

EVALUATION REPORT

PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PILOT

BUILDING EQUITABLE ECONOMIES FOR
IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN PEEL

2021 - 2023



August 31, 2023



Evaluator: Jean-Marie Chapeau,
Consulting Director Evaluating impact
at the Tamarack Institute
In collaboration with the project team:
Karenveer Pannu and Myriam Bérubé

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. The Participatory Grantmaking Project at a Glance.....	5
3. The 4-Level Evaluation Strategy.....	8
4. Results from The Participatory Grantmaking Pilot Process.....	10
5. Outcomes of the Pilot Project at the Partners' Level.....	21
6. Grantees' Projects Outcomes on Target Populations.....	27
7. Reflections on System-Level Change.....	40
8. Conclusion.....	47
A. The Evaluation Methodology	49
B. Evaluation Questions and Indicators.....	51



Introduction

This Evaluation Report presents the results and learnings from the Participatory Grantmaking Pilot that aimed to build more equitable economies for immigrants and refugees in Peel (Ontario, Canada). This pilot, funded by the WES Mariam Assefa Fund and supported by the Tamarack Institute, spanned over two years from 2021 to 2023.

The evaluation aims to assess the degree to which a participatory approach has contributed to empowering communities and whether it has resulted in grantmaking decisions that were responsive to the local context. Additionally, this evaluation examines the changes experienced by the key partners involved in the pilot as they gained a better understanding of the participatory approach, its associated risks, benefits, and value-added. Finally, it assesses the outcomes of the funded projects on the target populations and provides reflections on the conditions for success based on the pilot's experience.

To do so, this report is structured around a 4-level evaluation strategy:

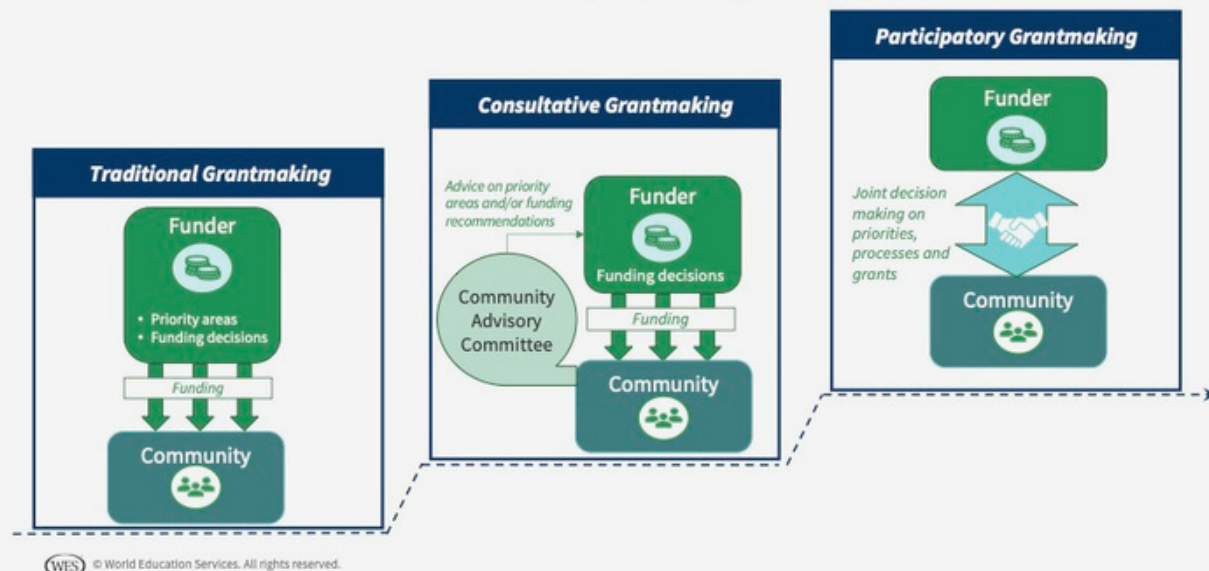
1. Results from the Participatory Grantmaking Pilot Process
2. Outcomes of the Pilot Project at the Partners' Level
3. Grantees' Projects Outcomes on Target Populations
4. Reflections on System-Level Change

The results and learnings presented intend to inform the participatory grantmaking strategy of the WES Mariam Assefa fund – and our hope is that it will serve the philanthropic field as more foundations look towards equitable approaches to funding.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING?

Participatory grantmaking is an approach to funding where decision-making power is ceded from the foundation staff to the communities that will be impacted by the grants. This approach aims to empower community members and ensure that the funding aligns better with the actual needs and priorities of the communities it serves. At its core, participatory grantmaking intends to promote greater equity, transparency, and accountability in philanthropy. - Grantcraft. (2018). Deciding Together: Shifting Power and Resources Through Participatory Grantmaking.

The move from traditional to participatory grantmaking has potential to shift decision-making power to the communities most impacted by funding decisions.



Participatory grantmaking – a practice of engaging community members in funding decisions that affect them – exists along a spectrum. At one end, funders can involve community members in certain parts of the decision-making process. At the other end, funders completely cede decision-making power to community members. This form of grantmaking is modelled on an approach that has been used for decades in community organizing, deliberative democracy, and community development. But the model remains far from mainstream in philanthropy

Marina Nuri in: Radical grantmaking: Shifting decision-making – and power – to communities. *The Philanthropist Journal*, June 2023



SECTION 2

**THE PARTICIPATORY
GRANTMAKING
PROJECT AT A
GLANCE**



The Participatory Grantmaking Pilot Project in Peel was facilitated by a project team from the Tamarack Institute in close collaboration with the WES Mariam Assefa Fund team. From early on, the community collaborative and local immigration partnership, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG), a collaborative acting as the local immigration partnership, played a key role in convening and offering guidance and information on the Peel context.

The pilot can be divided into two main phases of work of one year each:

1. Community engagement, co-design and grantmaking

- Once Peel had been selected as the pilot site, a group of 50 community members/organizations from the Peel Region participated in a virtual community engagement session to identify the needs of the community around the economic mobility of immigrants. They also provided initial input that served as preliminary guidelines to shape the People's Panel recruitment process.
- Through an open call, 12 community residents from the Peel Region were selected, striving for a balance between representing a diversity of lived experiences as immigrants and refugees, as well as professional/volunteer experience in the newcomer settlement sector. One local staff with lived experience as a second-generation immigrant was hired to support the engagement process and implementation of this project and help Tamarack navigate the Peel landscape.
- Tamarack facilitated a co-design process (over 5 sessions) with the People's Panel so that they defined the objective, priorities, criteria and guidelines of a new funding opportunity: Building Equitable Economies for Immigrants and Refugees in Peel. Following a call for proposals, the People's Panel made funding decisions for a total of \$600,000 in grants.





2. Support to Grantees, Capacity-Building and Communications

- Throughout the duration of their one-year funding term, Tamarack was the intermediary organization disbursing the funds to grantees, monitoring progress, receiving reports, and offering technical support to implement their projects. Grantees were also offered coaching and capacity-building opportunities (e.g., participatory evaluation) as well as quarterly cohort calls as spaces for connection and collaboration amongst the grantee partners.
- Below is a short description of each of the grantees' projects:
 - **Afghan Women's Organization (AWO):** WE-café project was an employment-focused, peer-led cohort model that centered employment readiness training while providing wrap-around settlement services and mental health supports.
 - **Family Services of Peel (FSP):** Their collaborative project developed an evidence-based family needs framework for newcomer and refugee clients to develop a more responsive pathway of services.
 - **Laadliyan** engaged women identifying international students to help create training modules for local small/midsize employers on how to make their workplaces safer and more inclusive for women identifying international students.
 - **Peel District School Board (PDSB):** This project launched a new role, a Pathways Coach, designed to support marginalized immigrants and refugees enrolled in adult educational programs and focused on guided job readiness and labour market needs.
 - **MIAG - Center for Diverse Women & Families:** Their collaborative project was a self-employment program for immigrant and refugee women. Participants were trained and supported on how to pursue self-employment opportunities through teaching modules as well as individualized coaching and support.
 - **SEVA Food Bank:** Their project was a Culinary Training for Newcomer Women program which aimed at serving and helping low-income, newcomer women. This project provided participants with culinary training, coaching and mentorship.

