TAMARACK INSTITUTE

COMMUNITIES ENDING POVERTY IMPACT REPORT

A Deep Dive Into 2022

Contents

2022 Impact Report

Communities Ending Poverty (CEP) is a collective impact movement and network to end poverty across Canada and the USA. Our members' multi-sector roundtables engage in this learning community to build capacity, connect, learn from each other, and drive their work forward. The guiding principles we all share are:

- Addressing the root causes of poverty and ending poverty, rather than alleviation

- Using an action-learning approach

- Comprehensive thinking and action in response to a complex challenge like poverty

- Multi-sector solutions – everyone is part of the problem and can be part of the change

- Asset-based approach – starting with strengths rather than challenges

Our Roadmap to End Poverty - Communities Ending Poverty's vision is the end of poverty in Canada. We believe that the next steps are to reduce poverty to 5% and then to sustain that progress. To do this, CEP supports communities across seven areas of capacity-building, mainly focused on ending deep poverty, Indigenous poverty, and working poverty. This includes helping members to:

- Operationalize Collective Impact

- Collaborate with all four sectors: business, government, social services, and community-including those with lived and living experiences

- Develop sustainable funds and collaborative leadership

100 Communities

Ending
Deep Poverty
Indigenous Poverty
Working Poverty

Community Engagement

Collective Impact

Sustainable Leadership

Policy and Systems Change

Evaluating Impact

Sustainable Funding

Building Capacity

- Share impact and build an evidence-based practice
- Put equity at the centre of anti-poverty work
- Generate hope, optimism, and momentum for the end of poverty
- Advocate for high-impact policies that advance equity

The network is strengthened by the number of communities who come together to align strategies at the local, provincial, territorial and federal levels, amplifying the potential impact that each individual community can have on ending poverty. The learning community comes together through:

- Peer Learning
- Events
- Online Learning
- Publications
- Policy and Systems Change Advocacy
- Expert Coaching

CEP Members

31 Mixed Communities
28 Rural Communities
30 Urban Communities
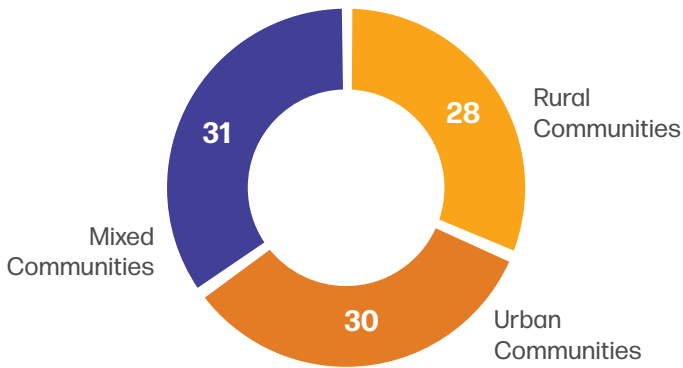
Poverty is multi-dimensional, and large-scale change can take years. We believe ending poverty can happen by mobilizing the unique, existing assets and influencers in communities and aligning policies, practices and resources differently to achieve impact. Communities Ending Poverty's role is to catalyze this change.

Collaborative Leaders

42 Local Government Led
46 Non-Profit Led
1 Academic

9

New Members

67
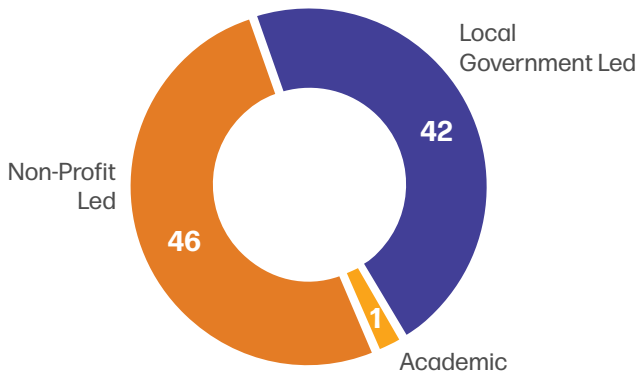
Members with a community plan

8

Members who moved from start-up towards sustainability in 2022

Scope

This Impact Report was constructed through a series of annual interviews with members, by collecting significant change stories through email, and a review of annual reports, funder reports and project reports shared by CEP members. This report is a snapshot of the success CEP members have had and trends that show how, as a sum of many parts, there is a groundswell inciting change amongst provinces, territories and the federal government. While there are stories abound, this impact report has yet to have the scope to capture every successful innovation, policy change or growth in capacity throughout Canada and the U.S.A. This report seeks to share a handful of stories that exemplify the breadth of work amongst CEP members, exemplify the values that hold us together, and that can inspire more community action at any phase.

Key findings while developing this report include

- Many people and organizations live in the COVID-19 long emergency, and not all are ready to innovate and co-create new activities. Poverty reduction collaboratives are re-evaluating what they have energy for and looking for new ways to prime the community for action once collective healing has been done.

- Due to the same capacity issue, tracking and reporting outcomes have become more difficult and less prioritized. Funders need to invest in the sector to increase the skills and resources of non-profit staff, volunteers and board members to evaluate and provide feasible timeframes for evaluating when providing grants.

- The network is diversifying the types of leaders in poverty reduction across Canada. To include local governments and people with lived/living experience and increasing use of collective impact to address the root causes of poverty.

- Income-based movements have seen a surge in popularity. Basic Income and Living Wage have seen more interest from government, advocates and the public as solutions to affordability challenges, poverty and/or a changing labour market.

- Direct cash payments, such as the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), for a short time, decreased food bank use, reduced housing affordability challenges, reduced low-income and deep-income poverty, and supported the financial resilience of Canadians. However, with the end of the pandemic, benefits and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and inflation, mental and physical health, food security, and housing security are all on the decline.
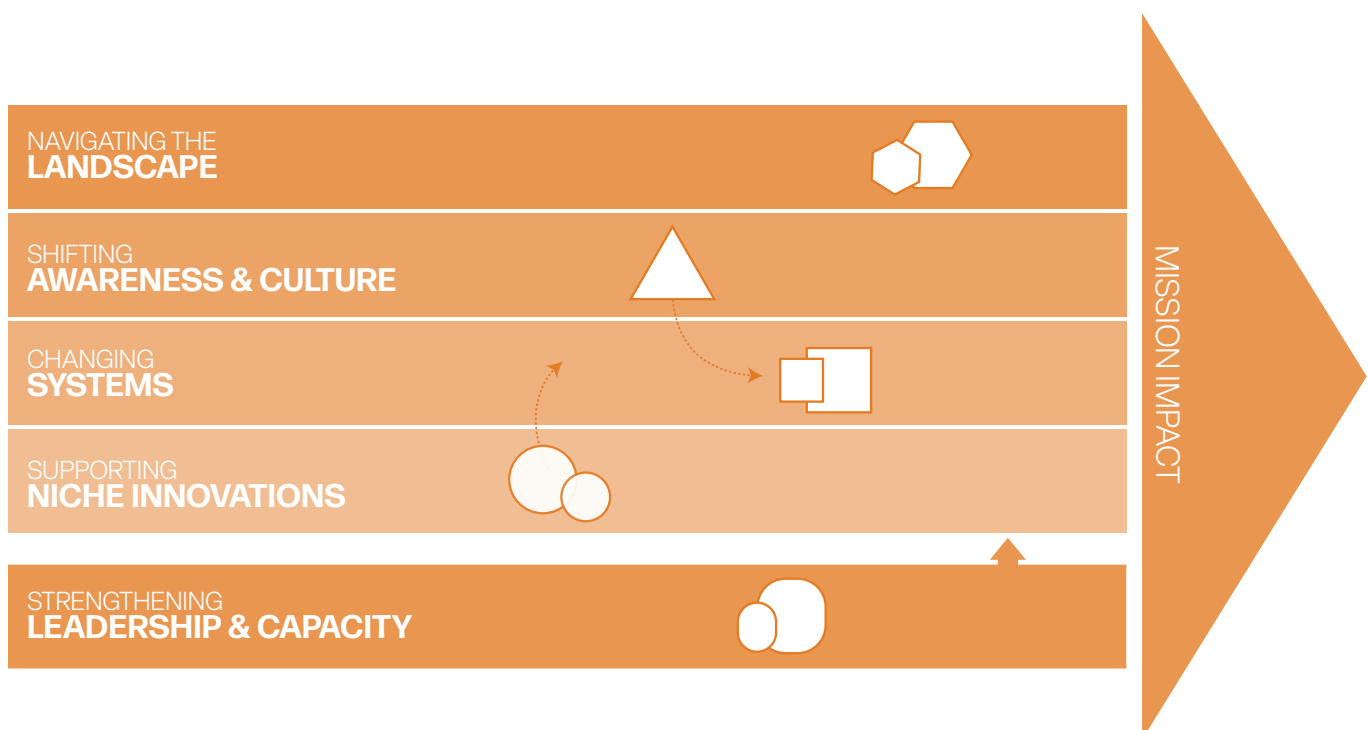

Like Oceans, We Rise by Mika S

Getting to Impact

There are five levels of work (depicted below) that poverty reduction collaboratives must undertake to achieve a population-level impact – **the "what."** Interventions at each level must work in concert with each other to achieve a profound and durable impact. Collaboratives may not be responsible for undertaking all the work but contribute to one or more elements. The five levels of work are:

- Shifting awareness and building the will of decision-makers and the public to act on poverty in a certain way.
- Supporting niche interventions (programs, policies or services) benefiting low-income individuals and families.

