

# TAMARACK 2014

## PROGRESS & IMPACT REPORT

A connected force for community change



We believe that  
true community  
change occurs  
when citizens  
and organizations  
adopt a new way  
of thinking and  
working together.

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# TAMARACK 2014 PROGRESS & IMPACT REPORT

Over the past twelve years, Tamarack has worked toward making the work of community change easier and more effective for community leaders. We have worked to deepen the engagement of our members and partners because we believe that when knowledge meets practice and action, communities are more vibrant, better connected and citizens feel engaged.

We believe that true community change occurs when citizens and organizations adopt a new way of thinking and working together.

The Tamarack team entered 2014 confident that our approach was indeed helping communities to move the needle on important issues, and we set clear goals to expand our current work and share it with new audiences.



We grew the number of learning events we offered across Canada and the United States. During 2014, learners collectively spent over 10,000 days in our seminars and workshops. We grew our capacity by launching the Thought Leader program and adding four new staff to our team. We expanded our knowledge areas with the release of the book, *Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*, and introduced the Deepening Community curriculum to communities, churches, and school groups. We launched new methodologies and evaluation systems in our campaigns to enable the action learning communities to get to impact. This included launching a new Deepening Community - Conversations initiative in Delburne and Grey Bruce, and expanding our Vibrant Communities - Cities Reducing Poverty network. And we reached a critical mass in affecting the way that organizations, communities, government, and businesses collaborate by bringing together more than 300 people, who joined together for an entire week, for the first-ever Collective Impact Summit.

### Establishing our path forward.

In mid-2014, we surveyed our learning network to better understand their experiences, feedback and recommendations for Tamarack.

We learned that:

- *Learners come to Tamarack for resources, practical tools, and the latest thinking on community change;*
- *They are looking for information on community development, collective impact, community engagement, collaboration, evaluating community change, poverty reduction, and innovation;*
- *Learners have a desire to connect and share their work with each other;*
- *The majority of the people interacting with Tamarack are experienced practitioners and leaders who have been in the work of social change for more than 5 years;*
- *There is a need for learning and training events and they want Tamarack's leadership.*

This feedback has been fundamental in re-aligning Tamarack's goals and has enabled us to plan forward to 2020 with a clear direction for how we can further support our learners. We look forward to sharing this map with you over the coming year and have you experience first-hand the positive changes that will come from continued expansion of our work and deeper connections within the learning community.

## THANK YOU.

We thank you – our partners, members and key supporters – for your contributions to this robust learning network. Your combined efforts enable this network to be a connected force for community change.

THE J.W. McCONNELL  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

LA FONDATION DE LA  
FAMILLE J.W. McCONNELL



## 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

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Learners collectively spent over  
**10,000 days**  
in our seminars and workshops

Growth of **3,059** members  
during 2014, reaching **15,485**  
members at the end of 2014

**11,093** people were  
subscribers to Engage! magazine

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**117,463**  
unique visitors joined us online to learn

**14,476**  
resources were downloaded  
during 2014

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**528** people participated in  
**8** different Communities of Practice  
working towards action planning for  
community change

**22** Thought Leaders contributed  
their knowledge to the Tamarack  
learning community

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**47** cities were members of  
Vibrant Communities – Cities Reducing  
Poverty and have formal poverty  
reduction plans in place

Learners invested **\$1.2M**  
to participate in seminars and  
workshops, which we re-invested  
back into developing learning products  
and programs

# TAMARACK INSTITUTE

**The Tamarack Institute is a connected force  
for community change.**

Through our **Learning Centre** we work with leaders in non-profits, government, business and the community to make their work of advancing positive community change easier and more effective. We do this by teaching and writing about collective impact, community engagement, collaborative leadership, evaluating community impact and community building. We turn theory into action by connecting people into networks to share and learn together, and we work one-on-one with organizations to help advance their specific agendas.

