

# Engage!

February Edition: Tamarack Institute's Annual Report 2013

Welcome to the 2013 annual report edition of Engage! As a member of Tamarack's learning community, we are excited to share highlights on what each of our learning communities has accomplished in 2013 and offer you a snapshot of what's in store for 2014. You'll also find our regular summary of posts from learning community members and a listing of upcoming learning opportunities. Thank you for joining us and contributing to the shared goal of a society without poverty.

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## Tamarack 2013: Deepen Community, Collaborate, End Poverty

[By: Paul Born]

In 2013:

- 54 cities have joined our Vibrant Communities-Cities Reducing Poverty Learning Community;
- Nearly 1,000 people participated in our multi day learning events;
- Almost 100 conversations about community were held and documented;
- Over 10,000 subscribers received our e-magazines each month; and,
- More than \$1.1 million was generated to support our learning communities

Tamarack's deepest hope is to build a movement for change that ultimately ends poverty in Canada. We believe that when people are engaged, working and learning together on just about any issue that strengthens their communities, they are contributing to the building of a society without poverty.

Change is not something you force on others: it is a not a win -lose situation. Rather, lasting change comes from people learning to live differently - from within and with each other. In this way, ending poverty is a co-generative process rooted in deep community and collective impact. This is the reason that we have chosen to focus our efforts in building learning communities for change. Through these learning communities we partner with you, our members, to sustain and grow the collective will, knowledge and capacity to scale social change so that, together we can build amazing communities that are good for all people.

Tamarack's three learning communities are: [Seeking Community](#); [Communities Collaborating](#) for Collective Impact and [Vibrant Communities](#) - Cities reducing Poverty. [Seeking Community](#) focuses on engaging citizens who are working together to deepen the experience and impact of community. This work will lead to new programs and policies that: enhance and rebuild neighbourhoods; make it easier for us to care for each other; and, enable us to work together to improve our cities. [Communities Collaborating for Impact](#) draws together practitioners who are leading social change efforts in communities across Canada, the United States and internationally to share resources and learning in order to accelerate our collective ability to effectively collaborate and achieve better outcomes on complex community issues. Finally, [Vibrant Communities](#) is building

a network of 100 cities in Canada with multi-sector community roundtables to build comprehensive poverty reduction strategies. Our goal is have aligned poverty reduction strategies in every city, every Province and territory and within the federal government so that we reduce poverty for 1 million Canadians within the next four years.

Collectively, the members of these three learning communities are leading the charge to positively change the social fabric of Canadian society by engaging citizens; connecting to each other; and moving the needle on complex community challenges through policy and systems level changes.

2013 has been an exciting and busy year for Tamarack. We have continued to grow and expand our learning communities. As you will read about in this annual report; we have: envisioned and are recruiting a new team of thought leaders; welcomed a number of new staff members to ensure that our members continue to be well supported by the resources and learning opportunities we provide; and, we have invested heavily in simplifying and growing our learning infrastructure.

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#### Learn More:

- [About Tamarack](#)
- [Tamarack's Organizational Chart](#)
- [Our Theory of Change](#)
- [2013 Financial Highlights](#)
- [Our Impact By the Numbers](#)
- [The Tamarack Team](#)
  - [Our Donors and Sponsors](#)

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## Tamarack 2014

[By: Liz Weaver]

In 2014 we will:

- Host 17 learning events for nearly 2000 people;
- Offer 15 online events for 2,500 people;
- Expand membership in Cities Reducing Poverty to 75 cities;
- Sponsor and document 250 conversations about community;
- Engage a dynamic team of 30 thought leaders; and,
- Grow our learning community to 15,000 members

We have an ambitious agenda for 2014 with some unique

elements that we are excited to tell you about.

### Tamarack Thought Leaders

We have been recruiting senior leaders, who are already active in our network from each of the three learning communities. These individuals have agreed to be Tamarack Thought Leaders: offering leadership in the learning communities by sharing their experience, knowledge and wisdom with you. In addition to giving overall leadership to the learning communities they will be posting regular blogs, sharing publications and teaching and facilitating in our tele-learning sessions and workshops.

### Our 2014 Learning Schedule

The work of facilitating community change is complex. Over the past several years, Tamarack has delivered single and multiple day learning events primarily in Ontario and Alberta. This year, we plan to take our workshops on the road to new parts of Canada and the United States. Our three-day [Evaluating Community Impact](#) workshop is planned for Winnipeg and Halifax and many one-day workshops will be held in several other provinces. Our learning schedule also includes [Champions of Change](#) an advanced workshop for Collective Impact Backbone Leaders and will be held in both San Francisco and Vancouver. In October we will be hosting Canada's first ever Collective Impact Summit in Toronto.

