

A Game Changer Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategy and Evaluation

A Tamarack Webinar Featuring

Mark Holmgren and Mark Cabaj



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Our Webinar Speakers



Mark Holmgren
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From Here to There





vibrantcommunities
CANADA
CITIES • REDUCING • POVERTY



Vibrant Communities Canada – Cities Reducing Poverty

- Led by the Tamarack Institute
- Pan-Canadian learning community and collective impact movement focused on place-based poverty reduction
- Network of 50+ members nationwide who reduce poverty at municipal, provincial, and federal levels

“We want less poor not better poor”

- Paul Born, Founder, Tamarack Institute



Too often, evaluation is mysterious noise. We can't discern a beat we can tap our feet to. The melody we seek is elusive. Outcomes and traditional evaluation approaches were supposed to be, or help us create, the beautiful music we so desperately want to sing and listen to. But more often than not we are swimming in noise.

Primary Users/Beneficiaries

Cities Reducing Poverty Members

- To learn from their peers, and to potentially incorporate the VC framework to complement their local work

VCC-CRP Network, via Tamarack

- To gather feedback from members nationwide, to track progress towards goals, to identify patterns and trends, and to stimulate local learning



VCC – CRP 2016 Evaluation Framework

Membership Survey

Focus in on the following:

- Scope of work
- Member Poverty Reduction Strategy/Efforts
- Structure & Governance
- Community Engagement
- Community Partnerships
- Municipal/Regional Commitment
- Resources (People, Funding, In-Kind)
- Satisfaction with Tamarack services and support

Impact Survey

This survey instrument will ask for data that will serve as a baseline for your initiative and for us collectively as a network, in the following areas:

- Community Capacity Building
- Policy and Systems Changes
- Physical Assets: Emergency Supports, Housing, Transportation, Childcare....
- Social Assets: Civic participation, improved or increase social networks....
- Human Assets: Health, Literacy, Education, Employment skills....
- Financial Assets: Income, savings, and sources of financial security, including government income security. programs

Change Stories

Through a simple format survey, members will be asked to share stories from the field that are about significant change(s) that have taken place and that are connected to the work of the local VCC-CRP network.



The Evolution to Game Changers Emerging Design Questions...

- How can evaluation be sufficiently comprehensive while acknowledging time/capacity challenges?
- How can we focus evaluation efforts on what matters most?
- Is there a simpler way?
- How do we collect reliable and consistent data/info year to year?
- How do we evaluate poverty reduction with the long view in mind?
- How might we understand data and information as signals of progress?
- How do we evaluate to learn and adapt and inform future strategy and innovation?



What is a Poverty Reduction Game Changer?

A priority area or strategy that not only aims to deliver on its own specific goals or outcomes,

but also elicits an array of other significant, positive outcomes that cascade both within and outside of its area of emphasis,

and consequently profoundly impacts the course, character, or extent of poverty.

Features/Benefits of a VCC Network Game Changer Approach

Clarifies/advances Collective Impact Efforts.

- Helps articulate a common agenda and resultant strategies
- Facilitates Outcome Identification
- Clarifies Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Focuses Communication
- Helps Identify Backbone Supports
- Leverages Complexity
- Frames Collaborative Leadership
- Helps focus re: Community Engagement
- Enhances Capacity Management
- Emphasizes Progress over Proof
- Moves from Attribution to Contribution
- Signals Policy/Systems, Political Reform
- Contributes to Movement Building
- Focuses Learning/Adaptation on Big Change.
- Can influence funding and research priorities
- Enhances Communication as a Network





The Cascading Effect: Safe/Affordable Housing



Access to safe, secure, adequate, affordable, and suitable housing is fundamental to living a decent life, and can help people escape poverty, experience less unemployment, and participate fully in their communities.

Once people find stable housing, they can focus on other important areas of their lives, such as education and employment, and can build strong futures for their children.



Possible Game Changer Indicators

- Formal Plans at work (governments, communities)
- Policy and Systems Change (e.g. mix of market and social housing in new developments)
- Housing Stock by Type (e.g., shelter, transition, supportive, special needs, social housing, subsidized housing, market housing)
- Rental and Utility Cost
- Homeless Count
- Wait lists for subsidized housing
- Zoning, bylaw changes that facilitate affordable housing development
- Rent Banks, Eviction Intervention Programs

- Innovations



Some Go-Forward Challenges/Issues

- Identifying Game-Changers: rationale, progress indicators....
- Design that *fits* a diverse VCC membership
- Clear communication with members as well as other key stakeholders (e.g. major funders).
- Balancing consistency with the iterative nature of a new/innovative approach.
- Maximizing the collection of reliable, defensible data/information.
- Connecting Game-Changers, not silo them.

What's Next?

- Continuing to identify and frame the Game Changers
- Engagement of Members
- Design and Beta Testing
- Identifying and acting on Learning Opportunities

Any and all comments and questions are invited:

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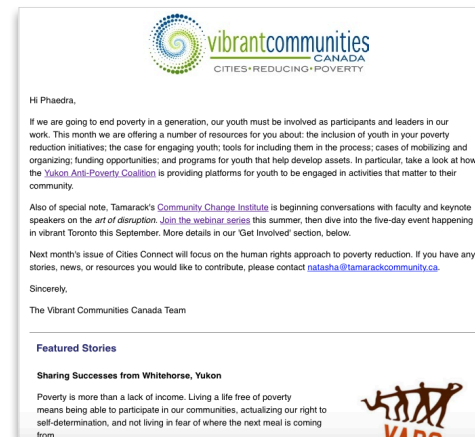
Mark Holmgren – mark@tamarackcommunity.ca



Stay Up-to-Date with Our Game Changers

Monitor Your Inbox:

- Cities Connect poverty reduction e-news: <http://events.tamarackcommunity.org/cities-connect-subscribe>



Check the VCC Website:

- www.vibrantcanada.ca



Questions?



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Join our online community!

- Visit us at: www.vibrantcanada.ca





November 15-17, 2016 | Hamilton ON

Evaluating Community Impact is a three-day workshop intended to provide those who are funding, planning and implementing community change initiatives with an opportunity to learn the latest and most practical evaluation ideas and practices.

Learn more and register for this event: http://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/eci_hamilton

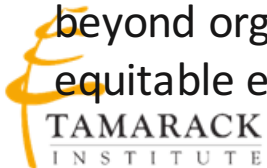


Upcoming Webinar

Neighbourhood-Based Strategies for Poverty Reduction: The Parkdale People's Economy Project

Thursday, October 27, 2016 | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. EDT

Join us with Victor Willis, Executive Director of The Parkdale Activities – Recreation Centre (PARC), to learn about this Toronto inner city's neighbourhood-response to the growing low-income trend in their community. A key feature of their success has been with building a collective social infrastructure and economic alternatives that put the community in control. Victor will tell us about lessons and challenges on moving beyond organizational barriers, to collectively build more equitable economies.



Thank You!

Please send questions, comments, and feedback about this webinar to:

alison@tamarackcommunity.ca

