



**A GUIDE FOR BUILDING A  
SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT  
COLLABORATION**

## Acknowledgements

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Community stories create context, and we learn from each other's successes and challenges. This guide has been developed through the contributions of many individuals who are advancing community change efforts in their organizations and communities every day. Your work is an inspiration.

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# INTRODUCTION

**10: A Guide for Building a Sustainable and Resilient Collaboration** is an idea that was born out of many conversations with place-based collaborative tables about the challenges these tables face securing funding to support collective work. Over the past 20 years, Tamarack has engaged with more than 2,000 collaborative roundtables globally. The conversation about creating sustainable and resilient collaborations is a frequent and challenging topic that many of you are required to navigate.

Since 2011, there has been an emergence of Collective Impact collaboratives in the US, Canada, and around the world. The five conditions of the Collective Impact framework are: developing a common agenda, shared measurement, supporting mutually reinforcing activities, engaging in continuous communications, and investing in backbone infrastructure. The final condition — investing in backbone infrastructure — explicitly recognizes that collaboration resulting in changes to outcomes at a community-wide scale requires shared leadership and governance agreements and skilled human resources.

Expressly highlighting the importance of backbone resources has opened deeper thinking about the human and financial resources required to achieve population-level impact in community change efforts.

This guide is designed to broaden our collective thinking about the factors that contribute to sustainable, resilient, and impactful collaboration. After the introduction, you'll find a section that defines the key terms appearing throughout the guide. Sections 1 to 5 explore the factors relevant to creating a sustainable collaboration and the elements that build resiliency in collaborations. Each of these sections is written to provide readers with ideas, questions, and resources that will supplement thinking and action.

Section 6 includes ten community stories. These stories reflect collaboration efforts that have built their approaches with sustainability and resilience as key factors. Other stories reflect collaborations that have navigated community change effectively. However, in all cases, the community-based collaboration stories share the lessons learned.



The final three sections are designed for collaborations who might want to go a little bit deeper in their thinking. Section 7 contains ten resources that broaden and add to the concepts of sustainability and resilience, Section 8 includes questions for funders and collaboration tables to consider, and Section

9 anticipates the future of collaboration, sustainability, and resilience.

This guide will explore the full dimensions of creating sustainable and resilient collaborations. We invite you to share your reflections about this 10 Guide by emailing us at [tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca](mailto:tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca).



## Tamarack 10 Guides

Tamarack 10 Guides are designed to be provocative, and within them we ask you to consider some tough questions. We share lessons learned from the experiences of communities, and we strive to reflect current thinking about timely and pertinent issues. In developing a 10 Guide, Tamarack engages advisors and reviewers, shares community stories, and curates relevant resources on the topic examined.

## The Audience for This Guide

Sustaining cross-sector collaboratives and the strategies they design is work that everyone who supports the collaborative must share. Thus, this 10 Guide is for anyone connected to a collaborative effort. It has been developed for individual members of a collaborative table, members and backbone leaders connected to a Collective Impact initiative, investors and funders of collaborative efforts, and individuals who are simply curious about collaboration. It may also be useful to share this guide with board members who hold governance authority related to members of the collaboration.

## The Times Are Changing: The Current Context

This guide was finalized between the fall and winter of 2022. It is an understatement that the two and a half years prior to this have been challenging. The COVID pandemic laid bare deep and systemic inequities in our systems, and programs that have existed for a long time became far more visible. The pandemic also contributed to a greater social divide and dissonance. The challenges we face are more complex, and many of us find it difficult to navigate the changing context. Therefore, we've come to look to each other and to collaboration as a means toward shared outcomes.

In addition, it has been ten years since the initial release of the Collective Impact framework. While collaborations certainly existed prior to Collective Impact, the scope, scale, and number of multi- and cross-sector collaborations seeking to achieve population-level impacts have increased significantly. In large cities, there are often several cross-sector collaborations competing for human resources, community focus, and funding. However, the broader public may only have limited understanding of the nature of cross-sector collaboration and how it contributes to thriving communities.

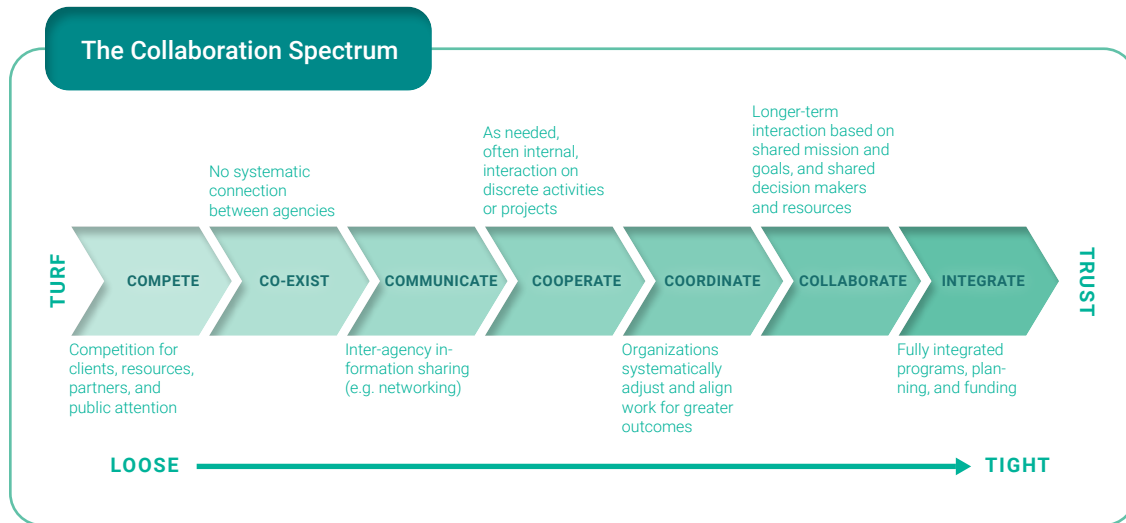
Building the partnerships that address the root causes of inequity takes time. The human, financial, and community resources required to support collaborations designed to achieve population-level impact are the same resources that also provide for people’s urgent, essential needs today. Sustaining longer-term, multi-sector collaborations can be challenging.

We need the wisdom and perspectives of many to understand the systemic barriers and how to address them, to be able to plan in uncertainty, and to develop collaborative strategies that challenge inequity and build better futures.

### The Collaboration Spectrum

Collaboration is not a single action. Rather, it encompasses the many ways in which partners show up and contribute to community change efforts. Tamarack developed the Collaboration Spectrum to build a shared understanding of the options and experiences of collaboration, bearing in mind that it can be helpful for collaborative partners to identify the nature of their collaboration and its desired outcomes.

[The Collaboration Spectrum Tool](#) is a resource to assist collaborative efforts in understanding the current context of their shared work.



This 10 Guide is most useful for collaborations seeking to coordinate, collaborate, or integrate their efforts. This includes collaborations that employ the Collective Impact framework or those that are seeking to improve conditions for a specific population or the whole community. In the collaboration spectrum, these types of collaborations require increased trust amongst partners. The partners around the collaboration table are also more deeply involved and committed to the shared outcome.

The guide may also be used by collaborations that are designing programmatic solutions. There may be some content in the guide that is not completely relevant to programmatic-focused collaborations. If this is the case for you, we suggest that you simply bring in the content that is most relevant to your context.



### Initial Questions to Consider

This guide is designed to identify the factors that nurture the necessary conditions to create a sustainable and resilient collaboration. You’ll notice that the questions raised in the guide are provocative. When a collaboration seeks to build a sustainable approach, it must determine which parts of the effort are relevant to sustain. Similarly, the collaboration should also consider the conditions that enable it to be resilient and responsive to changing community conditions.

Here are some initial questions to frame your thinking:

- How does your collaboration define sustainability?
- Do you want to sustain the collaboration or specific elements of it?
- Does your collaborative effort need to be resilient and able to navigate the waves of change? If so, what is required to accomplish this?
- Does it make sense for your collaboration to address the sustainability factors and increase your capacity to build resilience?
- Do you need to adapt your strategy to strengthen your long-term sustainability and resilience? If so, how?

**Let’s begin.**

# DEFINING THE CORE CONCEPTS IN THIS GUIDE

The concepts of sustainability and resilience are linked and may sometimes seem contradictory. We often think about sustainability in terms of sustaining a program, service, or collaborative the same way forever, with zero or little change. However, we know that people's mindsets, needs, resources, and community priorities are dynamic and that they shift and change over time.

## Collaboration

Collaborations are convened and facilitated by individuals, and they seek to improve communities or places. In this context, the concept of creating healthy, vibrant, and engaging collaborative experiences for the participants and the community is vital.



## Equity

Centering equity means ensuring that individuals impacted by the collaboration are involved in the process. The Collective Impact Forum identifies [five practices for centering equity](#) in collaborative efforts:

1. Ground the work in data and context, ensuring that solutions are targeted
2. Focus on systems change, as well as programs and services
3. Shift power within the collaborative
4. Listen to and act with the community
5. Build equity leadership and accountability



*"Collaboration is essential for complex situations, and that by nature, do not have one "right" approach. This is challenging to navigate, but know you are not alone. If a collaborative forms, you can be sure there are others – locally, nationally, or internationally – that are likewise passionate about taking action. When thinking about collaborative sustainability, think about how your insights (successes and failures!) can be shared to build the greater community capacity for change."*

Vivien Underdown, United Way Halton & Hamilton

## Sustainability

Sustainability incorporates many factors, including leadership, funding, community engagement, and the ability to influence policy and systems that lead to program or a collective impact. Whereas resilience focuses on the internal conditions related to collaborative health and well-being, sustainability includes investments and outcomes that can have lasting impact. These concepts are tied together and can affect one another.

Successful and sustainable collaborations are ones in which every actor in a partnership has a role to play and in which responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of their collaborative efforts is shared. This includes conveners, community members, backbone partners, and partners who are engaged from different sectors. All of these contribute to the collective outcome.

In many funding agreements, organizations and collaboratives are asked about their sustainability strategies when launching a new or scaled effort. Most of them answer by identifying their capacity to leverage funding resources, but this response represents

the limited view that sustainability is solely about securing funding. It also implies that all collaborative efforts should be sustained, but this is not always the case.

There are examples in which an initiative was tried but the anticipated outcomes were not achieved. Failing or failed efforts should not be sustained. Examples of a failing effort include when funders no longer want to invest in the collaboration, partners have left or are difficult to recruit, there is significant conflict, or the community priorities have shifted and changed. Knowing when to pull the plug on the collaboration is difficult but important. Reflecting on the ten factors of sustainability helps bring focus to a collaboration that might be in difficulty.

There are also examples in which the work of a collaboration has very profoundly changed a community's ways of working. The collaboration achieved its purpose and is no longer required, or perhaps the collaborative's work was absorbed into an existing institution or set of actors. Collaboratives should end when their work becomes part of how its larger ecosystem operates.



