Waterloo. A Community Impact Agreement was created which outlined regional community priorities and principles of working together, of community investment and of community engagement. By identifying how we could benefit from further collaboration, yet respect community autonomy, this agreement supports our working together to strengthen our communities.

Along the way we had the support of many volunteers, organizations and ordinary citizens. Specifically we want to acknowledge the support and advice from staff of the Region of Waterloo's Social Services and Public Health Departments, and the City of Cambridge. We also acknowledge the efforts of the Centre for Community Based Research and Wilfrid Laurier University's Community Psychology Department in conducting the literature review and community consultations, respectively. Specifically we wish to acknowledge Dr. Andrew Taylor and Dr. Scotney Evans in conducting the literature review, the community consultations and helping us define long term outcomes for our community priorities. In particular we want to thank Dr. Evans for compiling this report.

We want to thank the many partner agencies and others who provided time, and thoughtful input through this process that has helped us focus our energies. Your perspectives on the needs of our communities and strategies to address these needs have been heard and are valued. Our focus in 2007 was to further define our community priorities by identifying what would contribute to them becoming a reality. We arrived at long term outcomes for each community priority. Our discussions in the near future will focus on how agencies' efforts and strategies contribute to realizing the long term outcomes.

Finally, we thank the many people that participated in the community survey that helped us determine where community energy lies with regard to those long term outcomes. All of the options listed, in the survey, were valid; your wisdom in ranking them told us where the community would like to see the efforts of United Ways focused.

As we look forward we will continue to talk, engage and innovate so that our communities are stronger, more vibrant and compassionate.

Thank you!

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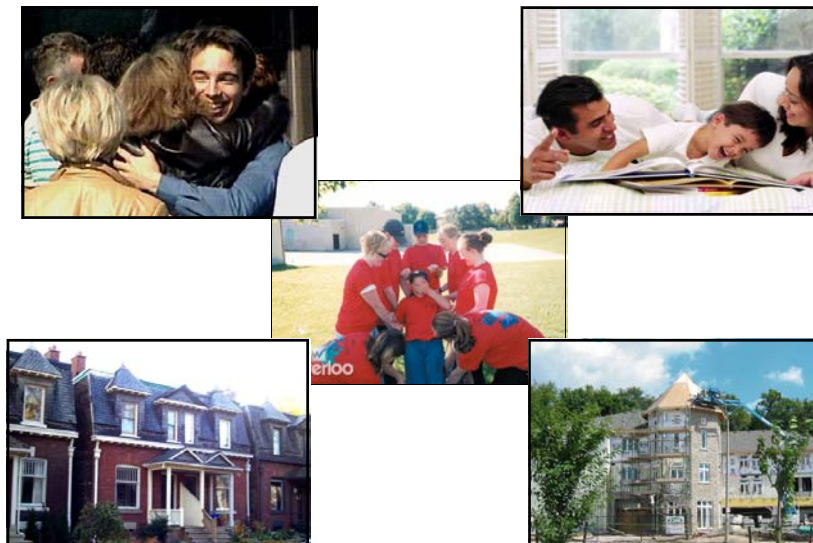
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## Executive Summary

The Canadian **United Way movement** is in the process of **evolving to focus on lasting impact** in the communities it serves. United Way is a leader in understanding the root causes of social issues that face our community and a partner in bringing together people and resources to find lasting solutions. We improve lives and build our community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. We are focusing on prevention, in addition to responding to crisis. By inspiring people to come together, we can collectively make a lasting difference. United Way is creating change in people's lives – meaningful, positive, lasting change - not just for today, but the long term. And that means a better community for us all.

This means focusing funding investments and supporting and facilitating impact on key community priorities. In other words, resources will be invested to achieve positive change in the ways that our communities need it most.

Over the past year, both of the **United Ways in Waterloo Region** have worked together to develop a set of **shared community priorities** and to find ways to achieve these through similar yet individual methods appropriate for each community. By thinking regionally and acting locally, our two United Ways will model community investment strategies that engage our communities to act on a common vision and shared priorities to achieve lasting impact.



The **five community priorities** (in no particular order) approved by the Boards of both United Ways are:

***All children and youth reach their potential***

***All families are strong***

***All neighbourhoods are inclusive and thriving***

***All newcomers are welcomed and supported***

***All people are economically secure***

The next step was to **identify long-term outcomes**, changes in the community, that must be addressed in order to achieve each community priority. After a team of researchers examined local research, results from key informant consultations and a community survey, the Boards of both United Ways approved the following long-term outcomes.