- Policy and systems change – which scales the breadth of a change and "changes the game" rather than helping people beat the odds.
- Building more local leadership and capacity to undertake the above work.
- Navigating the local landscape – or "context" – political, social, economic, cultural, etc

There are also three primary ways that CEP members approach systems change – **the "how."** Collaboratives start in one category and end up affecting systems change. For instance, we don't want to stop at creating a new program but scale it to the point it's no longer "niche" but becomes the "norm" of practice.

NAVIGATING THE
LANDSCAPE

SHIFTING
AWARENESS & CULTURE

CHANGING
SYSTEMS

SUPPORTING
NICHE INNOVATIONS

STRENGTHENING
LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY

MISSION IMPACT

The three archetypical approaches we have mapped are:

Starting with niche interventions scaling to the point they break through from being "niche" to becoming the norm.

Building awareness and will to act on poverty creates fertile ground for systems changes and niche interventions.

Pushing through a policy or systems change builds awareness and willingness to change and creates the conditions (e.g., funding, relationships, etc.) to initiate niche interventions.

Mapping outcomes at each level of the framework helps us know whether we're on the right track to ending poverty. Outcomes taken from What We Heard report include:

Behaviour change in the way communities tackle poverty

29 communities (33% of members) now use a collective impact approach to address poverty locally; this includes a rise in communities:

- Addressing root causes of poverty and seeking to make a population-level change (reduction or elimination) rather than alleviation

- Identifying and implementing mutually reinforcing activities that are comprehensive (i.e., tackle more than one issue simultaneously) and without duplication. In other words, tackle more than one issue simultaneously

- Continuously communicating with partners about what all partners of the initiative are doing, helping to reduce siloed work

- Developing a shared measurement system to monitor and communicate – and sometimes course correct – their collective's efforts

- Hiring or re-allocating dedicated staff to help advance the agenda of community leaders

Increase in municipalities taking on leadership roles in poverty reduction

In 2022, 47 CEP members (53%) were backboned or led by a local government. This is a 9% increase since 2016, when Communities Ending Poverty hosted the Edmonton Summit, "When Mayors Lead," which featured members highlighting many ways in which mayors and municipalities were leading poverty reduction in their communities. This increase suggests that more and more municipalities have at least some knowledge of their levers and best practices, as well as and some support to commit resources to poverty reduction goals.

Increase in people with lived/living experience engaged in poverty reduction

The number of communities reporting convening people with lived/living experience at the table or as advisory committee members with influence in decision-making have risen to 26 CEP members (30%). This behaviour and systems change in partnering with people with lived/living experience is scaling up (in policies), out (through replication), and deep (in our values and beliefs). It indicates that resources are being allocated to help people with lived/living experience establish leadership roles in poverty reduction and that allies are helping to lift their voices. This power dynamic has long since been dominated by helping professionals.

Determination by Krystal Chan

Scaling Up

Changing institutions at the level of policy, rules, and laws

Scaling Out

Replication and dissemination, incresing the number of communities impacted

Scaling Deep

Changing relationships, cultural values, and beliefs

Ontario, and BC. In these three provinces that have formed provincial Living Wage bodies and are certifying/engaging employers, the provincial governments have increased the minimum wage to at least $15/hr.

💲 Growing movement in support of Basic Income

Since CERB was announced, Communities Ending Poverty has seen a rise in interest in Basic Income. In 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic), an average of 163 people registered for 5 Basic Income webinars. From 2020-2021 there was an average of nearly 300 registrants over seven webinars, with 600 registrants in March 2021. CEP members are also increasingly adopting a Basic Income resolution, with at least 22/87 members (25%) now reporting that Basic Income advocacy is a part of their poverty reduction strategy. These figures indicate an increase in the number of people becoming aware of and educating themselves on the merits of Basic Income and an increase in the capacity of Basic Income advocates to do more education and grow support for Basic Income locally and regionally.

✉️ Three provinces have increased their minimum wages to at least $15/hr and there is a growing Living Wage network across Canada.

From 2016 to 2022, more communities and advocates joined the Living Wage movement, with an increase from 53 Living Wages calculated across eight provinces and territories to 75 Living Wages calculated in ten provinces and territories. While Living Wage for Families BC was established in 2009, this increase in capacity in the last six years included the formation of two new provincial Living Wage networks (Ontario and Alberta), which – like BC - created standardized calculators to help communities in each province calculate their local wage. These regional networks also shared messaging about Living Wage internally and inter-provincially. They developed the capacity to certify employers who pay a Living Wage and are committed to increasing the rate yearly. As of October 2022, 955 employers paid 77,611 employees at least a Living Wage in Alberta,

"As of October 2022, 955 employers paid 77,611 employees at least a Living Wage in Alberta, Ontario, and BC. In these three provinces that have formed provincial Living Wage bodies and are certifying/engaging employers, the provincial governments have increased the minimum wage to at least $15/hr."

Tamarack's Contributions to Strengthening Leadership and Capacity

During the 2022 Member Gathering, members rated CEP's (including both Tamarack and members') contributions to some of the big changes in poverty we're seeing nationwide. Just over one third of our members (35) participated in this exercise. We asked them to rank CEP's contribution from 1-10, with the lowest indicating that change would have happened without CEP intervention and ten indicating that CEP was the primary reason for this change. Members' average contribution ranking across all categories was 7/10.

The area where members ranked CEP as making the largest contribution (average rating of 7/10) was to the growth of the living wage network. Members also considered CEP to have made important contributions (6/10) to the increase in local government leadership in poverty reduction, increases in the use of collective impact to address poverty, increases in collaboratives convening people with lived/living experience, and to the basic income movement. Members ranked Tamarack's contribution to actual reductions in poverty at 5/10, flagging that the large reductions

in MBM observed in 2021 related more to COVID-19 and associated government benefits.

Regarding Tamarack's role in growing capacity of the national anti-poverty movement, members noted our organizational strengths in knowledge sharing and ability to create community connections. Other indicators that demonstrate the growing capacity of the CEP network and national anti-poverty movement include growth in the number of CEP members, the increased number of members with community plans, the increased number of members that are centring the voices lived/living experience, and the increased number of members with paid staff capacity to do the work.

The numbers, trends, and narratives above help CEP to prioritize our direction forward, including deciding which aspects of the work Tamarack leads versus supports, as we advance our evolving role as a systems catalyst.

Members who ranked CEP as the largest contribution to the growth of the living wage network

Members who considered CEP to have made important contributions to reduce poverty

Members who believed Tamarack's contributions resulted in actual reductions in poverty

Testimonials

Darlene from Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty ranked CEP contribution a 10. "I'm [going to] give you a 10 because I really am not sure that we could have managed to bring this coalition together without Tamarack. Just the organizational capacity of Tamarack and of you, Natasha, - the time you've put in, and the ability you've had to pull together the organizations that were previously not in connection with each other so now we're aware of each other and able to work together in a way that we never did before, and also just managing webinars, sharing out information that comes from those, helping us organize the summit that's coming up, all of those things have been essential because many of us work for small non-profit organizations or faith-based organizations, and we don't have the capacity for that kind of organization at that level, so I do think that Tamarack's support through this process has been essential."

"I'm [going to] give you a 10 because I really am not sure that we could have managed to bring this coalition together without Tamarack"

- Darlene from Antigonish Coalition to end Poverty

Austin Lui from City of Vancouver Strategic Initiatives Team ranked CEP contribution a 7 or 8. "From the events, series, and conversations that I've been a part of, and the work that I've collaborated with Tamarack on, I would give it a 7 or 8/10. What was really helpful that Tamarack helped with, was actually to develop a case study for the low-income transit pilot that we conducted. Using that case study, we were able to share it with other groups, municipalities, and community organizations. It was something that was accessible and easy to share, so that was actually a really big factor in getting other invites to conversations with different folks. Secondly, Tamarack puts on a lot of really great series, dialogues, conversations, and CoPs that I've really enjoyed going to and hearing about other groups doing similar works. You do a really good job of tailoring and curating this content in a way that's actually useful for hearing some of these other stories and practices happening across the country."

Community Capacity Building

Strengthening local capacity and leadership to undertake poverty reduction efforts is critical. The community must feel it has the capability and resources to effect change. Capacity building is both a pre-condition for change-making and often an outcome that gets communities closer to reducing poverty.

From 2020 to the present, the Government of B.C. has played a key role in poverty reduction by providing financial resources for communities to build local capacity to reduce poverty and introducing policies (see below) that directly benefit low-income individuals and families.