Finally, during this phase of the work, the Tamarack and WES Mariam Assefa Fund teams developed learning opportunities and publications to disseminate knowledge and share learnings about the Peel pilot. Both teams also frequently shared their experience with individuals from a wide range of sectors: philanthropy, the immigration sector, municipalities, academics, collaboratives, and networks.



SECTION 3

**THE 4-LEVEL
EVALUATION
STRATEGY**



The evaluation approach utilized within this report aims to identify the outcomes and key learnings that have emerged throughout this pilot project. Tamarack developed an evaluation framework to understand and capture the results that have emerged along the following four dimensions:



Results from the Participatory Grantmaking Pilot Process
Outcomes of the Pilot Project at the Partners' Level
Grantees' Projects Outcomes on Target Populations
Reflections on System-Level Change

After outlining the project's strategy of change, an evaluation plan was developed identifying 12 key evaluation questions and 17 corresponding indicators (see Appendix A).

This evaluation was a collaborative effort between the project team and the Impact Evaluation team at the Tamarack Institute. The evaluation also involved a small committee of individuals with lived experience from the People's Panel. This committee contributed to the development of the evaluation strategy, including the formulation of questions and indicators.



To build capacity, the Tamarack team offered evaluation support to the grantee partners. A training session on participatory evaluation, strategies and data collection methods was offered as well as voluntary one-on-one coaching sessions to give grantee partners the opportunity to improve their existing evaluation strategies.



SECTION 4

**RESULTS FROM THE
PARTICIPATORY
GRANTMAKING PILOT
PROCESS**



To what extent was this process authentically participatory? To what extent were the community members meaningfully engaged?

The participatory approach of the process, as related to the project description presented in section 2, was exemplified through four key dimensions identified in interviews and surveys with the People's Panel, the Tamarack project team, and PNSG.

**Engaging the Peel
community at each step of
the process**

**Empowering community
members to make
decisions through the
People's Panel**

**Partnering with local
organizations
through PNSG**

**Supporting grantee
partners through capacity-
building embedded in the
project**

The authenticity of these four participatory dimensions and the depth of stakeholder engagement are perceived by all interviewed actors as very high. Horizontally, the combination of various complementary participatory strategies involving the above-mentioned actors has contributed to ensuring the overall coherence and authenticity of the approach. Vertically, the depth of involvement of each actor or group of actors in the process (e.g., contribution to the design, reflections on the approach, participation in decision-making processes, sharing of learning, and continuous communication) contributed to making the process meaningful in terms of engagement.



How did the People's Panel leverage their lived experience and knowledge of the community to co-design the funding opportunity and make funding decisions?

The People's Panel was involved at various levels of this project:

Co-design of the funding opportunity,
including the funding criteria

Grantmaking decisions

Participation in field visits and
cohort calls

Project evaluation

After having participated in the process, members from the People's Panel reflected on their experiences (through a post-participation survey) and emphasized key learnings and observations. Their responses highlighted how the recruitment of the People's Panel, their involvement in all key stages, and how the process respected their perspectives all contributed to making this, a genuinely participative process.





The table below presents the average ranking of the Panel members who took part in the survey (7/9 members responsible for the grantmaking decisions) on a scale of 1 to 4 for each question related to their experience.

PEOPLE'S PANEL EXPERIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT (n=7 respondents)

Average ranking
of the 7 People's
Panel members

1. How would you rate the quality support offered to you (this includes: meetings, resources, tools, support of the team, number of meetings etc.) throughout this process? From Low=1 to High=4

3.9/4

2. How would you rate the quality of your contributions to the decision-making process? From Low=1 to High=4

3.7/4

3. To what extent did you utilize your lived-experiences (lived experiences as newcomers/immigrants) within the various stages of this participatory grantmaking process? From Low=1 to High=4

3.6/4

4. To what extent did you utilize your professional experiences (working in the settlement sector) within the various stages of this participatory grant-making process? From Low=1 to High=4

3.3/4

5. From what you observed in this process, how strong is the connection between the funding decisions that were made and the community's needs (as defined/presented in the funding guidelines)? From Low=1 to High=4

3.4/4



Key observations from the **People's Panel experience Self-Assessment:**

- What ranks the highest are the People's Panel members' perceptions of the quality of their contributions and the support they received from Tamarack to play their role.
- The results also confirm that this participatory process allowed the People's Panel to leverage their own lived experiences and to a lesser extent, their professional experiences as well.
- Finally, a significant connection is observed between the community's needs and the funding decisions that were made.

The People's Panel members also shared their key learnings and appreciation of the process. The points below summarize their main insights:

- They gained valuable knowledge about employment, settlement issues and immigration trends that impact newcomers within the Peel Region.
- They learned about the challenges faced by international students and the importance of having enhanced and targeted settlement services for them.
- This project also gave the People's Panel valuable insights into grant applications and decision-making processes.
- In doing this work, they valued the way teamwork and their shared diversity contributed to the process. They valued the different perspectives brought by members from diverse backgrounds. They also acknowledged the importance of considering the varied and diverse struggles faced by immigrants and newcomers.
- They also expressed a sense of hope within the sector, noting the shift towards this community-led and participatory model (in funding approaches and beyond).
- The inclusive and empowering nature of the process was praised, as the process yielded rich discussions that deeply considered of various needs of diverse populations.
- They believed that this work was grounded within the voice of the community and that the grantmaking approach felt more flexible and solutions-focused.
- The Panel expressed gratitude for the opportunity to contribute and hoped for more newcomers and immigrants to have such chances.



The integral role the People's Panel played is validated by observations made by the Tamarack project team on the Panel's contributions and the way they shaped the process. The Panel approached their roles with a deep commitment and continuously fed the process with their ideas, proposals, counterproposals, and insightful questions. Their own lived experiences and their understanding of the local context informed their decision-making, as they were primarily interested in funding projects that meaningfully responded to local needs and interests.

The diversity within the People's Panel allowed them to identify certain programmatic blind spots, such as recognizing the type of demographics that are not typically reached within existing newcomer programming. The decision-making and dialogue the People's Panel engaged in was grounded within this thinking. When making decisions, they were actively looking at applicants whose projects were looking to engage marginalized individuals and communities.

Feedback from the People's Panel:



The first few sessions, we focused on sharing our thoughts (we were observing), but over time it became dialogue (more reciprocal). Because people were in conversation with each other, they were listening actively. We were engaging deeply and listening keenly.



We went from a collaborative group to a participatory group.



To what extent the participatory approach (this includes the People’s Panel and Tamarack’s role as an intermediary organization) added value to this project’s process in comparison to a more conventional fund allocation process?

Three main elements emerged regarding the added value generated by the participatory dimension of this project:

1

The relevance of the local needs initially identified during the community engagement session in Peel, divided into individual, organizational and system-wide issues helped to frame the subsequent work of the People’s Panel. The hypothesis that a more conventional approach to needs analysis (typically carried out internally by the funder) would have led to different results is confirmed by the WES Mariam Assefa Fund’s team (as expressed through their evaluation interview).

It should also be noted that the 50 community members/organizations who shared a vision of the local needs also collectively contributed to defining the parameters which guided the recruitment of individuals for the People’s Panel. This may have also generated greater coherence in the participatory dimensions of the project, as the needs analysis influenced the composition of the People’s Panel.

