



15  
CELEBRATING YEARS

TAMARACK  
INSTITUTE

# Tamarack Institute 2017 Progress & Impact Report

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Celebrating 15 Years of  
Community Change



“It is time for fresh thinking and bold actions. We must unleash the **creativity and resourcefulness** of Canadians in all parts of society so that we can **tackle the complex** and **interrelated** challenges of the 21st century.”

*Tim Brodhead*

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“I’ve travelled enough to realize there are brilliant people in every community who know solutions. They don’t need saviours, they need allies.”

*Wab Kinew*

*For more great quotes, go to [socialchangequotes.com](http://socialchangequotes.com) curated by Al Etmanski*



# Tamarack Institute

**The Tamarack Institute is a connected force for community change.**

**We serve more than 24,000 learners in over 2,900 cities worldwide.**

In our Learning Centre we work with leaders in non-profits, governments, businesses and the community to make the work of advancing positive community change easier and more effective. We do this by teaching, writing and working one-on-one with organizations about:

- Collective Impact
- Community Engagement
- Collaborative Leadership
- Community Innovation
- Evaluating Impact

Vibrant Communities is the applied work of the Tamarack Institute and is made up of two Learning Communities:

**Cities Reducing Poverty** is a network of more than 175 cities represented by 61 Regional partners who are working to reduce poverty for 1 million Canadians.

**Cities Deepening Community** is a network of 50 cities seeking to strengthen neighbourhoods and 25 cities developing community plans to grow citizens "sense of and commitment to community."

Our belief is that when we are effective in strengthening community capacity to engage citizens, lead collaboratively, deepen community and reduce poverty, our work contributes to the building of peace and a more equitable society. Our deepest hope is to end poverty in Canada.

## Thank You

Our work would not be possible without our financial partners and supporters. We thank you wholeheartedly for your contributions that help enable us all to be a connected force for community change.

## Our Partners

Thank you to our most generous funders and partners who make our work possible.



## ANONYMOUS

Our Supporters for in-kind contributions



# A Letter from Tamarack

## Thanks.

An annual report is a time to say thank you! First to our 24,000 learning partners in 2,909 cities from across Canada, the United States and 52 countries from around the world. It is humbling to be a part of your lives as we learn and work together to build great places to live, for all.

We also want to thank the partners that have contributed to our work financially. You will find over 800 organizations and individuals that invested this year as donors, members, consulting clients and learners. Each of you contribute in a unique way and together the work of Tamarack continues to grow.

We have had a transition in leadership this year. Liz Weaver is now leading our Learning Centre and Paul Born our Vibrant Communities work. We made this change to foster growth and impact as it allows us to focus on our two unique and yet interrelated program areas. We believe that this change will focus the creative energy of our team to engage you, our members, more effectively and directly. It feels good to share this leadership and is authentic for Tamarack as we promote collaborative approaches to community change.

2017 Progress & Impact Report

We have been celebrating Tamarack's 15th Anniversary and as a way to mark the occasion, this report contains a special 15-year reflection. We hope this provides some context to our history and the achievements we have generated together. Throughout the report you will also find highlights of our year from the Learning Centre and Vibrant Communities. Be sure to read the side bars that highlight our work in numbers. Lastly, we invite you to review the names of the more than 800 organizations and individuals that have contributed to our work and success this year. If we have missed your contribution, please let us know as we value all the contributions made through this shared learning experience.

We expect 2018 to be our best year ever! In each section of the report we share with you some of our plans for the coming year and invite you to partner with us.

Finally, we take your ideas and contributions seriously and need these to grow and have an impact. On behalf of the board, staff and partners of Tamarack we are deeply grateful for your friendship.

Much joy,  
*Alan, Liz and Paul*



**Alan Broadbent**  
Board Chair



**Liz Weaver**  
Co-CEO, Tamarack,  
Learning Centre



**Paul Born**  
Co-CEO, Tamarack,  
Vibrant Communities

## Highlights for 2017:

**24,000** learners engage with us from:

- **1,101** cities in Canada
- **827** cities in the US
- **52** countries and **981** cities in the rest of the world

Over **800** donors, learners and partners invested **\$2.3M** in our work

**61** member networks representing **175** cities have joined our Cities Reducing Poverty learning community

Tamarack learners collectively spent over **13,830** days in person at our seminars and workshops

Cities Reducing Poverty held **33** consultations in **9** Provinces/Territories to support the development of the Federal Government's national poverty reduction strategy

Tamarack leaders contributed to and published **12** articles, book chapters and papers which were accessed by more than **15,000** learners

**205** cities/regions were impacted through our consulting services

With support from the Suncor Energy Foundation we launched **1** new Community of Practice: The Citizen Role in Disaster Preparedness



# Tamarack

# Learning Centre

**The goal of the Tamarack Learning Centre is to equip you, the community change innovator, with the skills, knowledge, resources and connections you need to make lasting change in your community. We support you in a number of different ways, wherever you may be in the world.**

The Tamarack Learning Centre focuses on five key drivers of community change. We believe these drivers are critical for community change and impact to happen.

## 2017 Learning Centre Highlights

Tamarack learners collectively spent over **13,830** days in our seminars and workshops

**7** multi-day workshops were held with 1,000 people participating

**69** partner organizations assisted hosting events, leading sessions and co-creating content

**15** single day workshops were held with **1,027** people participating

**103** consulting training events were delivered in cities across Canada, the US and Internationally involving **7,954** participants

**43** webinars were held with **6,570** people registered

In partnership with the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), Tamarack co-hosted capacity building services including **6** Webinars, **7** workshops and provided coaching supports to **52** OTF Collective Impact grantees

Learners invested **\$1.5M** to participate in seminars and workshops and consult with Tamarack, which we re-invested in developing learning products and programs

**192,511** unique visitors joined us online to learn (16,043 per month on average)

**945** people participated in Communities of Practice on topics like Evaluating Impact, Collective Impact and Community Engagement

Tamarack leaders contributed to and published **12** articles, chapters and papers which were accessed by more than **15,000** learners

**14,590** people were subscribers to Engage! Magazine

**38,448** resources were accessed during 2017

“We believe that true community change occurs when citizens and organizations adopt a new way of thinking and working together.”