### Deepening Community

This year, our President Paul Born, will release a new book published by Berrett Koehler and with a forward by Peter Block. The book is entitled *Deepening Community, Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*. The book

has received high praise from some of the most respected authors and community builders in North America. We are planning book launches and seminars in cities within Canada and the United States to further animate the key concepts. [Learn more](#) by reading the pre-release endorsements or pre-order at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). In tandem with the book's release, our Seeking Community campaign will be renamed to Deepening Community. Sylvia Cheuy has now joined Tamarack full time as the Director of Deepening Community to lead an exceptional team to further this dynamic campaign.

### New Learning Technologies

We are introducing new learning technologies this year to make it simpler and easier for our members to engage and share knowledge with one another. This initiative is being led by our new Director of Community Engagement, Lisa Attygalle. You may already have noticed some changes in the look and feel of our sites and mailings. For a preview of further changes to come, read her report below.

### Engaging with You

Tamarack deeply believes that you, our members, are integral to building a force for social change. The work you do in communities, organizations, businesses and government is transformative. Creating opportunities for all of us to share our experiences and learn together is the foundation of Tamarack's work. We could not do this without your valued contributions. We are driving down this road together, dealing with the changing conditions and navigating along the way. We invite you to take the wheel, become engaged more deeply and share your wisdom and knowledge. [Join us!](#) We are stronger together.

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### Learn More:

- [Tamarack's Learning Community Design](#)
- [Tamarack Learning Events for 2014](#)
- [Tamarack's Thought Leader Program](#)

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## Tamarack's Learning Infrastructure

[By: Lisa Attygalle]

Learning should be a joyful experience. With joy comes eagerness, creativity, and open-mindedness.

Over the past year, we have witnessed, and supported, people engaging for the joy of learning.

In 2013, Tamarack:

- Hosted almost 1000 participants in face-to-face Learning Events;
- Registered 4,423 individuals to participate in our free online learning events;
- Profiled contributions from the 1,789 members of our three online learning communities;
- Facilitated the downloading of 9,416 library resources; and,
- Shared our e-magazine, Engage!, with 10,359 monthly subscribers.

The goal of Tamarack's learning communities is that they become co-generative spaces where members engage with us - and each other - to accelerate our collective learning and strengthen the impact of positive social change. We do this online by uploading and sharing resources; blogging about the successes and failures of our own experiments in advancing social change and bringing forward our questions so that other community members can share advice. For this to happen smoothly, our sites need to:




- Be easy to use;
- Make it easy to engage with others; and,
- Be easy - and useful - to come back to.

When I joined the Tamarack team in July, my mantra was, "Make it Simple." From August - October I engaged our team in evaluating all of our systems and highlighted a number of key priorities to make the learning experience better for Tamarack members. Some of these priorities are directly aimed at improving the learning experience. Others will allow the Tamarack team to be more efficient in some of our procedural tasks which leaves us more time available for engaging, animating, researching, and teaching within the online learning communities.

Our key priorities to enhance the learning experience of our members in 2014 include:

- **Offering One-Day Workshops** - We have heard there is a need for learning in a workshop format that allows participants to dive in to a topic. In 2014 we're offering one-day workshops on a range of topics across a number of geographies. Please [reach out to Caroline](#) if you'd like to request a specific workshop in your area. Also, check out our [list of upcoming events](#) to see if we are already scheduled to come to a town near you.
- **Tailoring Communication Preferences** - We send out publications, event listings, news and other notifications, but we never want to burden you with email. By putting your communication preferences in your hands we hope that you will eagerly anticipate each email because you know it will share information you can use.
- **Enhancing Email Readability** - Did you know that 49% of emails are now opened on mobile devices? We agree that receiving an email where you need to zoom out and scroll doesn't make for a delightful experience. Over the past year we've begun using new email templates that are more mobile device friendly so next time you receive something from us feel free to read it in the office or in the park!
- **Personalizing Learner Engagement** - We know the importance of a database as a relationship management tool and we knew it was time to upgrade ours to a platform that can allow for better segmentation and classification of learner engagement. By understanding better what each of you, our learners, are engaging with, we can continue to better focus on providing meaningful learning opportunities.
- **Updating our Website** - We always want our website's content to be fresh. We had a little face-lift in September and are planning to launch a new website in 2014 complete with an easy to use content management system.
- **Simplifying our Event Registration Process** - This one is for both of us! We want it to be as easy as possible to register for events; provide payment; obtain logistical information; sign up for workshops; provide us with important dietary requirements, etc. You'll see improvements in our registration and events process in the coming months.
- **Refreshing our Tele-learning Seminar Format** - We want to offer our free learning events in new ways that incorporate a better experience for our visual learners, as well! Starting in March we'll be trialling a webinar format. We welcome your feedback on this experiment and invite you to view the list of [upcoming tele-learning/webinars here](#).
- **Revising our Resource Libraries** - We want to make it easier for you to find the resources you're looking for and allow you to explore new areas as well on all of Tamarack's Learning sites.
- **Making the Learning Sites Easier to Use** - Signing in shouldn't be a burden, and neither should posting content or collaborating with your peers. We're evaluating the current experience for users of our learning community sites and discussing what would make it a more joyful experience. If you're interested in being part of a focus group to generate ideas for improving the community sites please [let Lisa know](#).