2

The second element of added value lies in the relevance and responsiveness of the grantmaking decisions made by the Peoples' Panel. Their knowledge of the field, combined with their lived experiences of potential solutions that could be implemented in their community, resulted in funding decisions that were responsive to the Peel context. This process produced diverse and innovative results, which might not have been possible if the process had been more conventional and applied rigid criteria.

An important point to note is that the selection of grantees mainly focused on projects that provided direct services to individuals. The People's Panel applied a pragmatic vision given the amount of available funding and the one-year duration of the grants for the pilot. They felt it did not allow for more complex projects focused on long-term system changes. The high potential for short-term impact can be seen in this context as an added value. A more conventional approach to funding, according to the partners interviewed in this evaluation, would probably have supported organizations working on larger scale changes, which could have been more challenging to launch and to measure in the pilot timeframe.



3

A final added value lies in the perceived legitimacy of the decision-making process by both funded and unfunded organizations. Being chosen (or not chosen) by members of the community brought a dimension of coherence and robustness to the selection, informed by a well-analyzed and well-understood needs assessment by the People's Panel members. In other words, there was greater transparency regarding the rationale that led to the decision, unlike a conventional, potentially more opaque funding allocation process.

“The organizations selected for funding by the People’s Panel represented the values and goals that the WES Mariam Assefa Fund would want to see in organizations it funds. Most of them were BIPOC-led and focused on serving the most underfunded groups in Peel Region. With their one-year projects, they are designing and launching new models of service delivery that they have been thinking about for a while but were struggling to find funding for.

Marina Nuri in: *Radical grantmaking: Shifting decision-making – and power – to communities.*
The Philanthropist Journal, June 2023



What are some effective approaches to community participation and trust building learned through this pilot project? To what extent did the participatory process result in responsive funding decisions that directed funding to projects that aptly address the community's needs?

Four main key learnings have emerged from interviews with the project team and grantee partners, and from a final grantee partners survey, regarding what they perceived as effective approaches to community participation and trust building:

1. Building legitimacy through an iterative process of community engagement:

Each step of the process was built on previous input from community members so that this iterative process built the legitimacy of decisions along the way. A prime example is the community engagement session that contributed to the understanding of the community's needs and establishing guidelines for the recruitment of the People's Panel, which then built on these and their lived experiences to co-design the funding opportunity and make funding decisions.

2. Activating diverse voices and perspectives from the community:

The connections and ongoing conversations between the Tamarack project team and multiple actors (the People's Panel, PNSG, the grantee partners, and the WES Mariam Assefa Fund) contributed to the validation and continuous adaptation of the project that would not be as effective and responsive if any one component were missing from this ecosystem.



3. Creating safe spaces and effective facilitation design:

The trust developed among the People's Panel members and in the participatory process played a significant role to build their confidence in their ability to navigate differences. This highlights the effectiveness of the facilitation process designed by Tamarack and the creation of safe spaces to foster trust, connectivity, and synergy, enabling the group to work towards consensus-building.

4. Bridging Power Differences:

As an intermediary organization, Tamarack contributed to bridging the gap that often exists between the funder and the community. PNSG as a local partner also played a connector role. These organizations facilitated the communication process as they contributed to bringing what was perceived as a more "neutral" voice. Tamarack's direct relationship with PNSG was also crucial to the pilot's success, as it allowed for connections with the broader Peel network and facilitated the communication flow all along the pilot.

“ I have found this kind of capacity-building and support to be atypical among other funders, many of whom I only speak to when it comes to reporting or sometimes not at all. Tamarack's team seemed to be deeply invested in the project's succeeding and in our team's success, which was a major asset and a huge blessing when doing this work. - A grantee partner ”



In summary

The definition of success for this section, as defined by the evaluation committee in Appendix A, was based on two outcomes:

Perception: The participatory process is perceived by all those involved as legitimate, relevant and meaningfully engaging lived experiences

Empowerment: This participatory approach contributes to empowering the community and leads to grantmaking decisions that are responsive to the local context

Based on our findings and assessments of the process, we have observed **that all those involved perceive this participatory approach as legitimate, relevant, and (for the People's Panel) meaningfully engaging their lived experiences.**

The multi-layered participatory process, which incorporated a local partner organization convening other local nonprofits, a panel of citizens with lived experience, and a staff member recruited from the community, has successfully infused the voices of the community at every level of the project. It has also fostered strong alignment among all project components, from the initial goals of the funder to the specific responses to local needs.

This participatory approach has contributed to empowering communities across various levels, encompassing needs assessment, funding decisions and learning generation. It has contributed to genuine community engagement right from the project's inception.

Finally, the deliberate design of this process has led to grantmaking decisions that were highly responsive to the unique local context.



SECTION 5

**OUTCOMES OF
THE PILOT
PROJECT AT THE
PARTNERS' LEVEL**



What changes were observed by the partners involved (e.g., mindset, process, approaches, practices)?

We asked key partners (WES Mariam Assefa fund, Tamarack as an intermediary organization, PNSG as a local partner, and grantee organizations) in interviews and surveys, to identify the various changes they could observe in their organizations related to the experimentation. Below are the changes identified and an explanation of the causal links identified between these changes and the various components of the participatory process.

Increased capacity to share about participatory grantmaking leading to more connections with other funders, including municipal governments. For both WES and Tamarack, the increased capacity is a direct consequence of the concrete experimentation and the reflexivity generated throughout the process (e.g., regular check-ins and monitoring, Peoples' Panel reflection sessions, etc.). The articles from Tamarack in the [Social Innovations Journal](#) and WES Mariam Assefa Fund in [The Philanthropist Journal](#) are two relevant examples that captured the lessons learned to share with other funders.

Increased capacity to incorporate participatory grantmaking learnings and skills into organizational practices. A deepened interest in incorporating participatory elements in the work, for all parties interviewed, has led to accelerated internal conversations about participatory approaches. This increased interest and capacity are due to the fact that their organizations have learned how to handle a participatory grantmaking process and feel more confident in doing so. From the local partner organization, PNSG, being involved in the different activities proposed by Tamarack (e.g., People's Panel co-design and grantmaking sessions, ongoing conversations) has made a significant contribution to their own capacity to integrate participatory approaches.



Increased capacity to incorporate participatory grantmaking approaches in new funding strategies or new projects and moving beyond the usual way of consulting communities by reproducing some elements of the process experimented in the Peel Region (e.g., Community Panel or advisory, engaging people with lived experience). At the funder's level, the project has generated an acceleration of the conversations and reflections on participatory grantmaking within and outside their organization.

A greater understanding of the diversity of experiences among newcomers, immigrants, and refugees for all the partners interviewed. This understanding has been generated through a deeper connection with local needs and realities, the observations and reflections of the People's Panel and the continuous dialogue with grantee partners, including the field visits organized in March 2023.

Confirmation of the intention to concede power. The funder's leadership accepted to concede their decision-making power (analysis and funding) to the community and agreed to trust and let go of their usual ways of proceeding. At the funder's level, this power shift was generated by the strong organizational intention of experimenting with an innovative participatory approach to grantmaking, and the early learnings of the experimentation confirm, in their perspective, the relevance of such a shift.

Trusting the process. At the local partner level, the quality of the design of the project allowing continuous attention to trust building and empowerment has facilitated collective confidence in the participatory decision-making process. For example, the capacity to work with a People's Panel has been raised as a direct outcome of the project.

Additionally, grantee partners reported that they have **increased their capacity to network, share skills, and exchange knowledge with other local projects.** They see this as a direct result of the participatory nature of the project and the opportunities for collective conversations and learning.



What are some benefits and risks of this participatory approach for the partners involved?

