

COMMUNITY CHANGE INSTITUTE

CITIES OF THE FUTURE
CO-CREATING TOMORROW



#CCI2017

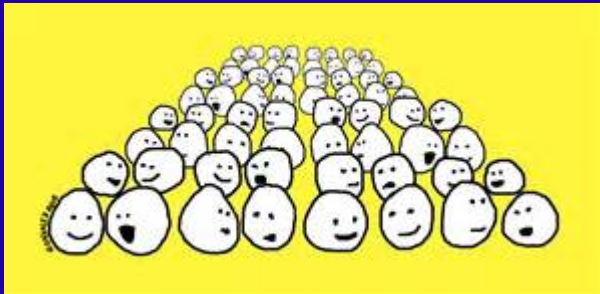




Game Changers: The Vibrant Communities Canada Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategy and Evaluation

Mark Holmgren

THINK-PAIR-SHARE



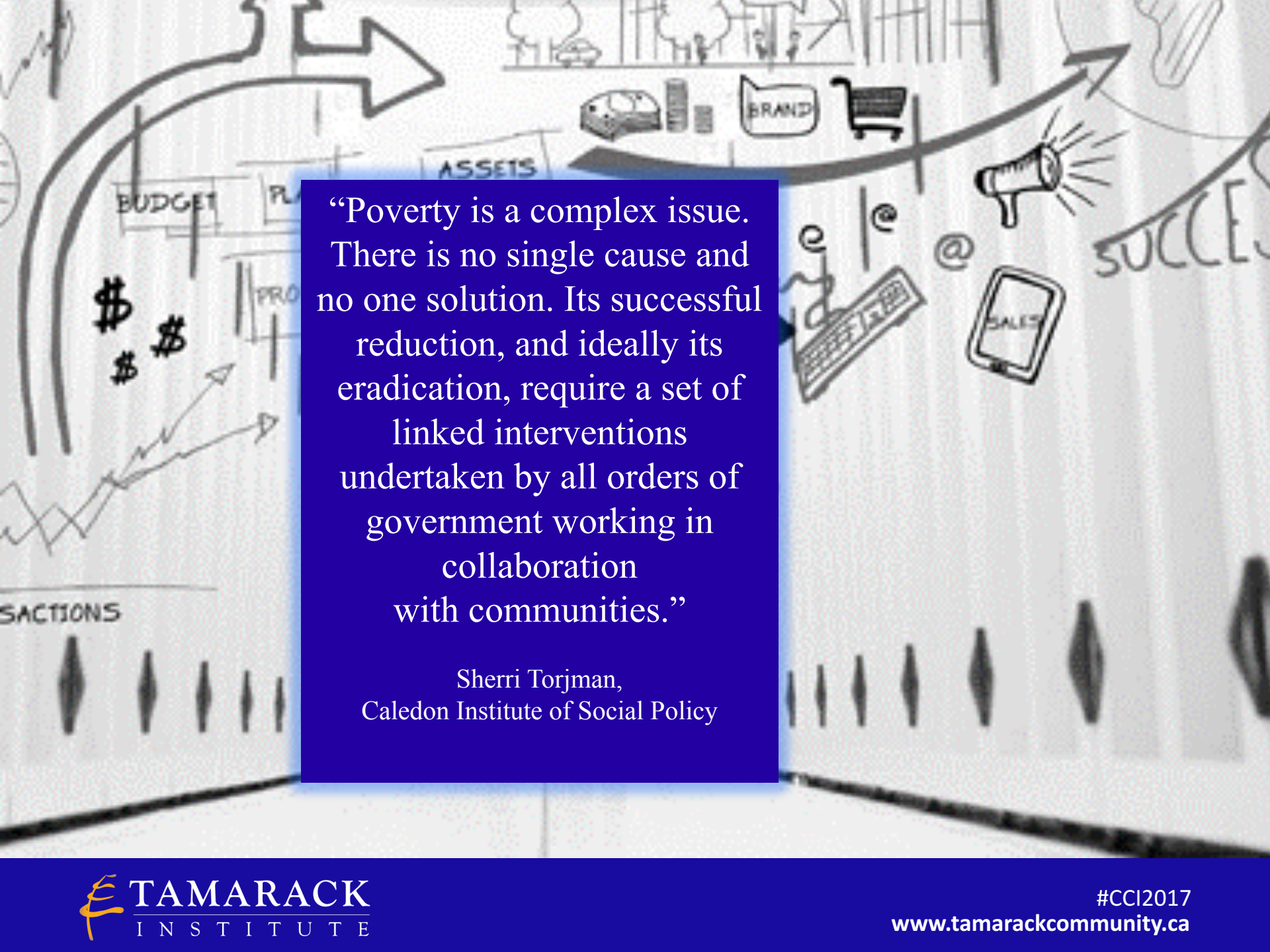
Talk about an example of how you/your group “proved” your organization was responsible for the impact on clients/people.

