

## Tamarack Learning Centre - 2-page overview

### Mandate

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

The Tamarack Learning Centre contributes to this mission by developing and publishing online tools, papers and resources for our network of almost 30,000 learners. The Learning Centre also hosts virtual and face to face webinars, training sessions and workshops. Over the past several years, the Learning Centre has also provided coaching and consulting services to our learning community.

The Learning Centre operates as a social enterprise, all revenues generated from workshops, consulting and other services are reinvested in delivering research, development and quality programs and services as well as making all of our resources digitally available through an integrated online platform – [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca).

### History

While Tamarack has always provided coaching and consulting services, it wasn't until 2011, that we began to focus on and build an intentional approach, providing these services beyond the network of Vibrant Communities partners. Between 2010 and 2011, earned revenue in the organization increased from \$297,000 to \$653,000 and it has been growing steadily since that time. In 2019, earned revenue was charted at \$1.3 million. This growth in earned revenue, generated largely through the Learning Centre has created a foundation for the organization and has enabled us to grow the Learning Centre team.

In 2016, the Learning Centre shifted directions slightly and identified an approach that focuses on five interconnected practices for community changemakers. These interconnected practices include: Collective Impact, Community Engagement, Collaborative Leadership, Community Innovation and Evaluating Impact.

This approach has resonated well with our network of learners and the Learning Centre has begun to build tools, resources, workshops and consulting services in each of these practice areas. While independent in focus, building skills in each area is critical to advancing community change efforts.



## Current status

Two trends are impacting the work of the Tamarack Learning Centre. The first trend is the increased competition we are facing from other organizations delivering workshops and online learning. Although we continue to attract learners to Tamarack workshops, we have seen numbers remain relatively consistent or even in some cases, drop to lower levels. There are many options for learning available and while Tamarack offers unique content, the choice that Tamarack members can now access is significant. As well, there are unique competitors in the field. Innoweave, for example, offers workshops to community changemakers and provide start up funding so that these organizations can move from workshop to implementation.

A parallel trend is the increasing request by organizations for coaching and consulting services. While Tamarack has never advertised this service, many individuals, organizations and collaborative groups have reached out to the Tamarack Learning Centre team to provide single day, multi-day and longer-term consulting services. These consulting services have a relationship to Tamarack’s digital and face to face learning services as many consulting clients have either attended a Tamarack event or after accessing a coaching or consulting session, will send their team members to Tamarack learning events.

An example of the connection between different Learning Centre products is that Tamarack facilitated a series of design workshops for the ESDC Learning Branch in the Spring and Summer of 2019 which lead to securing the Communities Building Youth Futures funding.

The Tamarack Learning Centre has both a local and global audience. While Tamarack workshops are mostly held in Canada, we have partnered with organizations in the US to co-host workshops. Tamarack thought leaders are also invited to present at international conferences and consult with international colleague organizations.

## To Consider

5 Risks facing the Learning Centre	5 Opportunities for the Learning Centre
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Increased competition</b> from other organizations (non-profit, for profit and funders) offering workshops and consulting services</li> <li>2. <b>Changing nature of Tamarack learners</b> with far more segmentation in our learner profile audience – too many diverse demands</li> <li>3. <b>Decreased money</b> available for learning activities post-COVID</li> <li>4. Increased number of <b>online learning opportunities</b> available to our network of learners</li> <li>5. <b>Decreased available funding for consulting and coaching services</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Learner engagement</b> - Only 1 in 5 members of the Tamarack learning community access workshops, there is an opportunity to market more intentionally</li> <li>2. There is an opportunity to <b>promote consulting services more intentionally</b> to our learning community and externally</li> <li>3. <b>Better market segmentation</b> can lead to learning products which meet different needs from early career professional to seasoned manager</li> <li>4. <b>Create strategic partnerships</b> within Tamarack and with other service delivers to increase reach and scope of our work</li> <li>5. <b>Continue to focus on the 5 interconnected practices</b> as a way of differentiating Tamarack’s product line</li> </ol>