Some key elements emerged from the data collected from the grantee partners, the intermediary and local organizations and the funder:

Smaller **grantee organizations** benefitted from this model (as opposed to a more conventional funding model) as they were given the opportunity to build strong relationships with the other grantees, the Tamarack team and PNSG. The participatory processes facilitated key learnings that strengthened the capacities of the grantee organizations. The participatory process also ensured transparent communication between the different stakeholders, which allowed for a high level of trust to be fostered.

At the **funder's level**, the benefits identified were linked to the way this process allows for funders to efficiently make investments that are in alignment with their values and objectives. This project was a valuable experiment that has served as a lever to move forward with new participatory projects. The funder (WES Mariam Assefa fund) has now integrated new targets for participatory grantmaking.

Finally, the process has demonstrated a capacity to support smaller organizations and **BIPOC-led organizations**, which may not have the visibility of more established organizations, and which would otherwise have missed out on the valuable financial support.

Smaller organizations can benefit a great deal from such opportunities as opposed to conventional funding models. This allowed us to build a strong relationship with the other grantees, the Tamarack team as well as the WES team, which is something that doesn't always happen when an organization receives funding.

- A grantee partner



What are some common risks of a participatory approach for the partners involved and how have they been mitigated?

Some key elements emerged from the data collected from the grantee partners, the intermediary and local organizations and the funder:

One initial risk to consider is **related to empowering local actors (in this case, members of the People's Panel) who may be contested by other local actors in terms of the legitimacy of decisions.** The risk of generating polarization at the local level did not materialize in this project, primarily due to the transparency and sequential nature of the decisions made in the process. Preemptive communication with potential project implementers beforehand and announcing the decisions made afterward helped mitigate this risk. Another factor that contributed to this was forming a partnership with a local organization that was trusted by the community.

A second risk is associated with **the likelihood of conflicts of interest for decision-makers, given their close ties to their community.** In the project, the risk was mitigated by identifying the potential conflicts of interest at all decision-making stages and acting accordingly. The role of a facilitating intermediary in the process can be crucial in such cases as they can support local actors in identifying potential conflicts of interest and help provide an appropriate response. For example, in the project, a potential conflict of interest was declared by a member of the People's Panel. Accordingly, the individual withdrew from the decision-making process at the appropriate time. 3 out of 12 members of the initial co-design team also stepped down from the People's Panel as their organization decided to apply for funding.

A third risk is **the misalignment between the funder and the locally made decisions.** This risk has been mitigated through two means: firstly, by ensuring a clear stance from the funder regarding its posture and priorities (in this case, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund completely stepped out of the process intentionally), and secondly, by fostering ongoing communication and dialogue between the funder and local actors throughout the process with the support of a neutral intermediary organization. This contributed to a shared understanding and alignment of objectives.

Finally, a fourth risk is **the multiplication of steps at various organizational and strategic levels, thus complicating the approach.** Once again, the role of the process conductor played by the intermediary organization helped maintain a focus on a flexible, agile, and prompt process. One aspect appreciated by the People's Panel was precisely the perception of being integrated into a diligent process where the Tamarack team ensured that the various steps were completed within the agreed-upon deadlines.



In summary

The definition of success for this section, as defined by the evaluation committee in Appendix A, was formulated as follows:

Mindset shifts are observed by the key partners involved in the participatory grantmaking pilot project, as they gained a greater understanding of the participatory approach and its value-added.

The examination of the project's outcomes, as well as its associated benefits and risks, facilitates the identification of changes that extend beyond shifts in mindset, which were already prevalent in some of the partners (as was the case with WES Mariam Assefa Fund) prior to the experimentation. If we were to identify a common change among all partners, we could characterize it as placing trust in the "deep" participatory process, transcending mere consultation and believing in its ability to generate consensus-based decisions firmly grounded in the community's needs.





SECTION 6

**GRANTEES' PROJECTS
OUTCOMES ON
TARGET
POPULATIONS**



How did the design of the grantees' projects consider the wide-ranging needs of the target populations and generate collaborative solutions?

All six projects have demonstrated a systematic consideration of the needs of the targeted populations. **There is a clear alignment between these needs and the actions that were developed by the grantees.**

We can observe that the programs and actions developed have focused on providing a targeted response to the identified challenges. The project selection made by the People's Panel primarily focused on projects that addressed **the immediate need for training and holistic support toward the economic integration of immigrants and refugees.** In all cases, the grantee partners have shown a commitment to addressing the identified community needs precisely. This has resulted in the development of programming that specifically supported women and other marginalized immigrants and refugees.

The **collective dimension** in responding to these needs varies from one project to another, but all six projects incorporate this dimension both in their programming (e.g., workshops, cohort-based approaches, networking, and connections within and outside the group) and in the development of their local partnerships (access to community trainers, collaboration with placement organizations, and public or private educational institutions).

The following table provides a concise overview of the two key dimensions within the grantee projects: **needs and corresponding collaborative strategies.**



TARGET POPULATION NEEDS AND COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES

NEEDS IDENTIFIED	COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES
AWO: The Afghan Women's Organization Refugee and Immigrant Services (AWO)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program was implemented to address community issues related to employment for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. • AWO support many refugees who face significant challenges in finding employment. • Many clients are not job-ready, which adds to the workload of employment advisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program focused on cohort models to support participants in developing their community connection. Emphasis was placed on flexibility, finding ways to engage participants who may have varying commitments. • A curriculum was developed to be utilized by peer leaders. The development of the curriculum involved input and support from an advisory committee, which helped identify the specific needs of the newcomer demographic. • The project successfully facilitated and organized six cohorts, engaging a total of 88 individuals who had recently immigrated to Canada and required employment support. • Bridging strategies are being considered to connect participants with relevant resources and opportunities. • Each cohort had a dedicated WhatsApp group to maintain connectivity. Creating a supportive space was one of the project's objectives, allowing employment-seeking refugees and immigrants in the Peel Region to meet, expand their knowledge, and build connections.
Family Services of Peel	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers needs are often addressed individually, despite coming to Canada as a family unit. • FSP conducted a study to generate data that will inform the provision of coordinated services to newcomer families in the Peel region and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project yielded a valuable data set as well as frameworks (family needs framework). A community-based participatory approach was applied, involving community members, organizations, researchers, and relevant stakeholders. • The project involved collaboration between Family Services of Peel (social service agency), the University of Toronto Mississauga, and was guided by an advisory committee consisting of experienced service providers from the settlement sector in Peel (including members from the People's Panel). • 86 immigrants living in the region of Peel participated in the survey. • Findings from the project have been synthesized and analyzed - and have led to the development of two models: The family needs framework and a proposed service pathway.
PDSB	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service navigation and mental health are prominent concerns in the Peel Region. • Highly skilled individuals are often compelled to take on survival jobs. • There is a need for improved digital literacy skills and preparation. • Elderly learners encounter numerous barriers in accessing resources and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from a Pathways Coach: In addition to individual appointments with Pathways Coach, in terms of collaborative solutions, 354 learners took part in employment-related workshops, job fairs and community partners information sessions. • Other grantee partners from the Pilot were invited to participate in the job fairs. • PDSB connected and engaged with over 100 business and industry contacts to refer students. • PDSB enhanced the referral networks through partnerships with community agencies for support services.