## **Long-term Outcomes in Relation to the Community Priorities**

In late November 2007, the boards of both United Ways approved the following long-term outcomes, as stated, in relation to the community priorities:

***Priority Area: All children and youth reach their potential***

*Long-term Outcomes:*

- Children and youth are free from abuse and neglect
- Children and youth are healthy
- Children and youth succeed in school

***Priority Area: All families are strong***

*Long-term Outcomes:*

- Families are free from violence
- Families with complex needs are supported
- Families are resilient and supported by their community

***Priority Area: All neighbourhoods are inclusive and thriving***

*Long-term Outcomes:*

- Neighbourhoods have inclusive and safe gathering places
- Neighbourhoods have strong, accessible supports and services
- Neighbourhoods have diverse groups that are connected and working together to take action

***Priority Area: All newcomers are welcomed and supported***

*Long-term Outcomes:*

- Newcomers are meaningfully employed
- The community is inclusive and newcomers are free from discrimination
- Newcomers are involved in and have a voice in community settings

***Priority Area: All people are economically secure***

*Long-term Outcomes:*

- People have basic needs met
- Education, training, and learning opportunities are affordable and accessible to all
- People have sufficient and stable employment

## **Investment of United Way Resources**

At each United Way, investment of resources will be overseen by a volunteer Community Impact Council. This Council will receive recommendations from sub-committees, each assigned to focus on one or two of the priorities. Within each priority three levels of investment will be made:

- Basic needs and supports to secure a stable network of supportive programs
- Capacity building approaches that are focused on prevention of issues
- Changes in community conditions which affect issues at a systems and/or policy level.

We will use these community priorities and long-term outcomes to focus investments in the communities in the region where they are needed most and will have lasting impact. Together with our community partners, we will continue to look at our methods and outcomes and make sure they are relevant with our ever changing community. We are committed to continually learn from our actions in order to strengthen our role in creating opportunities that foster healthy and thriving communities in Waterloo Region.

## Introduction

The Canadian United Way movement is in the process of evolving to focus for lasting community impact. In a recent report, United Way/Centraide Canada described the movement's "commitment to **work with our communities to create measurable, cumulative and lasting change that both improves lives and builds resilience in those communities** (United Way/Centraide Canada, 2006, p. 5). United Ways across Canada are committed to working proactively to help address the complex challenges facing communities today. This means focusing funding investments and supporting and facilitating impact on key community priorities.

Over the past year, both of the United Ways in Waterloo Region have been working together to develop a set of shared community priorities and to find ways to implement these through a consistent structure. It is our intent to achieve the benefits of both collaboration and autonomy as we move forward. By thinking regionally and acting locally, our two United Ways will model community investment strategies that engage our communities to act on common vision and shared priorities to achieve lasting impact.



In January, 2007, after a three-month facilitated process of a joint United Way board committee, both boards approved a focus on *five regional community priorities*. Based on a review of existing local research, these priorities have been defined in order to provide strategic focus, for United Way investment, clearly tied to community need. Both United Ways in the region are aligning themselves to concentrate on the most pressing community issues and results that will help enable and build our communities. United Ways view the community priorities as goals for which to strive. The **five priorities** are:

- **All children and youth reach their potential**
- **All families are strong**
- **All neighbourhoods are inclusive and thriving**
- **All newcomers are welcomed and supported**
- **All people are economically secure**

The identification of the community priorities was our first important step. These priorities are already being used by both local United Ways in communication with donors, agencies and other key partners, to plan for funding decisions in the future, and have allowed us to focus and communicate our efforts.

In order to further define the priorities and set targets for action, both United Ways worked, together, through a series of steps to identify key long-term outcomes under each priority. This process continued through much of 2007 and consisted of examining relevant local and national research, seeking input from community stakeholders, and engaging in ongoing dialogue about our hopes for the community. This October, we arrived at a set of long-term outcomes that will guide our action in the coming years. **Long-term outcomes help define what needs to happen for each regional community priority to become reality.** As we developed these long-term outcomes, we looked at existing research and we asked others, and ourselves "What needs to happen in order to achieve these community priorities?"

The committee envisioned long-term outcomes as statements about community change that could, in principle, be measured over time as a way to track overall changes in social conditions within the communities in Waterloo Region. Long-term outcomes were not seen by the group as changes that could be achieved solely by single programs, services or initiatives. Instead, long-term outcomes were conceived as changes that occur progressively through the cumulative effects of many different kinds of interventions.

This report outlines the long-term outcomes for the United Way community priorities, and describes the decision-making process undertaken jointly by the two United Ways to identify those outcomes.