## Resilience

Resilience is a practice that enables collaborations to consider the changes occurring in their communities in real time and learn how to navigate them. It is a collaboration's effort to increase its capacity to bounce back from setbacks, mobilize around emerging opportunities, take time to reflect, and be prepared for future challenges. In these days of rapid change and disruption, resilience — the ability to adapt to emerging opportunities and respond to unanticipated challenges — is an essential capacity. Resilience is about building a collaboration's capacity to shift, adapt, and change, and is also focused on the overall health and well-being of the collaboration and the community.

Resilience is often linked to environmental approaches that examine the capacity of the natural environment to regenerate. It is also often considered in a human context that reflects the human capacity to navigate change. Resilience in a collaborative context includes the willingness and interest of partners to renew their shared strategy and recommit to their shared effort.

## System Change

Collaborations often seek to influence and change the system in tangible ways. This includes influencing the system of service providers, funders, or policy makers, which could also mean changing the behaviours of key partners or community members. Collaborations that take the time to identify and explore the organizations delivering services and programs within a community ecosystem will also identify strategies to leverage existing resources.

## Population-Level Impact

Collective Impact efforts often seek to achieve population-level impact. These efforts seek to improve outcomes for individuals or specific population groups. Examples of population-level impact include a decrease in the number of people living in poverty and an increase in secondary school graduation rates. Population-level impact is often achieved through a long-term focus and the collective efforts of many organizations and collaborations.

## Community Engagement

Successful collaborations engage beyond the members of the core table. Collaborations that focus outwardly and seek to engage the ideas, perspectives, and resources of the community are more sustainable and resilient.





# SECTION 1

## Assessing Your Collaboration's Sustainability Factors

A question often found on funding applications probes how the organization or collaboration might sustain their program, service, or work after the funding has ended. The question or questions are designed to prompt the collaborative to consider the longer-term viability of the undertaking. In some ways, the questions about sustainability make sense. The funder or investor is making an investment in a collaborative effort because its partners have identified that their work will address an unmet need or will shift population-level outcomes.

There are subtle differences between how a program or individual organization operate and how a collaboration effort functions and is structured. These differences impact sustainability. One challenge, in a collaborative context, is that there are many different

elements to collaboration. These include investing in the people and process of the collaboration: recruiting partners, determining how to work together, developing a plan for change, and working collaboratively to enact the plan. There is also the impact of collaborative effort: developing a funding proposal, engagement of community members, the coordination or delivery of services, achieving impact, and evaluating and communicating results. The people and process aspect of collaboration is often the most difficult to secure funding for, and yet is integral to achieving success and impact.

An important question every collaboration should ask is this: What needs to be sustained? Keep in mind that there are options. If the work has fulfilled its core purpose, it does not need to be sustained. In other cases, some

### Tip from a funder's perspective:

If possible (depending on your relationship with the funder), it can be a good idea to ask what they are looking for in terms of sustainability and why they are asking. We make many assumptions about this, but not all funders are referring to the same concept or approaching it in the same ways.

of the collaborative outcome might eventually be embedded in the core work of one or more partners around the collaborative table.

A better set of questions can offer a deeper understanding of the nuanced context of the sustainability of collaborative work. In the United Kingdom, the language of legacy is used: What will be the legacy of this collaborative work? Which organizations might carry forward the work? How can the lessons we are learning about the community and about collaboration be shared more effectively? If we consider the concept of leaving a legacy during a collaboration's lifespan or when a collaboration is finished, this will contribute to the overall effectiveness of community change.



## SECTION 2

### Assessing the Resilience of Your Collaborative to Navigate and Adapt to Change

Communities are living, dynamic organisms. From the time a collaboration begins to intervene in the community, things start to shift and change. During the collaboration, there could be leadership changes in key strategic partner organizations, a shifting of community priorities, or a change in proposed or identified resources. Some of these shifts and changes may be forecasted in advance of the launch of the collaborative effort. Alternatively, some might emerge when the work is taking place.

The COVID pandemic illustrated how individuals, organizations, and collaboratives were required to navigate unanticipated shifts. These included shifts from direct to virtual delivery of services, in-person gatherings to remote work, and — for some organizations — the loss of revenue generated from services and memberships. Over a period

of more than 800 days, organizations of all types and collaborative planning tables were required to continually shift and tilt to navigate these changes in real time. Few of us could anticipate the positive and negative impacts we would all experience as a result of the pandemic. Some collaborative efforts were resilient and became the focal point of community connection, while other collaboratives languished and faded away.

Tamarack developed a 10 Guide: A Guide for a Community-Based COVID Recovery, which profiled community-based collaborations and how they navigated through the pandemic. The guide also provided key strategies for collaborations to consider.

Many collaboratives do not consider the dynamic nature of community change into their planning and strategy. Instead, they

develop more definitive and structured approaches. Sometimes, these approaches are in response to funding applications that require collaborative partners to develop a clear work plan, with defined steps to achieve their change goals. Other times, these more rigid, pre-determined approaches are in response to collaborative partners with low-risk tolerance.

Tamarack advocates for collaborative efforts to embrace a more dynamic and responsive approach to community change work. This effective approach emphasizes embracing principles aligned with the practice of resilience.

Resilience is the ability of collaborative groups to navigate dynamic shifts and changes that often occur in organizations and communities. In this context, resilience is not about the ability to return to the “status quo” but rather to adapt to unanticipated challenges with enough agility to capitalize on emerging opportunities. In Section 5 of this guide, ten practices for building resilience capacities will be explored. These practices are best applied to a dynamic and changing community context. As the pandemic has taught us, resilience is becoming a required practice.



## SECTION 3

### 10 Questions About Building a Sustainable and Resilient Collaborative

#### Question 1:

What are the funders' and the collaborative's definition of sustainability and success? Have members of the collaborative strategically built relationships with funders to support the ongoing sharing of opportunities relevant to the work the collaboration is doing? Are funders authentically engaged in the collaborative work? What could the collaboration consider if the definition of sustainability is significantly different from that of the funders?

#### Question 2:

How will the shared definition of sustainability influence which elements of the collaborative work are sustained?

#### Question 3:

Do you have the right people at the collaborative table to work toward a common vision and agenda for the collaborative? Are they each committing resources to the shared work? How is power distributed equitably between those who hold power and those with lived and living experiences?

#### Question 4:

What strategies or systems changes does your collaborative want to sustain? Why is it important to sustain this mindset, policy, power shift, element, service, program, or activity that the collaborative effort has developed? How might the elements to be sustained be integrated within the service offerings of a current collaborative partner?

#### Question 5:

What evidence do you have that there is an ongoing community need for this strategy or systems change? What results or impact has the collaboration already achieved? How will this impact sustainability efforts?

#### Question 6:

What are the financial, human resources, community, and other resources required to sustain a particular element of the work or the collaboration as a whole? Which of the current or future partners might have the capacity to contribute resources to support the sustainability of the collaboration?

#### Question 7:

How is the broader community involved or engaged in the collaboration? Who is engaged and how? How is the community informed about the progress and impact of the collaboration? How is the collaboration's work visible to the community?

#### Question 8:

Does the collaboration continuously improve processes and strategies? How does the collaboration evaluate, reflect on, and learn from its collective effort? How are the lessons learned shared widely to create an ongoing legacy of the work and impact?

#### Question 9:

What alternative action (or actions) will the collaboration take if there are no identified human or financial resources available to sustain the effort? What is the biggest risk facing the collaborative in sustaining the work?

#### Question 10:

What has the collaboration done to advance policy, advocacy, and/or systems change? Do these shifts enable the collaboration and its shared purpose to be embedded in larger-scale change? What else could partners do to advance larger-scale change?

*"As a funder, I would like to encourage more conversations about sustainability between funders and grantees. Funders often ask about sustainability, and it's not always clear what we're looking for or whether we have a clear understanding about what needs to be sustained. Discussing these items (and the related factors) can be so helpful if all parties approach the conversations with bravery and curiosity."*

Kelli Stevens, Suncor



## SECTION 4

### 10 Really Good Sustainability Factors

#### People Factors

- 1 Equity and inclusion embedded in design
- 2 Strong ties between partners
- 3 Broad community engagement

#### Resource Factors

- 4 Adequate human and financial resources
- 5 Partners contribute to shared outcomes

#### Process Factors

- 6 Compelling Case drives work
- 7 Ongoing reflection and learning

#### Impact Factors

- 8 Data and Evidence informs approach
- 9 Progress and Impact is tracked and reported
- 10 Influence policy and systems change



The ten sustainability factors described below fall into four main categories and two stacks of work. The first stack describes people and resource factors. Sustainable collaborations pay attention to who engages and how to engage people while ensuring everyone is committed to the shared work. They also seek to ensure there are sufficient and diverse human and financial resources from multiple sectors and sources.

The second stack of work focuses on process and impact factors. Process factors include developing a compelling case and

ensuring ongoing evaluation, reflection, and learning. Impact factors weave data, evidence, and stories of progress and impact together. Impactful collaborations seek to influence policy and system change to create ongoing relevance and sustainability.

A sustainable collaboration pays attention to each of these factors independently and considers the relationship between them. In this section of the guide, each factor will be described with suggestions about how to implement it. Links to additional resources will also be included.

## 10 Really Good Sustainability Factors: How They Stack Up

### People Factors: Consider Who to Involve

- 1 The collaborative effort is designed to address equity and inclusion.
- 2 There are strong ties and trust between collaborative actors.
- 3 The community is actively engaged in the collaborative effort.

### Resource Factors: Consider the Investment Required

- 4 There are adequate financial and human resources to achieve success.
- 5 Collaborative partners actively contribute to the shared outcome.

### Process Factors: Consider the Why of the Collaboration

- 6 There is a compelling, community-based reason for organizations to collaborate.
- 7 There is ongoing reflection and learning by collaborative and community members.

### Impact Factors: Consider the Impact and Tell the Story

- 8 The collaborative uses data and evidence to co-design a compelling agenda and impact approach.
- 9 The collaborative tracks and communicates progress and impact.
- 10 The collaborative influences and shifts policies and systems to benefit the community.

## Sustainability Factor 1:

### The collaborative effort is designed to address equity and inclusion.

Equity should be embedded as a central priority across any issue area in order to create sustained impact, because without addressing the root cause of an issue, the issue will reoccur. Equity includes the concepts of fairness and justice and recognizing that not everyone starts from the same place. It is about uncovering the injustice that is occurring and creating appropriate pathways and supports to address it.

Collaborations that embed equity and inclusion as their core approach achieve a deeper, more significant impact. In communities, individuals with lived and living experience of the inequity of opportunity are often navigating barriers in a system designed against them. These individuals are often excluded from community conversations and community decision tables.

Individuals with lived and living experience bring a deep understanding to what is working and what is not working within the system. In understanding both the individual and collective experiences of individuals with lived and living experience, the collaborative can



more effectively understand the root causes of a problem or challenge. The collaboration can then better identify strategies that are more equitable and impactful. Intentional effort needs to be taken to avoid tokenism; simply inviting the perspective of those with lived and living experience is not enough. This can mean shifting engagement and inclusion practices, sharing power, providing resources and access, and creating the space for voices that historically are not heard.