*Liz Weaver, Co-CEO  
Tamarack Learning  
Centre*

# The Five Idea Areas Pivotal to Community Change



## Collective Impact

One of the biggest challenges facing community change leaders is impacting systems and policies to improve the well-being of citizens. In 2011, FSG in the United States defined an approach to large-scale, system-wide community change called Collective Impact. The Collective Impact idea provides a useful framework for community change and is situated within the broad frame of collaborative efforts focused on systems and policy change. Tamarack collaborates with colleagues in Canada, the United States and internationally to intentionally build the field of practice in Collective Impact and collaborative community change efforts.



## Community Engagement

Community Engagement is the process by which citizens are engaged to work and learn together on behalf of their communities to create and realize bold visions for the future. We apply the theory to community contexts and teach and coach organizations, municipalities and groups to engage their communities meaningfully. We stress the importance of approaching engagement with an outcomes-based lens, of always involving context experts, and to provide community ownership of solutions whenever possible. We specialize in applying Community Engagement to systems-thinking in order to work collaboratively for community-wide change.



## Community Innovation

We see Community Innovation as a particular form of social innovation that is place-based, within the specific geography of a community. As dynamic 'living labs', communities offer the perfect container for innovation. Through our experience with community change, we have come to understand that to be effective, innovation requires an appreciation of both the issue one is hoping to address, as well as a deep understanding of the unique characteristics of the community – the place and the people within it – where the innovation will be implemented.



## Collaborative Leadership

The premise of Collaborative Leadership says: If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization and community. When collaboration works, it reproduces and builds the characteristics of civic community, allowing us to deal with future issues in constructive ways. Collaboration builds social capital. Collaboration is the new leadership, and we work with communities and organizations to implement Collaborative Leadership processes to achieve impact.



## Evaluating Impact

New approaches to community change require different ways of evaluating impact. We are experimenting with new ways of measuring change, exploring who is responsible for outcomes, developing methods that adapt to the pace of community change activities, creating alternative approaches for getting change makers involved in the actual assessment process, and using the results to drive new thinking, better strategies and deeper impact.

Tamarack Learning Centre

## 2017: Building Capacity

By building the capacity of people working in communities, we hope to help make exponential change. In 2017, the Tamarack Learning Centre continued to advance the knowledge, skills and competencies of practitioners of community change efforts through workshops, consulting, coaching, webinars, and resources in our five idea areas.

We updated our tamarackcommunity.ca website in 2017 and saw a renewed focus on creating knowledge, tools and resources. Over 120 Tamarack learners and partners have contributed more than 450 posts, tools, resources and articles to our blog and resource library. This number continues to grow.

Tamarack's consulting services provided customized learning experiences for over 100 organizations in Canada, the United States and internationally. We have supported municipalities; local, provincial and state organizations, governments and networks; and private sector organizations. Consulting services include webinars, workshops, coaching, technical assistance and customized facilitation for learning and planning sessions. Tamarack continued its unique partnership with the Ontario Trillium Foundation in advancing capacity building services designed to transform communities across the province of Ontario and engaged nearly 700 learners in this effort.

We continued to partner with leading edge organizations across the globe to advance the community change field of knowledge and practice including the Collective Impact Forum, Co-Creative Consulting, The Civic Canopy, The Harwood Institute, PolicyLink and the Forum for Youth Investment in the United States. Internationally, Tamarack engages with Inspiring Communities in New Zealand; Collaboration for Impact, Local Community Services Association and the Ten 20 Foundation in Australia; and with Bridge to the Future in Israel. Our network of partners and influencers continues to evolve.

### Tamarack Papers and Articles published in 2017:

#### **Collective Impact**

*How to Develop a Common Agenda for Collective Impact* | Paul Born

*Turf, Trust, Co-Creation and Collective Impact* | Liz Weaver. Also published in the International Association for Community Development Journal and translated into French by Avenir D'Enfants.

*Developing Collective Impact Strategies* | Mark Holmgren

*Perspectives from the Field: A Conversation about Collective Impact and Collaboration from Australia and Canada* | Liz Weaver & Max Hardy

*Possible: Transformational Change is Possible* | Liz Weaver, published in *Collective Impact and Community Development Issues*, Routledge, 2018

*Community-campus partnerships, collective impact and poverty reduction* | Co-authors: Liz Weaver, Karen Schwartz, Natasha Pei and Annie Kingston Miller, in *Collective Impact and Community Development Issues*, Routledge, 2018

#### **Community Engagement**

*The Content Experts* | Lisa Attygalle

#### **Collaborative Leadership**

*35 Voices On Collaborative Leadership and Co-Creating Cities of the Future* | Mark Holmgren

#### **Community Innovation**

*The Community Innovation Imperative* | Sylvia Cheuy

#### **Evaluating Impact**

*Shared Measurement: The Why is Clear the How Continues to Develop* | Mark Cabaj

## 2018: Focusing on Impact

We enter into 2018 with a renewed spirit and energy. Ultimately, the focus of the Tamarack Learning Centre is to create and share cutting-edge learning which builds capacity for community change efforts to seed, scale and have impact. We've identified three goals which will drive the work forward in 2018:

1. To advance learner knowledge and practice in Collective Impact, Community Innovation, Collaborative Leadership, Community Innovation and Evaluating Impact which build capacity for people working in community change. We will do this by focusing on the latest trends in these fields, developing content, tools and techniques, providing extraordinary learning experiences and connecting learners together in unique and customized ways.
2. To create a Tamarack Learning Centre approach that is cutting edge in quality and content and builds a financially sustainable model which enables the work of community changemakers in Canada, the US and Internationally.
3. To understand the impact of building learner capacity through the Tamarack Learning Centre as a mechanism for community change. This will include a developmental evaluation project focused on our learners, their learning needs and the impact learning has on community efforts to scale impact.

The Tamarack Learning Centre is uniquely positioned to advance the field of community change and impact, but we know that it is our connection to you, our learners, that is pivotal to our success. We want to learn from you, share your success stories and challenges, and work together to build communities that are powerful enablers for all citizens.