NEEDS IDENTIFIED	COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES
Laadliyan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs for building equitable workplaces for women identifying international students • Recruited and engaged 33 women identifying international students - their lived experiences shaped the training modules for employers and Laadliyan's programming. 	<p>Community is at the center of their programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement with these women identifying international students led to key partnerships with community organizations (including academic institutions such as Algoma university, Lambton college and Sheridan college). <p>Consultation work :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report presented key learnings and recommendations for stakeholders who engage with international students. • The Laadliyan team conducted bi-weekly info sessions/workshops on topics highlighted by these students. • 8 sessions in total (topics included: legal rights, employment rights, financial literacy, professional development, etc.). All these sessions were meant to support these women as they take part in the workforce.
MIAG	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment among immigrant population and visible minorities. • Low annual gross income for their families. • Reflects the need for a program that equips immigrant women with entrepreneurship skills needed for the Canadian market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total of 3 cohorts, with 3 rounds of programming. • Each cohort consisted of 9 sessions, with 1 session per week. • Sessions were hosted by different partners, offering diverse knowledge and information. • Each cohort received 2 group coaching sessions. • Participants also received 3 individual coaching sessions. • A webpage and Facebook group were created to market the products of self-employed women. • A WhatsApp group was established for communication, questions, and information exchange among participants.
SEVA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for professional training for newcomer women and pathways to quality employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective professional training workshops • Collective employment and entrepreneurship support • Partnership with Hospitality Training Action Centre 75 to support learners in their job search



Throughout the project, grantee partners demonstrated a high capacity to identify and pinpoint the needs of their target demographics with a high level of precision and granularity (with regards to how they named specific population subgroups, specific issues, etc.), as shown through their proposals, reporting. The ability to analyze and understand local issues was central to the criteria used by the People's Panel, and it is evident that this criterion was taken into consideration in the decision-making process. One hypothesis is that the lived experiences of the People's Panel members helped to validate the accuracy and relevance of the needs identified by the selected organizations.

The overall design of the projects shows a strong alignment between the identified needs and proposed solutions. Upon closer examination of this alignment, five observations can be made regarding the projects and activities developed:

1

First, the projects offered **targeted actions tailored to the specific target population** (preparation and professional qualifications, etc.), addressing the need for contextually appropriate interventions for newcomers at risk of marginalization.

2

Second, the **programs consistently aimed at fostering economic integration** through a progression of steps, which ultimately fostered an empowering environment for individuals.

3

Third, **most projects emphasized the importance of networking, peer support, and personal and professional co-development**, addressing the need to combat the isolation experienced by individuals moving through the economic integration process.

**4**

Fourth, all projects demonstrated an ability to **develop collaborative strategies** with other partners in the community, responding to the need for generating collective impact through a network of diverse stakeholders in the region.

5

Finally, **most projects considered structural employment barriers** (e.g., rights, language proficiency, mental health), resulting in learnings that could be utilized to influence systems. This contributes to answering the need to directly or indirectly address the underlying causes that hinder the economic integration of immigrants in the Peel community.

“ It is interesting to note that this continuum of proposed solutions covers the three levels of needs identified at the beginning of the project: individual, organizational, and system change. This is noteworthy because the funding choices primarily prioritized direct services to the population. This coherence between needs and strategies is a significant outcome of the project.

- **A Tamarack's team member**



What outcomes have been generated on target populations?

The six projects supported within this participatory process implemented evaluation measures, mostly participatory in nature, to assess their impact on the target populations. During the project, some evaluation training/coaching was provided to the organizations on a voluntary basis. However, it is important to note that three out of the six selected projects already had strong evaluation capabilities, including personnel, external consultants or researchers and internal competencies (such as existing monitoring and evaluation tools). Therefore, all projects were able to develop strategies for strategic learning and measuring short-term outcomes on individuals.

To achieve this, the organizations employed a mix of highly relevant methods, such as pre/post-questionnaires directed at the clientele, individual interviews, internal monitoring, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and impact assessments. In the case of one project, which experienced a significant delayed start, the survey conducted with the beneficiaries yielded a very low response rate, limiting the production of significant quantitative data. Thus, the evaluation relied on the observation of outcomes.

The quantity of data obtained by the projects is interesting and illustrates the impact of actions on the targeted populations. However, considering the simplicity of the implementation of methods used and the sample sizes of the surveyed individuals, within the context of short-term projects, caution is advised when interpreting the quantitative data. In this context, the testimonials, narratives, and stories shared by the organizations in reports, reflection sessions, and field visits prove invaluable in complementing and refining the quantitative data.



The tables in the following pages aim to present the main results generated by the six projects on the individuals served and within the community. The synthesized information presented is derived from the projects' final reports and the field visits conducted with the organizations by the Tamarack project team.

The first table on p. 35 presents an overview of the measured and observed effects of the six projects looking at the approximate level of impact (High, Moderate, or None) of each project. Based on the information shared by the grantee partners, six dimensions were identified to classify this information:

<p>1. Access to educational pathways (professional training, adult education, college studies, English language training, etc.)</p>	<p>2. Improvement of well-being and mental health</p>	<p>3. Attainment of full-time or part-time employment, sometimes combined with an educational pathway</p>
<p>4. Job readiness (networking, resume writing, interview preparation, confidence-building, etc.)</p>	<p>5. Enhancement of the ability to assert one's rights (in dealing with employers and other actors such as landlords that may hinder individuals' progress)</p>	<p>6. Systemic changes (direct or indirect influence of actors contributing to maintaining barriers or, conversely, playing a role in alleviating those barriers)</p>

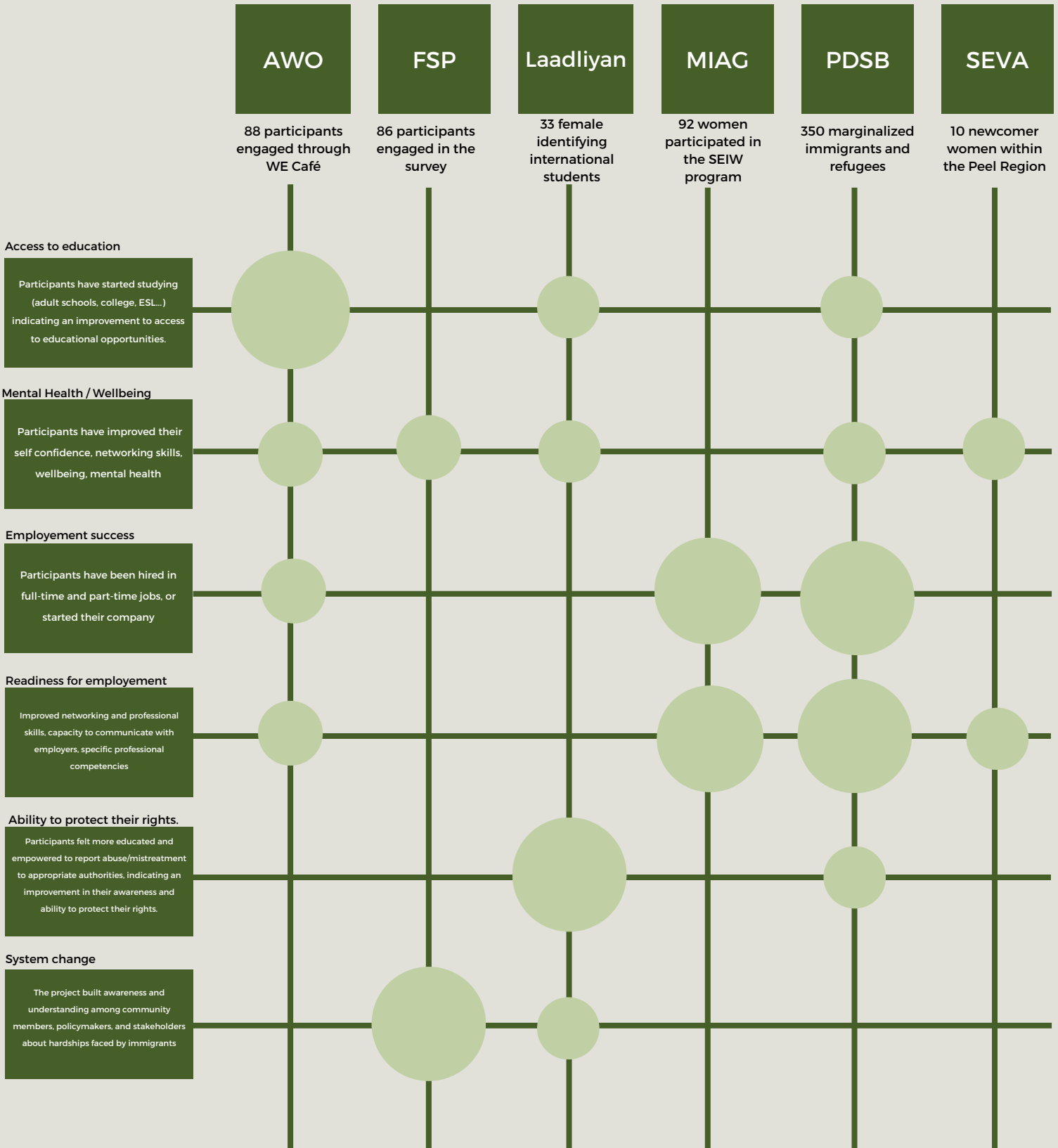
The second table on pages 36 and 37 provides a summary of key data presented by the organizations in both quantitative and qualitative terms (observations or testimonials).