## Methodology

There were **three main components to our process of defining these long-term outcomes**. First, we sought a review of existing research, trends, and best practices (proven methods to achieve the long-term outcomes) related to the five priority areas, highlighting key issues with respect to each. Second, we held a series of consultations with community stakeholders from the public and nonprofit sectors to gather community and practical knowledge. Third, we constructed a brief survey based on information from steps one and two and solicited responses from over 500 community stakeholders and citizens. We attempted to utilize a balance of existing research, knowledge from practice, and community wisdom to inform our thinking about long-term outcomes. This section details these three steps.



### Review of the Research

On May 1, 2007 the **two United Ways in the region put out a joint call for proposals for research related to the five priority areas**. The purpose of the call was to ask local researchers to review existing research to 1) identify current issues and trends in the Waterloo Region with regard to the priorities; 2) suggest a priority list of, potential, important long-term outcomes related to the five community priorities; 3) outline promising and effective models and practices relevant to achieving impact in these priority areas; and 4) identify local strengths and barriers and consider the potential implications of these models and practices in the communities in the Waterloo Region.



Dr. Andrew Taylor and a **team of researchers** from the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services (now the Centre for Community Based Research) **took the lead on the review** with support from researchers from Wilfrid Laurier University and insight from staff from Region of Waterloo Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration Division and

Region of Waterloo Health Determinants, Planning and Evaluation Division. The **group met as key informants with United Way staff to develop a strategy for the review, to share reports and other resources for consideration, and to discuss preliminary findings**. This first meeting led to a preliminary list of reports for inclusion on the review and to a basic structure for the products of this first phase. Regional research from the last five years was reviewed and included reports from Region of Waterloo Social Services, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council, Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, and others. Relevant research reports with a broad provincial or national focus were also included where appropriate.



A **set of five final reports was delivered to United Way** in late July 2007. Each report focused on one priority area and **identified key messages** under each of several sub-headings: context; local issues and challenges with respect to the priority area; local strengths and capacities; recommended long-term outcomes; and recommended intervention strategies. Members of the team described above met to discuss the findings and implications, and revised versions of the five reports incorporated their feedback. Information from these reports was presented to a joint United Way board meeting in October, 2007.

## Key Informant Consultations

Four community consultations were held over two days in late August 2007 with the goal of hearing from key community stakeholders about key factors associated with the five United Way community priorities. Over 100 participants from community agencies, regional agencies, local government, and other funders were invited to attend. Fifty-six participants ultimately attended the two-hour sessions facilitated by Dr. Scot Evans and student research assistants from Wilfrid Laurier University. Sessions were held in Cambridge on August 27th in the Regional Board room of the Waterloo Region offices, and on August 28th in Waterloo in the Waterloo Region Public Health and Social Services building meeting room.

After a short welcome and introduction in each of the sessions, participants were guided through a structured activity to answer one key question about each of the five priority areas: "What conditions need to be created in order to see success?" For example, for the first priority, participants were asked to answer the question, "What conditions need to be created in order for 'children and youth to reach their potential'?" Participants spent several minutes listing "conditions" on their own, and then were asked to work with others in small groups to prioritize their top five conditions. A short discussion followed as each of the groups presented their top five before moving on to the next priority area. Participants were also asked to comment on the assets and challenges that currently exist in our community that need to be considered regarding these conditions.



Scot Evans and research assistants collected all data for analysis, organized the information and reported consistent themes. The final report was discussed with United Way staff in September of 2007 and presented to a joint United Way board meeting in October of 2007. The consultations took place after the review of research was complete, and the facilitators were, in a global way, informed by the findings of the research review. However, a conscious effort was made to allow participants to identify potential priority outcomes based wholly on their knowledge and experience; as such, the recommendations of the literature review were not shared with participants during the consultation.

## Community Survey

In September of 2007, based on consistent themes emerging from both the research review and the community consultations, we surveyed the community-at-large, and representatives from the public, not-for-profit and private sectors, to gather perspectives on the most relevant long-term outcomes for each priority. We wanted to ask community members, based on their experiences living and working in the region, to identify the potential long-term outcomes most relevant to them. Survey respondents were presented with a list of 5 to 8 possible long-term outcomes for each priority area and were asked to rate each as "very important", "somewhat important", or "not important". Respondents were also asked to identify any additional important issues that should be considered. This gave opportunity for contributions beyond the pre-determined list. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each priority area to get a sense of which outcomes seemed most relevant to the people responding to the survey. All responses were analyzed and compared to the consistent themes that emerged from both the research review and the stakeholder consultations. This report was also then presented at the joint meeting of the boards of the United Ways in October, 2007.