My Biases about Evaluation

- Community problems are complex and take a long time to resolve. They do not exist in 12 month reporting cycles.
- Evaluation is complicated and is time- and resource-intensive. Solutions do not occur in 12 month reporting cycles.
- The demands for evaluation and the capacity to do evaluation are often asynchronous.
- Evaluation is highly valued by funders but resourcing evaluation is valued less.
- Often the data we choose to use for measuring change cannot be reliably connected to the results we have delivered or influenced.



Every **YES** has its **NO**
-Lao Tzu

A hand-drawn business plan sketch on a whiteboard. The sketch includes a large curved arrow at the top, a central box with the text "ASSETS", a shopping cart icon, a "BRAND" label, a megaphone, a smartphone labeled "SALES", and the word "SUCCESS" written in large letters. There are also several dollar signs, a line graph, and the word "ACTIONS" at the bottom left. The background is a light blue gradient.

“Poverty is a complex issue. There is no single cause and no one solution. Its successful reduction, and ideally its eradication, require a set of linked interventions undertaken by all orders of government working in collaboration with communities.”

Sherri Torjman,
Caledon Institute of Social Policy

VCC Evaluation History | 2002-2010

- 15 Trail Builder Communities/Cities from 7 provinces
- Multi-dimensional perspective on “poverty”
- Collaborative design with a high degree of local autonomy.
- Two types of strategies: programmatic and systemic interventions.
- Evaluation reported 170,000 households experienced at least one benefit that improved their situation.

Theory of Change: Vision

Our Vision is of a poverty-free Canada, where citizens have incomes that not only address basic needs but that are sufficient to foster health and well-being, support ongoing learning, allow for participation in community life and contribute to future financial security.

Included in this vision is a society where human rights are universally applied regardless of income, age, gender, sexual orientation, health or disability, geographic location, level of education, ethnicity and language, religious belief, or political involvements. These rights include but are not limited to:

- The right to work and receive a fair, livable income and benefits
- For those unable to work, the right to income and support services that meet basic needs.
- The right to safe and affordable housing
- The right to live free of racism, discrimination, and being marginalized
- The right to access health services that promote health, prevent disease, and provide acute care interventions or chronic care.
- The right to participate in civic and political life
- The right to education throughout all stages of an individual's life
- The right to access quality, nutritious, and affordable food
- The right to live free of abuse and violence

Theory of Change

Comprehensive Thinking and Action focused on addressing the interrelated root causes of poverty rather than its various symptoms;

Community Asset Building focused on building on community strengths rather than focusing on deficits



Multi-sectoral Collaboration focused on engaging individuals and organizations from business, government, non-profits, and low-income residents and working together to effect significant change.

Community Learning and Change focused on embracing a long-term process of learning and change rather than simply undertaking a series of specific interventions.

BACK STORY

3 phases

Questions about:

Resources

Priorities

Governance

Partnerships

Challenges

Engagement

Stage/Phase of Work

LEARNINGS



Lack of backbone funding.