B.C. committed $5 million in funding for municipalities to develop and implement local poverty reduction strategies to support local capacity through the Union of BC Municipalities Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. To date, 18 CEP member communities have developed or updated poverty reduction strategies, with an additional three members creating or updating social plans that integrate

poverty as a central theme. All communities have used a collaborative approach, including engaging people with lived/living experiences.
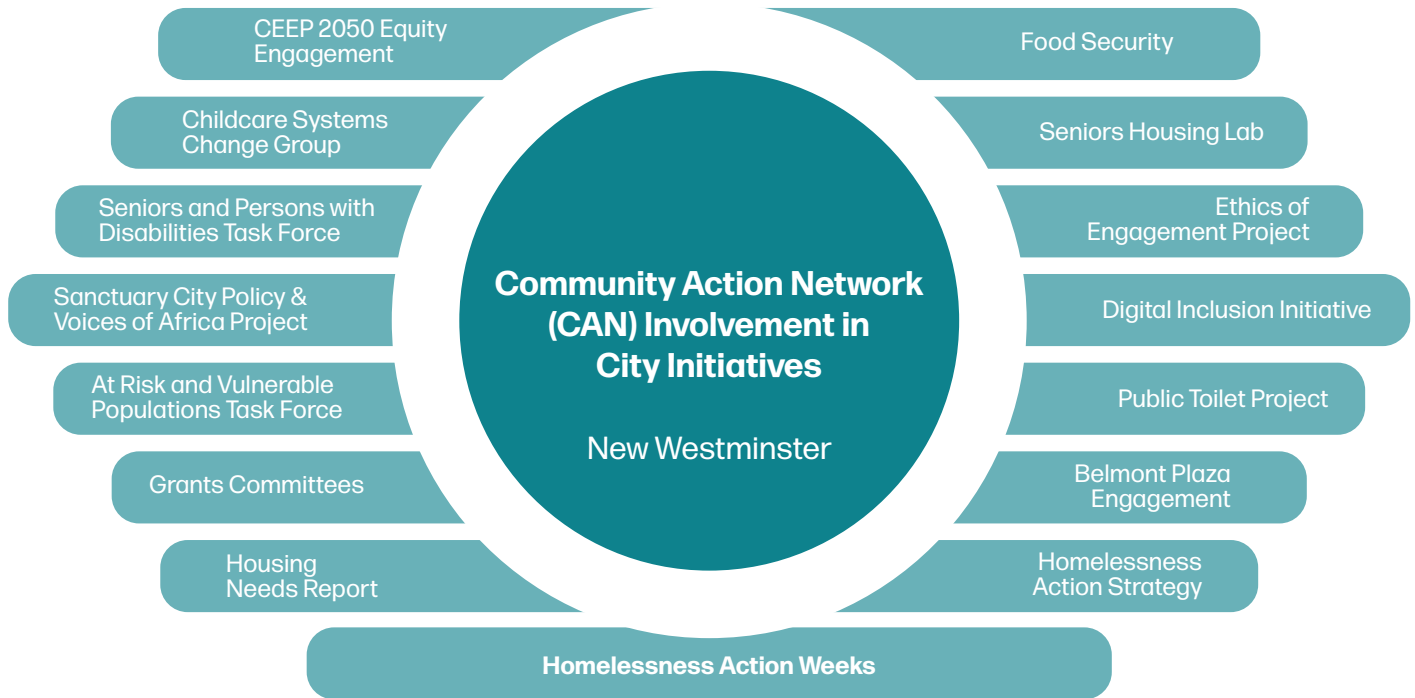

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Prince Edward County and Niagara Region in Ontario each reached a milestone by convincing their regional municipalities to lead the development of a community-wide poverty reduction strategy.

The City of New Westminster is making progress in democratizing decision-making, centring the voices of community members with lived/living experiences in the development and implementation of city policies and plans.

Through a partnership with the B.C. Poverty Reduction Coalition and City, facilitators have

"To date, 18 CEP member communities have developed or updated poverty reduction strategies, with an additional three members creating or updating social plans that integrate poverty as a central theme"

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Diagram 1

Community Action Network (CAN) Involvement in City Initiatives

New Westminster

- CEEP 2050 Equity Engagement
- Childcare Systems Change Group
- Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Task Force
- Sanctuary City Policy & Voices of Africa Project
- At Risk and Vulnerable Populations Task Force
- Grants Committees
- Housing Needs Report
- Food Security
- Seniors Housing Lab
- Ethics of Engagement Project
- Digital Inclusion Initiative
- Public Toilet Project
- Belmont Plaza Engagement
- Homelessness Action Strategy
- Homelessness Action Weeks

provided leadership training to 16 people with lived/living experience so that they have the skills to share their experiences and advocate for significant changes in the community.

CAN graduates, now called CAN Leaders, have participated in the development of numerous plans, policies and strategies, including partnering on the development of the Homelessness Action Strategy and the preparation and delivery of the Sanctuary City Implementation Plan; leading segments of the Digital Inclusion Initiative; informing equity considerations related to the draft Community Energy and Emissions Plan; and participating in the Ethics of Engagement Project. They were also involved in the COVID-19 At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations and Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities Task Forces, and the City's Grant Committee. The program provides CAN Leaders with an avenue for direct action, connecting people with opportunities to influence policy. As a result, planning staff are better equipped to respond to equity-denied

issues, as conversations become more honest and transformative, educating staff and decision makers along the way.

Spending time with people with lived experience has enabled the City to mobilize resources better, leverage and apply for funding, and ensure a more timely, effective response to community-based issues. Further, elected leaders can better fulfill their mandate, and the relationship between the City and the community has strengthened. Diagram 1 showcases the many initiatives where CAN Leaders have been integrally involved to date, with many more to come.

Bruce Grey's Poverty Task Force is building Indigenous-Non-Indigenous relations by supporting the facilitation of an Indigenous-led Sharing Circle called Giiwe. M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre's Indigenous Housing Support Program developed the Giiwe Model, and initial partners around the Circle were focused on
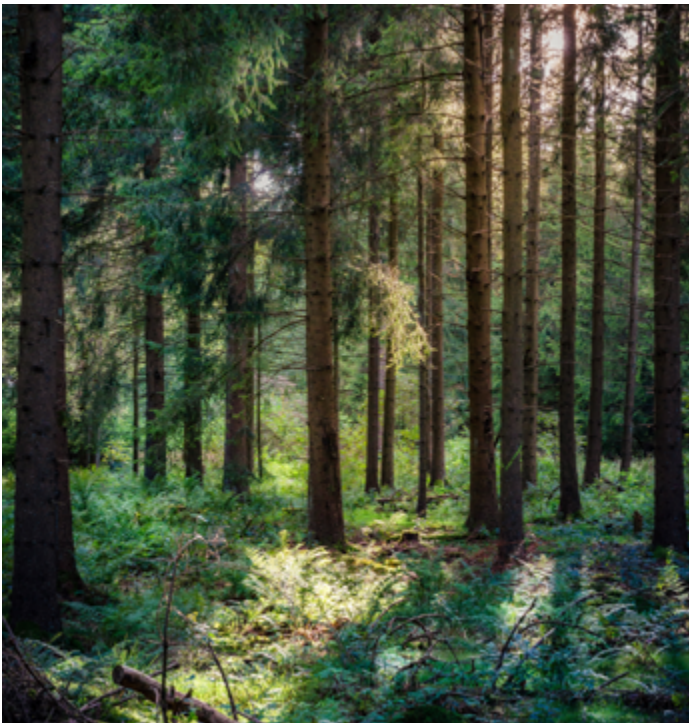
Indigenous housing and homelessness issues. By request of partner organizations, M'Wikwedong has organized meetings using the Giiwe model for sectors like Family Services, Community Safety, Social Service Funding, and Community Services.

Giiwe Sharing Circles involves about 20 social service, health, environmental, and government organizations, including Saugeen Ojibway Nation organizations. Depending on the sector focus, sharing circles range from 20-60 participants. Giiwe emphasizes that inter-organizational work will be more effective when there is trust. Giiwe builds trust by following Indigenous protocols, sharing Indigenous Knowledge, and creating time and space for people to know and understand each other. Sustaining adequate relationships among each other is a precondition for collaborative action.

The Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force remains a crucial partner and continues to facilitate participation and provide support to the Giiwe Coordinator. Our Housing Action Group members of the Poverty Task Force remain core members at Giiwe Sharing Circles. See the Giiwe Executive Evaluation Summary here.

Durham Region is changing the funding and community landscape for non-profits to do their work well. During COVID-19, the Region's Social Service Department brought together three lower-tier municipalities, the local United Way and Durham Community Foundation, for efficient rapid updates and data-driven assessments of what was happening in the community and where funding need was. With this success, the "Funders Table" continues beyond the acute COVID emergency. It has shifted to focus on problem-solving, sharing best funding practices, identifying service gaps, and transparently sharing where all its funding is allocated.

The table meets quarterly intentionally and purposefully to inform on issues in Durham, ensuring funding has a better balance. They are also strengthening the non-profit and charitable sectors beyond funding through a campaign to educate the community on the importance of volunteerism – to combat the burnout many non-profits are experiencing. The Region of Durham's Corporate Communication and Engagement team is involved and helps maintain consistent language and they continue to expand, recently welcoming the Region's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Income & Employment

A National Look

From 2019-2020, Canada's poverty indicators continued a 5-year downward trend, surpassing the Federal Government's overall goal of reducing poverty by 50% by 2030. The Market Basket Measure declined by approximately 38% to 6.4% overall. Racialized groups, Indigenous and gender and sexually diverse individuals had higher poverty than cis-gendered heterosexual white people. However, poverty also declined for all these groups in the same timeframe. Significantly, there was a 60% decrease in deep-income poverty and a 35% decrease in relative low-income, signalling that in 2020, we reduced deep and shallow poverty for many people.