Equity involves creating the space and supporting opportunities for all to be engaged in finding community solutions. Collaborative efforts that seek to centre equity in their work are sustainable because of they have intentional and inclusive processes and engage more diverse community members

and their assets and perspectives. This leads to strategies that address root causes and generate better community outcomes. Centering equity in collaborative efforts also keeps people connected to their communities and increases engagement and ownership of the process and outcomes.

#### TO DO THIS:

- **Consider the issue focus:** Examine the issue or opportunity being addressed by the collaborative effort. Which equity-deserving groups are least served by how things are today? How does this issue impact members of the community? Who is most impacted? Are these individuals engaged in defining the issue and its impacts? How might these individuals be more meaningfully engaged?
- **Build collaboration membership:** Consider who is participating in the collaborative effort. Do they bring diverse perspectives and knowledges around the issue that would inform the group? Does this collaboration include representation of individuals with lived and living experience of the inequity? Consider who holds power and privilege and how these things will be distributed as the collaborative is assembled.
- **Build in equity supports:** Not every person can participate fully in collaborative processes. Has the collaborative table considered how to support individuals with lived and living experience to enable their participation? What financial, learning, technical, engagement, and other supports might be required? Does the initiative build support that enables equity into the design of their collaborative work?

#### LEARN MORE:

- [10: Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience](#) – This guide, developed in partnership with lived and living experience experts, provides practical advice to collaborative tables considering how to engage and what supports are required for effective engagement.
- [Centering Equity in Collective Impact](#) – This article provides a framework for collaborations to centre equity in their work. It includes five core practices.
- [5 Powerful Ways to Take REAL Action on DEI \(Diversity, Equity & Inclusion\)](#) – The Center for Creative Leadership in the US provides a useful framework that includes four steps to acting on equity, including revealing relevant opportunities, elevating equity, activating diversity, and leading inclusively.



## Sustainability Factor 2:

### There are strong ties and trust between collaborative actors.

Communities that have strong ties and levels of trust between partners engaged in the collaborative effort will achieve greater connection and impact. In the early stages of collaboration, putting a focus on the people-side of coming together will lead to deeper bonds between partners, as well as to a greater ability for the collaborative to navigate through tough times.

Many collaboratives focus on getting right to work on the problem rather than building relationship, connection, and trust. Focusing

on building connections and trust is important, especially when the partners do not have a history of working together or there are power dynamics around the table.

Building connections and bonds can happen through simple engagement strategies, such as asking the question: Why is it important that you have joined this collaborative table? Responses to this question often reveal deeper personal or organizational commitments to the shared problem.



#### TO DO THIS:

Building connection between collaborative actors increases empathy, commitment, and trust. There are some simple strategies that can be used regularly to build trust.

- **Build engagement at every opportunity:**

Ask questions at the beginning of each meeting that invite people to share their perspectives or observations. Tamarack invites partners to both 'check in' and 'check out' of a conversation as a way of engaging all voices around a table.

- **Build your trust toolkit:** While swift trust might happen when a collaborative first meets, maintaining and building trust is an important skill set to have. There are many tools which can be used to build trust, and the people factor in collaborative partnerships is an important component of sustainability.

- **Identify and navigate power dynamics:** When collaborative tables engage people from different sectors and community members, there may be power dynamics that can prevent progress from occurring. Agreeing to a core set of principles for working collaboratively can be the first step in surfacing and navigating power dynamics.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Turf, Trust, Co-Creation and Collective Impact](#) – This paper, published by the Tamarack Institute, explores the multiple dimensions of building trust among partners engaged in a collaboration. It also provides practical tools that create connection and bonds.
- [Establishing Values and Principles for Working Together](#) – Collaborations may stumble if they have not agreed on how they want to work together. This Tamarack tool provides a process to help the table articulate their collective commitments. Building these commitments early will help collaborative relationships when issues become challenging.
- [The Power Project](#) – The Sheila McKechnie (SMK) Foundation has created a resource hub to generate a new way of thinking about power and building action for social change. The *It's All About Power* guide will support individuals and collaborators to work strategically and use their collective power to drive change.

### Sustainability Factor 3:

## The community is actively engaged in the collaborative effort.

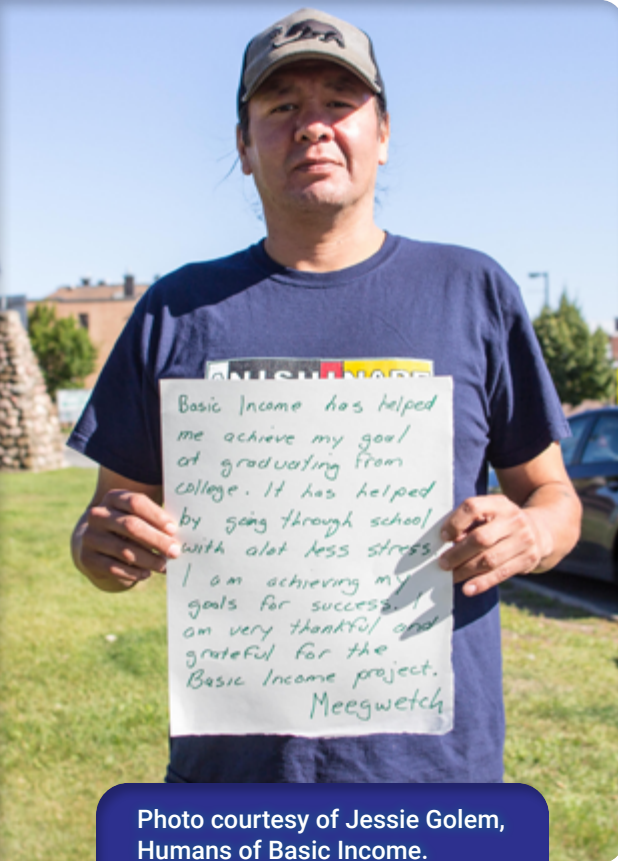


Photo courtesy of Jessie Golem, Humans of Basic Income. Provided by HRPR.

Collaborations that seek to actively engage the broader community in their work are more relevant and sustainable. Too often, once a collaboration is formed it is only focused on engaging a small set of partners, either at a core table or through working groups.

Collaborative efforts that hope to achieve a population-level impact must broadly engage and build commitment from across the community. Whatever the focus of the collaboration, there are likely people and organizations already working to make change. Recognizing and valuing this work can leverage new resources for the collaboration and build momentum. Collaboration is about building a movement for change in which the broader community or others working in a similar way can join forces.

Collaborations that focus on movement building as a strategy can harness and leverage community connections to achieve and scale impact. The more people involved, the stronger the commitment to the collaborative purpose and focus. Once the focus is deeply embedded in the community, the momentum for change and impact grows.

### TO DO THIS:

- **Understand authentic engagement:** Authentic community engagement is creating an environment in which everyone is invited to participate, co-create solutions, and innovative actions. It is about creating a foundation of partnership and empowerment.
- **Recognize community change and other champions:** Recognizing the positive work already happening is key to building trust and commitment. Every community has leaders who contribute daily to causes that might be connected to the collaborative effort. Celebrate them and their impact when it aligns with the collaboration's shared outcome.
- **Unleash the power of community:** Collaborative tables often hold on tightly to power. By unleashing the power of community and welcoming all who can and want to contribute, the collaboration will move from something *nice* to do to something we *need* to do.

### LEARN MORE

- [Creating the Culture for Community Engagement](#) – Deep engagement is challenging to achieve, and we are often fearful that authentic engagement might raise issues we cannot resolve. This paper focuses on essential strategies for creating the culture of deep and authentic engagement.
- [Tools for Systems Thinkers: Systems Mapping](#) – Identifying the organizations and individuals in a system and the connections between them can be helpful in determining where leverage opportunities might exist.
- [Build a Movement](#) – Deeply sustainable and resilient collaborations build beyond themselves; they build movements. The Solutions Project will teach you how to build a movement for change.





## Sustainability Factor 4:

### There are enough financial and human resources to achieve success.

Collaborative efforts are more successful when there are enough financial and human resources in place to help the group achieve scale and impact. Once the collaboration partners have identified the issue they want to work on and determined a strategy (or strategies), the partners should have a conversation about what the collaboration will need in order to be successful.

An honest conversation about financial and human resources needs early on can help build mutually supportive collaborative relationships, as well as prevent challenges (such

as burnout, for example) in the future. This conversation will inform how the collaboration thinks about the scope and limits of the work.

If a collaboration is seeking to make a population-level change, such as improving high school graduation rates, it will likely be looking at longer-term outcomes. Population-level impact often takes between three to five years and involves multiple interventions across many partners. Making sure there are enough human and financial resources to be successful is a key sustainability factor.



#### TO DO THIS:

- **Build a budget and funding plan:** Build a workplan and budget that aligns with the scope of the collaboration's work. Be realistic about the backbone resources and timelines required to achieve success and impact.
- **Look for resource commitments from partners:** Invite collaborative partners to make an investment in the shared or common agenda. All collaborative partners should be contributing their time and expertise, but some partners might also be able to contribute specific skills, such as building your website or financial resources, to help get the shared work done.
- **Engage funders and investors:** Sustainable collaborative efforts engage multiple and diverse funders and investors in their work. Engaging a range of supporters helps the table to continue to move forward when a funding priority changes with one of the investors.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Collective Impact Initiative Budget Tool](#) – The Collective Impact Initiative Budget spreadsheet in Excel is useful for newly launched collaboratives as well as more mature efforts. This tool identifies a variety of different expense categories needed by collaborative planning tables.
- [The Innovation Ambition Continuum](#) – Authors Mark Cabaj and Keren Perla discuss three different levels of ambition and the impact it has on collaborative outcomes.
- [Tools for Backbones](#) – This resource from the Collective Impact Forum provides ideas and strategies to ensure the effective engagement of partners and maintain their commitment and momentum over time.



## Sustainability Factor 5:

### Collaborative partners actively contribute to the shared outcome.



Collaborative partners play a pivotal role in the success and impact of the shared outcome. Once they have agreed to their compelling, community-based goals or common agenda, they must intentionally link their own organizational mission and personal goals to the shared goal.

Collaborative partners are the leaders and should be the early adopters of the shared goal and outcome. They can leverage their own personal and organizational capacity to create early wins and effective impact. The partners around the collaboration table should consider what they are personally doing or what their organization is currently working on and how that work might align and contribute to achieving impact.

In the Collective Impact framework, this is called “mutually reinforcing activities”. Considering the existing assets that individuals and organizations might bring to the collaborative effort can be important and can provide early leverage. It also becomes an incentive for encouraging other organizations to join in. Collaborations that rely extensively on the backbone team to drive the work are less committed, less connected, and less impactful.