We're excited by all that 2014 brings, and eager to continue to learn with you so please don't hesitate to contact me, Lisa, at: [lisa@tamarackcommunity.ca](mailto:lisa@tamarackcommunity.ca) with any ideas or feedback on how to help you make the most of the learning communities and resources that Tamarack has to share.

Share this:   

**Learn More:**

- [See Tamarack's upcoming learning events](#)
- [Subscribe to Tamarack's e-newsletters and updates](#)

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# (CCI) Communities Collaborating for Impact

[By: Liz Weaver & Kirsti Piirtoniemi]

At [Tamarack CCI](#) is a Learning Community for leaders who engage and collaborate across diverse sectors to develop innovative solutions to complex community challenges. The members of the CCI learning community are united in their desire to change the world, one community at a time. Here's a quick snapshot of some of what our Learning Community accomplished in 2013:

- More than 900 learners have developed profiles on this site;
- 240 learners joined us in person in Edmonton for our [2013 Communities Collaborating Institute: Accelerating Impact](#), with social change leaders including Adam Kahane, Tom Kelly and Ratna Omidvar;
- We proudly co-hosted a seminal workshop in Toronto, **Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact**, with John Kania and Fay Hanleybrown of [FSG Social Impact Consultants](#). This over-capacity event was the first of its kind in Canada;
- In collaboration with the Greater Douglas United Way in Oregon we led a custom-designed [Collective Impact Institute](#) in November 2013;
- The Tamarack CCI website ([www.tamarackcci.ca](http://www.tamarackcci.ca)) welcomed 13,784 learning sessions over the past year; and,
- More than 6,000 resources were downloaded from this site.

2014 promises to be an equally dynamic year for our Learning Community. Planning is already well underway for four exciting face-to-face learning opportunities:

- In April, the Tamarack CCI learning community is hosting the [Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact](#) workshop in Vancouver which is already over-subscribed;
- In May and June we will host [Evaluating Community Impact](#) workshops in both Winnipeg and Halifax; and,
- In October 2014, we will host the first-ever Canadian Collective Impact Summit in Toronto.

Overall, the purpose of the Tamarack CCI Learning Community is to facilitate the networking of 1,000 collaborative leaders who are actively learning and working together towards a positive impact in their communities. As our leaders share their knowledge and experience with us and each other, we will, together, build a connected force for social change by leading and learning together.

## Related Links:

- Visit the [Tamarack CCI Learning Community](#)
- Learn more about our [Evaluating Community Impact](#) workshops in Winnipeg and Halifax

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## Cities Reducing Poverty 2013

[By: Donna Jean Forster-Gill & Amy Zoethout]

Imagine, 100 Cities across Canada collectively reducing poverty for 1 million Canadians. [Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty](#) (VC-CRP) is a collective impact movement that is doing just that. We are linking together a learning community of 100 Canadian cities - each with local poverty reduction strategies championed by multi-sector leaders.

In 2013:

- 48 cities joined as full members of the Learning Community;
- 123 communities are connected to the VCC-CRP Learning Community;
- 380 learner profiles, 5 communities of practice and 6 action teams are together advancing the collective priorities of the network;
- A Canadian Living Wage Framework and [website](#) was launched together with several national partners;



- A [Cities Reducing Poverty Charter](#) was launched and has secured more than 20 endorsements;
- A Shared Measurement Framework was developed and will be in full use for 2014; and,
- We Linked with 1,504 followers on social media.

The members of [Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty](#) play a significant leadership role of the network, participating actively in all aspects of the learning community's design and implementation. Members also share engagement in the learning community through an annual membership contribution.

In 2014 the VCC-CRP Network plans to:

- Grow the number of endorsements for the [Cities Reducing Poverty Charter](#);
- Launch the Business Case for Cities Reducing Poverty;
- Meet together to learn, share and advance collective priorities in March 2014;
- Announce registration for **2015 Summit in Ottawa - Reducing Poverty Together: Every City, Every Province, Every Territory** - May 6-8, 2015 in Ottawa;
- Build a shared policy agenda for reducing poverty with cities, provinces, territories and the federal government; and,
- Bring the shared measurement results to light.