## Preliminary Findings

In this section, we **outline the findings from each of the three information-gathering strategies**. In addition to the three forms of enquiry described above, staff from both United Ways along with Dr. Taylor and Dr. Evans, engaged in ongoing dialogue to analyze how each step of the process informed a growing knowledge-base about each of the community priorities, and the potential outcomes key to achieving each of them.

### Review of the Research

While there are many possible factors to be considered in each of the five priority areas, a **review of the local research reveals possible long-term outcomes that emerge under each category**. (Notes: see 'methodology' on pages 6,7 for a description of how these results were identified; please refer to the complete reports for further details)



**Children & Youth Reach their Potential.** Waterloo Region has a wide range of services for children and youth. Several comprehensive planning processes have been undertaken, and the core messages are fairly consistent. In local research reports, there are specific identified gaps in service. There is also chronic under-funding of foundational programs like child care and alternative education for youth, and this leads to difficulties and inequalities in access to services. In this priority area as in most of the others, the unmet needs of individuals with complex needs are also mentioned many times in local reports. These last two challenges frequently lead to calls for systems reviews and collaborative planning across organizations. With these issues in mind, the



authors of the research review report recommended the following strategic outcome objectives to the United Ways:

- **Improved quality and accessibility of early learning and care for all children in Waterloo Region.** Although this strategic objective sets programs rather than children as its targets, the research literature supporting the link between quality care and healthy development is strong. Furthermore, a clear blueprint for action on this objective exists locally.
- **Improved services for children and youth at risk.** Local children and youth are vulnerable for many reasons. Recent local reports have identified specific risk factors that require action, including obesity, low levels of literacy, and homelessness. The calls for increased integration of local services are also, in many cases, intended to support children and youth at risk.
- **Increased voice for youth in community planning.** This strategic outcome speaks to the need, identified in several local reports, to engage youth as partners in addressing the issues that affect them. When decision making processes change, local cultures and attitudes may also change, and this process may have far-reaching effects for a wide variety of programs and services.

**Families are Stronger.** Almost all of the issues discussed in the other four priority area reports could justifiably be included here. The negative effects of poverty, the stress of immigration, and challenges of growing up healthy, and the lack of neighbourhood support are all visible in the dynamics of family relationships. It is very much for this reason that there are calls locally for an approach to supporting families that considers all of these issues in an inter-related way. A review of the current literature suggests that the following strategic outcomes be considered:



- **Increased economic security for families.** Interventions that address the root causes of family dysfunction are essential to long term progress in supporting healthy families.
- **Increased capacity of families to raise children.** Capacity building interventions might include development of parenting skills, conflict management and anti-violence skills, or employment-related skills. Community development and outreach efforts that strengthen the social networks of families are also important. Child care programs and associated supports provide families with the resources to seek employment and the support to nurture their children's healthy development.
- **Reduced violence within families; increased service integration.** Family violence is closely tied to root causes including poverty, parenting stress, and dysfunction in the parents' family of origin. Breaking the cycle of abuse, while understanding the need for more comprehensive family supports, is a key strategy.
- **Increased support for families with complex needs.** Families with complex needs, such as the stresses, resource challenges, or time investments of supporting older family members, or family members who have special needs, face challenges that require community support. More comprehensive family supports may again be a key strategy.



**Neighbourhoods are Inclusive & Thriving.** The need to consider neighbourhood health carefully when planning for growth, preventing crime, working to integrate newcomers, engaging youth, or promoting public health has also been identified in many local research reports. Delivering services and other kinds of supports through neighbourhood-based organizations has become a widely supported approach in Waterloo Region. Municipal recreation programs, crime prevention efforts, programs for young parents, police community mobilization initiatives, community development, public health programs and many other services have adopted one form of neighbourhood outreach or another.



Although the need for a coordinated vision to guide this significant investment has been identified by local neighbourhood groups and by regional government, it does not appear to be under active development at the present time. For these reasons, three strategic outcomes are proposed for consideration by the local United Ways:



- **Increased infrastructure and sustainability for neighbourhood organizations.** Organizations based in neighbourhoods can be hubs for the provision of many kinds of support if they have strong partnerships, adequate, stable funding, a clear vision and strong leadership. Although neighbourhood organizations are not the only groups that intervene at a neighbourhood level, they are key players in this type of work in Waterloo Region.
- **Increased inclusiveness and accessibility of neighbourhood-based services and organizations and increased awareness among residents of the programs being offered within neighbourhoods.** Making sure neighbourhood-based services and supports are equally accessible to everyone is an important means through which United Way can advance all 5 of its priority areas. Achieving this objective requires outreach and awareness raising efforts as well as the development of new kinds of programming.