#### TO DO THIS:

- **Look for existing mission and program alignment:** When you are asked to join a collaborative table, you should consider your own personal mission statement or result as well as those of your organization. When your own personal or organizational mission or result is connected and aligned with the common agenda or goal of the collaborative, you are more likely to see connection and opportunity. You and your organization will also be more committed to the shared outcomes of the collaboration.
- **Contribute human, financial, and organizations resources:** Collaborative work achieves greater impact when partners are contributing to the goal or solution, and all collaborative partners have resources they can contribute. Creating opportunities with which to meaningfully engage partners by inviting their contributions deepens connection and commitment.
- **Leverage community connections:** There are a maximum of six degrees of separation between us. Collaborative tables composed of partners from different sectors can benefit from creating and leveraging community connections.

#### LEARN MORE

- [15% Solutions](#) — This Liberating Structures tool helps partners reveal small and big actions that they can contribute to the shared success of the collaboration. Each partner is asked to identify something they are currently doing, which, when adjusted slightly, create momentum and progress.
- [Top 100 Partners Exercise](#) — The Top 100 Partners Exercise is a useful tool for collectively identifying the community connections each partner brings to the collaboration. By sorting partners into sector or other categories, the collaborative table can determine where community connections are strong and where they are weak.
- [12 Tools to Foster Alignment & Collaboration](#) — CoCreative Consulting has developed this background resource that identifies 12 simple tools to build engagement, collaboration, and alignment.

## Sustainability Factor 6:

### There is a compelling, community-based reason for organizations to collaborate.

A core condition of the Collective Impact framework is the articulation and development of a “common agenda”. The common agenda is both a call to action and a compelling, community-based reason for organizations to collaborate.

Most collaborative initiatives focus their efforts on making an impact by solving a problem or community dilemma. There are also examples of collaborations that focus on leveraging an opportunity, whether this

involves aligning services or accessing funding. In either case, developing a compelling, community-based reason for organizations to collaborate is central to engaging partners, focusing the collaborative work, and building support and sustainability.

Building the compelling case is critical to building a sustainable and resilient collaborative. Doing so brings partners to the table and, when progress is being made, will keep them there.



#### TO DO THIS:

- **Understand your community's story:** Every community has a story that its citizens tell each other. Some narratives highlight the good things happening in that community while others focus on the challenges. Ask yourself and your collaborative partners how they might describe their community. What do they love about it and what challenges does it have? What do they know about how colonization, immigration, and other historic realities have shaped current systems? How will these reflections help the collaborative make progress with the community problem or challenge?
- **Engage with relevant data:** Stories are not enough. Data can reveal and uncover patterns that might not be explicit through stories alone. Data – disaggregated to reveal racialized, gendered, and location-based disparities examined over time – can also reveal whether progress is being made or if the problem is growing.
- **Build a common and shared understanding of the problem:** Working together to develop a common and shared understanding of the current challenge and how the collaborative might respond is a foundational step in building sustainability.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Collaboration: What Problem Are You Trying to Solve?](#) – This paper, recently published by the Tamarack Institute, provides useful advice for deepening the collective understanding about the particular problem that needs to be solved.
- [Data Walks: An Innovative Way to Share Data with Communities](#) – The Urban Institute team developed a data walk approach that enables community collaborators to make sense of core data points. This tool helps them to interpret the data through their own experience and through the lens of the problem.
- [Collaborating to Create a Common Agenda](#) – This useful FSG (Foundation Strategy Group) resource helps collaborative tables consider how to get started in developing a common and shared agenda. The tool also helps collaboratives consider what elements might frame the container or scope of working collaboratively.

## Sustainability Factor 7:

### There is ongoing reflection and learning by collaborative and community members.

Community change is dynamic: there are shifting priorities, changes in leadership, and external factors to navigate. Building an ongoing reflection and learning strategy into your collaborative practice will help the collective partners assess where they are, what is changing, and how these changes can be leveraged.

Building the culture of reflection and learning can be as simple as regularly asking: What

has shifted in the community and how do we respond? Ongoing reflection and learning create sustainability, as the collaboration is reflecting the dynamic of the community. It is in sync, relevant, and current.

Collaborations that build a plan and then do not regularly check in may miss opportunities for funding, innovation, and community engagement.



## TO DO THIS:

- **Create opportunities to ask reflective questions:** Reflection can happen at every meeting. Simply asking the question, “What are you noticing about our shared issue in the community?” can seed reflective responses. These reflections engage partners but can also help uncover opportunities for action.
- **Encourage community members to provide their perspectives:** Inviting community members outside of the collaboration circle can bring new ways of thinking and different perspectives, both of which could deepen impact. Build regular opportunities for community members to engage and learn with collaboration partners.
- **Build reflection and learning into evaluation processes:** Evaluation processes should include time to consider the results and the impact of the collaboration. Take the time to pause and ask, “What are we learning and what might we do differently?”

## LEARN MORE

- [How to Craft Powerful Questions](#) – Inspiring Communities New Zealand has developed this useful resource about creating powerful and engaging questions that encourage community conversations.
- [DIY Toolkit](#) – The Nesta DIY Toolkit contains 30 tools for thinking and learning that can help collaboratives deliver better results. The worksheets are helpful in framing reflective thinking and propelling forward action.
- [Better Evaluation](#) – The Better Evaluation website has a wealth of evaluation tools, including participatory sensemaking and learning strategies for evaluators and practitioners.



## Sustainability Factor 8:

### The collaborative uses data and evidence to co-design a compelling agenda and impact approach.

Building a compelling, community-based case for collaborative work should be based on evidence and data, both qualitative and quantitative. Evidence and data can deepen the knowledge and perspective of collaborative partners about the issue to be addressed. Quantitative data, including the percentage of the population impacted by the problem, can be complimented by qualitative data, which include stories about how groups of individuals are experiencing the issue.

In most communities, there are organizations that already track community data. Collaborative tables can reach out to social planning councils, municipal governments, Chamber of Commerce, educational

institutions, healthcare providers, other non-profit organizations, and philanthropic organizations depending on the data they are seeking.

Some communities also have local data websites. [MyPeg](#) in Winnipeg, Manitoba is an example of a community-based data hub. In smaller communities, data and evidence might be more challenging to access. Where data at a local level might not be available, the collaboration might look to other, similar initiatives to determine what data and trends they might be tracking. In the United States, the [National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership](#) is useful for accessing data at a neighbourhood level.



#### TO DO THIS:

- **Convene with local partners to ask about the data they collect:** There are many organizations and institutions collecting and analysing data. Invite your local partners together and ask them about the data they collect and are possibly willing to share.
- **Engage data experts:** You don't have to be the data expert. Seek out people in your community whose work it is to review or analyze data. Ask them if they would be willing to lend their expertise to help your collaborative table understand what data points are relevant and why.
- **Establish a data baseline:** Many collaborations are looking to improve a community or population-level outcome. For example, a baseline (the level of poverty in the community for the current year) will help the collaborative understand if it is making progress. Select appropriate indicators that will help you create your data baseline, which will make it easier to measure progress and impact.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Vital Signs](#) – Many community foundations in Canada regularly produce reports about community health and vitality. The data included in the Vital Signs report might be useful to your collaborative's purpose.
- [Shared Measurement Mapping](#) – This mapping tool can help collaboratives identify indicators in four categories: process, programs, policy, and population indicators. This simple method can help collaboratives focus on their core outcomes.
- [Learning in Action: Evaluating Collective Impact](#) – This compendium of articles by different authors dives into the challenges of evaluating collective community change efforts. The articles explore aligning Collective Impact initiatives, engaging funders, and navigating power dynamics.

## Sustainability Factor 9:

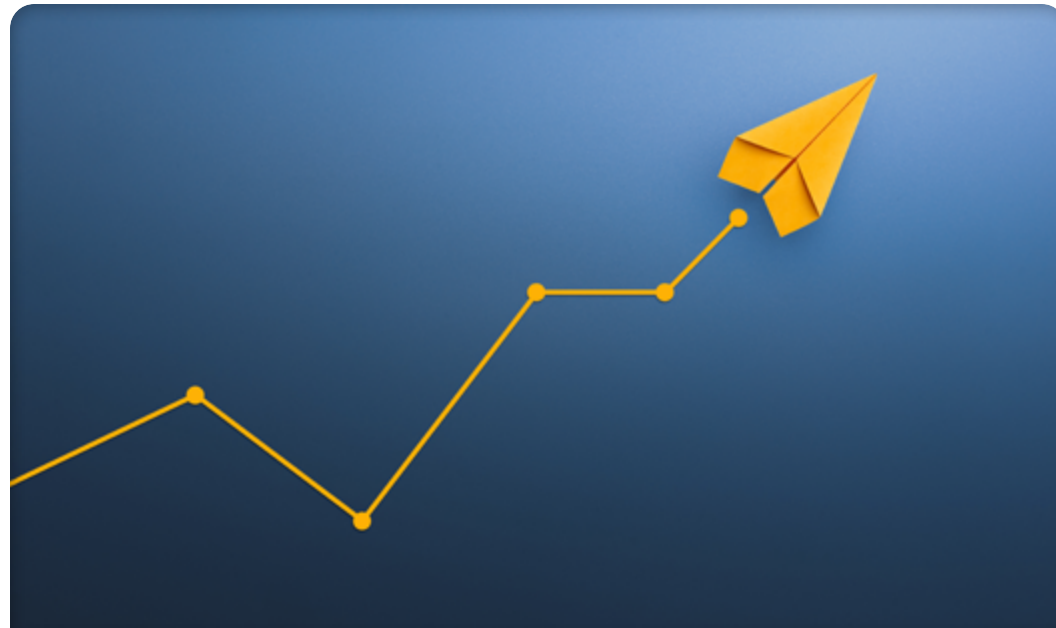
### The collaborative tracks and communicates progress and impact.

Momentum and engagement are generated from making purposeful progress. Collaborations should establish clear and measurable goals, focus the progress they are making toward those goals, and communicate success regularly.

Momentum builds upon momentum. Collaborations are more successful at attracting support, people, and resources when they focus on progress and impact. Not all impact happens at once, however. The

Evaluating Collective Impact guide identifies three stages of impact.

The first stage focuses on the process or formation of the collaborative: ensuring partners are engaged, ensuring there are resources in place, and building a shared or common agenda. The second stage focuses on how the collaborative is shifting behaviours of individuals and community partners to achieve impact. The final stage is achieving a population- or systems-level change.



#### TO DO THIS:

- **Define the progress or impact:** Once the collaborative partners have agreed to a common or shared agenda, they should identify the required success or progress factors. Spending time defining success is a core ingredient to achieving impact.
- **Build a tool or tools to track progress:** There are many different tools that could be used to track progress, including a shared reporting form or a shared database. The collaboration partners should commit to tracking, reporting, and reviewing progress against shared outcomes on a regular basis.
- **Develop reporting and communication strategies:** There might be several different audiences interested in learning about the collaborative's progress and impact. Develop a reporting and communication strategy that positively connects with different audiences, including members of the collaboration, key strategic partners, funders and investors, and the community.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Getting to Impact: Outcomes Diary](#) – Collaborative efforts with multiple partners often have many strategies occurring at the same time. Using an outcomes diary helps the collaborative track and measure change as it happens.
- [Mapping Moving Trains](#) – This tool, adapted from the Forum for Youth Investment, helps collaborative partners identify who is delivering what services and where those services might be leveraged for greater impact.
- [Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact](#) – This useful guide provides case studies and proxy indicators for Collective Impact efforts seeking to evaluate their outcomes over time. It focuses on the maturity level of the collaboration, building an appropriate evaluation framework, and includes opportunities for learning and sensemaking at all stages.