We work deeply in two practice areas to advance community change: cities reducing poverty and deepening community. **Cities Reducing Poverty** is a network of 47 cities who are creating comprehensive poverty reduction strategies to impact the lives of 1 million Canadians living in poverty. **Deepening Community** explores programs, policies and practices that strengthen communities, neighbourhoods and enhance social capital.

Our belief is that when we are effective in strengthening community capacity to engage citizens, lead collaboratively, deepen community and innovate in place, our work contributes to the building of peace and a more equitable society.

**Our deepest hope is to end poverty in Canada.**

**[www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca)**

## Change Happens as People Learn and Act Together

True community change occurs when citizens and organizations adopt a new way of thinking and working together. Tamarack's Learning Centre offers the latest thinking, knowledge, resources and interactive online practice delivered in accessible and creative ways to provide leaders the knowledge and inspiration they need to achieve success in their community change efforts.

We believe that to get to the impact we want to see, people need to connect with each other, share resources, learn from each other's challenges and successes, and support each other in what we all know to be important, but often isolating, work.

This model of working together is called a Learning Community. It's a means by which we can gather and share. We build community together as we get a sense of the "common". We generate learning as we question and challenge ideas and in turn, create new knowledge. We turn answers into questions with the understanding that every learner is a teacher and every teacher is a learner.

## GOING FORWARD

Engagement is core to the work of Tamarack: Learners engage with knowledge and learning resources; network members engage with each other to collaborate, share and learn together; and they also engage with wider communities to learn about issues, involve stakeholders, and together take specific action in order to advance community change.

In a survey conducted in June 2014, network members shared that the value of connecting and collaborating with others enables them to advance their community change efforts. Over the next 5 years, Tamarack plans to invest in strategies that improve the ways in which members can engage with Tamarack, with each other, and with their communities.

In 2014 we introduced the Thought Leader program, where we invited strategic thinkers and practitioners in our key knowledge areas to connect and share their ideas and thinking which we then mobilize into knowledge experiences and products. We plan to develop our thought leader program into a mature system of leadership that is helping us define our learning agenda and that promotes peer to peer and generative learning experiences.



## SNAPSHOT OF 2014

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# 10,000

days of learning were delivered  
this year including...

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**5** multi-day workshops with  
**997** people participating

**8** one-day workshops were  
held with **695** people  
participating

**93** custom training events  
delivered in cities across Canada,  
the United States, Australia and  
New Zealand

**36** partner organizations  
helped to host local events

**117,463** unique  
visitors to our web sites (2,259 a  
month average across all sites)

**926** people joined Learning  
Communities

**14** webinars were held with  
**2,327** people registered

**14,531** learning  
resources were downloaded

# LEARNING CENTRE

**Through our Learning Centre we work with leaders in non-profits, government, business and the community to make their work of advancing positive community change easier and more effective. We do this by teaching and writing about:**

- Collective Impact
- Community Engagement
- Collaborative Leadership
- Community Building
- Evaluation for Community Change

We turn theory into action by connecting people into networks to share and learn and work together, and by working one-on-one with organizations to help advance their specific agendas.

The Learning Centre services include workshops and gatherings, custom training and coaching, research and publications; and an online learning community that houses learning resources, hosts webinars, and where thought leaders and community change leaders can share their latest thinking. These services are designed to facilitate this transference of knowledge and to help participants to turn ideas into action.

[www.tamarackcci.ca](http://www.tamarackcci.ca)





## GOING FORWARD

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Since 2002, Tamarack has strategically built a knowledge centre containing tools, resources, articles, case studies, books and learning events that have increased the skills and capacities of community change leaders. In a recent survey (Summer 2014), Tamarack members expressed significant recognition and value of the role the Institute has had on building capacity and knowledge.

We believe it is an opportune time to formalize and integrate Tamarack's role as a learning and capacity building leader in Canada by building a robust Learning Centre designed to be the go-to place for people working towards community change. An increased and integrated investment in a Tamarack Learning Centre will enable the development of knowledge products, build strategic new partnerships and markets, and increase accessibility and integration across different sectors.