- **Increased social capital within neighbourhoods.** Increased inclusiveness and strengthened infrastructure are steps towards the larger goal of creating neighbourhoods that are rich with social capital. The longer-term objective of United Way should be to create neighbourhoods with higher rates of volunteerism, civic engagement, and local leadership.



**Newcomers are Welcomed & Supported.** The agenda for action regarding settlement of recent immigrants is clear. A recent national report reviewed all of these issues and identified three top areas of need for newcomers to Canada. These were: 1) better information and guidance; 2) employment supports; and 3) language training. Numerous local reports touch on these same issues. The agenda for action on settlement and immigration is laid out clearly at a local level and a national level, and the recommendation in this priority area report was that local United Ways adopt the following long-term outcomes:

- **Increased access to employment for immigrants.** Numerous reports identify challenges that newcomers face with regard to accessing employment. Supports and policy changes that would enable newcomers to access employment should be a priority.
- **Improved language skills among newcomers.** Newcomers can face barriers to accessing employment and to participation in the community, if they don't possess language skills that will allow them to interact freely in their new community.
- **Increased knowledge about available supports among newcomers and service providers.** Newcomers are often unaware of the existing supports that are available in the community, both from a peer-to-peer perspective, as well as from service providers. Increased awareness of these supports may be of significant benefit as newcomers become accustomed to their new communities.





**People are Economically Secure.** Although Waterloo Region has a track record of success and innovation in this theme area, many of these interventions have been efforts to mediate the negative impacts of a social assistance and subsidized housing system that is inadequate. Many local reports point to the need for basic reform of large-scale programs funded through the provincial government. It may be fair to say that no comprehensive, cross-sectoral vision for further action at a local level currently exists. For these reasons, the following strategic outcomes were recommended to the local United Ways:



- **Increased coordination across stakeholders and development of a shared vision.** Among the five priority areas, poverty is the one that most clearly requires a comprehensive social change strategy including advocacy with government, partnership with other sectors of the local economy, and a strong, widely shared vision. In addition, increased coordination among social services in order to (for example) improve access to income subsidies or subsidized housing is needed.
- **Increased capacity among low-income families.** Helping people develop the skills, the confidence, and the social connections necessary to build a stable economic foundation for themselves is clearly part of the solution. The reasons for poverty are complex and individualized – as a result, the capacity building strategies are likely to be different for different populations. Capacity building is also, in a sense, a systems change effort, because it can lead to the development of grassroots leadership and advocacy efforts.
- **Increased system capacity to meet basic human needs.** There is a need for enhancements, identified in several reports, for improvements in basic services that provide shelter, food, and income subsidies.



The research review made it clear that the **five priority areas are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact interdependent.** For example, an outcome that helps to build stronger neighbourhoods is very likely related to a belief that stronger neighbourhoods will lead to stronger families.

For all of these reasons, the recommendations that emerged in each priority differed in their focus and specificity. However, the process also affirmed the centrality of the five priority areas in local dialogue about addressing social issues. Although the five priorities overlap and are not exactly parallel types of concepts, **they all emerge repeatedly in local research as important.** Although the research review recommended specific program ideas in some areas, and broad, general principles in others, in every case it was possible to infer some type of concrete recommended outcome, and some consistent messages about where local research reports felt energies should be directed.

### **Key Informant Consultations**

Findings from the **community consultations suggest some common themes across the five community priorities** including: safety, engagement, supports and services, basic needs, and community responsibility. Additionally, three unique theme categories emerged under the “People are Economically Secure” priority area: wages, employment, and education. Overall, the sessions were successful in tapping into the practical wisdom of key community stakeholders. **The sessions illuminated numerous factors related to the five United Way community priorities.** These factors, when held alongside the existing research in the region, suggest common themes that informed the next step of the research process, and ultimately, the development of the long-term outcomes for each community priority that focus the United Ways’ unique contribution to community well-being. (Notes: see ‘methodology’ on pages 6,7 for a description of how these results were identified; please refer to the complete reports for further details).