## Sustainability Factor 10:

### The collaborative influences and shifts policies and systems to benefit the community.

*The important collaborative work of shifting systems toward greater equity can take years, and sometimes decades or more – this work is designed to undo centuries of inequity and oppression. People who are engaging in and supporting these collaboratives have to structure relationships, processes, strategies, and investments that match the scale and duration of the work – not simply a grant cycle.*

– Jennifer Splansky Juster, Collective Impact Forum

Karen Pittman, former CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment, is noted as saying that programmatic interventions seek to **improve** the odds, while systemic interventions **change** the odds. When the collaboration has determined its shared or common agenda, it will also know whether the effort is focused on making a programmatic or a systems change.

Program change means developing a new program or service that will improve outcomes for a small group of people and learning about the impact of that program. Systems- and policy-level change refers to shifting a larger system to improve outcomes for a population. There are collaborative

efforts with strategies focused on both program-level change and systems-level change.

Longer-term and more sustainable efforts are collaborations that are moving policy and systems-level changes forward. These changes can happen in multiple ways: inside a partner organization, across all parts of the collaboration, in the community, or in a whole population. Policy- and systems-level change embeds the change into current and future actions. An example of this is when the Province of Ontario embedded their poverty strategy into legislation, which keeps the issue of poverty in focus for the current and future governments.

#### TO DO THIS:

- **Uncover the current policy or systems:** Once the collaboration has defined its common agenda, it should conduct an environmental scan to determine which policies and systems are positively and negatively impacting people. Uncovering the policy and systems environment can lead to potential strategies.
- **Build policy- or systems-change capabilities:** This is a useful investment, and there are many ways to influence policy and systems change. Focusing on the right approach is a key to success.
- **Build a policy- or systems-change framework:** Agreement on the framework or approach the collaborative will use is essential. There may be partners who want to step forward boldly, while others may be less risk tolerant. Policy change can be impactful, but a clearly defined framework can keep the collaboration partners onside.

#### LEARN MORE

- [Pathways for Change: 6 Theories about How Policy Change Happens](#) – This guide details three global approaches to policy change and three policy change strategies. It can help collaboration efforts become more strategic and tactical when considering policy change approaches.
- [The Water of Systems Change](#) – The Water of Systems Change helps collaborative explore six conditions for systems change to occur: shifts in policies, practices, resource flows, social connections, power, and mental models. Broadening Social connections, shifting power, and mental models are about changing people and mindsets.
- [Evaluating Systems Change: Principles](#) – Tamarack Associate Mark Cabaj, who is also the principal at Here to There Consulting Inc., thinks a lot about systems change. This resource Cabaj put together provides practical and practiced strategies for evaluating systems change.



## SECTION 5

### 10 Really Good Resilience Practices

- 1 Build from top and bottom
- 2 Nurture caring relationships
- 3 Adapt to change
- 4 Engage with the unknown
- 5 Embrace long-term commitment
- 6 Leverage existing assets
- 7 Develop "good enough" plans
- 8 Be purpose- and values-focused
- 9 Build partner capacity
- 10 Surrender control



Especially in these days of rapid change and disruption, resilience is the ability to adapt to emerging opportunities and respond to unanticipated challenges. It is an essential capacity for collaborations and communities to build and develop. Collaborative and community resilience is a process linking a set of networked, adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after an initial disturbance.

Resilience is the capability to bounce back from setbacks and ensuring that the collaboration takes time to reflect on them. It is also about being prepared for future challenges and setbacks. While the first section of the 10 Guide focused on the people, resources, processes, and impact factors which will create greater sustainability for a collaboration, this section will focus on resilience, which is all about the health and well-being of the collaboration.

As a concept, resilience is drawn from the environmental and human well-being sectors. The natural environment as well as humans have extraordinary capacities to respond and rebound from threats. Just as forests regenerate after being devastated by fire, humans can be equally resilient in bouncing back from challenges they experience.

As the world becomes more complex and polarized, being sustainable and resilient means being less competitive, having more

### Building resilience can occur across different scales.

- **Spatial scale** – landscapes, regions, the globe
- **Temporal scale** – daily, seasonal, annual, generational
- **Jurisdictional scale** – localities, state, national, international
- **Institutional scale** – operating rules, laws, and regulations
- **Managerial scale** – tasks, projects, strategies
- **Human networks scale** – family, kin, society, trans-society
- **Scales of knowledge** – practice-based, local

willingness to sit in uncertainty and discomfort, and building capacity to be better able to act for the health of the whole system versus individual outcomes.

Resiliency is the concept of internal well-being and health of an organization. It's about the ability to bounce back and maintain mental, physical, and emotional stability among staff and management in the tough and increasing workload facing the client-facing, non-profit sector.



In order to build resilience, the collaboration will need to increase its adaptive capacity. This includes the collaboration's or collaborative partners' ability to anticipate changes and shifts that might be occurring in the environment or the system and understand the impact of these shifts. This means having a dual focus, one on the core focal point of the collaborative and one on the external environment and system.

The collaboration must also recognize its own vulnerability. This means paying

attention to shifting funding, policy, and engagement priorities and strategies. It must learn to live both in the moment and with a view to the futures.

Finally, the collaboration must focus on building trust, not only across partners but also with system players and influencers. This means that the collaboration should build capacity to map the broader system and develop strategies to engage and partner with system players who are both friends and foes.

## Making the Case for Resilience

*“There is a myth that creating deep-seated social change is somehow all about winning ... organizing is all about resilience. You’ll get hit in every direction you can imagine — but if you keep getting up and trying again, eventually you’ll win. How to build in resilience was a question that came up repeatedly in our discussions — burnout was a big concern. Working for change can be tiring, under-resourced, and feel unrelenting. Networks that allow mutual support can help, and people increasingly understand the importance of self-care.”*

[12 Habits of Successful Changemakers](#),  
Sheila McKechnie Foundation

In [The Case for Cultivating Community Resilience: Adapting to Challenges, Sustaining Hope](#), author Sylvia Cheuy reflects on the many challenges facing local communities, including failing infrastructure, growing debt levels, increasing inequality, and growing rates of social isolation and loneliness. Cheuy uses a place-based lens when defining resilience, and cites multiple sources and examples of resilience in practice, including the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal and the Vitalyst Health Foundation (formerly St. Luke’s Health Initiative) to identify ten factors for building community or place-based resilience.

Cheuy describes resilience as the ability to bounce back from trauma. However, she also notes that the practice of resilience can be proactive in terms of being able to focus on the futures and anticipate changes or challenges that might be ahead. She notes that resilience is a mindset, a practice, and an outcome.

The factors identified by Cheuy are a useful framing for building resilience into place-based and collaboration contexts. These factors have been built upon in this 10 Guide, and we also encourage you to read this informative paper by Cheuy.



## Describing the 10 Resilience Practices

### 1 Build from the bottom up and from the top down by engaging diverse leaders and perspectives

A diverse blend of partners provides a range of perspectives and insights. Building from both the bottom up and from the top down enables the collaboration to have a 360-degree view of the challenge and the systemic and environmental conditions it exists in.

### 2 Nurture caring relationships and shared leadership

Collaborations achieve impact when people are engaged and committed to a shared outcome. Nurturing caring relationships and shared leadership throughout the collaboration brings people to the table and keeps them there. There are times when conflict will emerge; caring relationships built on the foundation of trust help collaborations navigate challenging times.

### 3 Build the capacity of the collaboration to adapt to change and mitigate vulnerabilities

Collaborations that commit to strategic foresight practices are better equipped to identify and navigate through potential vulnerabilities.

### 4 Increase the ability of collaborative partners to tolerate ambiguity or the unknown

Despite their best efforts, collaborations will face uncertain and unpredictable circumstances. Very few were able to predict the deep impact of the COVID pandemic and the pressure to shift from in-person to virtual environments. The future is increasingly unpredictable, and increasing the ability of the collaboration to navigate the unknown will be a core competency.

### 5 Encourage partners to be involved in a long-term commitment

Achieving systems- or population-level impact typically requires a long-term commitment to change. Population-level change is typically achieved with a minimum of a three-to-five-year commitment, but it can often take generations. For example, there is [an Indigenous practice](#) based on the Haudenosaunee Seventh Generation Principle and its philosophy in which one plans ahead for seven generations.

### 6 Identify existing community or system assets to leverage

Every community and system contains existing individuals, organizations, collaborations, and resources that could be leveraged to scale progress and impact. Spending time identifying and mapping system assets at the beginning enables resilience.

### 7 Develop “good enough” plans or approaches and create capacity for experimentation and learning

Change is dynamic. Resilience is about creating a good enough plan and then building upon it when new ideas or innovations spark impact. Incorporating skills, tools, and practices from the field of social innovation can build capacity for experimentation and for learning.

### 8 Be purpose-focused and values-driven, not opportunity-driven

Committing to a shared purpose and being values-driven are important capabilities for resilient collaborations. As a collaboration grows and thrives, more and more opportunities present themselves, and these opportunities may divert attention and resources. Being purpose-focused is about asking the question, “How will this opportunity help us

achieve our purpose?” Being values-driven is about asking the question, “How will this opportunity activate and augment our values?” Collaborative values should centre on respect, building trust, ensuring equity, and caring for each other.

### 9 Invest in capacity-building for partners, including organizing, advocacy, and peer learning

Collaboration requires different mindsets and skill sets, and therefore investing in capacity-building of collaboration partners is key. This includes developing their capacity for organization, engaging in systems-level and shared advocacy, and creating capacity for peer learning and reflection. Collaborations that invest in capacity-building for partners create deeper bonds between those partners, as well as commitment and increased impact.

### 10 Surrender the need for control

Resilient collaborations recognize that they do not need to control everything. They learn how to leverage and benefit from innovations that might occur in the broader system. They understand that progress and population-level impact is only achieved by embracing the whole and celebrating collective progress.

# SECTION 6

## 10 Inspiring Stories

- 1 **Calgary Reads:** Restructuring to Strengthen the Early Literacy Movement
- 2 **Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) Portage la Prairie:** Building Relationships to Establish Trust and Credibility
- 3 **Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) Yukon:** Centering Youth in a Territory-Wide Collaboration
- 4 **Food First NL:** Scaling for Sustained Impact
- 5 **Halton Our Kids Network:** Shared Leadership for Strong Community Data Collection & Knowledge Mobilization
- 6 **Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR):** Responding to Community and Advocating for Systems Change
- 7 **Local Investment Toward Employment (LITE):** Reflecting the Community and Partnering to Meet the Community's Needs
- 8 **Neighbourhood Montréal-Nord:** Making the Neighborhood's Youth a Priority Through Collective Community Action
- 9 **Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG):** Engaging the Community, Developing Partnerships, and Breaking Down Silos
- 10 **Transition Salt Spring:** Building Trust for Community-Led Action on Climate Change

Food animators. Photo courtesy of Food First NL.