PROJECTS IMPACTS MATRIX



Type of changes observed and measured on the target population's access to employment

Source : final reports



88 registered participants
 66 participants supported by 3 peer leaders
 97% are refugees
 8 have started studying in LINC and Adult Schools
 15 have taken English classes
 7 are currently pursuing their studies in college
 2 are studying in college and ESL courses and have been employed
 4 have been hired in full-time and part-time jobs
 28 participants have not made any changes in their professional and educational life
 2 participants were unreachable

Afghan Women Organization

Participants shared that program:
 Helped with networking and interview preparation
 Taught them the importance of volunteerism
 Shed light on the significance of linkedin during job hunt
 Gave valuable information on how best to approach job search
 Helped them to gain confidence.

Was particularly helpful for those who were new to Canada, in preparing them for job interviews and making connections with potential employers.

One participant shared that when they first arrived in Canada, they felt their education and work experience were not useful, as the qualifications required in Canada were higher. However, the program gave them the idea and confidence that they could still use their skills, experience, and education in Canada.

"For newcomers who don't know anything about Canada yet, the most important thing is to find a job and learn how to prepare for it. The session was very helpful, and I learned how to make a resume and prepare for interviews. Before joining the program, I had some experience, but it was different from what I learned here. I used to add lots of unnecessary details in my resume back home."

86 immigrants living in the Peel Region participated in the survey
 This research has resulted in key recommendations for future research and service practice to enhance capability to meet family needs, increase continued and coordinated service pathways and enhance mental health and resilience of newcomer families

Family Services of Peel

Finding from the project have been synthesized and analyzed to develop two models:

The family needs framework : a family-focused strengths-based framework that serves to support assessment process of the settlement and related needs of the family with a focus on the promotion of family resilience

A proposed service pathway that enhances access to and continuation through services for newcomer immigrant and refugee families. This pathway has 5 key components: a widespread database for record keeping; a system navigator; pre-arrival service mobilization; post arrival services and coordination of services and the referral loop

Knowledge transfer :

A website with key pieces of info/findings/research and the frameworks + an interactive map of newcomer service agencies in the Peel region to compare the density of service agencies to the changes in immigrant population and household composition in Peel

33 female-identifying international students
 Informal feedback:
 Increase in competencies and empowerment to report their abuse/mistreatment to appropriate authorities.

Laadliyan

Increased awareness and understanding among community members, policymakers and stakeholders about hardships faced by female identifying international students

This work led to key partnerships and collaborations - research findings acted a catalyst for collaborative initiatives and join efforts to improve the students experiences and provide appropriate resources

Policy changes and support services - evidence in research will have potential to influence discussions around support services available to international students

Empowerment and advocacy : overall, this project engaged 33 south asian women international students; 10 small business employers from the Peel region, empowered vulnerable south Asian women international students and cultivated meaningful community for them; provided these women with information about their rights and where to go for support, and presented these women opportunities to enhance their mental health and wellness

In total, **92** women participated in the SEIW program

63% reported very good or good understanding of the concepts of self-employment (post course)

70% reported they are ready to start their own business after having received this training

24% reported they are somewhat ready to start their own business

6% reported that they are not ready start their own business

97% of participants stated that they benefited from their coaching sessions

51% developed their products

41% are in progress to develop their products or services.

43% are selling their products or services,

16% are in progress of selling their products.

94% reported an improvement in their knowledge of using the business model canvas tool in business.

91% indicated improved knowledge of building a company profile.

69% stated that they are ready to start their own business.

MIAG

Participants shared that they feel like they have an entrepreneur mindset

Participants that connected meaningfully to other cohort members were able to build a community

Enhanced the employability of **350** marginalized immigrants and refugees through workshops, fairs, information sessions and one-on-one meetings

Received a total of 22 responses to survey

68.2% were satisfied with the job fairs

57% left the fair with a better idea of the types of jobs available; skills+ education needed

66.7% feel more confident in their ability to interact with employers/recruiters in their job search

Of the 74 learners who were looking for immediate work, **25** confirmed that they have achieved this goal

93% of students indicated that as a result of working with the Pathways Coach, they were better prepared to find and maintain employment.

100% of students indicated that as a result of working with the Pathways Coach, they have more knowledge about job search and possible pathways to employment, including education and training.

93.3% of students indicated that as a result of working with the Pathways Coach, they feel that they are closer to reaching their employment goals.

100% of students indicated that they were either likely or very likely to refer the Pathways Coach's services to a classmate or friend at PDSB who needs employment help.

PDSB

Pathways coach provided essential emotional support and reassurance which allowed learners to navigate job search with confidence

Many learners did not recognize the value their job/professional experiences from back home had – the Pathways Coach helped them recognize the valuable experiences they had

Program served a total of **10** participants (newcomer women within the Peel Region). Participants had more one-on-one time with the chef and were able to develop meaningful connections with their cohort members.

SEVA

Participants gained relevant, industry-standard culinary and hospitality skills and received training that aided in their job readiness.

Via employment training, participants gained knowledge and developed skills in areas such as business entrepreneurship, resume writing, tips on how to interview, how to job search, and good customer service skills.



Globally the six projects demonstrated clear evidence of impact across the different dimensions connected to the project's objectives. It is important to note that some projects targeted more than one objective of the pilot project.

A more detailed analysis of the results related to the four priorities defined by the People's Panel, however, shows more uneven outcomes.

1. Engage industry and employers to position marginalized immigrants and refugees' skills to emerging markets' needs. This objective was prioritized by three projects. Some projects effectively positioned participants' skills to meet the demands of the evolving labour market, equipping them with relevant competencies and increasing their employability. Nonetheless, some projects have experienced difficulties in helping participants to secure employment and only one project really succeeded in engaging industry and employers.

2. Develop entrepreneurship skills and job readiness while aiming for system change to create self-employment pathways for marginalized immigrants and refugees. This objective was prioritized by three projects. One project successfully fostered self-employment opportunities by providing participants with the necessary support, resources, and knowledge to establish their own businesses or pursue entrepreneurial ventures. However, for several projects, effectively engaging employers remained a challenge.

3. Implement the holistic integration of mental health support into settlement and employment services. Three projects prioritized this objective. Recognizing the importance of mental well-being, most of the projects integrated mental health support into their services, addressing the holistic needs of participants and promoting their overall well-being.

4. Align service navigation and accessibility to the marginalized immigrants' and refugees' perspectives and experiences. Four projects prioritized this objective and were successful in improving, at different scales, access to essential services and proactively addressing barriers faced by participants, ensuring equitable opportunities, and removing obstacles that hindered their progress.