### **Children & Youth Reach their Potential**

**Safety:** children are safe, violence-free homes, safe schools

**Engagement:** children and youth are engaged in community and that engagement is sought and supported

**Supports & Services:** access to affordable learning opportunities, early learning opportunities, good health and nutrition, continuum of support, access to recreation

**Basic Needs:** basic needs met, ready to learn, economically stable home environment, adequate housing, equitable access to resources

**Community Responsibility:** increased value of children and youth by community, community understands children and youth from diverse perspectives

### **Families are Stronger**

**Safety:** freedom from abuse, violence-free homes

**Engagement:** families are engaged in community, connectedness

**Supports & Services:** extended family support, accessible and affordable programs for various needs, accessible health care (incl. dental, vision, etc.), available and affordable childcare

**Basic Needs:** basic needs met, economically stable home environment, adequate housing, secure, decent paying employment, affordable transportation, income minimums

**Community Responsibility:** family friendly workplaces, family friendly schools, gender equity, celebration of diverse family types

**Skills:** parenting skills

### **Neighbourhoods are Inclusive & Thriving**

**Safety:** people are safe, neighbourhoods are safe and crime-free, safe environment

**Engagement:** youth are engaged, citizens are engaged in community, people have voice in matters that affect them, better access to schools as focal point for neighbourhoods, diverse neighbourhoods, community cohesiveness, supports and structures for engagement

**Supports & Services:** schools partner with community centres, de-centralized services, accessible services, infrastructure support for neighbourhood groups

**Basic Needs:** adequate and affordable housing

**Community Responsibility:** community gardens, markets and green-space, shared values, sufficient neighbourhood investment, resources and tools available to neighbourhoods

### **Newcomers are Welcomed & Supported**

**Safety:** freedom from discrimination, safety and acceptance in community, anti-racism education programs

**Engagement:** newcomers feel connected to community, opportunities for involvement in local community structures

**Supports & Services:** knowledge of how to access services, access to ESL/literacy supports, multi-faceted welcome centres, multi-cultural lingual supports, clear and central information system, host families (for transition period), community guides “welcome wagon”, trauma services

**Basic Needs:** basic needs met, employment commensurate with qualifications, access to healthcare, education and training opportunities, communicate job prospects based on education/experience prior to arrival

**Community Responsibility:** create a culture for celebrating diversity, community understands unique needs of refugees, community recognition that white privilege exists

### **People are Economically Secure**

**Safety:** safety in the workplace

**Supports & Services:** budgeting skills and nutrition learning, effective social/supportive adjustment programs, access to secondary education, universal affordable childcare, transition support, adequate assistance programs

**Basic Needs:** strategies for self-sustainment, literacy for money management, affordable housing (safe, secure, accessible, quality)

**Wages:** adequate minimum wage, a living wage

**Employment:** stable, full-time employment with good benefits, employer recognition of transferable skills

**Education:** access to adult education, access to training/learning opportunities, graduation and continuing education is encouraged for everyone, high literacy rate

**Community Responsibility:** diverse economy, culture where education is valued, societal attitude shift towards people who live on low-incomes to ensure sustainable change, healthy economy and match between economy and skills of population, revised UI/EI policies

**Assets & Challenges.** Participants were also able to identify relevant assets and challenges in each of the five priority areas. Assets include mention of specific organizations and collaborations that are doing exemplary work as well as positive neighbourhood and community conditions. Challenges include lack of sustainable funding, the immense need, lack of awareness of poverty issues, and negative community characteristics such as the existence of fear, racism and discrimination.

Based on these findings from the consultations, it was proposed that United Way continues to build on the overarching themes of safety, engagement, supports and services, basic needs, and community responsibility when focusing and refining long term outcomes.

## Community Survey

Although for the most part, survey participants felt that all outcomes in the five priority areas were important, some patterns emerged from the survey results to suggest some participants identified more with certain aspects of the potential long-term outcomes. The following tables describe frequencies for responses under each priority area. (Notes: see 'methodology' on pages 6,7 for a description of how these results were gathered)

### 1. All Children and Youth Reach Their Potential

Please tell us how important the following options are to you.	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
All children & youth are free from violence, abuse, and discrimination	10 2%	14 3%	512 96%
All children & youth have basic needs met	10 2%	16 3%	510 95%
All children & youth are healthy	10 2%	38 7%	485 91%
All children arrive at school ready to learn	8 1%	75 14%	451 84%
All children & youth succeed in school	12 2%	98 18%	425 79%
All children & youth are playing meaningful roles in community settings.	28 5%	169 32%	337 63%

### 2. All Families are Stronger

Please tell us how important the following options are to you.	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
All families are free from violence, abuse, and discrimination	8 2%	15 3%	509 96%
All families have basic needs met	7 1%	42 8%	483 91%
All families have access to strong formal and informal support networks	12 2%	151 28%	371 66%
All families with complex needs are supported	15 3%	144 27%	366 70%
All families have voice in decisions and issues that affect their lives	19 4%	153 29%	351 67%
All families have access to affordable childcare	24 5%	159 30%	347 69%
All families have access to affordable recreation and leisure opportunities	24 4%	210 39%	300 56%