However, Communities Ending Poverty members and other partners are hesitant to celebrate, as the data was collected in May 2020, and much of this

"There was a 60% decrease in deep-income poverty and a 35% decrease in relative low-income, signalling that in 2020, we reduced deep and shallow poverty for many people."

success was due to people receiving pandemic benefits - all of which have been discontinued. Canada met its antipoverty targets in one third the time allotted and then 'unmade' them a year later. By 2021, the poverty rate grew to 7.4% and the overall reduction in poverty had deteriorated to 49.0%, just short of the millennial goal in legislation. The Government of Canada had started to 'un-win' their 2030 objective. In 2022, members reported seeing dramatic increases in demand for services related to living on low-income (e.g., food banks, shelters, mental health supports). Statistics Canada data also shows that the average wage decreased by 36 cents from 2020 to 2021, and 16 of 21 social assistance programs in Canada saw a decline in cases due CERB making their earnings too high and thus becoming ineligible; this means that income from employment and government benefits are down.

Meanwhile, unemployment (seasonally adjusted) in November 2022 is even lower than before COVID-19, at 4.6%. This may be due to the many workers who retired during the pandemic and are no longer classified as looking for work. The labour force participation rate hasn't fully recovered since COVID-19; both a declining inactivity rate (15-64 years) and a decline in the rate of people working or looking for work (15 years +) could indicate a significant portion of workers 65+ years retired during COVID-19.

Provincially

BC is taking the lead. The province increased the minimum wage from $10.45 in 2015 to $15.65 in 2022. As of June 1, 2023, BC's minimum wage will increase 6.9% to $16.75, reflecting average inflation rates, making it the second highest in Canada, and benefiting more than 150,000 workers. For people working 35 hours a week, 50 weeks per year, between 2015 – 2023, minimum wage increases equate to $11,000 more annually. For the first time in 20 years the BC poverty rate is lower than national average. Putting the above in policy acknowledges the impact that inflation has on families.

Accessing Skilled Development
by Joshua Odujole

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Communities Ending Poverty members are particularly active in actions that increase income and decent work for employees. They are primarily reporting outcomes within policy change. They are raising awareness about good employment policies, such as liveable wages, full-time full-year work, and decolonization, which supports equity-deserving workers to have good experiences.

They also target income and affordability for all – whether you have a job or not – by raising awareness for and creating more community capacity to advocate for Basic Income and passing more local-scale policies, such as lowering eligibility thresholds to access municipal subsidies.

Increasing Wages: Communities are growing the Living Wage movement from the bottom-up.

- Under the banner of the **Ontario Living Wage Network**, Living Wage Canada created one calculation methodology for the Living Wage. This allowed them to expand the number of communities with Living Wage rates. In 2022, for the first time, they expanded the campaign so that every community in Ontario has a Living Wage rate; every employer in Ontario has the opportunity to be certified as a Living Wage employer.

- **Living Wage for Families BC** was launched in 2009, and there are now 370 Living Wage Employers across BC.

- The **Town of Canmore** recognized the need to raise the awareness about affordability challenges in their tourist town and felt "living wage" was the right strategy to invest in. With the injection of $10,000 and many passionate staff hours, Canmore was instrumental in creating a living wage calculator and working with other Alberta communities to establish the Alberta Living Wage Network. In 2022, the Alberta Living wage Network launched the calculator and certified employers for the first time. The ability for Alberta communities to easily access local cost of living data has led to increased awareness of affordability challenges and system changes – such as increasing the income thresholds for the Affordable Services Program in Canmore.

- The **Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI)** has successfully surpassed its campaign goal of bringing 10,000 low-income workers to a $15/hour wage, achieving a remarkable total of 12,500 workers in less than a year. This resulted in a substantial increase of $5,200 per year for full-time employees who were initially making minimum wage ($12.50/hour).

  Initially, RMAPI engaged 37 employers in Rochester who pledged to pay at least a $15/hour wage to all their employees. These employers acknowledged RMAPI's contribution by ranking it 5.7 out of 10, indicating the influence it had on their decision. As of the end of 2022, the number of RMAPI members had grown to over 100. While not all of them were transitioning to the $15/hour wage for the first time, some had been offering it for years but chose to join RMAPI to publicly commit to this wage standard.

🛠️ Creating decent working conditions

Five members joined Tamarack Institute's collaborative effort to reduce working poverty by 5% in their communities. Their strategy includes bringing businesses, financial institutes, non-profits and people with lived experience around local statistics and stories to uncover unique employment and financial inclusion solutions to ending working poverty. Results of this group so far have included:

- Stronger coalitions and collaborative action amongst partners: Cohort members created new connections with business (one chamber of commerce, one economic development corporation and two local businesses), one primary care network, and a growing number of people with lived/living experience who provided input toward the creation of inclusive personas and who are now engaged via leadership tables and advisory groups. They

> **"Five members joined Tamarack Institute's collaborative effort to reduce working poverty by 5% in their communities"**

also strengthened relationships with one bank and one financial institution.

- Increased advocacy capacity: Cohort members embedded 'shifting awareness and will' into their Theories of Change; this included planning for strategic communications and advocacy efforts

- Increased knowledge: Cohort members explored local and population level data, and engaged with people with lived/living experience (e.g. Trail created a lived experience advisory group; Drumheller interviewed six people earning below a living wage; Saskatoon engages people with lived/living experience across all decision making processes and provides equitable compensation; Winnipeg engages via Empower Manitoba and the Manitoba Financial Empowerment Network; and Chatham Kent has engaged more than 1000 residents over the last three years) to create inclusive personas that supported them to more deeply understand working poverty in their communities. All five cohort communities engaged in data deep dives, with support from EWP thought leaders John Stapleton and Yvonne Yuan at Open Policy Ontario, that applied learning from the data to the development of their theories of change and proposed innovation fund initiatives.

- New political champions and increased political will or support: Cohort members recruited and re-engaged one new First Nations government and one new elected representative, deepened existing connections with mayors, councillors, and municipal staff as part of their leadership roundtables, and thought through which Provincial and Federal programs and policies they plan to advocate for.

"Basic Income is taking root in hearts and minds across Atlantic Canada and by its elected officials."

An example of the cohort's work includes United Way Winnipeg which runs Indigenous Youth Employment Social Innovation labs to change workplace culture and wrap support around Indigenous youth to help them achieve financial independence. This includes creating culturally safe workplaces where the goal is to work towards Indigenous young people having equitable access to jobs, training, and advancement opportunities, providing mental, physical, spiritual and emotional transitional support and finally bridge financing, which looks to bridge the financial gap that exists between pre-employment and employment. These focus areas were carried out in two ways, through the Employer Consortium and a Social Innovation Lab. The Employer Consortium is a group of more than 30 companies from diverse sectors who engage in education around reconciliation and work together to translate these learnings into action within their own companies. The Social Innovation Lab focused on bringing people from diverse backgrounds together to deeply understand a challenge from multiple perspectives, identify patterns and structures that keep the challenge entrenched, and then co-create high-potential solutions to be shared with others. They are also prototyping wraparound supports post-hire; these include:

- **Digital platform prototype** facilitates connections between Indigenous job seekers, businesses, and community-based organizations.
- **Scouts prototype** identifies allies within a company with cultural awareness and an interest in mentoring indigenous youth.

- **HR policy prototype** – Companies involved in the Employer Consortium are looking at their existing policies, benefits, and processes through an EDI and Reconciliation lens and are actively considering how to make changes to create more culturally safe workplaces
- **The Access Pathways prototype** addresses employment barriers, for example, cost to start a job- people- often require new clothing, transportation, and equipment.
- **'Still Here'** is post-hire support. A trusted person will walk alongside the young person as he/she/they transition into employment and beyond for the next six to 12 months.

Income support for all

Basic Income is taking root in hearts and minds across Atlantic Canada and by its elected officials. Initially convened by the Sisters of Martha – Martha Justice Ministry, Antigonish, they worked with Tamarack to bring together Communities Ending Poverty members from all provinces to explore the appetite for Basic Income in Atlantic Canada. In 2022, they established a unified voice amongst advocates for the Basic Income they all want. They convened with their municipal and federal elected officials to bring awareness to the Basic Income they should be advocating for and to discuss cross-jurisdictional collaboration and challenges in making Basic Income a reality. At the same time, Newfoundland & Labrador, on the heels of PEI, established an All-Party Committee on Basic Income after the 2022 Health Accord named Basic Income, a potential means for reducing poverty and increasing well-being. Five municipalities have passed Basic Income resolutions, including Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John and St. John's. The New Brunswick Basic Income Society was also established by Greater Social Innovation Fredericton, who took note at the meetings of how far behind advocates were in their province in the other three.

Housing

Core housing needs decreased across Canada in 2021. However, this trend was driven by declines in unaffordable housing rather than crowding or housing in disrepair, indicating that it was possibly a pandemic benefit artificially inflating renters' and homeowners' income and ability to spend less than 30% of their (before-tax) income on shelter costs. Housing Challenges.

Statistics Canada's analysis of homelessness in Ontario reveals a concerning trend. Over six years, visits by homeless individuals to Emergency Departments increased, while the average age of homelessness decreased significantly from 50-54 years to 20-24 years. Furthermore, homeless individuals have been observed migrating from Toronto to mid-sized cities like Hamilton and Windsor. These findings emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address core housing needs and support vulnerable populations across the province.

Shannon's Story: "Reno-viction"

Point-in-Time counts similarly say that from 2016 to 2020, there was a 14% increase in homelessness across 61 communities. Homelessness is also becoming more visible. Canada's 25 large cities experienced at least one homelessness encampment during the pandemic. Encampments Across Canada.

The unaffordable housing crisis is impacting the most vulnerable the hardest – single seniors, black-led households, and young people are finding it hardest to find housing. Housing Challenges.