Reflecting on the Four Priorities and the Impact Observed:

While most projects managed to demonstrate tangible changes among the individuals they serve, it is more challenging to identify the broader and long-term impact of the projects within the community. Implicitly, we can deduce that improved access to employment for newcomers has significant collateral effects on families, close contacts, and the wider community. Additionally, all six projects have demonstrated an ability to foster new relationships and partnerships within the community, which could have a long-term multiplier effect.

The projects collectively reached a critical mass of approximately 650 individuals through various means, which in itself is a significant output at the community level. However, it should be noted that some projects reached a smaller number of individuals (between 10 and 33 people). The organizations have shared a number of challenges that have hindered their anticipated outreach of the projects, including time constraints and recruitment difficulties.

In summary

The definition of success for this section, as defined by the evaluation committee in Appendix A, was formulated as follows: **Grantee partners demonstrate employment-focused impact towards serving and empowering marginalized immigrants and refugees through projects that offer holistic, responsive, and collaborative solutions grounded in the Peel community.**

Overall, we can observe that the six projects contributed to achieving this result, with some nuances. The main impacts were not directly focused on improving access to employment but rather on prerequisites for employability (especially for marginalized immigrants and refugees), which may take some time before transforming into job opportunities. Direct access to quality employment was realized for only a limited number of people. However, it would be interesting to measure the long-term effects (e.g., after a year) of the work these organizations have implemented in a relatively short period of time (professional skills, knowledge of rights, mental health, holistic support for individuals and families) on employment outcomes.



SECTION 7

**REFLECTIONS ON
SYSTEM-LEVEL
CHANGE**



How many funding organizations have increased their awareness of the benefits of participatory approaches?

The number of funders sensitized to the reality and benefits of participatory grantmaking through the dissemination strategies utilized by Tamarack and the WES Mariam Assefa Fund teams was one of the indicators identified in this evaluation. However, it is extremely challenging to estimate, given the numerous opportunities for sharing and dissemination that were seized throughout the project. The final report of the pilot project, shared by the Tamarack team, lists around ten specific publications (including some with wide reach, such as Future of Good, PhiLab, and Social Innovations Journal) and dissemination events that discussed the project and its learnings. The WES Mariam Assefa Fund team also widely shared their learnings through publications (such as The Philanthropist Journal) and at events where they were invited to share their experience.

Without venturing to estimate a precise number of actors involved, it can be observed that the project has had a significant reach within the North American philanthropic ecosystem, and likely exceeded initial expectations. Undoubtedly, it will continue to have an impact in the coming months.

In addition to the philanthropic ecosystem, an unintended collateral effect has been the interest expressed by non-philanthropic actors: public institutional actors, local consultations, and networks of community organizations who have had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with philanthropic actors.





? What are the necessary conditions for success based on this experience?
And what conditions are necessary to share and scale this project?

Based on the information gathered in this evaluation, several points for reflection emerge:

1

A shift in culture and governance rules within funding entities, whether philanthropic or institutional: Yielding a portion of decision-making power in the analysis and allocation of funding implies a major cultural change, strong reflexivity, and strong leadership among the stakeholders involved. Two areas of reflection are necessary for this cultural shift. The first concerns the paradox related to risk perception. To what extent is the perceived risk by decision-making bodies in transferring power related to fund allocation counterbalanced by the assurance of generating more relevant and coherent investments through a participatory approach? The second area of reflection is related to a shift in focus regarding the anticipated impact sought. In a participatory approach, funders will likely need to accept a certain level of unpredictability regarding the types and magnitude of impacts to be generated, while becoming highly attentive to new forms of outcomes to observe, such as the ability of a community to amplify a project among less visible populations or those at high risk of exclusion or facing emerging social challenges.

2

Neutral intermediaries to facilitate processes and help generate convergence: A participatory grantmaking strategy entails significant changes from conventional ways of granting and receiving funds. Whether it involves communicating mutual expectations, resolving administrative issues, validating processes, providing feedback loops, or recruiting actors involved in setting grant parameters and making decisions, managing such a process can be complex and fraught with pitfalls that can impede progress. The presence of an intermediary between the community and the funder is a key condition for the success of an approach like the one tested in this project. In this case, the presence of a second local intermediary working in coordination with Tamarack helped anchor the project in the community.



3

Continuous learning and capacity-building strategies: A participatory grantmaking process like the one tested in this project provides opportunities for learning at all levels: during needs analysis, decision-making, various stakeholder dialogues, and evaluations. Furthermore, the deep intention to foster stakeholder empowerment can lead to training and knowledge-sharing opportunities among local actors within the process.

4

Genuine alignment of all stakeholders towards equity: Participatory grantmaking is not only about transferring decision-making power. The essence of such an approach is an authentic pursuit of equity in all dimensions of the process. This pursuit of equity requires an open posture, curiosity, and sensitivity toward the systemic phenomena that generate exclusion, both at the individual level and for specific population groups.



How did the participatory grantmaking process contribute to empowering communities? And grantees?

The pilot project took place over a relatively short period of time and on a somewhat limited scale (number of organizations, allocated funds). It is likely that some effects of the project in the community will be felt in the long-term, such as the impacts of collaboration between organizations, educational and research actors, institutions, and the business community.

What is community empowerment?

Community empowerment refers to the process of increasing the capacity, resources, and collective power of individuals and groups within a community to take control of their own lives and make decisions that affect them. It is about giving communities the tools, knowledge, and opportunities to participate in and influence social, economic, political, and cultural processes that shape their well-being and development.

Key elements of community empowerment include:

- **Participation and Inclusion:** Ensuring that all community members have the opportunity to actively engage in decision-making processes and that marginalized or vulnerable groups are included.
- **Access to Information and Education:** Providing communities with the information and knowledge they need to understand their rights, resources, and opportunities.
- **Building Social Capital:** Fostering connections and relationships within the community, promoting trust, collaboration, and a sense of collective identity.
- **Skill Building:** Equipping community members with skills and abilities to address their challenges effectively and to advocate for their interests.
- **Strengthening Local Institutions:** Supporting and strengthening local organizations and institutions to be more responsive to community needs and priorities.
- **Advocacy and Influence:** Empowering communities to advocate for change, influence policies, and challenge structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice.



From the learning shared by partner organizations and community members, we can identify some elements of response regarding the impacts of the project in terms of community empowerment, while keeping in mind that the project was implemented on a relatively small-scale in the context of a region such as Peel:

By involving community members with lived experience, and local organizations in the process, the participatory grantmaking process ensured that the voices and perspectives of the community were heard and considered. This inclusive approach provided an opportunity for people who experienced the challenges of newcomers' economic integration to participate in shaping the funding decisions that directly impacted their communities.

The process facilitated capacity building among the six grantee partners, the People's Panel, and the local immigration partnership by providing training, learning opportunities, and resources to support the projects and the process. This helped strengthen skills, knowledge, and abilities to address local needs effectively.

The participatory grantmaking process fostered collaboration and networking among community partners. Through partnerships and shared experiences, organizations were able to leverage collective strengths, share resources, and establish networks that may extend beyond the grant period. This collaborative environment created a supportive ecosystem for community development and empowerment and for the development of efficient integration pathways.

By actively involving community members in the grantmaking process, the approach empowered them to take ownership of the initiatives and projects that addressed their specific needs. This sense of ownership and empowerment instilled a greater sense of agency and self-determination within the community.

The participatory grantmaking process allowed for a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers faced by the community. By considering these barriers in the funding decisions and supporting projects that aimed to address them, the process contributed to systemic change and worked towards creating a more equitable and inclusive community.

