One Hundred Cities. One Goal. Reduce Poverty.
Lessons Learned from the Vibrant Communities 10 Year Poverty Reduction Experiment?
What are the elements of Vibrant Communities?

A Framework for Community Change
The Complex Nature of Poverty

“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.”

Poverty Policy
Sherri Torjman,
Caledon Institute of Social Policy
October 2008
Core Principles

• Poverty is a complex issue
• Working across community requires the development of a shared aspiration
• Local communities are sites for innovation
• Local efforts are strengthened when communities can learn from one another
• The combination of local action and Pan-Canadian learning can result in large scale and sustained reductions in poverty

The Communities

Map of Canada highlighting various cities and regions.
What is the Impact?

- Increased Community Engagement
- Enhanced Community Innovation
- Policy and Systems Change
- Decreased Poverty
Measuring Community Change

- **Policy and Systems Change**
  - Changes in public policy
  - Changes in service and support systems
  - Changes in material resources
  - Changes in community-level assets

- **Community Capacity Building**
  - Convening capacity
  - Multisectoral leadership
  - Collaboration
  - Community awareness

- **Individual and Household Assets**
  - Personal assets
  - Physical assets
  - Social assets
  - Human assets
  - Financial assets
Social Assets

Human Assets

Financial Assets

Inner resources

- Self-awareness
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Hope and motivation

Basic material goods and services

- Emergency supports
- Food
- Housing
- Transportation
- Dependent care

Income, Savings and Sources of Financial Security

- Employment income
- Non-employment income
- Savings and financial assets
- Reduced debt/costs

Relationships and Networks

- Civic participation
- Support networks

Skills, knowledge, education & health

- Health
- Life skills
- Financial literacy
- Education
- Employment Skills

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – Assets Pentagon
### Key Numbers in Vibrant Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>439,435</td>
<td>poverty reducing benefits to 202,931 households in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>256</td>
<td>poverty reducing initiatives completed or in progress by local Trail Builders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$22.8 million</td>
<td>invested in local Trail Builder activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,278</td>
<td>organizations partnering in Trail Builder communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>individuals playing substantial roles including 840 people who are living in poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>substantive government policy changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What have we learned?
Evaluating the Impact of Vibrant Communities
Using a comprehensive, multi-sector approach communities can ...

1. Raise the profile of poverty
2. Build a constituency for change
3. Encourage collaborative ways of working
4. Begin to shift systems underlying poverty
5. Generate changes for a large number of people living in poverty
VC Success Factors

• Influential and credible convener(s)
• Cross-sector, connected leadership table
• Challenging community aspiration
• Clearly articulated purpose and approach
• High degree of resident mobilization
• Research which informs the work
Collective Impact

• Common agenda
• Shared measurement systems
• Mutually reinforcing activities
• Continuous communication
• Backbone support organization

– John Kania and Mark Kramer, Winter 2011
Key Lessons

• Get both a bird’s eye and worm’s eye view

• Learn to navigate the local context

• Learn by doing

• Make both vertical and horizontal connections

• Be persistent and have appropriate expectations

Cities Reducing Poverty, Tamarack, October 2011.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Enabling Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thousand Seeds</strong></td>
<td>• Addresses multiple factors</td>
<td>• Scale of activities overwhelming</td>
<td>• Constellation governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobilizes broad support</td>
<td>• Difficult to ensure synergies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pool Ball</strong></td>
<td>• Easy to manage</td>
<td>• Weak effects</td>
<td>• Focus on high leverage cause and effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quick results</td>
<td>• Ripple effects not always known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaving</strong></td>
<td>• Addresses a network of cause and effects</td>
<td>• May not impact a large number of people</td>
<td>• Learn by doing approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hybrid</strong></td>
<td>• Weaves together and leverages all three strategies</td>
<td>• Difficult to manage and sustain</td>
<td>• Clear framework for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong leadership</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Inspired Learning
Evaluating the Impact of National Supports

JW McConnell Family Foundation
- Funding
- Learning

Caledon Institute of Social Policy
- Policy
- Community Stories

Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement
- Learning Community Animation
- Evaluation and Dissemination
Community Supports Defined

- Exploratory and matched funding (4 years)
- Defined + shared approach
- Learning Community with Learning Events
- Dissemination – website, tele-learning, learning events, COPs
- Community Coaching
- Community Stories – profiling success
- Common Evaluation
- Policy and Systems Change Agenda
Inspired Learning
Impact of Learning Supports

- Created shared language and common approach
- Created financial matching incentive
- Built capacity at community level and with national sponsors
- Influenced communities to build momentum and consolidate local action
- Brought recognition and legitimacy to local processes
- Invigorated local processes through energy and inspiration
- Developed a body of knowledge and expertise
- Strategies replicated across communities
- Linked policy expertise to community change
Now...What’s Next?
The opportunity in a changing landscape:

- Collaborative poverty reduction roundtables are emerging in cities across Canada (91 cities/regions have been identified to date)
- 8 provinces and 3 territories have or are developing poverty reduction strategies
- The Government of Canada – HUMA committee, Senate Roundtable on Cities and Federation of Canadian Municipalities have identified the critical importance of reducing the costs of poverty on cities and communities
Our Aspiration:

Imagine…100 cities reducing poverty TOGETHER
Cities Reducing Poverty – Priority Actions:

Learning Community – www.vibrantcanada.ca
City Charter and Business Case
Aligned Policy Agenda
Poverty Summit
Common Evaluation Framework
Want to Learn More?

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learnmore@tamarackcommunity.ca

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2012 COMMUNITIES COLLABORATING INSTITUTE

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KITCHENER, ONTARIO

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Margaret Wheatley, Tim Brodhead,
Michael Jones, White House Council
for Community Solutions, Al Etmanski,
Alan Broadbent, Joe-Anne Priel,
Jenny Kain along with Paul Born,
Mark Cabaj, Liz Weaver and the
Tamarack Team at this unprecedented,
week-long leadership event.

- Explore how cities are innovating together in their communities
- Engage with innovative leaders and world renowned thinkers
- Advance your community’s agenda with innovative mobilization techniques
- Embrace the power of citizen engagement and multi-sector collaboration
- Rejuvenate and grow your collaborative leadership capacity
- Earn a Communities Collaborating Institute Certificate from Tamarack

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