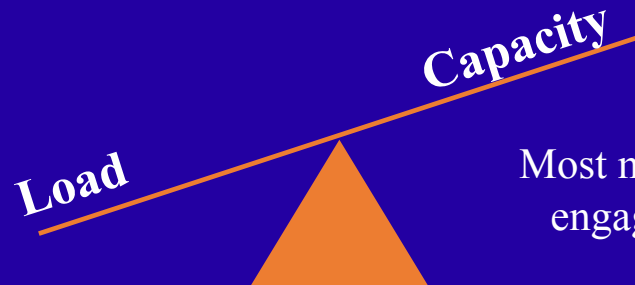
\$4.0 million in revenues, average: \$60,000

One in four - no income.

A few have most the revenues reported.



32% under 2 years :: 35% 3 to 5 years :: 33% 6 years plus



Most members need more capacity to engage in robust evaluation work.

Questions Emerging from the Lessons

- How and where can we converge local visions and strategies into a dynamic, shared understanding of progress and impact across the VCC network?
- How can we create an evaluation that addresses accountability while fostering learning, adaptation, and engagement about what to do next?
- How can communities sort through attribution and contribution?
- How do we create optimal reliability of data, information, and stories?
- How can we understand and act on not only the differences we are making in the lives of people but also on the systems and policies that govern, enable and restrict poverty reduction?
- How can we build capacity across communities to engage in and contribute to evaluation and measurement?
- What are the possible innovations we can bring to our evaluative work?

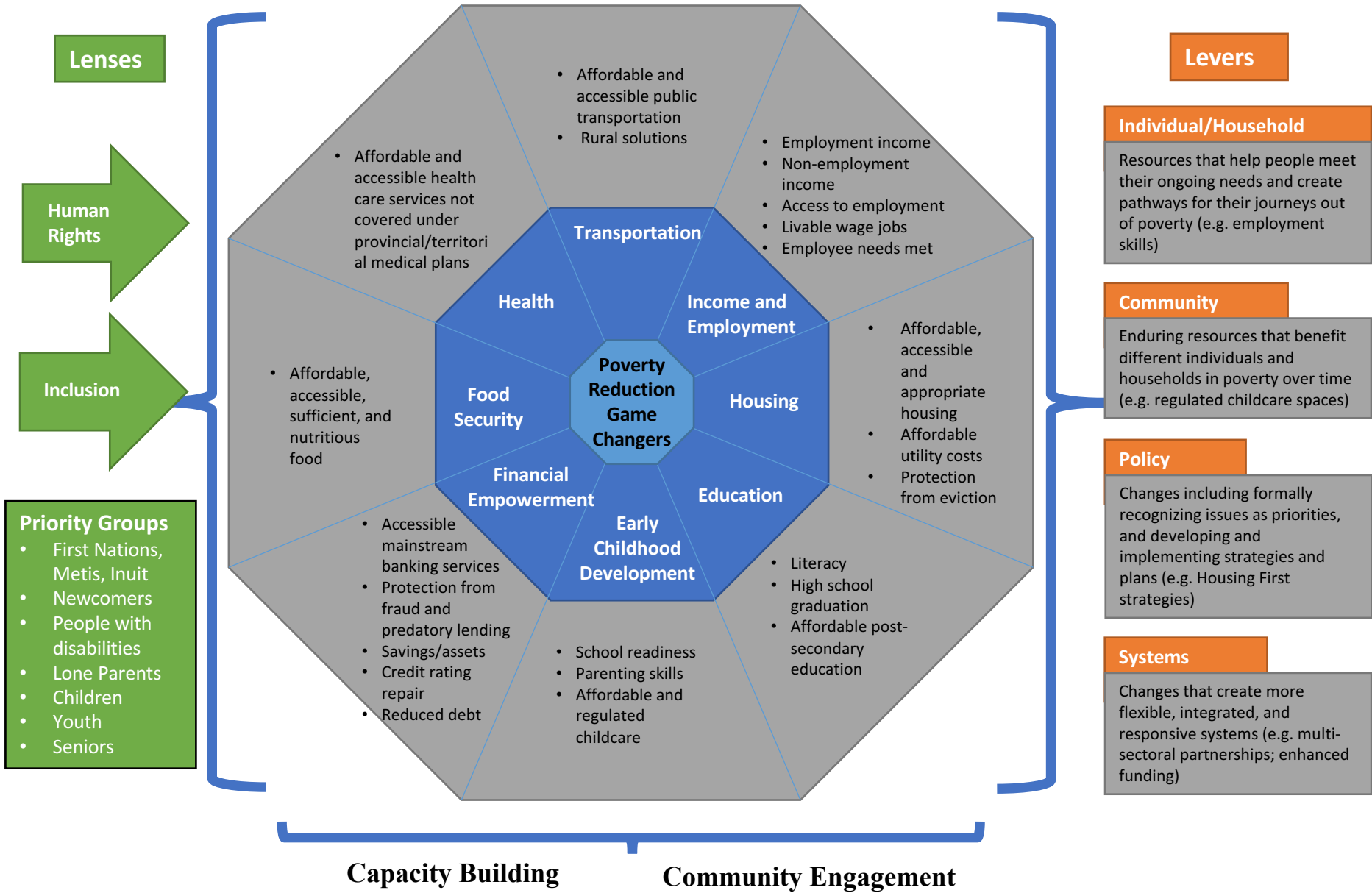
What is a game-changer?