Tamarack will continue to proactively engage our partners in co-designing learning based on your needs and emerging trends. In 2018, our learning events will have a specific focus on one-day workshops which will allow us to bring learning to more communities. We will re-launch the Community Change Institute as a Festival of Ideas focusing on the five core approaches for community change. Tamarack will also continue to build customized consulting services to provide community networks with coaching, technical assistance, workshops and webinars in a personalized way.

We have a focused agenda in creating content and in 2018, Tamarack will launch a curated communications strategy where subscribers will be able to customize how often they receive knowledge and tools from Tamarack. This dynamic process will enable learners to get the content they need at the frequency they want, that will move their community change efforts from ideas to impact.

We are excited about the journey forward for Tamarack into our next 15 years and welcome each of you along for the ride.



### The Impact of Learning:

"The Tamarack Institute hosted two learning events which I was lucky enough to attend, adding an incredible wealth of knowledge and exposure to ideas and initiatives that I could bring back to Innisfil. The keynotes, workshops, and learning labs combined allowed me to digest and dissect the shifts taking place, and refocus on the steps we must take to truly create inclusive and incredible communities. A key takeaway was the importance of an individual's sense of belonging and the impact it has on their personal, professional, and civic life. It has become clear that finding a sense of purpose is foundational to building strong, resilient, and well-rounded communities. Overall, Tamarack's expertise has allowed me to re-evaluate the morale behind my work, making me ask myself, "Am I doing the right thing?" rather than simply doing things right. At the end of each event, I left with a renewed energy, a sense of hope for the future, and the motivation to build a happier community back home."

*Michelle Lopes, Town of Innisfil*





# Tamarack

# Vibrant Communities

## A little bit of history:

**Tamarack was founded with the Maytree Foundation on the principle that our thinking and writing needed to be applied to help communities work better together and make their work easier and more effective.**

To this end we embraced a concept promoted by thought leader Étienne Wenger (Harvard University Press, 2002) known as “Communities of Practice” which we would later call Learning Communities. According to Wenger, Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. For Vibrant Communities, the Learning Community framework provided an opportunity for emergent ideas (like Cities Reducing Poverty) to take root and grow.

The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, a key founding partner in Vibrant Communities, took us under their wing in our early years and had us join a Learning Community of their own that would focus on Applied Dissemination. McConnell was particularly interested in applying the work that our co-founder, Paul Born, had brought to Tamarack. This project was known as Opportunities 2000 and had the goal of reducing poverty in Waterloo Region to the lowest in Canada. Our grand experiment was to see if this work could be expanded and disseminated across Canada.

**Vibrant Communities is the applied work of the Tamarack Institute and is made up of several Learning Communities under two banners:**

### **Cities Reducing Poverty**

is a network of more than 175 cities represented by 61 Regional partners who are working to reduce poverty for 1 million Canadians.

### **Cities Deepening Community**

is a network of 50 cities seeking to strengthen neighbourhoods and 25 cities developing community plans to grow citizens “sense of and commitment to community.”

Vibrant Communities is one of the largest Learning Communities in Canada where cities, citizens, business and governments are actively learning and working together to address some of our most pressing issues.

## 2017: Working Together

Cities Reducing Poverty's primary purpose is to ensure that local poverty reduction initiatives in cities, towns, regions, provinces, and territories are successful. Through our premiere, national Learning Community we aim to make the work of cities reducing poverty easier and more effective.

Inspired by the success of our 2016 national summit, *Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead* held in Edmonton, AB, we hosted our 2017 summit, *Cities Reducing Poverty: When Business is Engaged*, in Hamilton, ON in April. The event involved over 360 people, including 37 plenary speakers and 65 workshop presenters. Donors provided \$31,000 in event sponsorships which allowed 47 individuals with lived experience of poverty to participate. At the summit, we also launched the publication *10 – A Guide for Businesses Reducing Poverty* to showcase what can happen when businesses large and small are engaged in poverty reduction.

**Belonging to the Cities Reducing Poverty movement** equips cities with a unified voice and reinforces the urgency for communities and governments to work together to reduce poverty. In early 2017, we partnered with Employment Social Development Canada (ESDC) to encourage and support Cities Reducing Poverty members to host local community consultations to inform a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy. We created a consultation guide and between February and May, 27 cities hosted 33 community conversations across nine provinces and territories, with more than 600 community members participating. We continue to provide critical and important feedback on the federal government's plans to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction strategy and are looking forward to its release in 2018.

## 2017 Cities Reducing Poverty Highlights:

**61** members are part of the Cities Reducing Poverty learning community and represent over **175** municipalities

**2,909** people are subscribers to the Cities Reducing Poverty e-magazine

**3,490** technical resources were downloaded during 2017

**2,892** people participated in a Cities Reducing Poverty webinar

**360** people participated in the Cities Reducing Poverty 2017 Summit

"Vibrant Communities — Cities Reducing Poverty is an important network for municipalities working together to end poverty. This learning community has built connections for our team and informed our work with forward-thinking approaches."

*Mayor Don Iveson, City of Edmonton, Alberta*

## 2018: Growing our Impact

We are excited that an Anonymous Donor has provided us with a \$500,000 commitment over three years to grow our work in Western Canada. This will allow us to strengthen our supports for our most rapidly growing networks in Alberta and British Columbia and grow our work in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In addition to the many supports already in place for Cities Reducing Poverty, we have identified four priorities for 2018:

1. **Each Cities Reducing Poverty member will be allocated a Champion of Cities.** This Vibrant Communities staff person will reach out to cities, become deeply familiar with their work, and link members to the best possible learning opportunities, resources, and supports available to make their local work easier and more effective.
2. **Members will have priority access to Vibrant Communities' expert coaches.** The expert coaches will help members build specific skills, knowledge, and/or implement processes that are essential to their local work.
3. **We will work with Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments to support Cities Reducing Poverty.** We have long believed that government relationships are crucial for cities to succeed, and we will continue to emphasize the need for governments to join us at the Cities Reducing Poverty table.
4. **Vibrant Communities will be hosting two regional poverty reduction summits in 2018:** our Western Canada summit will take place in the spring of 2018 and our Eastern Canada summit will be scheduled for the fall.