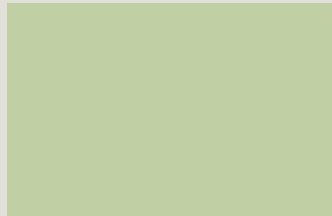


In summary

The definition of success for this section, as defined by the evaluation committee in Appendix A, was formulated as follows: **More funding organizations are aware of the benefits of participatory approaches, as influenced by the Participatory Grantmaking Pilot, and knowledge transfer takes place.**

The vision of success was based on the number of philanthropic organizations sensitized, even though the evaluation questions covered other dimensions (facilitating conditions and community empowerment).

If we focus on the success as formulated, we can confidently conclude that the targeted success has been achieved and even exceeded. The sharing of project learning began even before the official end of the project and reached a very wide range of stakeholders through various means. This evaluation will also contribute to sharing the project learnings in a more detailed manner.



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

As we contemplate the implementation of trust-based approaches and decision-making processes, along with the meaningful integration of lived/living experiences, it becomes evident that this experimentation has generated numerous valuable insights for partner organizations actively engaged in the community, intermediary actors who facilitate these processes, and, of course, the broader philanthropic ecosystem.

For philanthropic and institutional actors, this project illustrates the significance and achievability of a fully participatory approach:

Regarding relevance: This project showcases that entrusting decision-making power for fund allocation to communities results in investments that genuinely address local needs and support organizations that may not have otherwise been selected.

Regarding feasibility: Trust and impact are nurtured by key process elements, such as the role played by intermediary actors in facilitation and capacity-building, as well as the significance of maintaining smooth and transparent decision-making processes.

For intermediary actors: This project underscores the significance of establishing environments that go beyond mere consultation, emphasizing the need for spaces conducive to co-analysis, co-design, and collaborative decision-making. These spaces foster a crucial sense of alignment among the various participants, each representing the community's diverse needs and interests.

For partner organizations in the community: This project illustrates the feasibility of amplifying the voices and perspectives of individuals with lived/living experiences from the community within a complex fund allocation process. Such an endeavour produces a variety of effects, varying in magnitude but aligning closely with the project's original objectives and the community's analysis of the needs and priorities concerning the economic mobility of immigrants and refugees.

THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: FOUR DIMENSIONS FOR EVALUATING SUCCESS



There are four dimensions to evaluate the success of the participatory grantmaking pilot in Peel. They include:

The participatory process is perceived by all those involved as legitimate, relevant, and has meaningfully engaged lived experiences

This participatory approach contributes to empowering communities and leads to grantmaking decisions that are responsive to the local context.

Grantees' projects demonstrate employment-focused impact in serving and empowering marginalized immigrants and refugees and offering holistic, responsive, and collaborative solutions grounded in the Peel community.

More funding organizations are aware of the benefits of participatory approaches, as influenced by the Peel pilot, and knowledge transfer takes place.

THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY: KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITATIONS



The evaluation is based on a significant amount of quantitative and qualitative data generated through mixed methods of data collection that include:

- Internal monitoring
- Post-meeting surveys
- Surveys completed by the People's Panel and grantee partners
- Small group interviews with the Tamarack team, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund team, and the PSNG team, separately.
- Proposals, mid-term reports and final reports from grantee partners as well as observations from the field visits

This evaluation provides insights and learning on various aspects of the project, but it also has certain limitations:

- This evaluation was conducted by the Tamarack team. We have sought to remain as objective as possible, but the evaluation may have subjective biases linked to our involvement in the project.
- The sources used primarily come from data collected from the stakeholders involved in the project (partners, funded organizations, Peoples Panel)
- These two previous methodological choices were made to align with the overall intention of generating useful learnings on the deployment of the pilot project.
- Finally, the results of the evaluation are context-specific and may not be strictly transferable to other participatory grantmaking contexts.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND INDICATORS



The table below provides an overview of the evaluation strategy: how we defined the success of the project, the evaluation questions, indicators, and key informants:

Our definition of success	Evaluation questions	Indicators	Key informants
PROCESS			
<p>This participatory process is perceived by all those involved as legitimate, relevant, and meaningfully engaging lived experiences. This participatory approach contributes to empowering communities and leads to grantmaking decisions that are responsive to the local context.</p>	<p>To what extent was this process authentically participatory? To what extent were the community members meaningfully engaged?</p>	<p>1. # of community members involved 2. # and kind of decisions made by the People's Panel 3. Quality of the supports offered to facilitate the participation of community members 4. Quality of community members' contribution to the process, including decision-making (perceived and observed)</p>	<p>Peoples' Panel, Tamarack team, PNSG and other local partners</p>
	<p>How did the People's Panel leverage their lived experience and knowledge of the community to co-design the funding opportunity and make funding decisions?</p>	<p>5. Spectrum of situations shared by the Peoples' panel members describing causal link between their lived experience and knowledge of the community and funding decisions (context analysis, project analysis, decision)</p>	<p>Peoples' Panel</p>
	<p>What added value did the participatory approach (People's Panel + Tamarack) bring to the process? What would have happened if this funding had been distributed conventionally (e.g., directly by WES)?</p>	<p>6. Spectrum of hypothesis of a potential added value. Strength of each hypothesis.</p>	<p>Peoples' panel, Tamarack Team, WES team</p>
	<p>What are some effective approaches to community participation and trust building, learned through this PGP?</p>	<p>7. List of learnings shared by PGP core actors</p>	<p>Peoples' Panel, Tamarack Team, WES</p>
	<p>To what extent did the participatory process result in responsive funding decisions (i.e. decisions that directed funding to projects that aptly address the community's needs)?</p>	<p>8. Level of connection between the funding decisions (funded and non-funded projects) and the community's needs as defined by the People's panel and other community members.</p>	<p>Peoples' Panel, Tamarack team</p>



OUTCOMES AT STAKEHOLDERS LEVEL			
Mindset shifts are observed by the key partners involved in PGP, as they gained a greater understanding of the participatory approach and its value-added	What changes were observed by the partners involved? (e.g., mindset, process, approaches, practices)	9. # and type of short-term changes observed by each partner 10. Description of the causal link between the project's learnings and the observed changes	Grantees, Tamarack team, WES
	What are some benefits for the community from this approach? For the funder? For Tamarack? For grantees?	11. # and type of benefits observed by each partner	
IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION			
Grantee partners projects demonstrate employment-focused impact towards serving and empowering marginalized immigrants and refugees that offer holistic, responsive and collaborative solutions grounded in the Peel community.	How did the design of the projects consider the global needs of the target populations and generated collaborative solutions?	12. # and type of reference to target population's needs shared by grantees in grants applications and reports. 13. # and type of solutions proposed by grantees that answer explicitly to the target population's needs.	Grantees
	What impacts have been generated on the target populations especially in the 4 dimensions below? 1) To position skills to emerging labour market needs 2) To create self-employment pathways 3) Integrate Mental Health support into services 4) access to services and address barriers	14. # and type of changes observed and measured by grantees through their evaluation processes, on the target population's access to employment	Grantees
SYSTEM CHANGE			
More funding organizations are aware of the benefits of participatory approaches, as influenced by the PGP, and knowledge transfer takes place	How many funding organizations have increased their awareness of the benefits of participatory approaches?	15. # of funding organizations reached by Tamarack, WES through various dissemination strategies: webinars, Future of Good articles, etc...	Funding ecosystem (Local, national, international)
	What are the necessary conditions for success based on this experience? And what conditions are necessary to share and scale this project?	16. Inventory of key learnings related to conditions of success AND conditions for scaling the approach	Tamarack WES
	How did the participatory grantmaking process contribute to empowering communities? / grantees?	17. Inventory of hypothetical causal links between the PGP project and observed shifts on communities and grantees empowerment	Tamarack WES