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

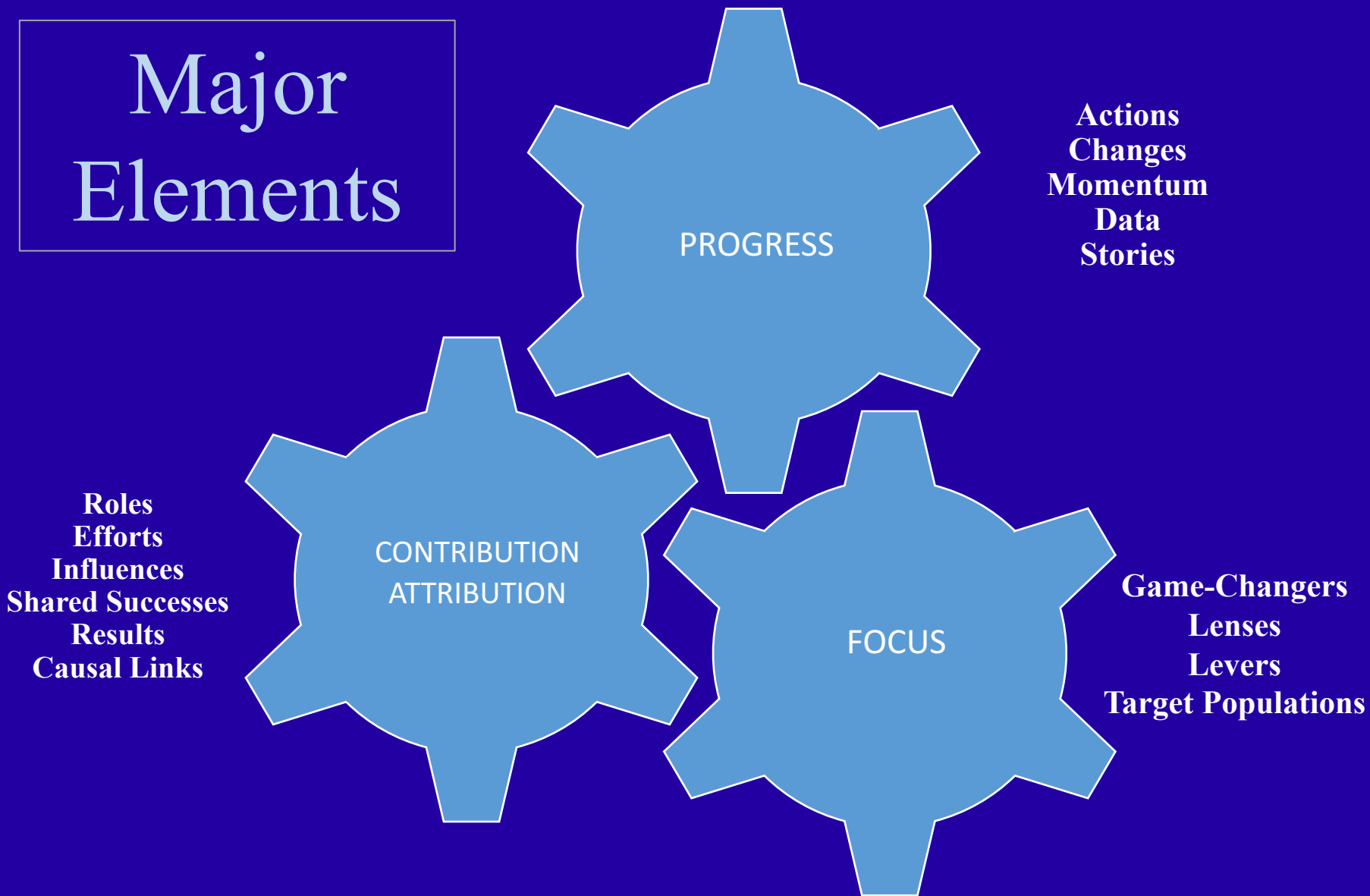
...elicits an array of other significant, positive outcomes that cascade both within and outside of its area of emphasis, and