CITIES  
REDUCING POVERTY

CITIES  
DEEPENING COMMUNITY

**Vibrant Communities**

Connecting local community efforts  
through national support since 2002

## Cities Reducing Poverty

# Members

### YUKON

1. YUKON ANTI-POVERTY COALITION

### NWT

2. GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

3. NO PLACE FOR POVERTY COALITION

### BC

4. DISTRICT OF STEWART

5. REVELSTOKE

6. KAMLOOPS

7. VIBRANT ABBOTSFORD

8. SURREY

9. PORT HARDY

10. NEW WESTMINSTER

11. GREATER TRAIL

12. CRANBROOK

13. NELSON AT ITS BEST, NELSON

14. LANGLEY

15. CITY OF VANCOUVER

### AB

16. GRANDE PRAIRIE

17. ENOUGH FOR ALL CALGARY

18. CANADIAN POVERTY INSTITUTE

19. THRIVE MEDICINE HAT AND REGION

20. CENTRAL ALBERTA POVERTY REDUCTION ALLIANCE

21. SPRUCE GROVE

22. STRATHCONA

23. EDMONTON

24. END POVERTY EDMONTON

25. STONEY PLAIN

### SK

26. SASKATOON POVERTY REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

### MB

27. WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION COUNCIL

### ON

28. OTTAWA POVERTY REDUCTION NETWORK

29. SAULT STE. MARIE POVERTY ROUND TABLE

30. PLANS FOR ACTION KINGSTON & AREA

31. LEEDS & GREENVILLE

32. SOLUTIONS: WATERLOO, CAMBRIDGE, NORTH DUMFRIES

33. POVERTY ROUNDTABLE OF HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD

34. CORNWALL

35. FUTURE OXFORD

36. OSHAWA

37. DC MOVES, DUFFERIN COUNTY

38. SIMCOE COUNTY

39. REGION OF PEEL

40. HALIBURTON-KAWARTHA LAKES

41. CITY OF TORONTO

42. HAMILTON ROUNDTABLE

43. NIAGARA POVERTY REDUCTION NETWORK

44. HALDIMAND-NORFOLK

45. ST. THOMAS ELGIN COUNTY

46. PROSPERITY ROUNDTABLE CHATHAM-KENT

47. PATHWAY TO POTENTIAL WINDSOR

48. LONDON CHILD & YOUTH NETWORK

49. BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES WATERLOO

50. HALTON POVERTY ROUNDTABLE

### QC

51. RQRI

52. CÔTE-DES-NEIGES-NOTRE-DAME-DE-GRACE

### NB

53. WESTMORLAND ALBERT (WA) ACTION

54. FREDERICTON CIN

55. MONCTON SOCIAL INCLUSION

56. LIVING SJ

57. VIBRANT CHARLOTTE COUNTY

### NFLD

58. VIBRANT ST JOHN

### NS

59. CAPE BRETON

60. HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

### USA

61. OPPORTUNITY CENTRAL IOWA, IOWA, US



Cities Reducing Poverty; December, 2017

## 2017: Connectedness & Collective

The aim of Cities Deepening Community is to support and nurture community leaders to create neighbourhoods and cities that are resilient and able to address complex challenges such as aging populations, extreme weather events, poverty, and income disparity. Ultimately, we want to work with cities to strengthen citizen engagement by deepening social connectedness and collective action for the greater good of our communities.

2017 was an important year for the Cities Deepening Community learning community. We implemented the first year of our funding and partnership agreement with Suncor Energy Foundation and worked with four cities: Peterborough, Baltimore, Grey Bruce and York Region, to complete Local Deepening Community Initiative projects. We worked with these cities to facilitate local conversations to connect neighbours, generate a shared vision for their communities, and implement a local action learning plan to realize that vision.

In June, we hosted our first bilingual gathering **Neighbourhoods ♥ The Heart of Community: Mobilizing for Impact | Les Quartiers ♥ Au Coeur de la Communauté: Se Mobiliser Pour L'Impact** in partnership with Centraide du Grand Montreal in Montreal, Quebec. 120 changemakers from across Canada came together to connect, be equipped with resources, and learn from thought leaders including John McKnight, Dr. Michael McAfee, and Dr. Christine Gibson.

Our Neighbourhood Strategy Leaders Community of Practice, launched last year, grew by 26 new members this year, for a total of 56 senior municipal staff from 30 cities, who now meet on a regular basis to learn how they can implement comprehensive neighbourhood strategies. By learning together, these leaders are able to access each others' wisdom, share best practices, and accelerate the effectiveness of their work.

## 2017 Cities Deepening Community Highlights:

**3** new cities completed Deepening Community plans. (For a total of **8** cities)

**120** learners were welcomed to Montreal, Quebec for our national Neighbourhood gathering, which was delivered bilingually for the first time.

**28** members from **15** cities launched the learning community Citizens & Emergency Preparedness.

**26** new members joined our Neighbourhood Strategy Leaders' Community of Practice for a total membership of

**56** leaders from **34** municipalities

**8** webinars attracted **633** registrants

**4** neighbourhood strategy case studies were published

**4** new local Deepening Community initiative case studies were published

Over **2,000** people subscribe to the Deepening Community Newsletter

"We live in community. We need one another. Community has the capacity to improve our physical, mental and economic health as well our overall sense of happiness and fulfillment. It has the power to unite us in a common bond as we work together for a better world."

*Paul Born, Deepening Community Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*

## 2018: Broadening our Reach

The work of Cities Deepening Community is still emerging and yet we are finding a growing interest within cities to deepen the “experience of community” for their citizens. There is a consensus that if we learn together, develop a community plan and work in deliberate ways to strengthen citizen engagement and action, our communities will be more dynamic, equitable and prosperous places for all.