**Learn more :**

- View [a snapshot](#) of our work
- View the [map of members](#) from across Canada
- Scan the [city profiles](#)
- Sign on to the [Cities Reducing Poverty Charter](#)
- Read our weekly [Cities Connect Blog](#) here.

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## Seeking Community 2013

[By: Sylvia Cheuy & Rachel Brnjas]

The [Seeking Community](#) learning platform is centred on the ideas of fostering a deepened sense of community and exploring the power and possibility of community to act as a driving force for social change. We are building consensus and capacity around the idea that caring for one another, as neighbours, creates vibrant communities.

In 2013:

- We welcomed 887 members who each posted profiles on our site;
- Our members posted 244 blogs about community;
- We hosted a dynamic 3-day Gathering: [Neighbours 2013: Policies and Programs](#) , featuring John McKnight, Jim Diers, Al Etmanski and 170 participants who explored opportunities for mobilizing neighbours and exploring policies and programs to build strong neighbourhoods;
- We launched the [1,000 Conversations to Shape our Future](#) Campaign: a three-year initiative aimed at hosting, documenting and sharing 1,000 conversations about community and using that data to build an engaged learning community and a path forward;
- In our first year we documented 93 conversations about community;
- Launched a [Community of Practice](#) to further explore and share programs and possibilities to enhance neighbourliness; and,
- Distributed monthly issues of [Seeker's Journal](#), an e-newsletter of the Seeking Community Learning Community to 1,480 subscribers.

In 2014 we will:

- Partner with at least 10 local communities to host community conversations;
- Inspire and support the members of our learning community to host community conversations where they live;
- Host a national gathering entitled **Deepening Community - Policies and Programs** for 150 community leaders; and,
- Release **Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times**, the latest book by Paul Born with a forward by Peter Block.

We invite you to [join us](#) as we discover powerful ways to translate the possibility of community into a reality across Canada and beyond.

#### Learn more :

- Visit and [join](#) Seeking Community online at [www.seekingcommunity.ca](http://www.seekingcommunity.ca)
- Access the documented conversations of the [1,000 Conversations](#) Campaign
- Review the [latest update](#) of the **1,000 Conversations** campaign
- Listen to the latest dialogue of our [Community of Practice](#) - with Community Development Halton about their new resource on building strong neighbourhoods: [Where We Live Matters](#)
- Find resources shared at the [Neighbours 2013: Policy and Programs](#) Gathering
- [View](#) and [subscribe](#) to **Seekers Journal**, a monthly e-newsletter of Seeking Community

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## Updates from Tamarack's Learning Communities

- [They Can't But We Can](#) - [John Stapleton](#) outlines his calculation for eliminating poverty in Ontario and illustrates that it IS doable if we rethink how government funds are aligned and allocated.
- [Disability - By Design](#) - [Sherri Torjman](#) explores the intrinsic link between poverty and disability and shares her belief that the first and most important step to tackling it requires a shift the way in which we understand the problem.
- [The Role of Water Carriers in Organizations](#) - [Liz Weaver](#) identifies the important, and often overlooked, leadership role of an organization's "water carriers" - individuals who carry forward the history and culture of the organization - as the life force that brings us together and holds us together over tough times.
- [The Need to Create a New "There"](#) - [Jay Connor](#) observes that greatest obstacles to improving our communities is that there's no **there** there. The infrastructure of most communities is a web of organizations. And, while this web is valuable, but it must be balanced with a capacity to think and work at the community level.
- [Little Artists with BIG Ideas](#) - The [1000 Conversations](#) Team profile the ideas generated by 15 children in Delburne Alberta as they explore the meaning of community and share their visions for the future of the rural town they call home.
- [Community Conversations Continued!](#) - [Eden Yesh](#) of KES shares excitement and resources as an idea to host **Community Conversations** has evolved into a thrilling one-year initiative that is gaining momentum.

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## Tamarack Events

- **February 20th, 2014** - Tele-Learning Seminar: [The Leadership Contract](#) with Vince Molinaro
- **April 7th, 2014** - [Collective Impact and Community Change](#) with Liz Weaver, Medicine Hat, AB
- **May 13th - 15th, 2014** - [Evaluating Community Impact](#) with Liz Weaver and Mark Cabaj, Winnipeg, MB
- **May 21st, 2014** - [Collective Impact and Community Change](#) with Liz Weaver, Windsor, ON
- **June 2nd - 4th, 2014** - [Evaluating Community Impact](#) with Liz Weaver and Mark Cabaj, Halifax, NS
- **Ongoing** - [Join one of Tamarack's nine Communities of Practice](#)




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## About Engage!

*Engage!* e-magazine is published by [Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement](#), to bring you inspiration, ideas, and resources to envision and create vibrant communities. We would love your ideas to help us improve our format. Please [email us](#) with your comments.

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