Quebec stands out as having the lowest housing affordability challenges among provinces and territories, despite a lower median income. This is due to an effective policy: ensuring rent controls for landlords.

Extra reading – To buy or to rent: The housing market continues to be reshaped by several factors as Canadians search for an affordable place to call home.

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Through the Built for Zero model, members have primarily focused on making changes within the local housing system to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. This includes identifying every individual by a name, tracking their progress, and bringing all service providers together to create unique solutions for individual situations. They have raised awareness amongst housing and housing-adjacent service providers as to the root causes of homelessness, built solutions, and many are now reporting results that show declining homelessness, despite overall increases in unaffordable housing.

Guelph-Wellington County has sustained between a 10% and 30% decrease in chronic homelessness since 2019.

Ottawa has reduced rates by 15%

Sault St. Marie has reduced rates by 31%

Dufferin County is on track to reach functional-zero chronic homelessness very soon, having already reduced it by as much as 74% since 2019.

In 2022, **St. Thomas-Elgin** was able to house 182 individuals experiencing homelessness using best practices, including their Quality By Name List, Coordinated Access System and investments in providing affordable, supportive housing in the community through a partnership with service providers. Their success is primarily due to having highly collaborative community partners who share a vision of housing stability. The system-level response is also anchored in best practice which is guided and supported by Built For Zero Canada – a national movement to solve homelessness in Canadian communities. While there is still lots of work to solve homelessness in St. Thomas-Elgin, the community continues to forge ahead with their shared vision, hope and hard work to increase the support and services needed to solve homelessness locally.

The **HousingTO** 2020-2030 Action Plan sets a target of approving 40,000 new affordable rental homes, including 18,000 supportive homes by 2030. The City has approved financial incentives for up to approximately 20,000 affordable rental homes since 2020, of which 12,160 are currently being developed. There are now 19,756 approved affordable and supportive housing homes in the City's development pipeline. The affordable rental pipeline dataset is now available on The City of Toronto's Open Data Portal - an open-source delivery tool to bring people and data together.

Transportation

During COVID-19, public transportation ridership dropped by 9.1% across Canada. However, at the same time communities have been making in-roads to find solutions to transportation barriers. In the last 10 years, from 2010 to 2020, 117 innovative transit programs have been created in rural areas of Canada alone.

Examples of member successes in the past year include

CEP members have been part of the innovation push. Local governments and community-based organizations in rural and urban areas are developing high-quality, affordable transportation solutions for residents. Success ranges from raising awareness about the issue to Council and community to building a full-fledged viable transportation system. Stories include:

Oxford County's Reducing Poverty Together collaborative is raising awareness about challenges affording the bus in the City of Woodstock and is nudging the media and (lower tier) City Council towards an affordable bus pass. The London Free Press wrote its first article on the issue of transit affordability after Reducing Poverty Together Oxford County submitted a letter to Council about the issue. The newspaper interviewed the Social Planning Council and an individual living on a low income about their experience. The decision at Council two days later was to order a staff report exploring reduced bus fare passes for low-income individuals, including a scan of best practices across Canada. Council ended up passing a 50% reduction in fare and folded it in to their existing recreation fare program.

The City of Powell River leased a vehicle and created an on-demand transit service for

"During COVID-19, public transportation ridership dropped by 9.1% across Canada. However, at the same time communities have been making in-roads to find solutions to transportation barriers. In the last 10 years... 117 innovative transit programs have been created in rural areas of Canada alone"

residents. The Zunga Bus uses Spare Labs software to make the most efficient routes based on where riders start and stop. This service has helped reduce social isolation for seniors, people with disabilities, and youth. With a 99% positive rating by Zunga Bus riders, the City is using data to inform improvements to overall transit service .

The County of Simcoe's CT Link is a partnership of trusted community transportation providers, helping Simcoe County's vulnerable residents get the transportation they need. The CT Link transportation help seniors, people with disabilities and vulnerable residents living in Simcoe County obtain rides to non-urgent medical appointments, including dialysis, chemotherapy, and regular check-ups. To address a backlog of medical appointments in the greater GTA area, Simcoe County used a surplus of community transportation grant funding from the Ministry of Transportation to incentivize community-based transportation providers to take passengers on longer trips into the city for medical appointments. CT link provides door-to-door services for these residents. As a result, they have entirely cleared a list of users waiting for transportation to their appointments. From April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, the number of shared rides through the Portal was 2,412 - this is an increase from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022, in which the numbers were 294. It is important to note that these numbers are only for unfilled rides that

"Local governments and community-based organizations in rural and urban areas are developing high-quality, affordable transportation solutions for residents."

one Community Transportation agency couldn't fill and therefore posted through the Portal, and another Community Agency picked up that ride and delivered it. Each Community Transportation agency does 50 to 100 times more rides within their organization annually (outside the Portal).

The City of Vancouver's Reduced Fare Transit Pilot Study [tamarackcommunity.ca] showed benefits across the social determinants of health for all participants. Lessons learned and key themes emerged from survey data, interviews and advisory committee input. Participants reported noticeable improvements in areas of safety, education, employment, basic needs, health, sense of inclusion, finances and freedom of time and movement. Despite implementation challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the successful pilot took place over a 6-month timeline in 2021-22, engaging 100 participants. Project partners included TransLink, four community-based organizations and 10 peer researchers.
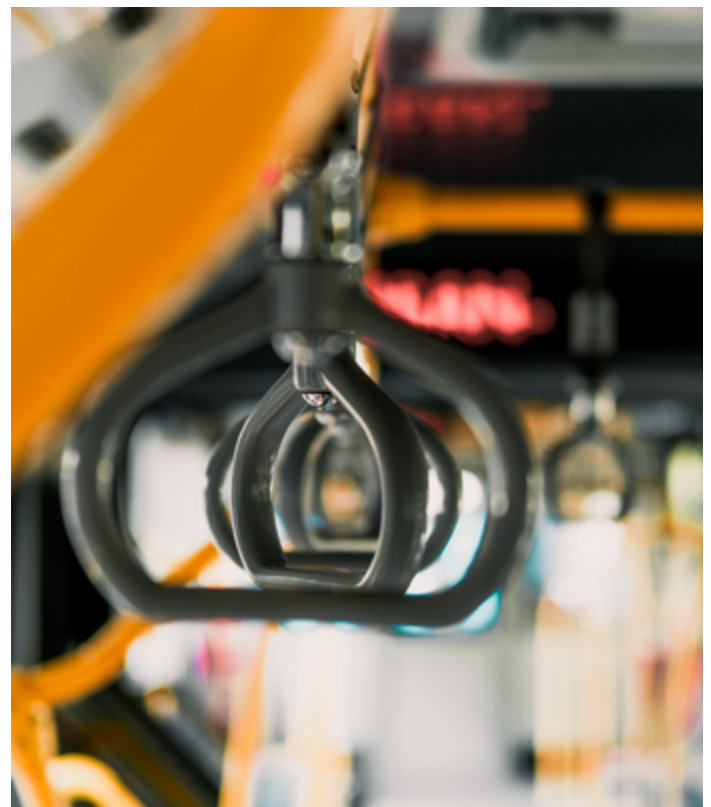
Food Insecurity

From 2018-2020, food insecurity declined slightly from 11.6% to 11.2%, though it was up in 2020 from a pre-pandemic low of 10.8% in 2019. Severe food insecurity (rather than moderate) was the main driver of the increase in 2020.

Food Insecurity in Canada
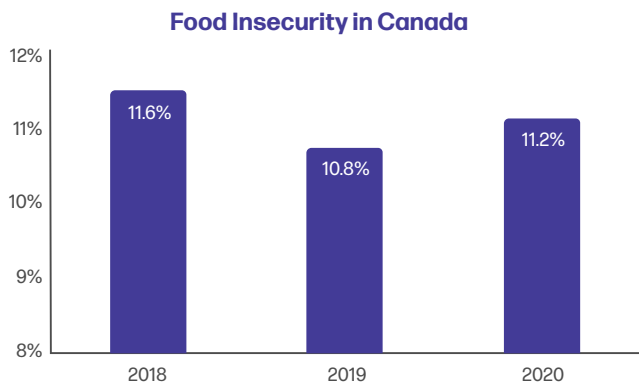
People who are most vulnerable (single individuals and lone-parent families) are gradually seeing less food insecurity than in previous years. However, compared to other family types, they are still 2-3 times more likely to experience food insecurity. All people in non-elderly families and single seniors, who have historically fared well, report more severe food insecurity. While the goal is more food security for all, data indicates that the gap in food insecurity began to close in 2020. Geographically, the prairies have the highest rates of food insecurity and are the only ones to see food insecurity (moderate and severe) rise from 2018-2020. BC's non-elderly, single individuals saw the most significant reduction in food insecurity, from 22% in 2018 to 14.9% in 2020.

Food Banks Canada reported 1.46 M users in 2021, a 35% increase since March 2019 and a 15% increase since March 2021. Their data also suggest single individuals are faring the worst as 45.4% of clients are single (and only account for 29% of the population). Food Banks Canada also noted an increase in seniors from 6.8% in 2019 to 8.9% in 2022 and young people (18-30 years).

