

Annual Report Issue

- [Better Together: Tamarack's 2012 Annual Report](#)
- [10 Years of Building Vibrant Communities](#)
- [Communities Collaborating for Impact 2012](#)
- [VC - Cities Reducing Poverty 2012](#)
- [Seeking Community](#)



Better Together: Tamarack's 2012 Annual Report

[By: Paul Born]

Over the past 10 years Tamarack has grown to become a mature and active force for community change in Canada and beyond. We have built the nation's largest learning community for collaborative leaders (more than 10,000 learners) and also the largest network of cities

(39) who are working together to reduce poverty. More than 203,000 Canadians are less poor because of the impact of this network.

Building upon this solid foundation, in 2012 Tamarack took a dramatic turn. Going forward we will focus all of our attention on building Learning Communities for social change. We want to be deliberate about creating large scale change. We believe that when leaders learn together - building a common agenda and then sharing their insights, experiences and resources for social change with one another - we can accelerate the impact of this work. Tamarack's role is to facilitate this co-generative process of learning and change. We will primarily do this through online and face-to-face learning activities.

This month's issue of Engage! is our 2012 Annual Report Edition. In it we offer you an overview of our three distinct but inter-related Learning Communities. Each article includes a series of links that will enable you to go directly to specific places on our four Online Learning web sites to find more detailed information and enable you to further explore topics of particular interest. We also welcome your feedback and encourage you to share your own ideas and stories about the work of this Institute.

We are proud of Tamarack's solid foundation and excited about what the future holds. We welcome you to join us in building a connected force for social change.

Learn More:

- [Who are Tamarack's Learning Communities?](#)
- [Tamarack Learning Community Design](#)
- Our [Theory of Change](#)
- [Thought Leader Program](#)
- [Our Impact By the Numbers](#)
- [Annual Report](#)
- [The Tamarack Team](#)
- [Our Organizational Chart](#)
- [Tamarack Donors & Sponsors](#)

Back to top.



Key Numbers in Vibrant Communities
439,435 poverty reducing benefits to 202,931 households in Canada
256 poverty reducing initiatives completed or in progress by local Trail Builders
\$22.8 million invested in local Trail Builder activity
2,278 organizations partnering in Trail Builder communities
1,539 individuals playing substantial roles including 840 people who are living in poverty
53 substantive government policy changes

10 Years of Building Vibrant Communities

[By: Liz Weaver]

In 2002, Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement and its partners, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Caledon Institute of Social Policy launched Vibrant Communities Canada. This action learning experiment invited communities to develop multi-sector roundtables focused on reducing poverty. The communities employed a consistent framework focusing on understanding poverty and its impacts, collaborating across sectors, using a comprehensive lens, building on existing community assets and committing to a long term process of learning and change.

Between 2002 and 2012, thirteen cities rose to the challenge and began experimenting with innovative approaches to tackling the complex issue of poverty. Their community journeys were documented by Caledon and shared widely through community stories. Community partners regularly reported their progress as they learned together sharing both successes and challenges.

Over ten years, the collective achievements have been substantial. These communities, their volunteer leaders and their investors have moved the needle by increasing assets for almost 203,000 households living in poverty. Over 250 innovations were developed across the 13 communities and their collective efforts contributed to 53 substantive policy changes.

The road to this change was often challenging. Poverty is a complex issue with many inter-related root causes and there was skepticism about whether collaborative efforts could move the needle. What the Vibrant Communities experiment proved, was that communities can step up to the table, build collective will and substantially improve the lives of citizens living in poverty. The experiment also proved the value of communities learning together and building off the successes that they achieved. Many substantial policy change efforts were leveraged across the cities including affordable transportation, housing and income strategies.

In 2012, cities from across Canada gathered to determine the next phase of Vibrant Communities and launched Cities Reducing Poverty with the vision of 100 cities across Canada joining together to reduce poverty. In the first year, nearly 40 cities have signed on and many more are forming their roundtables and beginning their work. In addition, eight provinces and three territories are working on poverty reduction strategies and recognizing the important role that communities play. The future is beckoning, reducing poverty is possible in Canada and it takes the leadership of cities and citizens to make this happen. Be sure to read the article **VC – Cities Reducing Poverty 2012** below to learn how the Vibrant Communities initiative continues and to discover our plans for the year ahead.

Learn More about Vibrant Communities:

- Watch the video: [What is a Vibrant Community?](#)
- Read [Evaluating Vibrant Communities 2002-2010](#)
- Visit the [Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty Learning Community](#)
- Review [Inspired Learning: Evaluation of Vibrant Communities National Supports](#)

Back to top.

Communities Collaborating for Impact 2012

[By: Sylvia Cheuy]



What might be possible for a network of community champions who are committed to leading - and learning - together? Could they: advance a movement for community well-being; revitalize local food systems; or, champion the voice of youth in planning for the future? Might these leaders become a united force for social change?

[Tamarack CCI](#) is a Learning Community for collaborative leadership professionals who are charting new ways to engage people from multiple sectors to work together. This diverse wisdom is the catalyst for creating innovative solutions to the most complex challenges facing communities.