## 1 Calgary Reads: Restructuring to Strengthen the Early Literacy Movement

Calgary Reads began in 2000 as a Junior League of Calgary one-on-one volunteer reading pilot. Over the years, it became a registered charity and grew to support the community's need to improve early literacy, with the goal that all children in Calgary and across Alberta would become joyful, confident readers. Programming was developed to meet those needs and collaborative initiatives were successfully offered throughout the community. A movement mindset and a strong brand — as well as an annual

**Indigenous Land:** Land traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis, on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

**Province/Territory:** Alberta

**Community Story Contributor:**  
Stacey Pinney (Collyer)

**Website:** <https://calgaryreads.com/>

community event, the Big Book Sale — connected the broader community to Calgary Reads over two decades.

A network of trusted relationships between leaders and partners provided guidance and support to the work of Calgary Reads as it grew and matured its menu of collaborative initiatives. These champions, in collaboration with Calgary Reads leadership, embarked on a journey to think and operate differently, launching a roller coaster to fundamentally transform the organization.

Most recently, Calgary Reads decided to radically transform by strategically imploding through a creative destruction process. Why? The problem of improving access to early literacy supports prior to the third grade had not changed at a system level, and the existing organizational structure was too limited to tackle the complexity of the problem. The need for greater early literacy support is so vast and critical, which prompted Calgary Reads to scale up and spread out to improve the reading lives of local children and families.

Existing programs that were developed through Calgary Reads are still needed in the community and they will continue to be offered through specific partners who have



The Big Book Sale 2022 (Calgary Reads).

taken on the leadership to own, operate, and expand them. These partners, called “dandelion seed partners”, include Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area, the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation, Frontier College, Mount Royal University's Department of Education, YWCA Calgary, University of Calgary's Owerko Centre, and the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown. These bigger partners will carry the early literacy programming “seeds” far and wide with the goal of reaching more children. Collaborative sustainability means finding the right places for the work to be done — places where there is expertise and capacity — and sometimes that means letting go and distributing responsibility rather than centralizing it.

What is needed now is adaptability and flexibility to develop a new succession, sustainability, and scaling strategy. This will expand possibilities and community buy-in while exploring new thinking and what needs to be developed and designed with new collaborators. This is part of the [collaborative eco-cycle](#) and is what happens when the current structures are not moving the common agenda forward. It is a time to reflect, rethink,

reinvent, and redesign the structure to better meet the needs of the movement. It can be risky to take a structure that operates well and change it drastically so that it can better meet the needs of the movement's goals, but the rewards can be exceptional when it works. The endeavour requires relying on partnerships and long-standing relationships to continue to play contributing roles, and it also involves building on existing community buy-in and increasing engagement to bring them along this new path of the journey.

We often think about sustainability as maintaining status quo or scaling existing collaborative work, but sometimes it also means returning to the core values of a collaboration and taking new paths that better align with them. In the example of Calgary Reads, the learning and the community efforts are sustained and will hopefully continue to demonstrate resilience over time, even if the organization in its current form is not. Sometimes we can be more creative with solutions and the ways we address community needs and opportunities if we are not wedded to particular structures or forms.

## 2 Communities Building Youth Futures Portage la Prairie: Building Relationships to Establish Trust and Credibility

Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) Portage la Prairie launched in 2020 with the goal of improving the lives of youth aged 15-30 in Portage la Prairie and the surrounding area. It is based out of the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC). Previous to the launch of CBYF, a five-year funding partnership with the Tamarack Institute, PCRC was already building capacity at a community level to break down silos and offer more coordinated direct services to community members through their Wawokiya initiative. Wawokiya – a Lakota term meaning “one who helps” – worked with partner agencies to mobilize

**Indigenous Land:** Treaty One Territory, as well as the traditional territory of the Ojibway, Dakota, and Cree Peoples and the historic homeland of the Métis nation.

**Province/Territory:** Manitoba

**Community Story Contributors:** James Kostuchuk, Morag Morison

**Website:** <https://www.portagecrc.com/cbyf>

and streamline existing resources in the community to give individuals and families the support they needed to prevent and permanently stabilize crisis situations in a way that had never been done before.

This cross-sector collaboration served as a strong foundation to examine how this type of collaboration might be leveraged to help students who were not attending school in the region. CBYF Portage la Prairie brought together community partners, built a leadership table, and hired support positions to, again, break down silos and come together to really understand the community context and build a common agenda using the collective impact framework.

One of the most powerful projects to emerge from this work is the [Roving Campus](#) – an innovative model that redefines the notion of “classroom” and engages students who are at risk of not completing high school on time due to non-attendance. The Roving Campus removes barriers that students face in their journey in school and beyond and turns the province itself into the classroom. This program relies on participation and partnerships with a diverse list of community partners throughout the province, in which students learn hands-on in the community and gain



Students of the Roving Campus. Photo courtesy of CBYF Portage la Prairie.

certifications that set them up for success even after graduation. The Roving Campus has been a powerful vehicle in building trust and credibility in the community and has proven key to building resiliency and sustainability for CBYF as a whole.

CBYF Portage la Prairie has seen the compelling results the Roving Campus has created and is committed to ensuring its sustainability and growth into the future. Some of the key factors to CBYF Portage la Prairie's resilience and future sustainability have been:

- **Advocacy:** Students at the Roving Campus gain personalized support to help them overcome the barriers they're facing. For some students with little support in their lives, getting up and going to school or to work can be a challenge. However, having teachers who check up on them and help them overcome barriers (such as transportation and proper identification) gives students the support they need to keep moving forward, even when doing so feels challenging. On top of that, the program focuses heavily on helping students learn to advocate for themselves. It is committed to building up students' relationships within the community and strengthening
- **Community partnerships:** The Roving Campus takes place within the community the students are a part of. Students gain access to training and certifications that they can use in the future and will bolster their resumes, but they also gain connections with local businesses, Elders, and all levels of government as they visit and create relationships through their learning. This model empowers the community to feel invested in the students and gives students connections that can be built upon to serve the community as a whole.
- **Evaluation and building a case for support:** CBYF recently hired an Evaluation and Advocacy Coordinator to help evaluate the outcomes and learnings from the Roving Campus so that it can be used as a model to scale, as well as an example for systemic change across the province. The evaluation and case for support are also key to demonstrating the success of the project and the clear return on investment for the partners who take part, helping to ensure its sustainability well into the future.

their confidence so that they see themselves as deserving and capable of power and participation within their community.

- **Staff support:** With the addition of the Evaluation and Advocacy Coordinator, as well as the support staff coordinating the collective impact's efforts, CBYF Portage la Prairie is ensuring that the good deeds of the volunteers and teachers who are key to the project's success do not burn out along the way. The teachers in the program are asked to go above and beyond in their support for the students, and so in order to properly support those teachers, the Advocacy Coordinator is now in place to further support students after they graduate and with any challenges as they arise. The support team hired to coordinate the project also works to maintain strong relationships across the different stakeholders and to ensure follow through so that volunteers and community partners remain engaged and effective.
- **Results-driven over process-driven:** The gift of flexible funding has been key to the success of the Roving Campus and has allowed the program to focus and adapt based on the program's results rather than a pre-determined process. Teachers work with youth who are not thriving in a traditional school setting, and having the ability to key into what works best for them to help them achieve their goals has kept the program relevant to their unique needs, which is a key reason for its success

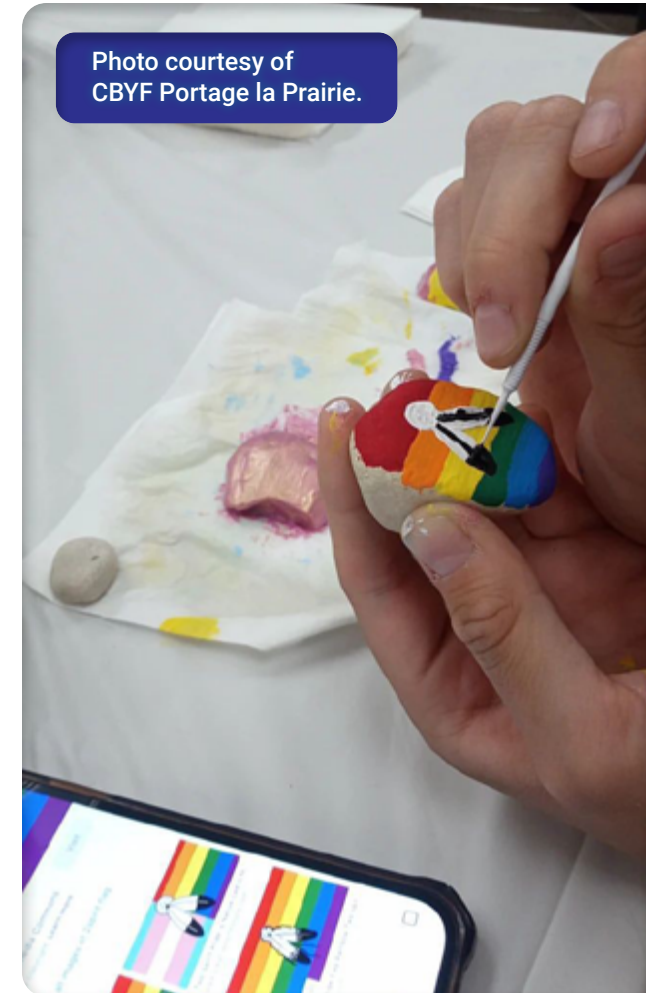


Photo courtesy of CBYF Portage la Prairie.

### 3 Communities Building Youth Futures Yukon: Centering Youth in a Territory-Wide Collaboration

Cultivating a sense of belonging for youth is the primary focus for a collaboration of Yukon Territory organizations that have come together to amplify youth voice through Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF). In 2016, this collaborative began engaging and empowering youth to take the lead in identifying and creating solutions for the challenges they face, and has done so formally as CBYF Yukon since 2020. The CBYF collaboration includes BGC Yukon, BYTE - Empowering Youth Society, Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office, Youth of Today Society/Shakat Journal, and Kwanlin Dün First Nation Youth Advisory Committee to Council. These organizations form the executive partnership table, but

there are many other key people and organizations that contribute support, guidance, and expertise through the greater community partnership table. Collectively, these organizations decided that a territory-wide, shared leadership model would provide for the most sustainable structure for long-term outcomes. This structure limits the opportunity for egos to take control of the agenda and creates a strong, common vision to collectively work toward — one in which all Yukon youth feel a sense of belonging in every aspect of their lives.