Revealing trends about causes of food insecurity from Food Banks Canada include:

- This is the first-time food bank usage has been decoupled from employment. Despite unemployment being at an all-time low (5.3%), food bank usage has increased. The number of employed food bank users rose from 12.1% in 2021 to 14.1% in 2022
- People employed and using the food bank tend to be racialized or working temporary, casual or in variable employment arrangements
- Users report high food costs, housing costs and low social assistance rates as the main reasons for visiting the food bank—particularly seniors experiencing inflation on a fixed income
- Indigenous food insecurity rose from 8% of users in 2021 to 15.3% in 2022. Clients report that their challenges include reduced income support, inflation, climate change limiting access to traditional foods and inaccessible ice roads to deliver food to rural and remote areas
- Alberta has seen the most significant increase in users, with a 73% increase since 2019, with minor increases in New Brunswick and other Atlantic provinces

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Actions on food security in 2022 focused on programs that were used as a catalyst to create space for community connection, to build leadership and action, and to raise awareness about poverty as the root cause of food insecurity.

Chatham-Kent evolved its COVID-19 response Mobile Market into a series of volunteer-led food security initiatives via packaged solutions in each rural community. Now named Harvest Markets CK, residents determine what unique food issues they have in their community and develop a solution they co-lead. Chatham-Kent Prosper Us now supports whatever the community groups find challenging to get independently, such as fresh produce. Harvest Markets are less about bringing produce to communities (as many are farming communities and eat their produce and share it amongst themselves) and more about creating a logistics pathway to centralize and broaden the reach of local produce to people not connected to the farming community or able to access the local food stores in that manner.

Examples of food initiatives include opening a food co-op in Wheatley, ON. The food bank transitioned into a micro-grocery store, as Wheatley does not have one, and the nearest store is approximately 30 minutes away – if you have a car. The micro-grocery store is in the Village Resource Centre (VRC), and funds generated from the grocery store offset the food bank making the VRC a more efficient and effective operation.

Each community has done something incredible; other examples include expanding volunteerism and hosting a soup luncheon from the previous week's produce to build relationships and community.

The **Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty** found start-up funding and convened a core team to launch the Antigonish Community Fridge and Pantry Project. The Community Fridge Project is bringing the community together and raising awareness about food insecurity and the root causes of food insecurity through charity and volunteerism. The project has approximately 30 active volunteers, with 15 of those being extremely involved. The visibility of the Community Fridge and Pantry and growing awareness about food insecurity led to an increase in awareness of the work of the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty and brought new partners to the table; significant support and partnership came from locally owned small businesses that the Coalition hasn't worked with in the past. The group deepens poverty understanding by carefully emphasizing that this is an emergency response rather than a long-term solution and that the roots of food insecurity are a lack of income and social inequities, and that sustainable solutions require policy change, not community charity.

Education

High school graduation rates increased across the country from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 - other than in Manitoba, where it is stable - from 81% to 84%. The high school graduation rate was higher for females than males, amongst those who graduate on time or within an extended two years. The jump in graduation rates may be caused by provincial policies that supported students staying in during COVID-19. For instance, no student's marks could drop below March 2020 levels in Ontario.

Examples of member successes in the past year include

In **Saint John, NB**, business, community and government partners have been working together to 'close the education gap' for children caught in the poverty cycle. 1 in 4 children live in poverty in Saint John. Innovative programs and partnerships have expanded, over 20 years, to level the playing field of opportunity for vulnerable children, from cradle to career. The collective effort has increased their high school graduation rates from less than 50% to more than 70% (compared to the current school district average of 90%). Program innovations include Early Childhood Hubs in neighbourhoods that join up services to help families with children from birth to 5 years of age to build their child's well-being, skills and experiences and prepare them for school success; Books, Books, Books placed in children's hands and homes; Community Schools and PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools) that attend to the basic needs of students from K-12 and provide more tutors, mentors and enriched

educational opportunities; high-quality after-school programs that remove all barriers to the children's participation and help them build the life skills and community experiences that all children need to thrive; Pathways to Education, Promise Partnership, PALS En Route to Success that help teens who are at-risk to successfully graduate from high school equipped for further education and employment. To close the gap even further in 2018, Saint John partners helped the local school district initiate a pilot project for seven elementary schools with the highest child poverty rates. The When Children Succeed project hired additional teachers for the K to 2 classrooms to reduce the staff-to-student ratio and provide the students with intensive individualized help to strengthen their education foundations, overcome learning barriers caused by poverty, and close their early literacy and numeracy achievement gap. Funding for the 3-yr. pilot ($1.5M per year) was achieved through a partnership of government, business and community funders. The project demonstrated a high level of success for the students. Their social well-being and academic progress had accelerated, and their achievement gap had rapidly closed (despite the challenges of the pandemic). The project realized its purpose of readying the children for Grade 3 and beyond. A large body of research confirms that if we close their education gap by Grade 3, their education and life success rate will be the highest, bringing the best return on investment. Based on the project's results, in 2022, the Government of NB agreed to fully fund the project for an additional two years to help inform and strengthen education policy and practices in ways that ensure every child has an 'equitable opportunity' to achieve their education.

"[Many] communities haven't had the chance to interact with advanced technology so providing this [program] was incredible. We are confident that in 10-20 years some of these keiki [children] will head down a STEM path. We've challenged them to think about broader opportunities than the ones they initially knew existed."

- Kean Wong

Vibrant Hawai'i has invested over $200,000 to improve access to technology, donated over 500 laptops, engaged over 3,000 participants in 3D printing workshops, and donated 28 3D printers to schools across Hawai'i Island. Technology leaders on Hawai'i Island recognized the opportunity to introduce 3D printing technology and skills to keiki through the Hubs 2.0 project. Community-based instructors led classes on designing, printing, and refining projects with 3D technology. Through this initiative, keiki (children) honed critical thinking, math, and science skills.

The 3D printers were donated to permanently stay at Hubs and in the community at the end of the project. Vibrant Hawai'i also contracted community-based digital literacy instructors to provide beginner-level workshops, distribute laptops, and provide navigation through the Affordable Connectivity Program to ensure residents had access to technology, broadband internet connectivity, and skills to participate in telehealth appointments, conduct online employment searches, and submit digital

applications. Within 90 days, the demonstration project assisted 300 community members - and 84% indicated that they would like to participate in additional online learning opportunities.

"For the keiki [children], the 3D printers also enlightened them to endless possibilities. They gained not only the skills involved in creating and using the printers, but more importantly they gained the confidence to be engineers who know this place and their place in the 'āina [places of belonging]."

- Kendra Killkuskie, Program Instructor

Financial Empowerment

From 2012 to 2019, there was an increase in Canadians' asset resilience (3 months of savings to withstand shocks) from 65.3% to 67.1% - an all-time high. The trend included young people under 18, 18-64 years and 65+ years.

However, the pandemic significantly depleted many people's savings. In 2022, Prosper Canada ranks 48.8% of Canadians as financially vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, with another 29% just approaching financial resilience. Low-Income Canadians have been hit particularly hard, increasing from 64% in 2021 to 73% now in extreme or moderate economic vulnerability. (pg 15).

The primary reasons for challenges to financial resiliency are:

- Inflation.
- Rising interest rates.
- Barriers to earning money.
- A lack of social capital to turn to for financial help.

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Financial Empowerment successes this year included scaling out a niche intervention – **Community Income Tax Filing Program** – to more communities and scaling up the number of clients served in each community. Also, relationships formed in the past year that are dedicated to financial inclusion have already created systems changes in one major financial institution.

TD Bank is helping to end working poverty in Canada. A Working Group has been struck between Tamarack Institute, TD Bank, Prosper Canada, Momentum, people with lived/living experience and five Communities Ending Poverty members to explore the role of Financial Institutes in increasing the financial inclusion of the working poor. The group uses a person-centred approach and has co-generated four archetypes of workers experiencing poverty, mapped how each archetype interacts with the bank, and co-created solutions that TD Bank can use to help increase the financial inclusion of the working poor. This work also supports five communities to understand and communicate the personas of working poverty in their communities and engage local financial institutes as partners. Results of this group so far have included:

- # Changed attitudes or beliefs
- Increased collaborative action between non-profits championing more financial inclusion, people with lived/living experience providing critical insights as to the experience, and TD Bank seeking to expand its client base.
- Increased knowledge of the barriers to financial inclusion for low-income workers, what low-income workers feel, need and experience, and solutions.
- New champions for financial inclusion of the working poor

The Government of Alberta's commitment to re-indexing benefits, including Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), income support benefits and seniors' financial assistance, to inflation benefited nearly 300,000 Albertans. For 2023, the 6% increase helps 71,000 people receive AISH, 47,000 people receive income support, and 176,000 seniors. The Government of Alberta also increased Alberta Child and Family Benefit payments by 6%, invested $15 million in new funding for low-income transit passes, and contributed $20 million over two years to Alberta food banks. Vibrant Communities Calgary and EndPovertyEdmonton are strong advocates for provincial policy change. Since the above rates were de-indexed as part of Alberta's 2019 budget, they expanded their advocacy efforts, which include letter writing, research, and joint media releases that include statements from the government, businesses and other high-profile community leaders.

The Financial Empowerment Program at **Prince Edward County** Learning Centre (PELC) offers support for community members living on low to modest incomes. Prince Edward County increased the uptake of Community Volunteer Income Tax Clinic filing to nearly 50% of eligible residents. In 2021 (2020 tax year)- Filed 411 tax returns for 401 individuals, and in 2022 (2021 tax year)- Filed 558 tax returns for 423 individuals. The municipality of PEC partnered with funding and promotion of the PELC volunteer tax clinics. PELC also provides volunteers with training in benefits screening, allowing staff to help clients access all the programs and benefits for which they may qualify.