In 2018, in addition to many Communities of Practice, webinars and publications planned, we have established four priorities to support our rapidly growing network:

- 1. A Champion of Cities will be appointed to help Neighbourhood Strategy Leaders and Local Deepening Community Initiative leaders advance their local work.** This Vibrant Communities staff person will reach out to members to customize their learning and help them connect with the best resources, opportunities and supports available to make their local work easier and more effective.
- 2. We will seek out Municipal, Provincial and Federal government partners to support the policy goals of Cities Deepening Community.** We will launch a new policy roundup, develop a position paper, and form relationships with key departments to emphasize the need for governments to join us at the Cities Deepening Community table to strengthen the social fabric in our communities.
- 3. Vibrant Communities will host a national gathering on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) in April 2018.** This bi-national event will be highly interactive and include internationally renowned ABCD thought leaders, John McKnight and Cormac Russell, among others.
- 4. In late 2017, with the support of the Suncor Energy Foundation we introduced a new Community of Practice, Citizens and Emergency Preparedness** that has already attracted 28 members from 15 different cities. In 2018, we will grow this network and create a learning and research agenda.



### Cities Involved In:

#### Neighbours

#### Community of Practice:

Chestermere, AB  
Fort McMurray, AB  
Valleyview, AB  
Edmonton, AB  
St. Albert, AB  
Canmore, AB  
Delburne, AB  
Strathcona, AB  
Lethbridge, AB  
Red Deer, AB  
Vancouver, BC  
Victoria, BC  
Kelowna, BC  
Surrey, BC  
Chicago, IL  
Dartmouth, NS  
Burlington, ON  
Ottawa, ON  
Brampton, ON  
Waterloo, ON  
Kitchener, ON  
London, ON  
Oshawa, ON  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON  
Toronto, ON  
Mississauga, ON  
Hamilton, ON  
Windsor, ON  
St. Catharines, ON  
Brantford, ON  
Saskatoon, SK  
North Battleford, SK

#### Local Deepening Community Initiatives:

Kamloops, BC  
Delburne, AB  
Wood Buffalo, A  
Grey Bruce, ON  
Peterborough, ON  
York Region, ON  
Baltimore, USA

#### Disaster Preparedness Community of Practice

Chestermere, AB  
Edmonton, AB  
Fort McMurray, AB  
Seward, AK  
Strathcona, AB  
Vancouver, BC  
Halifax, NS  
Toronto, ON  
Thornhill, ON  
Ottawa, ON  
Peterborough, ON  
Point Claire, QB  
Oamaru, NZ

# Operations, Finance & Communications

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement is a registered charity supported by learner and member contributions, foundations, businesses and government. Learners provide significant support by attending learning events and by asking the Tamarack team to support them through consulting, coaching, and custom workshops.

The Tamarack team and our Board follow best practices in all our accounting procedures and we are audited annually. Tamarack's full audited statements are available upon request. Please email [paul@tamarackcommunity.ca](mailto:paul@tamarackcommunity.ca) to request a copy.

The Operations team develops and maintains systems to ensure Tamarack is efficient and well run, and that staff are happy and productive. In 2017, the team implemented a new People Team policy, updated and streamlined financial processes moving us fully to a cloud-based service known as Xero, and improved our database that holds over 24,000 names.

## Board of Directors

**Alan Broadbent**  
*Chairman*

**Nathan Gilbert**  
*Vice Chair*

**Colin Robertson**  
*Treasurer*

**Vali Bennett**  
*Corporate Secretary*

**Paul Born**  
*President and Co-CEO*

**Liz Weaver**  
*Co-CEO*

## Donors Matter:

Our work could not happen without the support of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation (\$1M over 5 years), Suncor Energy Foundation (\$600,000 over 3 years), Maytree (\$500,000 over 5 years), Anonymous (\$500,000 over 3 years). Our donors are also our partners, bringing deep wisdom and commitment to building great cities for all. We are deeply grateful for your friendship.

## 2017 Operations & Finance Highlights:

**\$589,312** provided by Donors and Grantors

**\$896,760** provided by Learners and Members

**\$720,929** provided by Consulting Clients

**\$2.3M** Operating Budget

Board Restricted Reserve of **\$1.3M**

**21** staff positions located across Canada

## Thank you to Be A Light Donors:

The Be A Light Scholarship is a special fund to help those with incredible potential but limited budgets, and for those who have important lived experience to contribute to community change, to attend Tamarack learning events. Everyone deserves to benefit from new knowledge and ideas. Many donors this year helped grow this scholarship fund and we thank you.

# Donors & Contributors

Key:

D - Donors & Grantors // M - Membership Investments //

C - Consulting Investments // L - Learning Event Investments

Over 800 donors, learners and partners provided \$2.2 million dollars in 2017 to ensure that the Tamarack Institute continues to reduce poverty, deepen community and provide cutting edge resources, tools and approaches which build the capacity of community change innovators. Tamarack invests in providing resources and tools free of charge through the support of donors and grantors, and Tamarack learners pay a fee for consulting and coaching services and learning events and workshops.

## Over \$100,000

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TQSOI Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest de l'Île (L)  
TRCA (L)  
TRRUST Collective Impact, Vancouver (L)  
Tucker House Renewal Centre (L)  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (L)  
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (L)  
Uncles & Aunts at Large (L)  
United Way BH (L)  
United Way Burlington (L)  
United Way Kitchener Waterloo & Area (L)  
United Way Lower Mainland (L)  
United Way Marathon County (L)  
United Way Niagara Falls & Greater Fort Erie (L)  
United Way Northern British Columbia (L)  
United Way of Calgary & Area (L)  
United Way of Peel Region (L)  
United Way of Prince Edward Island (C)  
United Way of Winnipeg (L)  
United Way Perth-Huron (L)  
United Way Saskatoon & Area (L)  
United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo (L)  
United Way Windsor/ Essex County (L)  
Uniting Church Australia (L)  
University of Alberta (L)  
University of Guelph (L,C)  
University of Johannesburg (L)  
University of Toronto (L)  
University of Vermont Medical Center (L)  
Vancity (L)  
Vancouver Coastal Health (L)  
Vancouver Economic Commission (L)  
Vecova (L)  
ventureLAB (L)  
Vita Centre (L)  
VSMS (L)  
Vulnerable Children's Reform Unit (L)  
Water ave Baptist Church (L)  
Waterloo Region FCSS (L)  
We C.A.R.E. Grey Bruce (L)  
WellFort Community Health Services (L)  
WellnessVie (L)  
Women & HIV / AIDS Initiative of Ontario (L)  
Women's Habitat (L)  
Woodstock Museum NHS (L)  
Yellowhead Tribal Comm. Corrections Society (L)  
YMCA Niagara (L)  
YMCA of El Paso (L)  
YMCA YWCA Winnipeg (L)  
YMCA-YWCA of Guelph (L)  
York Region Public Health (L)  
York University (L)  
Yorkton KidsFirst Program (L)  
Youth & Philanthropy Initiative Canada (L)  
You've Gotta Have Friends (L)  
YWCA of Hamilton (L)  
YWCA of Yellowknife (M)