The Tamarack CCI Learning Community welcomed almost 1,000 people at the five face-to-face learning events that we hosted in 2012. This included the 150 people who attended the **2012 Communities Collaborating Institute: Innovating Together** - Tamarack's week-long signature learning event for collaborative leaders. 2,467 people joined our online learning opportunities and we welcomed 376,000 visitors to the Tamarack CCI website (www.tamarackcci.ca) where more than 21,000 resources were downloaded. Engage!, Tamarack's e-magazine which profiles the latest ideas from the field, was distributed to almost 9,000 subscribers monthly.

Our collaboration with the Lake Region United Way in New Hampshire at the custom-designed **Collective Impact Institute** in October 2012 has expanded beyond the event itself to include a dedicated space within the CCI Online Learning Community for alumni from that event - and all Tamarack CCI members - to find the event's resources and continue collaborating with one another as they translate their learning into powerful community action.

In 2013 the Tamarack CCI Learning Community is looking forward to welcoming John Kania and Fay Hanleybrown of [FSG Social Impact Consultants](#) to Toronto in April for **Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact**: a first-ever workshop of its kind in Canada. And, in October, we welcome Adam Kahane, Tom Kelly, Ratna Omidvar and others to **Accelerating Impact, Tamarack's 2013 Communities Collaborating Institute (CCI)** in Edmonton Alberta. The focus on this year's CCI has been designed specifically for those who desire **new ways to lead, engage and transform communities in ways that accelerate impact and lead to large-scale change**.

Ultimately, the focus and purpose of the Tamarack CCI Learning Community is to facilitate the networking of 1,000 collaborative leaders who are working towards positive impact in their communities. As these leaders share their knowledge and experience with us and each other, we will, together, advance the knowledge and practice of this field. If you are inspired, please join us!

Related Links:

- Visit the [Tamarack CCI Learning Community](#)
- Plan on joining us at the [Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact](#): - April 16th - 18th in Toronto
- Learn more about [Accelerating Impact: the 2013 Communities Collaborating Institute](#)
- Click [here](#) to find more on Tamarack's strategy for 2013 and beyond

Back to top.

VC - Cities Reducing Poverty 2012

[By: Donna Jean Forster-Gill]



Imagine, 100 Cities across Canada collectively reducing poverty for 1 million Canadians. Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty 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. Since the beginning of 2012, 105 communities have connected to the Learning Community through the online learning platform, 4 communities of practice, and 6 action teams. Movement is also being made towards a national living wage framework and deeper investigation into models of campus/community engagement.

The current focus of Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty is for members to play a significant role in the leadership of the network. Previously Vibrant Communities Canada provided a link to funding and other supports, but now Cities Reducing Poverty members participate actively in all aspects of their learning community from design to implementation and a commitment to shared engagement through an annual membership fee.

In 2012, the members of Vibrant Communities Canada - Cities Reducing Poverty identified six action priorities and are actively engaged in moving these priorities forward. We linked with 1,528 followers on social media, welcomed 108,708 visitors and saw 27,000 resources downloaded from our Online Learning site. We anticipate that during 2012-2013: significant progress will be made in developing a Cities Reducing Poverty Charter and Business Case; planning for a 2014 National Poverty Summit will be completed; and, significant progress will be made on creating shared policy and evaluation frameworks.

Related links:

- View [a snapshot](#) of the 2012 impact of Vibrant Communities - Cities Reducing Poverty
- Check out the [map of members](#) in the Vibrant Communities- Cities Reducing Poverty Network
- Scan the [city profiles](#) for each of the 105 cities in Vibrant Communities - Cities Reducing Poverty
- If you are part of a collaborative effort to reduce poverty in your community and would like to explore how to get involved with Vibrant Communities - Cities Reducing Poverty please email LizWeaver

Back to top.

Seeking Community

[By: Rachel Brnjas]



Imagine: city planners designing neighborhoods to increase social capital; elderly people staying in their neighborhoods for another 5 years; mental health rates declining because neighbours are caring for each other and creating a greater sense of connection and belonging together. [Seeking Community](#) is a Learning Community for individuals who care about the vibrancy of their communities. Our aim is to encourage and connect individuals who are hosting conversations to recapture the idea of community; to make it a guiding force in organizing our neighbourhoods and institutions; and, for envisioning policies for well-being.

In 2012, the [Seeking Community](#) Learning Community saw a 65% increase in subscribers to its monthly e-newsletter *Seeker's Journal*. 609 member profiles have been developed. There have also been 928,725 website pageviews and 172,928 web visits to the **Seeking Community** Learning Community.

[Seeking Community](#) brings people with diverse experiences and understandings of community into a dialogue about the importance of having a deepened sense of community. This online community allows you to create a profile, listen to podcasts, post blogs, post links to other websites, and other resources. Our Learning Community includes ten Thought Leaders: people who bring various insights and expertise into this overall dialogue. Over the next 3 year, we will host 1,000 conversations about community. Our online Learning Community will act as a vibrant space to document these conversations; analyze them to see what patterns emerge; and engage the Learning Community in co-generating insights from this data. Once clear understandings begin to emerge, we will bring these to policy makers, celebrities and other people of

influence to propose policy changes that acknowledge the importance of community.

Related links:

- Visit Seeking Community online at www.seekingcommunity.ca
- [View 2012 highlights and stats](#) from the Seeking Community Learning Community
- [Discover](#) Seeking Community's 2013 Goals

Back to top.

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.