Health

Canadians reporting unmet health care needs declined to a low of 5.1% in 2018 before rising to 6.1% in 2019 and 7.2% in 2020. These increases were seen across every age group from 16 years and older. Females were more likely to report unmet healthcare needs than males, particularly 25-54 years.

Other 2021 data indicate physical and mental health declined in 2020, including:

- A decrease in people self-reporting their health is "good" or "excellent" in 2021 as well as a steady decline from 2018 of people perceiving their mental health as "very good" or "excellent."
- A slight increase in the number of people experiencing stress
- A small but steady increase of people with arthritis
- More people are reporting diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure
- A big jump in youth obesity in 2021 after a steady decline from 2015-2020
- A slight drop in life expectancy (after six years of increases, this is likely due to COVID-19)

Of note, three positive health trends were fewer people reporting smoking - daily or occasionally - fewer people heavy drinking, and more people saying they are satisfied or very satisfied.

Race-based health outcomes were analyzed at the national level based on COVID-19 data for the first time. Findings revealed that black and South Asian people were more likely to experience death from COVID-19 than their white non-Indigenous counterparts. Among these populations, being black while living on low income was a driver of COVID-19 death.

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Sault Ste Marie is making mental health supports more accessible. When the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) was no longer able to offer in-person support during COVID-19 and demand increased significantly, they partnered with the John Howard Society, Victim Services, and (who else), all of whom have Registered Social Workers on staff, to share the phone lines. During this time, they reached so many more people that they'll never go back. They notably expanded their reach across the rural Algoma District, whose residents rarely come into the city to access services. They could also reach people who previously felt unsafe running into and interacting with other clients in person.

Portage Community Revitalization (PCRC) The Wawokiya Table in Portage la Prairie, a community of about 10,000 people, mobilize and coordinate existing resources across sectors to give individuals/families the support they need so they can prevent and permanently stabilize crises. The Table was named in a traditional naming ceremony and means "those who help" in the Dakota language. Wawokiya works with people who are involved with more than one community

Wawokiya Process Map

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                    │          Referral           │────────│  Not a fit   │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘        └──────────────┘
                                   │                               │
┌──────────────┐    ┌─────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
│  No Consent  │────│  Family Engagement Meeting   │        │   Resource   │
└──────────────┘    └─────────────────────────────┘        │  Discussion  │
        │                          │                        └──────────────┘
┌──────────────┐    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Engagement  │    │ System Mobilization Discussion│
│   Strategy   │    └─────────────────────────────┘
└──────────────┘                   │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Support Team Meetings & Plan │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                                   │
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                    │    Follow Up & Evaluation    │
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                                   │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │        System Change         │
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resource and need help accessing the help they need or are not connected to any resources and could use help. Referrals from various agencies such as the RCMP, Probation and the school division are brought to a committee of government and community agencies (the Wawokiya Table). Thirty-eight referrals came to the Table in 2022 – referrals do not reflect individuals, as some are families. The Wawokiya Table reviews the family's goals to remove barriers to getting support. Clients lead the process and are equal members of the support team. 89% of clients were connected to new services they would otherwise not have been linked to or didn't know existed. Over half (55%) of families involved with CFS had their children returned to them because of involvement with the program. 58% of families showed improvement in school attendance after enrolling in Wawokiya. 62% of participants struggling with homelessness or inadequate housing could obtain proper housing. Partners that sit on the advisory Table: Department of Families (EIA), MB Housing, Southern Health, Adictions Foundation MB, CFS Central, Michif Family Services, Family Resource Centre, Portage Learning and Literacy Centre, Youth for Christ, Reaching Home, CMHA, RCMP, Probation Services, Portage School Division.

The City of Richmond and the Richmond Public Library implemented the Community Services Pop-Ups pilot project in collaboration with community partners to increase access to community-based resources and supports for residents living on low incomes Held on the second Thursday of the month at the main branch of the Richmond Public Library from December 2022 to April 2023, the Pop-Ups assisted 336 community members in accessing various services from 22 different community partners over the five month pilot project. These services included navigational support for addiction services, affordable housing, and application support for government assistance. Participation in the Pop Ups grew steadily throughout the project, with participants reporting the services provided were "relevant, easy to access and helpful." Many participants identified they were accessing services for the first time, while others noted that the regularity of the Pop Ups enabled them to access services more frequently. Due to high demand from the community, the Pop Ups will continue to be offered through 2023. The Province of British Columbia provided funding to develop the pilot through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

Early Childhood Development

The alignment of the Federal and provincial/territorial governments to launch $10 a day daycare was announced in April 2021, and the final deal was struck in 2022. As a cost-shared model between the Federal government and each province/territory, the funding will be a mix of:

- Reducing fees of licensed childcare spaces by half (by 2022) and to $10 a day by 2026
- Increasing the number of licensed childcare spaces
- Increasing wages for early childhood educators

The initiative will save families who access licensed childcare spaces per child anywhere between $4,170 per year (PEI) to $9,390 per year (B.C.). The Yukon and Quebec have already achieved $10 a day or lower.

Seven provinces and territories (B.C., NWT, AB, NVT, SK, ON, NB) have cut fees for spaces in half at the end of 2022. And all (except Quebec) plan to reduce fees to the $10 a day target by 2027; in some provinces, it will be as early as 2023 or 2024. With already below-target childcare rates, Quebec has been given the funding with no strings attached and has committed to increasing the number of licensed spaces. Toward $10-a-Day: Early Learning and Child Care - Canada.ca

Examples of member successes in the past year include

Province of British Columbia The $ 10-a-day childcare strategy added additional funding support to what the Government of B.C. and community advocates had started. This allows them to reduce the average childcare costs further for all parents across B.C. to $21 a day and increase licensed spaces to 40,000. The funding also supports improvements to care quality by creating ECE wage grids quality frameworks, standards and tools for teaching; and supports creating plans for children from equity-deserving populations. B.C. is taking a multi-pronged approach, from funding early childhood education and providing wage subsidies for early childhood educators to support the development of childcare spaces, significantly

Indigenous Motherhood by JeenaLeigh Hill

increasing thresholds and amounts for childcare subsidies, to piloting $10 a Day sites across the province, among other initiatives. So far, these initiatives have resulted in families of over 65,000 children in B.C. paying lower monthly childcare fees, with early childhood educators earning higher incomes.

local Community Futures to support childcare business planning and self-employment. Overall, community readiness to take advantage of provincial and federal programs is improved, with clear positive results.

"So far, these initiatives have resulted in families of over 65,000 children in B.C. paying lower monthly childcare fees, with early childhood educators earning higher incomes"

Revelstoke BC is an example of communities amplifying good public policy; where the community has grown from being underserved to having one of the highest rates of childcare spaces per capita in the region. Anticipating shortages, the Revelstoke Child Care Society (RCCS) focused its efforts on growing the number of qualified Early Childhood Educators in Revelstoke so that they could staff childcare spaces. The RCCS has helped employees and community-based childcare providers access government grants and wage subsidies to upgrade their skills and work towards certifications. Textbooks are available for free as part of an Early Learning Lending Library. To support retention, RCCS employees are paid a living wage, and all providers in the community can access free or low-cost opportunities. Child Care providers are also supported to access start-up and capital grants and navigate subsidies and other programs. RCCS partners with the School District to nurture more students to consider an ECE as a career and works closely with the

Anti-Racism and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Racism and discrimination are prevalent in Canadian systems and our systems repeat and sustain inequality. Poverty rates are high for groups made most marginal (First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; immigrants; refugees; individuals who identify as members of ethno-cultural, Black and other racialized communities; 2SLGBTQ people; people with disabilities; people experiencing homelessness; children and youth in care; people living in institutions; people involved in the criminal justice system; women; and people living in remote areas). This demonstrates that Canada's social safety net does not reflect the diversity of needs and does not work for these individuals and families.

Disaggregated data is essential for understanding the experience of groups made most marginal. Previous change efforts did not recognize those disproportionate inequities. Disaggregated data should be easily accessible to voters to better inform them and to help build political will. Some participants in the 2022 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty suggested that poverty rates should be a measure of how municipal and provincial/territorial governments are performing.

Despite the government commitments to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the calls to justice from Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

advancement remains slow and poverty rates remain high compared to the general population. It is difficult to evaluate change without adequately disaggregated data on First Nations on- and off-reserve, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada.

After 4 years of the MMIWG project– of the 231 legally mandated directives to stop the violence against Indigenous women girls and two-spirit people, only 2 have been carried out and more than half (123) haven't started and 106 in progress.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people need to be involved in program and policy design Access to culturally appropriate services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities is a key aspect to delivering support. Reference the above section Transforming our Systems: the 2022 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty

Matriarch Ninsstsiksi by Chataya Holy Singer

Member Highlights

Members are developing and beginning to implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and anti-racism strategies. Local governments are changing internal policies, setting targets and developing budgets to further equity. The diffusion of these policies and systems changes are raising awareness within local government on the issues of racism and inequity, and are creating the conditions (e.g., funding, data) for niche interventions within each department's – or community - work.

Community-based groups are educating themselves internally about racism and trying to role model anti-racist ways of working. They are also offering education and training amongst their

partners and the broader community to have a bigger impact on changing systems locally.

In 2022, CEP explored nine members' equity, diversity inclusion or anti-racism strategies. They are raising awareness and creating systems changes as a matter of justice for Black, Indigenous, Asian, Muslim, Queer, differently abled, female and low-income individuals.

Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network (ACHN) is building relationships and developing community capacity to create more health equity. The ACHN prioritizes time to engage in relationship and trust building with members of nearby First Nations and local rural communities, using consensus-based decision-making. This is well reflected in the membership of their leadership table with robust engagement from rural and remote community members, representation from Indigenous organizations and time taken to engage and present activities to local communities. The ACHN governance structure acknowledges their table is informed by community voice, ensuring priorities are gathered by meeting partners where they are rather than expecting partners to come to them. They now have a wealth of diverse voices, from youth to people with lived experience, who can educate decision-makers, understanding that decision-makers do not always reflect the diversity of the population they serve. While this takes considerable time and resources, inputs such as the funding and capacity supplied through the Alberni Clayoquot Communities Building Youth Futures project has amplified youth voice in the two short years which the network has had the pleasure of coordinating.

The City of Montreal is starting internally and inter-departmentally on an intersectional GBA+ approach. They are expanding their Gender-Based Analysis Plus framework across all action plans, policies, programs, projects and budgets and are setting targets, a budget, progress indicators and a timeframe for doing so. They've trained more than

1,000 people from across departments including managers and elected officials, shifting mindsets and providing tools for action. In 2021, they created an office with a commissioner that works on systemic racism and created a "Solidarity, Equity and Inclusion" action plan.

Edmonton is building capacity, developing policies and implementing programs that increase income and good jobs for racialized people. This includes the reallocation of defunded police money to gather race-based data across the city and develop policies with 50 local systems stakeholders on the ethical collection and use of race-based data; creating pathways and policies in the non-profit sector from frontline to leadership to top-level management for racialized people; creating more opportunities for Indigenous people to take on senior leadership roles (a recommendation by Edmonton's Indigenous Circle). One aim of anti-discrimination policies is to ensure equitable hiring practices that provide fair opportunities within systems.

Society's conceptualization, enactment, and celebration of masculine, corporate, white, or Eurocentric leadership models leads to diverse forms of leadership not being recognized or are undervalued. EPE actively supports the Racialized Women in Leadership project, which involves collaborating with racialized women to design leadership initiatives that utilize diverse skills to promote social change.

The Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership has shifted how they think about and work towards poverty elimination, from programmatic responses to identifying how policies are designed to be exclusionary and how to make them equitable and inclusionary. This change occurred because of lessons learned during the COVID-19 response, which allowed partners to reflect on the uneven impact of and experiences of the pandemic on people who are racialized and/or living in poverty. SPRP then shifted to exploring how racism is rooted in each of their 12 Bold Ideas to Eliminate Poverty and changed their approach based on that work.

Policy Change in the City of Saskatoon:

Free WiFi in core area of city, selected based on population data (including high percentage of youth, seniors, newcomers, Indigenous persons), the needs of area students, consultation with external organizations, and the proximity to City-owned infrastructure where the necessary equipment could be installed.

Conclusion

The state of Poverty in Canada looks worse than pre-pandemic. Advances in government policy, systems change, local capacity building, and innovation have kept many people out of Poverty but haven't been able to keep pace with the ripple effects of COVID-19 and inflation over the last three years.

Our mental health is declining and impacting other areas of our lives, such as food, housing and employment. Many people are still experiencing the effects of long-COVID, are vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 or are a close contact with someone who is. Young people are struggling in school despite measures enacted to help them graduate.

The housing crisis is felt in urban and rural communities across Canada.

For a time, emergency benefits brought some of the lowest-income Canadians above the poverty line, reduced core housing need, food insecurity, and helped stave off the debt crisis, but are now discontinued.

Communities Ending Poverty members are responding to these challenges and helping people access existing benefits, creating new programs and service changes that make life more affordable and accessible. They are working towards making life more equitable for racialized, Indigenous, queer and people with disabilities.

Communities Ending Poverty is creating space for communities to learn from one another's successes and challenges and sound policies and practices that will end Poverty in Canada.

Members have indicated that Tamarack is very helpful in early-stage work, providing an evidence-based approach and language, receiving coaching and direction to implement it, and having the backing of a network to help them find answers and discuss challenges.

The next step that members want us to undertake is exploring what we can accomplish together that individual communities struggle to do alone. This will include policy, and systems change discussions with representatives from communities, Indigenous communities, people with lived/living experience, businesspeople and all levels of government.

Communities Ending Poverty's policy agenda in 2023 begins with one of Tamaracks three strategic priorities: *Shift Policy & Advocate for Systems Change using the following*

Principles

- Policy alone does not move outcomes at scale.
- Our policy work will be grounded in equity, reconciliation, and anti-racist approaches.
- We will do this work in partnership with others.
- Our members are key collaborators in shifting policy.
- We will centre lived and living experience.
- Optimism and hope.

Over the next year, Tamarack proposes to advance four bodies of **priorities** via nine tactics.

Priority Areas

(1) Centre the Social Role of Government

All levels of government (especially the local), all institutions, all associations, and all people have critical roles to play in supporting the well-being of people and they places they steward. Tamarack proposes to continue to support government to work across sectors to address the interrelated issues of mental and physical well-being, housing, affordability, reconciliation, and neighborhood safety, while also advocating to higher orders of governments to ensure that municipalities are resourced to do this work, and in partnership with all necessary actors.

(2) Involve People with lived and living experience of Poverty, Racism, Colonialization, and Other Injustices in Shaping Activities.

As outlined in our recently released 10 Guide for Deepening Community, a key element of well-being is a sense of control that community members feel they have over influencing activities in their communities. We propose to continue to support policy and practice that ensures those with lived experience have a voice and a role in decisions shaping the country.

(3) Democratize More Meaningful Data

Community members and community collaboratives in Canada face challenges accessing data that is timely, relevant,

Tactics

(1) Ecosystem Mapping & Partnership

We will map who is working in youth, poverty, climate, and place-based policy development and partner with them. We will participate in policy collaboratives convened by partners, sign statements aligned with our values and results, and otherwise resource and amplify partners' efforts.

(2) Flexible Engagement

We will be open to engaging in policy work at the municipal, provincial/territorial & federal levels. We will be open to cross-border and international collaborations. Our role will depend on what's missing in our ecosystem; this is often the case as we act as a field catalyst.

(3) Consultation

We will continue to participate in (and convene) government consultations and to work with our members to submit comments on government strategies.

(4) Convening & Learning

We will build internal infrastructure that operationalizes our principles. This will include convening (a) a Policy Advisory Group to advise on broad trends and partnership opportunities; (b) a National Collaborative for the End of Poverty; (c) a

and disaggregated in ways that allow us to see which equity-seeking groups must be centred. As recognized by StatsCan, CCNDR, and others, there is opportunity to improve community organizations' capacity to collect, analyze, and use data. Finally, there is opportunity to think about how people work with data about systems and with observations and stories of people's lived experiences. Tamarack proposes to move forward opportunities to embed better data access and sensemaking into existing policies. We need more accessible, more disaggregated, more timely, and more actionable data.

4 End Working Poverty

Tamarack has partnered with members of the Communities Ending Poverty network in an action learning lab to develop strategies to end working poverty. We will engage across sectors to identify and action strategies to support individuals to exit poverty and turn the lessons from this work into policy recommendations for governments, employers, and other key sectors.

5 Partner with Elected Officials Beyond the Election Cycle

We are seeking deep and durable changes for individuals most impacted by negative policies and practices. In advance of the upcoming provincial and federal elections, we will build bridges with elected officials at all levels to create an awareness and understanding of how their policies might have negative impacts on individuals who

National Collaborative for Youth Futures, engaging individuals from across sectors who are committed to scaling what is working in local CBYF communities

5 Honest and Systems-Focused Stories

We will name the role that racist, colonial, deficit-minded policies, practices and mindsets have played in our current reality, and welcome people into reforming those systems.

6 Member Learning and Engagement

We will develop learning opportunities that explain and welcome engagement with polices that advance our climate, neighborhood engagement, education, and anti-poverty work. We will also develop learning opportunities that help members understand which levels of government impact which types of decisions, and how community members can engage. We will support members to build their own capacity to advocate for high-impact policy and systems-change.

7 Alignment Across Levels of Government

We will develop learning opportunities for policy makers interested in community change. This might include forming learning communities at the municipal level, provincial/territorial levels and between departments at the federal level.

have less voice and influence. Tamarack will work beyond the election cycle toward embedding policies which support citizens living in poverty, those experience climate impacts, and young people who will lead next toward equitable economic, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Communities are doing as much as they can to collaborate, innovate, raise awareness and drive outcomes under each domain of poverty with their resources. Still, their efforts must be complemented by aligned investments by upper levels of government and policy and practice changes by businesses and the philanthropic sector.

We believe the end of poverty is possible in Canada – but it will take the hearts, minds and actions of people from all walks of life in every community across the country to make it a reality.

(8) Elect Officials Who Will Positively Impact Communities

In the lead up to the local elections in 2027 and beyond, we will partner with others (e.g. FCM, Equal Voice) to support members of equity-seeking groups to run for office, staff campaigns, and take up powerful staff roles.

(9) Build Capacity of Experience-Rich Leadership Tables

Building on past learnings, we will co-develop opportunities with those impacted by poverty, racism, xenophobia, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism to join leadership tables – and for leadership tables to become places of greater belonging.

Keep Your Head Up by Luma Abuarqoub