### 3. All Neighbourhoods are Inclusive & Thriving

Please tell us how important the following options are to you.	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Neighbourhoods are safe & free from violence, abuse, and discrimination	6 1%	27 5%	500 94%
Neighbourhoods have inclusive and safe gathering places	19 4%	140 27%	369 70%
Neighbourhoods have strong and accessible supports & services	21 4%	154 29%	351 67%
Neighbourhoods have power & voice in community issues	21 4%	195 37%	314 59%
Neighbourhoods have diverse groups connected and working together	38 7%	217 41%	275 52%
Neighbourhoods are organized and taking action on issues	53 10%	241 46%	232 70%

#### 4. All Newcomers are Welcomed & Supported

Please tell us how important the following options are to you.	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Newcomers are free from violence, abuse and discrimination	11 2%	32 6%	488 92%
Newcomers have basic needs met	19 4%	118 22%	390 74%
Newcomers are meaningfully employed	22 4%	130 28%	376 71%
Newcomers are connected and aware of formal & informal supports	22 4%	148 25%	357 68%
The community celebrates diversity and is inclusive	39 7%	167 32%	322 61%
Newcomers have a voice and are involved in community settings	40 8%	210 40%	277 53%

#### 5. All People are Economically Secure

Please tell us how important the following options are to you.	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
All people have basic needs met	8 2%	37 7%	486 92%
Education, training & learning opportunities are available & accessible to all	12 2%	80 15%	434 83%
Poverty and inequality in the region are reduced	10 2%	92 17%	426 81%
All people have sufficient and stable employment	12 2%	114 22%	403 76%
Citizens are active in change efforts to reduce poverty & inequality	23 4%	160 30%	343 65%

Additionally, survey participants were asked to rate some overarching themes on their importance to the five priorities:

81% felt that “*basic needs are met*” was the most relevant theme, followed by 77% for “*people are free from abuse, violence, and discrimination*”, 56% for “*people are supported and able to increase their ability to succeed*”, 34% for “*services and information are accessible*”, 27% for “*our communities are inclusive and equitable*”, and 15% for “*people are active in changing their community*”.

## Final Analysis & Conclusion

After gathering these three forms of data, the team was charged with selecting the most important and relevant long-term outcomes. To aid in this decision, a set of criteria for selection was developed.

### Criteria for Selection

First, it was important to discern and honour the **common themes** emerging from the three layers of enquiry. In doing so, the team attempted to balance the community input with the research review and stakeholder consultation data.

Secondly, it was agreed that selection of outcomes in each priority area should allow for investment through all three outcome types: 1) basic needs and crisis supports; 2) capacity-building; and 3) aspirational community level change.

Lastly, choices needed to set a focused foundation for each priority that galvanized community energy and include potential opportunity for United Way to play a unique and meaningful role.

With these criteria in mind, the team reviewed the survey results, identified the three key long-term outcomes from each priority area and considered them in relation to the research review and consultation findings. An attempt was made to “triangulate” the findings from each of the data collection strategies. A list of long-term outcomes was first drafted within each priority area and then examined across priority areas to check for overlap and redundancy. After a process of dialogue and deliberation, changes were made to reflect the group’s shared thinking. Ultimately, we feel we arrived at a comprehensive set of outcomes that are interdependent, complementary, and representative of our research process and community vision.

In November 2007, the boards of both United Ways approved the following long-term outcomes as stated:

#### Priority Area: All children and youth reach their potential

##### Long-term Outcomes:

- Children and youth are free from abuse and neglect
- Children and youth are healthy
- Children and youth succeed in school

#### Priority Area: All families are strong

##### Long-term Outcomes:

- Families are free from violence
- Families with complex needs are supported
- Families are resilient and supported by their community

#### Priority Area: All neighbourhoods are inclusive and thriving

##### Long-term Outcomes:

- Neighbourhoods have inclusive and safe gathering places
- Neighbourhoods have strong, accessible supports and services
- Neighbourhoods have diverse groups that are connected and working together to take action

#### Priority Area: All newcomers are welcomed and supported

##### Long-term Outcomes:

- Newcomers are meaningfully employed
- The community is inclusive and newcomers are free from discrimination
- Newcomers are involved in and have a voice in community settings

#### Priority Area: All people are economically secure

##### Long-term Outcomes:

- People have basic needs met
- Education, training, and learning opportunities are affordable and accessible to all
- People have sufficient and stable employment

## **Limitations**

While every attempt was made to gather as much information and community input as possible, we acknowledge that our decision-making process has had limitations. The review of research was conducted quickly, and worked from material that was readily available at a local level. More information was available in some priority areas than others, and the focus of available reports varied from community wide needs assessment or planning, to program evaluation, to epidemiological studies. In some priority areas, it was possible to supplement local information with provincial and national studies. In others, it was not as easy.