Youth are equal partners and key players in this collaboration. All of the CBYF Yukon backbone staff are youth themselves, and young people lead in the decision making. CBYF Yukon is very intentional in creating the optimal conditions and safe space for youth to be involved at their own level. Young people can choose how they wish to share their unique knowledge, perspectives, and expertise. Encouraging youth voice can be seen as risky by adults, but CBYF Yukon embraces that discomfort by recognizing the value that youth bring to the table when it comes to challenging adult systems and disrupting the norm. It invests in youth and in capacity building, enabling youth to be equal participants in the decision making that affects their lives. In

**Indigenous Land:** The shared territory of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

**Province/Territory:** Yukon

**Community Story Contributors:**

Lindsay Cornell, Maxime Crawford-Holland

**Website:**

<https://www.shakatjournal.ca/cbyf>

these ways, CBYF Yukon is purpose-focused and values-driven. It commits to a shared purpose of improving the lives of young people and is values-driven in how it engages youth. These are important capabilities for resilient collaborations. Through the Collective Impact approach, CBYF Yukon has developed a common agenda that drives its collaborative work. This agenda guides the creation of Calls to Action, which are the basis of the Yukon Territorial Youth Strategy. The strategy is informed by the annual Yukon Youth Summit, which directs where it is going and provides an opportunity for ongoing input and evaluation. All of these activities place youth at the center and are mutually reinforcing.

How does CBYF Yukon embed equity and inclusion in its work to support youth? It sees its work as the process of engagement, or “the how” rather than just “the what” of the

project outcomes arising from the process. It considers how youth are least served by how things are today, how issues specifically impact youth, which youth are most impacted, how youth are engaged in defining the issue and its impacts, and how youth can be more meaningfully engaged. It is intentional in building its collaborative membership to include youth, putting young people in leadership positions and building in equity supports for young staff and leadership to be mentored and participate fully.

CBYF Yukon continues to develop a sustainable structure to guide and move the Yukon Territorial Youth Strategy forward that puts youth at the center of the work and the outcomes. Through trust, honesty, competency, consistency, and benevolence, CBYF Yukon hopes to shift policy and make big changes in the territory and in the lives of youth.



Photo courtesy of CBYF Yukon.



## 4 Food First NL: Scaling for Sustained Impact

Food First NL has been working with communities in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure everyone has access to affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food since 1998. It is a not-for-profit collaborative working with a network of hundreds of like-minded organizations and individuals and collectively seeks to improve food security across the province and in local communities. Since its inception, Food First NL has adapted to changing needs by shifting its focus from education to advocacy, policy change, and supporting the capacity building of local communities to mobilize grassroots action on food security.

Food security is a complex problem, which involves issues around supply, homelessness, poverty, geographic and physical food

**Indigenous Land:** The traditional territories of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit.

**Province/Territory:** Newfoundland and Labrador

**Community Story Contributors:** Sarah Ferber, Josh Smee

**Website:** <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/>

access, a lack of advocacy, access to cultural foods, the fragility of food imports, the dependence on national and global food systems, public health, and the social determinants of health. To address all of these contributing and systemic issues, Food First NL has drawn upon champions from across sectors and seeks to break down silos through collaborative action to create impact. This includes contributions from retailers to government agencies to local community advocates. The deep, multi-sector relationships that have developed out of this collaborative work have fostered true partnerships based on trust; they create long-term goals together and intentionally expand their network to engage unusual suspects. Food First NL seeks to engage people around their passions, which contributes to sustaining their involvement and the broader food security movement. It attracts contributors because of its movement's longevity and due to its investments in relationships. In short, Food First NL has a demonstrated track record for turning ideas into action at system and community levels.

To accomplish its goals, Food First NL is always looking for ways to scale its impact. It scales up through its advocacy work in shifting systems that impact food security, which in turn impacts laws and policy. It scales deep through partnership development and



Photo courtesy of Food First NL.

supports innovation through social enterprise, which impacts cultural roots. It scales out to build sustainability and capacity, and grows the food security movement through its Community-Led Food Assessments that have successively led to local Food Action Plans. These action plans impact greater numbers, create a common agenda for local action, and engage people where they are at – in their communities. This results in grassroots action that is owned and supported by community members who are most affected by food insecurity. The Community-Led Food Assessment process, completed in ten communities thus far, works by creating a local understanding of food, building capacity at the community level, providing staff and volunteer support to get the work done, linking communities into systems level solutions, and increasing local leadership. They have had great success in engaging

communities in a rural setting, but the newest plan was developed in the city of St. John's and required it to adapt to this new urban setting with different systems.

For more lessons and insights around scaling, see [Scaling Out](#), [Scaling Up](#), [Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support it](#) by the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Food First NL is tackling food security across Newfoundland and Labrador from the top down and from the bottom up, which gives them a 360-degree view of the complexity of the issue. This will allow them to continue to understand the landscape and look ahead at trends to take advantage of key opportunities for change as they continue to build on, expand, and scale their impact for food security across the province.

## 5 Halton Our Kids Network: Shared Leadership for Strong Community Data Collection & Knowledge Mobilization

The Halton [Our Kids Network](#) has been applying a collective impact approach to improving children and youth's outcomes since its inception in 1996. Serving the Halton region in Ontario, the network is working towards the [Halton 7 Population Results](#):

1. Children and youth are healthy
2. Children and youth are learning
3. Children and youth are positively connected
4. Children and youth are safe
5. Families are strong and stable
6. Neighborhoods are where we live, work, and play
7. Schools are connected to the community

To accomplish this, Halton Our Kids Network has seven protocol partners ([referred to as "Champions"](#)) who provide leadership, financial support, and guidance to the network. These Champions include Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, the Regional Municipality of Halton, Halton Children's Aid Society, Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK), Halton Multi-Cultural Council, and ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development. The network

**Indigenous Land:** The traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat; now home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. They acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

**Province/Territory:** Ontario

**Community Story Contributors:** Angela Bellegarde, Lily Viggiano, Elisabeth (Liz) Wells

**Website:** <https://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/OKN-Community>

itself is made up of over 80 participating agencies who help develop and implement initiatives, such as conducting and sharing [research](#) and the network's Indigenous Reconciliation Plan and other initiatives for authentic youth engagement.

The network's [Indigenous Reconciliation Plan](#) is a five-year initiative being led by Angela Bellegarde, who says:

*"The Champions really recognized the importance of meeting the calls-to-action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They needed someone to put this at the front of their desk. That work has really moved forward, and we've had waiting lists to get on webinars where we talk not just about land acknowledgements, but also the treaties of this territory."*

The credibility and reputation that the network has developed in its over 20-year history has encouraged other organizations to come to them when tackling complex, sensitive issues. Bellegarde notes:

*"Not only do we have the years of understanding and good will associated with our organization, but they know that what we try to do as*



Photo courtesy of Halton Our Kids Network.

*an organization is [to] be sustainable, whether it's the asset building or otherwise. We have that mindset of community building collectively and running very lean."*

*"It's anecdotal, but I see that communities within the region are starting to work closely together on Indigenous reconciliation. So, whether these were agencies within the town of Oakville [or elsewhere], they know that they can come to us and we're going to do really quality work, and it's going to be well thought out."*

The [Halton Youth Initiative](#) was launched in 2017 and was coordinated by Lily Viggiano, who shares:

*"We had a seed grant, and it was focused on the neighbourhood level. In the neighbourhood of North Oakville, community partners actually had come together to talk about some of the issues or gaps that they were seeing for young people aged 12-18 accessing or even knowing about local resources – whether they had a voice or not on things that impact them. That council*

*came together – adults and protocol partners nominated youth from their neighbourhoods and communities – to form a youth-adult partnership committee and create action projects."*

The prototype was a success, and the network applied for further funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The program expanded into Milton, Aldershot, and Acton. Viggiano explains:

*"That's when I joined – to support those three new councils. I like to think of the Halton Youth Initiative as championing all of the different kinds of strategies and models that Our Kids Network embodies."*

*"The strongest model that we used at the Halton Youth Initiative was the Developmental Relationships Framework. Those are five qualities or styles of interacting with somebody that can build a positive relationship – expressing care, providing support, challenging growth, expanding possibilities, and sharing power. When adults actively put those into their relationship with youth, when they invest in young people, the likelihood of having a positive relationship and positive outcomes is improved and streamlined."*

The network, led by interim executive director Liz Wells, is continuing to invest in youth outcomes in a resilient, sustainable way by conducting and sharing research, building relationships, expanding its network, and planning. Wells says:

*"We've seen a lot of change in leadership over the past three years – not just this great resignation idea, but a lot of the key members reached the age of retirement. So, the history is still there and strong, and we have that great commitment of our protocol partners, but the actual historians or the people who helped move things forward and know the ins and outs are gone. It's more about creating relationships and connecting with the person who's going to carry the torch forward but, that is the most challenging aspect for us."*

*"You know who we are, and we can provide the guidebook or whatever, but these programs and values have to be something that's championed. Someone has to take ownership within each of our protocol partners, within each of those organizations. It's building those champions again from the ground up so that we have a way of demonstrating value to the community in an ongoing way."*

Halton Youth Initiative Youth Ambassadors meeting with local MPP.  
Screenshot courtesy of Halton Our Kids Network.



## 6 Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction: Responding to Community and Advocating for Systems Change

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR) is a collaborative and multi-sectoral table that seeks to bring together voices from across the community with the goal of eliminating poverty in the city of Hamilton. HRPR draws on its diverse and long-standing network to address community needs in real time, as well as to inform and advocate for change at a systems level. Throughout its 17 years as a collaborative, it has helped to push forward on issues such

**Indigenous Land:** The traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunees and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunees and Anishnaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

**Province/Territory:** Ontario

**Community Story Contributors:**

Jennifer Chivers, Tom Cooper

**Website:** <https://hamiltonpoverty.ca>

as payday lending, social assistance reform, basic income, living wage, and extreme heat, among others.

HRPR provides an important voice for people experiencing poverty in Hamilton. It has centered these voices to better understand the issues that matter most to those experiencing poverty and to be able to act on issues affecting people as they arise. One example of this is the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS) initiative that is currently underway. This project brought together partners from across sectors to highlight the challenges and facilitate conversations around building tiny shelters in response to the housing crisis in Hamilton. HATS served as a backbone collaborative to help get the initiative up and running, and through its strong partnerships within the community, the project has now received funding for the first ten cabins, has secured full-time staff support, and is testing locations with a long-term plan in place.

Some of the key factors that have led to HRPR's resiliency over such a long period of time include:

- **Strong and engaged network:** Having served the community for 17 years, HRPR has created a network of stakeholders across all levels of government,

businesses, faith groups, not-for-profits, academia, and people with lived and living experience of poverty, who are able to take action and leverage their wider-networks to create fast and effective responses to the issues Hamilton faces.

- **Trust and social capital:** The HRPR is a trusted voice in the community and has gained credibility and a positive reputation for facilitating conversations and action over the years. It has also leveraged partnerships through the media, as well as national players like the Tamarack Institute, to build awareness around its work and to keep in the public eye so that it is recognizable within its community and beyond. This has helped to build strong and lasting relationships in the community that can be relied upon.
- **Stable and committed funding:** HRPR has had steady funding from both the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community

Foundation since the beginning. Both funders exemplify a trust-based relationship, whereby they are committed and accountable to the goals but remain flexible and adaptable based on what the HRPR is learning and doing.