# Helping Communities Change

## The 15 Year Tamarack Story

*Written by Kris Culp*

Tamarack's story begins in the late 1990s with a series of conversations between Paul Born and Alan Broadbent. At the time, Paul was leading the Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA) and in particular, Opportunities 2000, a millennium campaign with a bold goal of reducing poverty in Waterloo Region to the lowest in Canada by the year 2000. Alan, of the Avana Capital Corporation and as chairman of Maytree, a foundation dedicated to advancing systemic solutions to poverty, was interested in the campaign's progress.

Paul and Alan talked about what it takes to get a broad range of stakeholders – business, government, faith, volunteer, and nonprofit – working together with people with lived experience of poverty to address this big, complex issue. CODA and Opportunities 2000 offered much learning in this regard. Alan and Paul began to see the outlines of something bigger: a national organization to promote the art and science of community change for cities, where people are engaged and working together to strengthen their community.

In 2001, Alan as Chairman and Paul as President jointly launched Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement. Its mission was to develop a process to help people create bold visions for the future of their communities and work together to achieve those visions more easily and effectively.

### **The Early Days:**

Alan, through Maytree, made a long-term commitment to funding and giving leadership to Tamarack, and with this confidence Paul consulted with a small group of founders on how to scale Tamarack and the Opportunities 2000 learnings to a national level. Among the early founders were Alan Broadbent and Ratna Omidvar of Maytree, Tim Brodhead and Katharine Pearson of the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, Frances Westley of the McGill-McConnell program at McGill University, and Sherri Torjman of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. "I shuttled between them over a six-month period, going from one visit to the next and passing on the ideas of one to the other," Paul recounts. "It was a brilliant 'meeting' that continued, at least for me, seemingly without pause."

When a plan was in place, Tamarack put out an invitation to community leaders: Would you like to meet and talk about the possibility of working together in a new way to advance new thinking about how communities change, and in turn create a new approach to reducing poverty? The answer was resoundingly "yes."



*Paul Born, 2003*

"Back when we started, no one had a community-wide plan to reduce poverty. Now, nearly every Canadian city has or is working on a poverty reduction strategy. That's 61 regions representing more than 175 cities. I find that remarkable, and I believe that's one of our greatest achievements in 15 years."

*Paul Born, Co-Founder  
& Co-CEO, Tamarack*

## 2002 - Vibrant Communities Is Launched:

With leadership support from the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, just over 50 community leaders from 14 cities gathered at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, Ont. "We spent four days together having a really good conversation," Paul recalls. "On the last day, we introduced the idea of Vibrant Communities Canada. People were excited."

Thus began a unique 10-year experiment. Thirteen Trail Builder cities agreed to explore a collaborative, cross-sector approach to local poverty reduction. Through Vibrant Communities, the cities received financial and technical support. In return, they tracked their lessons and outcomes and shared them with national sponsors in an "action-learning" process.

"We knew that in order to get scale, we had to follow some new principles," reflects Mark Cabaj, the first director of Vibrant Communities, who had worked with Paul at Opportunities 2000. "We were interested in finding how those played out in practice. We had done that in one context, Waterloo, but we wanted to know how this would play out in other cities." It was exciting work – building a new platform and a practice for social change in Canada.

## 2003 - Building and Sharing Knowledge:

Tamarack established a Learning Centre to document community-building activity and disseminate the learning. It quickly grew to include web-based learning, three e-newsletters, tele-learning, online workshops, and research papers. The knowledge was shared freely with anyone who wanted to access it. By 2004, more than 5,000 people used the open learning services every month.

"The building of the knowledge base has been very important and was a very intentional thing at the outset," Alan says. "This was going to be the basis of Tamarack's work – we would not only work with communities but learn from them, document their learning, and leverage their learning so other communities and individuals could benefit from it."

## 2005 - The First Community Change Institute:

Tamarack's signature learning event, a five-day gathering to inspire and renew community changemakers, took place at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph. Interest ran high and registration overflowed, so Tamarack arranged off-site accommodations and buses to carry people back and forth. "We wanted to produce events that gave people the very best experience," Paul says. "There was a sense that the people coming to our events were going to contribute to the wellbeing of the Institute."

"Tamarack has emboldened and strengthened lots of social innovators and would-be community builders across Canada because they feel like they're part of something bigger and they feel connected. Tamarack has helped strengthen the ecosystem of social innovation and community change."

*Mark Cabaj, Here to There Consulting*





## 2008 - Publishing Books, Sharing Knowledge:

Tamarack captured Trail Builder stories and learnings in a new book, *Creating Vibrant Communities – How Individuals and Organizations from Diverse Sectors of Society are Coming Together to Reduce Poverty in Canada*, edited by Paul. “Good things start with a conversation. So do good communities,” Paul wrote in the introduction. Fittingly, that year Paul also published *Community Conversations: Mobilizing the Ideas, Skills, and Passion of Community Organizations, Government, Businesses, and People*, a book that is now a Canadian best seller and has sold more than 20,000 copies.

## 2010 - Entering a New Phase:

As the Trail Builder experiment drew to a close, Mark stepped down as Vibrant Communities Director and Liz Weaver, of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, took up the role. “Tamarack was in the process of engaging its Vibrant Communities partners in a conversation about where to go from here,” Liz recalls. “What would be the next iteration of the poverty

reduction movement? How could we keep working together and building momentum? We started to refocus on what Cities Reducing Poverty could look like, how it could be member-driven, what would be the priorities for our members in a shared learning community, and how we could grow the base.”