Ultimately, the impact of this investment would be a network of community leaders and partners with the tools, resources and knowledge products they need to positively change their own community.



12

Provinces and Territories have poverty reduction strategies

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47

Cities have poverty reduction strategies in place

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34

Cities are in the process of developing poverty reduction strategies

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38

Cities are considering developing a poverty reduction strategy

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# VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

## Cities Reducing Poverty

**Vibrant Communities is a network of 100 cities who are creating comprehensive poverty reduction strategies to impact the lives of 1 million Canadians living in poverty.**

Launched in 2002 by Tamarack, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Vibrant Communities Canada originally invited 13 cities to build multi-sector leadership roundtables with the goal of reducing poverty. Between 2002 and 2012, this group of Vibrant Communities Trail Builders undertook an action-learning experiment to see if a place-based approach could move the needle on poverty. Their impact was significant with a number of the cities reporting a 10% reduction in poverty impacting the lives of 202,931 low income Canadians.

Building on the success of these 13 cities, a movement has emerged with more than 50 additional cities joining the network. While the poverty reduction effort is customized to the local context, these cross-sector community leaders have been working on poverty reduction strategies such as increasing access to affordable transit, living wage campaigns, increasing access to affordable housing, focusing on priority neighbourhoods, and advocating for evidence-based social assistance.

We collectively believe that this effort will result in a more equitable, vibrant and healthier Canada. When citizens are marginalized because of poverty, our communities and cities suffer. Reducing poverty increases our economic capacity, our health outcomes and our community vitality.

[www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)





## GOING FORWARD

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We seek to connect 100 Canadian cities with leadership roundtables focused on poverty to reduce poverty for 1 million Canadians. We believe this can be achieved through the alignment of poverty efforts at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. If we all work toward the same end, the result will be a healthier, wealthier and more vibrant Canada.

By 2020, Vibrant Communities Canada – Cities Reducing Poverty will have a robust and connected network of 100 cities with place-based poverty reduction leadership roundtables. These roundtables will be able to create synergies and collectively move the needle on the issue of poverty at the municipal and provincial level including new programs and services, policy changes and new investments for some of our most vulnerable citizens.



70

More than  
Deepening Community book  
launches, seminars and radio  
interviews held

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5,000

Deepening Community  
books sold

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150

people gathered to learn  
about Communities:  
Policies and Programs

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2

communities  
(Delburne and Owen Sound)  
hosted large scale Deepening  
Community Conversations.

# DEEPENING COMMUNITY

**Deepening Community (formerly Seeking Community)  
explores programs, policies and practices that strengthen  
communities and neighbourhoods to enhance social capital..**

The Deepening Community online learning community is a network of people who are exploring the unique role that communities and neighbours play in creating positive futures. We are discovering the power of community as an essential driver of effective social change and compiling a body of knowledge – including research, tools and practices – that make the work of creating strong communities and neighbourhoods easier and more effective. We strongly stand by Meg Wheatley's wise words: "Whatever the problem, community is the answer."

Deepening Community is advancing the Communities and Neighbourhood agendas in two specific ways. We are working with cities and rural communities to host a series of Community Conversations with a goal of understanding community values and needs, articulating possible improvements, and gaining citizen commitment in making their community a more vibrant and inclusive place to be. We also host a Neighbourhood Action Team – a peer-learning network of Neighbourhood professionals who share resources, support each other, and identify neighbourhood-based issues to improve strategy, policy and investment.

We gather the Deepening Community learning community together once a year for Community: Policies and Programs to discuss the role of Community, to explore the policies and programs that encourage communities to build, strengthen and foster a sense of creativity, and to be inspired by the work that cities are doing across the globe to deepen community.

The Deepening Community curriculum is based on Paul Born's book – ***Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*** – that was launched in 2014. This curriculum is being shared in classrooms, churches, and with community groups, and is built on four pillars: Enjoying one another; Sharing our stories with each other; Taking care of one another; and, Working together to make our families, neighbourhoods, communities, and the world great places to live in for all.