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





Major Elements





Who are you targeting?

What is your theory of change?

What can you do?

Who can you partner with?

How will you measure performance?

Are there any keystone outcomes?

POVERTY REDUCTION GAME CHANGERS



#1 – INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Income security through employment and non-employment sources, and readiness for, access to, and retention of secure, **livable wage jobs** where employer policies support employees' needs.



#3 – TRANSPORTATION

Affordable and accessible public transportation and **innovative rural solutions** that accommodate and cater to individuals with unique needs.



#5 – HEALTH

Affordable and accessible health care services that are not covered under provincial/territorial medical plans, and comprehensive, inclusive supports for physical and mental health.



#7 – FOOD SECURITY

Affordable, accessible, sufficient, and nutritious food that meets dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

#2 – HOUSING

Affordable, accessible and appropriate housing that meets **people's unique needs, affordable utility costs, housing retention supports, and protection from eviction.**



#4 – EDUCATION

Literacy, graduation from high school or equivalency, affordable and accessible post-secondary education, and opportunities for alternative learning supports.



#6 – EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Healthy early child development, school readiness, strong parenting skills, and access to affordable and regulated childcare spaces.

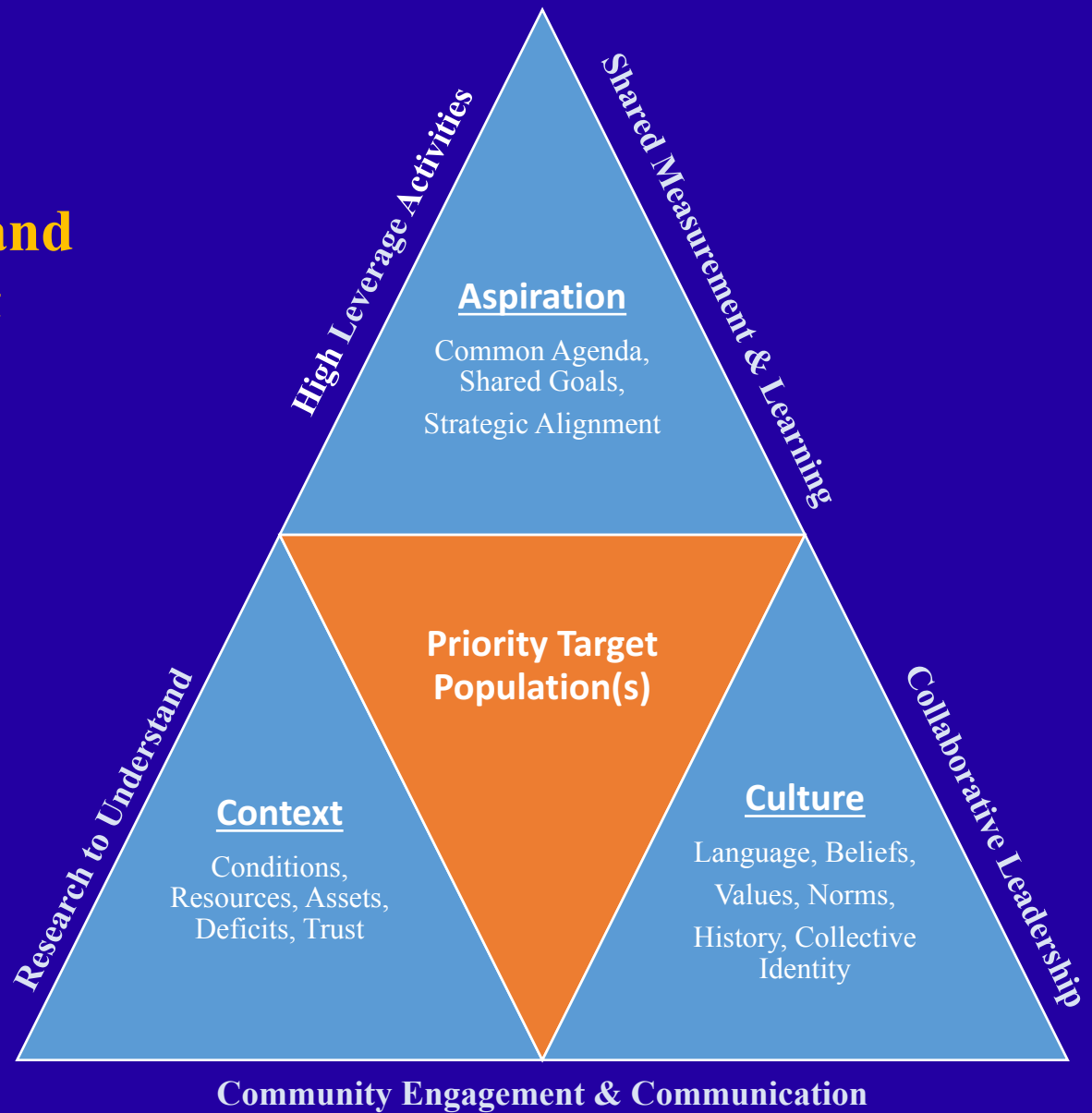


#8 – FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

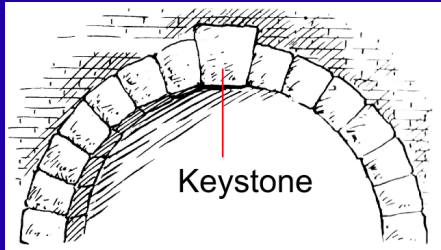
Accessible mainstream banking services, protection from fraud and predatory lending, and ability to build savings/assets, improve credit ratings, and reduce debt.



Game-Changers and Priority Target Populations



Keystone Outcomes: Game Changers within Game-Changers



More children become successful adults

← **Community Aspiration**

High School Graduation

← **Education Game-Changer**

Youth with quality career exploration by 8th grade

← **Goal/Outcome**

Children reading at grade level in 3rd grade

← **Goal/Outcome**

Children ready to learn when they enter kindergarten

← **Goal/Outcome**

KEYSTONE OUTCOME



Vibrant Communities Canada Member Contributions to Reducing Poverty

Income

MINIMUM WAGE

Province	2015 Min. Wage	\$15 min. Wage Timeline	# of people to receive higher Min. Wage	Total Gains in Annual Income
Alberta	\$11.20	2018	100,100	\$148 million
BC	\$10.45	2021	98,200	\$174 million
Ontario	\$11.25	2019	675,000	\$987 million

Canada's newly expanded tax-free Canada Child Benefit (CCB) benefits 1.75 million families with incomes under \$65,000.

Windsor-Essex' Living Wage initiative is one of more than 20 Living Wage communities in Ontario, and more than 60 across Canada. In November 2016, they recognized the highest number of Living Wage employers in Ontario, with 41 small, medium and large for-profit and non-profit organizations certified, representing over 7,700 employees.