## 2011 - “Collective Impact” Gains Profile:

Tamarack was writing its Trail Builder report when an article entitled “Collective Impact” appeared in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. It presented a framework for how organizations across all sectors could work together to achieve a common goal. It described, in fact, what Tamarack had been doing since 2002 with the Trail Builder experiment. “We had been doing [Collective Impact] ourselves, just using different language,” Mark says. “We were doing a Canadian version with on-the-ground experiences and practices. The ideas we had been writing about and implementing in communities became very popular thanks to our partners at FSG and Aspen in the United States.”

“We recognize Tamarack and its commitment to bettering Canadian cities, particularly through its work with municipal actors who are members of the Cities Reducing Poverty network. Tamarack has convened municipal leaders and community collaboratives in an online learning community and national movement to end poverty for over fifteen years. We recognize Tamarack for its early work with municipalities to develop poverty reduction plans, and how this resulted in a 10 per cent reduction in poverty in some cities between 2002 and 2012 and over 202,000 poverty reducing benefits for low-income Canadians.”

*Brock Carlton, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

## 2012 - Trail Builder Success:

Results were tabulated and they were extraordinary. “We way overshot our targets,” Mark says. The original goal was to assist 5,000 people out of poverty, but after 10 years nearly 200,000 people had experienced benefits and 15% reported a deep and durable reduction in their poverty level. “We learned that these things could mobilize at a scale we hadn’t seen before.” The experiment would eventually impact nearly 250,000 people, producing solid evidence that collaborative, cross-sector action is a successful way to reduce poverty. Based on these results, Vibrant Communities opened its model to all cities. Membership jumped to 26 cities. Liz attributes this to Tamarack’s open-source information platform: “Cities Reducing Poverty was out there on a platform that everyone could access. Lots of communities were listening to our webinars, participating in workshops, and downloading our resources, so when we opened it up, they were ready to join.” At the same time, Canada’s cities were increasingly viewing poverty as something they could tackle. “Key mayors like Naheed Nenshi [Calgary] took on poverty early in his term,” Paul says. “In Calgary, city council adopted a process that would allow anyone who was low-income to get 50% off their bus pass. That was our first really big systems change, affecting about 10,000 people.” Another was the Niagara Jobs Bus. Hotels in Niagara Falls needed workers, but low-income people in nearby St. Catharines didn’t have the means to get there. The local poverty reduction group worked with the hotels to provide transportation via a Jobs Bus, resulting in 200 new jobs.

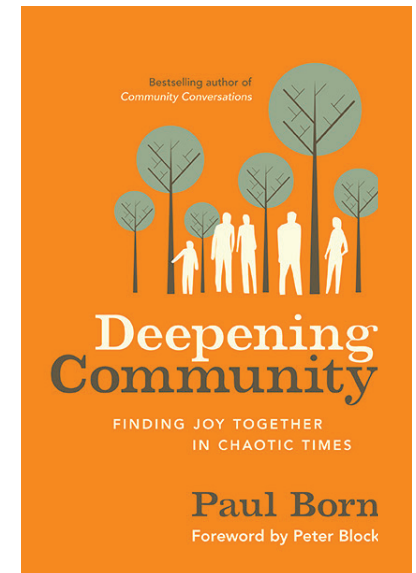
## 2013 - Growing and Evolving:

Bolstered by an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, Tamarack attracted more cities to the Vibrant Communities network. “We published the business case for poverty reduction, did policy work, convened the network, built out our online platform, and held webinars. It was exciting work,” Liz says.

Tamarack refined its learning approach by grouping resources and learning into five core idea areas: Collective Impact, Community Engagement, Collaborative Leadership, Community Innovation, and Evaluating Impact. Liz became Vice-President and Lisa Attygalle joined as Director of Engagement. A new practice area was launched based on what we had learnt from growing Vibrant Communities. Based on Paul’s research for his forthcoming book, a community of practice known as Deepening Community, with Sylvia Cheuy as director, was formed. Created to explore how to build stronger, more inclusive neighbourhoods, Deepening Community was first supported by Tamarack members and then bolstered by a three-year grant from Ontario’s Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration that allowed prototyping of the model. Another social innovation was underway.

## 2014 - Deepening Community in Canada:

Paul published his book *Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*, which has sold more than 20,000 copies to become a Canadian best-seller. The book presents four pillars of “deep” community:



“Tamarack has a long-standing reputation for its ability to convene community leaders and organizations in online learning communities, where people can gather, learn and share with each other. Tamarack brings great value and expertise to the community change sector.”

*Bill Morris, National Director, 211 Canada and Public Policy, United Way Centraide Canada*

When people share their stories, take time to have fun together, care for one another, and work together to make the world a better place, their communities become more connected and resilient places to live. These themes formed the basis of the growing Deepening Community practice.

## 2015 - 2017 - Poverty Reduction Gains Momentum:

Under Paul's leadership Vibrant Communities hosted three annual national summits that continued raising the profile of poverty reduction in Canada. The 2015 summit in Ottawa called for the three levels of government – municipal, provincial, and federal – to align their efforts to reduce poverty. The 2016 summit in Edmonton, called Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead, drew mayors from cities large and small across Canada to discuss and share ways to build economically inclusive communities. The 2017 summit in Hamilton, Cities Reducing Poverty: When Business is Engaged, featured business leaders who profiled initiatives such as Living Wage, financial empowerment, food security, education, and more. With the federal government committing in 2016 to a national poverty reduction strategy, momentum was on the rise, and Tamarack was a consistent national voice and advocate.