We had to strike a delicate balance between process and action and at the same time, honour our organizational values and vision. We could easily spend a full year researching the pressing issues in the region and engaging in an extensive community engagement process. However, we chose to collect as much “usable knowledge” as possible in a short timeframe that could allow us to act on these priorities.

## **Conclusion & Next Steps**

With the approval of the long-term outcomes, by both United Way boards, it is the role of our new community investment structures to determine how to implement and measure these outcomes. This structure includes a Community Impact Council at each United Way, to oversee the implementation, with sub-committees specializing on no more than two of the priorities each. Volunteers from the public, private and nonprofit sectors will lead this structure with specific responsibilities to: 1) examine and recommend best practices, 2) identify evaluation strategies and 3) make investment decisions.

Within each priority, three levels of investment will be made:

- Basic needs and supports to secure a stable network of supportive programs
- Capacity building approaches that are focused on prevention of issues
- Changes in community conditions which affect issues at a systems and/or policy level.

Our intention is to use these community priorities and long-term outcomes to focus investments in the communities in the region, and work with our community partners to promote community well-being. As we act in partnership with community, we are committed to ongoing reflection on our process and outcomes and will seek to continually learn from our action in order to strengthen our role in creating community conditions that foster healthy and thriving communities in Waterloo Region.

## Appendix

### United Way of Cambridge & North Dumfries & United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo & Area **Community Impact Agreement**



### Vision

**By thinking regionally and acting locally**, our two United Ways in Waterloo Region will model a collaborative community investment strategy which engages community members to act on a common vision and shared priorities to achieve lasting regional impacts.

### Our Shared Priorities for Regional Impact

Our United Ways of Waterloo Region are focused on creative approaches that achieve lasting impact so that:

- Children and youth reach their potential
- Families are stronger
- Neighbourhoods are inclusive and thriving
- Newcomers are welcomed and supported
- People are economically secure

### Principles for Working Together

Our collaboration, which models a unique way for community agencies to work together, will combine the benefits of cooperation and autonomy with the understanding that:

- We will share priorities but maintain two separate and autonomous organizations and boards;
- We will have local flexibility in the implementation of our shared priorities;
- We will deliver improved results by: 1) building on regional commonalities; 2) challenging our existing assumptions; and 3) stimulating new efficiencies;
- Our clarity of purpose will generate a roadmap that pushes boundaries and ultimately, creates something better for the entire regional community;
- We will leverage the full potential of the combined leadership on the two boards to stimulate enhanced strategic thinking, focus and impact;
- We will see this as an opportunity for our United Ways to develop an increased awareness and a deeper appreciation of each other.

## Principles for Our Community Investments

Our collaboration will respect and support strategies that:

- Are aligned with the connection between United Way priorities and agency program outcomes;
- Occur at **multiple levels** (individual, family, neighbourhood, community and societal); in **multiple settings** (schools, workplaces, community centres etc.); and use multiple **types of interventions** (prevention, intervention, addressing community conditions) with **multiple populations or sectors**;
- Are based on the best available research and evidence;
- Emphasize prevention and take action on root causes wherever possible;
- Recognize that community engagement is both a process and an outcome;
- Build on the strengths and capacities of the community.

## Principles for Community Engagement

*“Integral to our community building efforts is the belief that all communities have assets which need to be identified and built upon and societal issues must be dealt with holistically, at their root.” (Success to Significance: United Way – Centraide Strategic Plan 2006/2008)*

In recognition of the importance of community engagement, as both a process and an outcome, our collaboration will:

- Respect the wisdom and expertise of our community members;
- Engage citizens in our community priorities through a variety of different processes that encourage ongoing involvement, learning and leadership development;
- Encourage communities to identify assets and build on strengths;
- Promote inclusive participation and collective efforts to address our priorities through specific actions focused on root causes;
- Achieve recognizable impacts that contribute to community success and ongoing engagement.

## Steps Towards Our Common Future

We will engage the leadership of our two United Way Boards to:

- Endorse this agreement;
- Inform and involve key community stakeholders;
- Identify intentional, ongoing opportunities for board to board discussions and collaboration.

We will endorse the staff leadership to:

- Develop organizational plans to implement this agreement that are based in our 'Principles for Working Together';
- Design and implement a communications plan and strategy;
- Implement a collaborative community investment strategy (locally and regionally) for 2008 funding.