The province of Ontario is launching a 3-year pilot project as part of their basic income study. Costing \$50 million a year for each of the 3 years, the pilot will provide a minimum income level, regardless of employment status, to 4,000 households.

Vibrant Communities Canada

Member Contributions to Reducing Poverty

Transportation

Summary Information: Monthly Affordable Transit Passes

CRP Member	Eligible Citizens	Full Price	Subsidized Price	Dollar Savings	Percent Discount	Annual Savings
Edmonton	40,000	\$94.25	\$35.00	\$59.75	63%	\$711
Calgary*	25,000	\$101	\$55.00	\$55.00	45%	\$660
Calgary*			\$35.35	\$65.65	65%	\$787
Calgary*			\$5.05	\$95.95	95%	\$1,151

* Calgary provides subsidies on a sliding scale based on income.

In May 2016, collaborative discussions with the Alberta Government resulted in three years of provincial funding totaling \$12.4 million allocated to Edmonton and \$13.5 million allocated to Calgary over a three-year period, on an equal cost-sharing basis.

In July 2017, the Government of New Brunswick announced an investment of \$500,000 to support affordable bus transportation and enhance the community-led Rural Lynx/ Dial-a-Ride pilot project in southwestern New Brunswick.

Between April 2016 and March 2017, Westmorland- Albert's Tele-Drive Rural Rides program enlisted the support of 130 volunteers over 3487 volunteer hours to provide 1,334 door-to-door rides to 143 users (primarily seniors) in 3 municipalities

Vibrant Communities Canada

Member Contributions to Reducing Poverty

Between 2013 and 2017, Halton increased the take-up rate for the Canada Learning Bond from 31% to 38%, representing 13,087 children and \$26,174,000 in post-secondary education savings for children living in lower income families. Their goal over the next three years is to register an additional 10,000 children, representing an added \$20 million in savings.

Sault Ste. Marie's Housing Stability Bank, supports people who are housed but who face an inability to pay their rent and/or utilities. Between April 2016 and March 2017, 354 households were assisted to keep their housing or utilities running, with a total paid amount of \$214,000.

Ontario's new Student Assistance Program is making tuition free as of 2017 for more than 210,000 students from lower income families, and grants to a projected 230,000 additional students to help mitigate student debts.

An innovative arrangement between ATB Financial and Cashco Financial provides an alternative to payday loans and cheque cashing services, and supports clients to access safe and affordable financial products. Accounts have no monthly fees on direct deposits, no minimum balance requirements, no funds held on cheques, no debit fees, and overdraft protection.



Programmatic

Policies

Systems

Awareness

Engagement

Multi-Sectoral
Planning and
Collaboration

Data Indicators

Learning

Is measuring activity and quality sufficient for proven/best practice programming?

Are you striving for practice changes?

Can you measure behaviour?

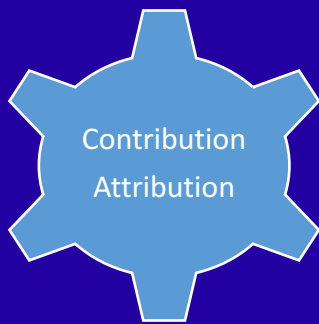
Can you assess the extent of the demonstrable difference(s) you have made in the lives of people?

What numbers indicate progress?

Is community engagement a goal and a measure?

Are you building capacity?

What do you need to understand in order to claim success?



Attribution:

Causing the outcome

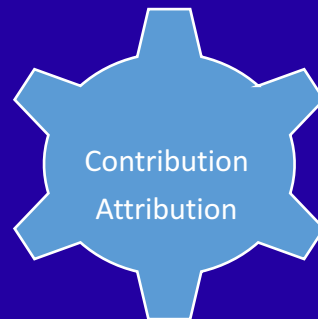
Contribution:

Influencing the outcome

Factors:

- # of Players
- Individual Differences
- Complexity and Scope
- Feasibility of the Outcome
- Viability of the Methods
- Capacity to Discern
- Fear of Reporting
- Degree of Influence
- Client Circumstances
- Reliability of Data