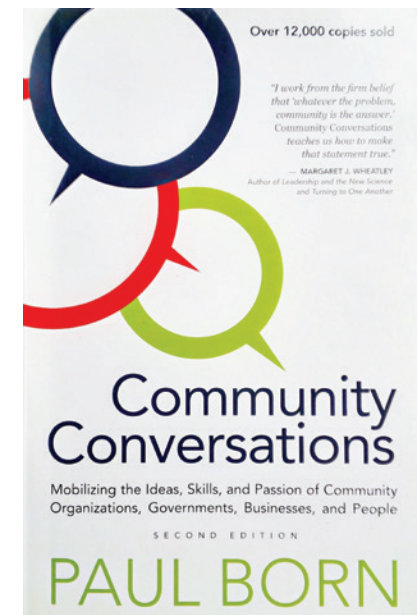
In 2016 Tamarack welcomed a significant, multi-year contribution from Suncor Energy Foundation to grow the work of Deepening Community across Canada. A Deepening Community summit in Montreal marked Tamarack's first bilingual learning event, bridging experiences and perspectives of francophone and anglophone community builders.

## 2017 - Two National Movements and a Learning Centre:

Vibrant Communities today is engaged in two national campaigns to reduce poverty and deepen community in Canada. Cities Reducing Poverty has a bold goal to improve the lives of 1 million Canadians within 10 years. Cities Deepening Community is building a network of 25 member cities by 2021 to strengthen local communities and deepen bonds between neighbours. Tamarack's Learning Centre is positioned to grow the capacity of the 24,000 community builders in our network by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, resources and connections to make lasting change. "It's humbling to partner with so many engaged learners who share our vision of creating community change," Paul says.

"As communities everywhere face increasingly complex challenges — from climate change to economic inequality to disruptive technologies — Tamarack's expertise is more relevant than ever."

*Elizabeth McIsaac,  
President,  
Maytree*







### With a lot of hard work and perseverance, Change Is Happening:

Anyone involved in community change knows the work requires a lot of hard work and perseverance. “All of us who do this work are privileged to be able to do it,” Alan says. “You only get there by going at it every day and working hard and keeping at it. All of us have to have a sense of faith and trust that our efforts will pay off for the communities we live in, and particularly for those who have the most difficulty and struggle, so they can live lives of dignity.”

Tamarack’s first 15 years have been dedicated to helping community leaders ensure that everyone can live in a great city, free of poverty with a deep sense of community. The next 15 years will be a time of unprecedented change in Canada and the world. The work of Tamarack will be more relevant than ever as we help citizens and networks work together, learn together, and care for each other to ensure a great world for our children and our children’s children.

### We look forward to the challenge.

“Can we systematically transfer the knowledge of how to create community change? Can we make it easier for people to do that in their community? What is the knowledge and what is the coaching that allows them to operationalize the knowledge? Because of Tamarack, Canada now has a network of cities that have the ability to interconnect and learn from each other — an essential foundation for social innovation.”

*Alan Broadbent, Chairman and Founder of Maytree, Chairman and CEO of Avana Capital Corporation*

“Tamarack is an outstanding organization with a 15 year track record in the field of community change and we recommend them based on our long-standing partnership and their record as a partner and leader in the field.”

*Jayne Engle, Lead, Cities for People, The McConnell Foundation*

## 15 YEAR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

In the last 15 years Tamarack received over **\$10M** from our amazing Donors and Grantors and nearly **\$9M** from our learners and community partners and achieved these amazing outcomes:

### Vibrant Communities:

We pioneered the idea of Learning Communities for large scale community change and implemented this approach in Cities Reducing Poverty and Cities Deepening Community

Today, **175** municipalities (from over **61** Regional Partners) have or are working on Cities Reducing Poverty strategies. When we started, there were none.

Because of these strategies, at least **250,000** families are less poor

**8** Cities deepened community for at least **10,000** people

**35** cities are learning and working together to strengthen neighbourhoods

### The Learning Centre:

We pioneered work in the areas of Collective Impact, Community Engagement, Evaluating Impact, Collaborative Leadership and Community Innovation

Our members attended more than **55,000** learning days of training with us

We hosted more than **200** webinars for an estimated **25,000** people

At least **250,000** resources were downloaded by learners from our websites

**7** books were produced and nearly **40,000** were sold



As of January 2018

## Tamarack Current Staff

### TAMARACK VIBRANT COMMUNITIES:

**Paul Born**

*Co-CEO, Vibrant Communities*

**Kirsti Battista**

*Senior Manager*

**Alison Homer**

*Manager of Cities, Western Canada,  
Cities Reducing Poverty*

**Heather Kearn**

*Manager of Cities, Cities Deepening  
Community*

**Natasha Pei**

*Community Animator and Manager of Cities  
Eastern Canada, Cities Reducing Poverty*

**Leena Sharma**

*Manager of Cities, Eastern Canada,  
Cities Reducing Poverty*

**Justin Williams**

*Managing Assistant*

**Jessica Fisher**

*Manager, Learning*

**Vacant**

*Manager of Policy, Publications and Evaluations*

### TAMARACK LEARNING CENTRE:

**Liz Weaver**

*Co-CEO, Tamarack Learning Centre*

**Lisa Attygalle**

*Consulting Director, Community  
Engagement*

**Sylvia Cheuy**

*Consulting Director, Collective Impact*

**Vacant**

*Consulting Director, Community Innovation*

**Vacant**

*Consulting Director, Collaborative  
Leadership*

**Jane Humphries**

*Director, Operations*

**Stephanie Murray**

*Manager, Learning Events*

**Duncan Fields**

*Community Animator, Tamarack Learning  
Centre*

**Pooja Lal Mohan**

*Community Animator, Collective Impact*

### FINANCE, OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

**Jana Harris**

*Manager, Administration & Finance*

**Megan Wanless**

*Senior Community Animator,  
Marketing & Communications*

**Vacant**

*Community Animator, Admin &  
Finance*



## Find Us:

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Conrad Grebel University College  
University of Waterloo  
140 Westmount Road North  
Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G6*

## Charitable Registration Number:

*862808615RR0001*

## Our Vision:

*Building a connected force for community change*

## Our Mission:

*Collaboratively create vibrant communities by engaging learning leaders. When we are effective in strengthening community capacity to engage citizens, lead collaboratively, deepen community and reduce poverty, our work will contribute to the building of a more equitable, prosperous, and peaceful society.*