**[www.deepeningcommunity.ca](http://www.deepeningcommunity.ca)**





## GOING FORWARD

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Community well-being is the result of a complex interplay of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors that is beyond the influence of any one individual, organization or level of government alone. The most creative and lasting solutions to enhancing community well-being depend upon citizens, and a diversity of organizations and governments uniting around a common vision and working collaboratively on initiatives that make it a reality.

Over the next 5 years, Deepening Community is focusing on two main tenets – Community Conversations and Neighbourhood Action Planning.

We will work with 25 communities to facilitate community conversations, document insights, and share back to support community-led social change.

City leaders with established neighbourhood strategies will be convened as a peer learning network. Resources and insights from the network will be harvested and shared to make the work of building strong neighbourhoods easier and more effective. The peer network will help develop a Promising Practices guidebook and curriculum for creating sustaining strong, robust neighbourhood action and identifying shared initiatives that could further enhance their collective work.



## SNAPSHOT OF 2014

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# 15

Staff located across Canada

# 12

Home offices

Tamarack moves head office to the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College located within the University of Waterloo.

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# \$1.64 million

operating budget

Learners invested

# \$1.2 million

million to participate in seminars and workshops, which we re-invested back into developing learning products and programs

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Board restricted reserve surpasses

# \$1 million

ensuring Tamarack remains active, can grow and is sustainable in the long term

# OPERATIONS & FINANCE

**The Operations team develops and maintains systems to ensure Tamarack is efficient and well run and that staff are happy and productive.**

The Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement is a registered charity supported by member contributions, foundations, businesses and government, as well as through revenue generated from consulting, coaching, and custom workshops and learning events. The Tamarack team and our Treasurer follow best practices in all our accounting procedures and we are audited annually. Tamarack's full audited statements are available upon request. Please email [paul@tamarackcommunity.ca](mailto:paul@tamarackcommunity.ca) to request a copy.

### BOARD:

Alan Broadbent – *Chairman*

Nathan Gilbert – *Vice Chair*

Colin Robertson – *Treasurer*

Vali Bennett – *Corporate Secretary*

Paul Born – *President*

### DIRECTORS:

Paul Born – *President & Director, Vibrant Communities*

Liz Weaver – *Vice President & Director, Learning Centre*

Lisa Attygalle – *Director, Engagement*

Sylvia Cheuy – *Director, Deepening Community*

Louise Merlihan – *Director, Engagement*

### STAFF:

Kirsti Battista – *Manager, Vibrant Communities*

Zoe Fleming – *Community Animator, Learning Centre*

Muhammad Hadi – *Finance Coordinator*

Heather Keam – *Community Animator, Learning Centre*

Caroline Mills – *Manager, Operations*

Christie Nash – *Community Animator, Deepening Community*

Natasha Pei – *Community Animator, Vibrant Communities*

Megan Wanless – *Community Animator, Engagement*



## GOING FORWARD

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Tamarack is in a phase of growth. We have tested our model for getting to impact and we are now getting ready to expand into new knowledge areas.

To do this we need to solidify our organizational structure, and strengthen the systems and roles within our organization to support learning communities. Our goal is to become one of the best “decentralized” offices in the country adopting innovative practices of management so people can work where they live.

Growth also means building stronger relationships with government and foundations, and diversifying our governance structure to ensure that people who benefit most from our success will play a leadership role in our success.





140 Westmount Road North

Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G6

**Web:** [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca)

**Email:** [tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca](mailto:tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca)

**Phone:** 519-885-5155

**Charitable Registration Number:**

862808615RR0001

**Our Vision:**

Building a connected force for community change

**Our Mission:**

Collaboratively creating vibrant communities by engaging learning leaders.

When we are effective in strengthening community capacity to engage citizens, lead collaboratively, deepen community and innovate in place, our work will contribute to the building of a more Equitable society.

**Our deepest hope is to end poverty in Canada.**