



BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES

A FIVE-YEAR COLLECTIVE IMPACT STRATEGY

A five-year strategy to work within up to 13 communities across Canada to develop system-wide solutions for youth as they build and act upon plans for their future.

BACKGROUND

The Government of Canada has an ambitious plan to transform the lives of young people. Working in partnership with the Learning Branch, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the Tamarack Institute will implement a five-year impact strategy to help increase high school graduation rates for youth facing barriers.

A primary goal for engaging youth facing barriers is to develop strategies that enable young people to be engaged in their communities and successfully navigate transitions from youth to adulthood. These transitions might include the completion of a secondary school curriculum leading to a post-secondary education or apprenticeship experience or employment. As a way of responding to the need for effective strategies, Tamarack's Building Youth Futures Collective Impact strategy aims to:

- Leverage the core tenants of the Collective Impact framework to build both community driven and national strategies for addressing the unique challenges of supporting youth at risk of disengaging from their education;
- Support the integration of services to reach more youth, and strengthen local community capacity and action which connects youth to locally-based resources and supports;
- Engage and leverage collective resources of a national collaborative – a network of key strategic partners brought together to address issues of disconnected youth in communities.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Building Youth Futures is comprised of several key project components, including ongoing reflection, learning and evaluation.

What is Collective Impact?

Collective Impact is a collaborative framework that supports community change efforts at the local, provincial and national scales. The framework consists of the following pre-conditions:

- Engaging influential champions in the change work;
- Understanding the urgency behind the issue by examining data and community mapping; and
- Securing adequate human and financial resources to support the collective work.

Collective Impact contains five core conditions including:

1. The development of a **common agenda**;
2. Using **shared measurement** to understand progress;
3. Building on **mutually reinforcing activities**;
4. Engaging in continuous communications; and,
5. Providing **backbone support** to move the work forward.

1. **Community Youth Initiatives** – In total, up to 13 communities will participate in this project. Communities will be onboarded in two important phases during the project: Phase 1 includes six communities who have the capacity and readiness to scale their initiatives quickly; Phase 2 includes an additional seven communities who will need more coaching, and be supported during the development phase, and then scale their initiative(s) during the last 3 years of the project.

The participating communities will each employ a Collective Impact approach to:

- Build a common agenda and strategies to guide their community-based effort
- Engage in shared measurement and mutually reinforcing activities
- Develop a backbone staff team, that includes youth
- Increase access to services
- Engage in continuous and strategic communications to build engagement and sustainability
- Ensure that Youth have a seat at the Table and be involved in both the design of the community-based action

This project includes funding for communities to establish a backbone staff team, receive ongoing coaching, develop impact reporting, network convening and backbone support. As well, communities will benefit from a range of coaching and learning supports and will be convened as a Building Youth Futures community of practice.

2. **National Collaborative (Network)** – Will work in parallel with community level actions. The National Collaborative will be comprised of national organizations, businesses, youth, and leaders already engaged in working on issues affecting youth facing barriers across the country. It will provide strategic guidance, identify opportunities to influence and leverage systems changes, promote identification and sharing of best practices and engage in identifying project sustainability.
3. **Annual Partner Convening** – Collective Impact efforts benefit significantly from an investment in evaluation and learning. The annual partner convening will be an opportunity for communities and the National Collaborative to come together, share emerging practices and learn from each other. The Annual Partner Convening will be held in different locations across Canada and will provide an opportunity to showcase progress and to profile emerging practices.
4. **Innovation fund** – Communities will have access to a community innovation fund. Criteria for the fund will be established and communities will be invited annually to apply for the fund. The fund will be used to test and evaluate new tools, supports, and approaches identified by the community.
5. **Evaluation and Learning** – As foundational components to any successful Collective Impact project, an evaluation will be implemented throughout the duration of the project. It will employ a developmental evaluation approach which will greatly inform and strengthen the on-going learning and continuous improvement. In addition, Tamarack will support the project through the development of learning and technical assistance supports.

ABOUT TAMARACK

The Tamarack Institute is a Canadian charity with a bold vision: to build a connected force for change; to end poverty; and, to build a sense of community in Canada and beyond. We exist to empower community changemakers to achieve greater impact. Since 2002, Tamarack has worked with communities across Canada to build and scale local Collective Impact efforts. Tamarack brings combined expertise in supporting local community change efforts with the best practice and knowledge that the field has to ensure that local communities move successfully from idea to impact. Learn more about Tamarack at www.tamarackcommunity.ca.