Attribution	Contribution
Housed 50 single parent families	Gov't announces 5 year plan
Eviction Prevention for 200 people.	Rent Controls Announced
Literacy Mentoring for a classroom	#s reading at grade 3 increase
Engaged 200 people in community planning	Residents start Block Parent Program
Sign up 20 Living Wage Employers	Minimum Wage introduced
Tax Service generates \$1 million in refunds	Home ownership increases
Help 100 families get full income security benefits	Low Income rates decrease
Start up a community garden	Grocery store moves into the neighbourhood.
Provide specialized transportation	Transportation subsidies introduced.
Employment placement for 200 people	Unemployment rate decreases



Deeper Dive Example

The Community Bridge:

eviction prevention for low income families

The Theory of Change:

Rapid response, minimal rules, and paying to stop evictions is effective for families and costs far less than homelessness, housing first, and other interventions.

Attributions:

- # of evictions stopped
- # still housed after 6 months
- # cost savings comparisons
- # improved landlord relationships
- # re-housed to match affordability
- # helped to get full benefits
- # helped to get a job

Contributions:

- Impact on rate of homelessness
- Future avoidance of eviction
- Family stability longer term
- Improved financial management
- Long-term employment

What actions constitute Contribution?

- Collaborating with others on service delivery.
- Sitting on a government committee.
- Meeting with elected officials.
- Attending consultations.
- Writing briefs, articles, blogs.
- Speaking out to groups
- Providing public education
- Advocating to community

Assessing Contribution

Major Influence?

Moderate Influence?

Minor Influence?

The challenge is to make a reasonable claim.

The Game-Changer Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategy and Evaluation

Framework and Tool

Process Framework



Key Questions

- What matters most to whom?
- What are the problems that require resolution?
- Who defines them and who is working on them?
- What progress has there been? Where is there little progress?
- What is your niche? What can you be best at?
- What is your collective capacity to get the work done?
- Who should be your partners?
- What's the end state you envision?
- How will you understand performance?
- How will you learn in order to adapt?

Resources

Sometimes to hear the music you have to turn down the noise: A Game-Changer Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategy and Evaluation. Mark Holmgren,

<http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/game-changer-approach-to-poverty-reduction>

Shared Measurement | The Why is Clear, The How Continues to Develop. Mark Cabaj,

<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Publications/Shared%20Measurement%20Paper.pdf?t=1506016146523>

The Results Accountability Guide, The Results Leadership Group,

http://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/By_Division/DCHP/RFP/RBAGuide.pdf

Contribution Analysis, Better Evaluation: Sharing Information for Better Evaluation,

http://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/contribution_analysis

Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect, John Mayne,

http://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/ILAC_Brief16_Contribution_Analysis.pdf

A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity, Boris B. Volkov and Jean A. King,

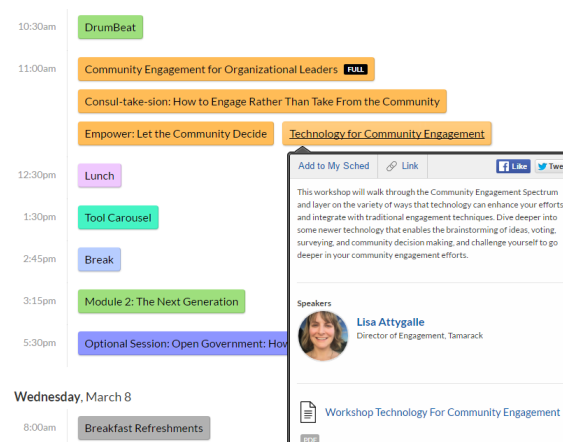
<https://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u350/2014/organizationalcapacity.pdf>

THANKS!

GET EVENT RESOURCES

Access all event resources including PPTs and handouts.

<https://communitychangeinstitute2017.sched.com/>



STAY IN TOUCH

To access tools, resources, webinars, and to stay up to date with the latest in community change, visit:

www.tamarackcommunity.ca