- **Ability to stay nimble:** Due to the nature of the HRPR and its ability to adapt its focus, it has been able to shift and respond to its context based on what is most needed. This has allowed for active support on issues as they come up (such as supporting participants of the Basic Income Pilot, for example), as well as maintaining a systems-view of what needs to happen on a policy level to create sustainable change.

As with many collaboratives that have been active for many years, one area that the HRPR wants to invest time and attention into is succession planning for both staff and leadership. When a collaborative has been around as long as HRPR has, it is inevitable that it will have to intentionally address how to replace skills and perspectives that are lost through attrition while keeping the collaborative work moving forward. It is also an opportunity to onboard new perspectives and voices that might have been missing and might help steward the work into new directions. The HRPR will soon be undertaking multi-year strategic planning and will use it as an opportunity to reflect on and build sustainable staff and leadership teams to continue to guide its important work.



## 7 Local Investment Toward Employment (LITE): Reflecting the Community and Partnering to Meet the Community's Needs

Local Investment Toward Employment, more commonly known as LITE, is a Winnipeg-based charitable foundation that leverages strong community partnerships to work collaboratively in creating job experiences for people struggling against barriers to employment.

LITE got its start in the early 1990s, when a group of community members came together after noticing that during the holiday

season, their neighbourhood in Winnipeg (one of the poorest) would receive an influx of food hampers, which was affecting the profits of [Neechi Commons](#), their local Indigenous-owned grocery store. Because of the donations that were flooding in, less people went shopping locally, and this had a ripple effect on the business owners' sales and the shift work available to their staff. LITE was formed to coordinate an alternative food hamper program to address this, in which food hampers were stocked with goods from the local community, therefore bolstering local businesses and work opportunities during the holiday season rather than draining them.

Since its inception, LITE has built up a local network of diverse community partnerships with organizations, businesses, not-for-profits, and charities in order to address the on-the-ground needs of its community and to serve those who are often left behind. While LITE is a distributor of funding, it works closely with its partner organizations to fund initiatives guided by what the community needs, and it can adapt its funding to best serve the local context. It is with this flexible and adaptable funding that partner organizations can get support for issues people are struggling with that don't fit into a traditional funding model.

**Indigenous Land:** Ancestral lands of Treaty One territory, where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. The traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk Nations. Manitoba is the Homeland of the Red River Métis Nation and their water is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty Three territory.

**Province/Territory:** Manitoba

**Community Story Contributor:** Jewel Pierre-Roscelli

**Website:** <https://www.lite.mb.ca/>

A key component of these partnerships, and the agility to act on needs as they arise, is the strong set of relationships LITE has developed within the community it serves. In August 2022, LITE hired its first Indigenous Executive Director, Jewel Pierre-Roscelli, who shares how important it is for the leadership of LITE to build trust with and reflect the community it serves so that initiatives are created with both a diversity and an equity lens. As Jewel says, "Our work is a hand *up*, not a hand *out*." By being a member of the community and seeing the people you serve as a community member and not a client, LITE is able to create sustainable and resilient partnerships that meet the needs of people where they're at.

LITE is also strongly guided by what is locally known as the [Neechi Principles](#), originally developed by Neechi Commons. The principles have a particular focus on the following five themes: training and skill development, local production, human dignity, community self-determination, and healthy and safe neighbourhoods. By being values-driven in their collaborative work and having clear principles, they embed a clear direction and cohesivity to the partners they work with so that they are stronger when working together rather than apart.



## 8 Neighbourhood Montréal Nord: Making the Neighborhood's Youth a Priority Through Collective Community Action

In 2008, a young man named Fredy Villanueva was killed by police gunfire in *Montréal-Nord*. This tragic event highlighted not only the complex, structural issues facing *Montréal-Nord* and the need for greater resources, but also the community's resilience and ability to mobilize a response from multiple actors from many different sectors. The coroner's report on Fredy's death,

**Indigenous Land:** Tiohtià:ke, historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations, on the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation.

**Province/Territory:** Quebec

**Community Story Contributor:**  
Moaad Boussekri

**Websites:**

<https://tqmns.org/>

[http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ARROND\\_MNO\\_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/PLANDACTIONJEUNESSE\\_FINAL\\_WEB\\_2.PDF](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ARROND_MNO_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/PLANDACTIONJEUNESSE_FINAL_WEB_2.PDF)

released in 2013, recommended that the City of Montreal and the Borough of Montréal-Nord (*Arrondissement Montréal-Nord*) develop a specific action plan to address poverty and social exclusion in the *Montréal-Nord* neighbourhood.

Community engagement led to a series of three major meetings in 2016, bringing together key actors from the community, school, government, philanthropic, sport, cultural, and private sectors, among others. As a result of these meetings, *Priorité Jeunesse* was launched, which is a collective action plan to create and implement a ten-year strategy (2017-2027) to address the issues affecting youth in *Montréal-Nord*. Various institutional and community actors are involved in this project, working to deliver transformative action in the lives of young people (0-29 years old) in three core areas:

1. Fostering school readiness, perseverance, and educational success
2. Developing talents, employability, and entrepreneurship
3. Enriching community life

The process that was used is unique because it is based on strong participatory leadership, co-chaired by the *Arrondissement*



Photo courtesy of Table de quartier de Montréal-Nord.

*Montréal-Nord* and the *Table de quartier de Montréal-Nord* (the *Montréal-Nord* neighbourhood roundtable). Moaad Boussekri explains that one of the factors contributing to the project's sustainability and resilience is the recognition of the community's expertise, combined with a genuine willingness from local institutions and the philanthropic sector to listen.

Boussekri also reminds us of the importance of collaborative spaces, which provide an important forum for connections between individuals and organizations that can foster

discussions and partnerships. This provides a structure for not only co-construction but for problem solving as well, while leaving space to continually adjust and adapt practices. The *Rencontres collectives de Priorité Jeunesse*, which are collective meetings organized by *Priorité Jeunesse*, are a good example of this.

Local organizations and the neighbourhood roundtable are helping put citizen voices at the heart of what they do, which is a key success factor in this process. Including citizen voices influences strategic planning and evaluation, but also strengthens the social

fabric and sense of belonging in the community. Citizen leadership leads to actions and policies that address blind spots and gaps, resulting in greater inclusion and reduced discrimination.

Another strength is the project’s shared, unifying vision. Discussions are held on a regular basis to determine collectively what the objectives are, what changes are needed, and who will participate. This also allows them to plan for the future — for a common dream.

A climate of trust is also vital for collaboration. People must take the time to build trust and to invest in it. It is important to cultivate healthy interpersonal relationships while always being aware of power dynamics and inequalities.

The notions of knowledge sharing and recognition form the foundation of the work completed to date. Different stakeholders take the time to get to know each other — for example, at the six Youth Priority Axis meetings held in 2021. These kinds of opportunities create a space for exchange and allow the different actors to learn about each other’s roles and how everyone contributes to the common action plan. It is also an opportunity for community members in collective meetings to share what this work means to them and how it makes a difference in their neighborhood.

Adopting a 360-degree perspective and working in complementary ways strengthens the social fabric and ensures that traditionally excluded voices are included in the process. In data collection, for example, the collaborative ensures that the data is disaggregated to better understand the work’s nuances and subtleties, as well as establishes a clearer picture of the neighbourhood and the populations who need to be reached.

*Priorité Jeunesse’s* way of collaborating promotes information sharing and effective communication. Having a shared language and a common understanding of the issues and the steps to be taken has also been essential.

Finally, in Moaad’s personal opinion, it is important to give organizations the tools and means to develop their own evaluation culture and mechanisms. How can we decolonize evaluation so that it belongs first to those who do the work and not to those who fund it? How can we empower communities to choose their own ways of measuring their impact? During one of *Priorité Jeunesse’s* collective meetings in *Montréal-Nord*, the collaborative used the “most significant change” approach, which enables it to move away from traditional indicators and devote more space to storytelling. *Priorité Jeunesse* measures the change it creates by telling stories of how its actions have made a difference, beyond the numbers.



Screenshot courtesy of Table de quartier de Montréal-Nord.

## 9 Peel Newcomer Strategy Group: Engaging the Community, Developing Partnerships, and Breaking Down Silos

The Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) was born in 2006 out of an immigration planning and visioning session co-sponsored by the United Way of Peel Region and the Region of Peel. The session was in response to the rapidly growing immigration levels in the region and with the desire to ensure service planning and coordination could take place effectively. Representatives — 136 of them, to be precise — from across sectors

**Indigenous Land:** The Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. In particular, they acknowledge the territory of the Anishinabek, Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples; the land that is home to the Metis; and, most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who are direct descendants of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

**Province/Territory:** Ontario

**Community Story Contributors:** Sara Cheriyan, Jessica Kwik

**Website:** <https://peelnewcomer.org/>

attended the session and made a commitment to the vision that “newcomers should be welcomed in Peel by a coordinated array of services with a single point of access that is easy to navigate, from the time of deciding to come to Canada to well after arrival in Peel.” As a result, PNSG was created and was tasked to champion a coordinated and collaborative strategy for the successful integration of newcomers into the community of Peel and its economy.

Over 15 years later, PNSG is a vital community collaborative that acts as the local immigration partnership table serving Peel region, and it engages local stakeholders to optimize and coordinate services that facilitate newcomer settlement and integration. It acts as a backbone organization to support several planning and working groups in order to break down the silos across service providers. It also identifies the gaps that hold newcomers back from accessing what they need and learning how to thrive when they come to Canada.



International Student Experience Summit. Photo courtesy of PNSG.



PNSG works through three main collaborative tables:

1. **Central Planning Table:** Made up of three levels of government, immigration and refugee agencies, and health- and employment-focused organizations. Meets bi-monthly and develops the core focus areas and strategies based on its diverse expertise, access to different data sets, and experience navigating the systems in place.
2. **Implementation Table/Service Delivery Network:** Comprised of eight agencies focused on newcomer direct services that can leverage their networks, as well as act as an innovative incubator to pilot new operational changes and partnerships to test out ideas in real time.
3. **Resettlement Support Working Group:** Encompasses over 30 representatives from broad-community partnerships who meet as needed. This large network is also called upon to provide guidance about initiating new projects, solving pressing needs, and improving processes.

With lived-experience perspectives at the front and centre, these groups work together to understand and adapt to the evolving context of newcomers coming to Peel region. They communicate and collaborate to build clarity around what the process for

newcomers is when they arrive in Peel and where to direct them for the things they need.

Some of the factors that have contributed to the resiliency of PNSG throughout rapid times of change, as well as its ability to sustain itself, can be attributed to:

**Diverse funding:** PNSG is funded through a diversity of funders. This not only makes it more resilient to funding trends and changes but also allows PNSG to focus its work across the many different streams that make up newcomers in Canada (such as refugees, displaced persons, permanent residents, international students) and not be tied to one specific group due to a particular funder's priorities.

**Strong and collaborative partnerships:** PNSG draws on a large mix of partnerships to stay on the pulse of what is happening at a systems level, what different data sets can tell us when shared and corroborated, and what the on-the-ground experience is for newcomers and service providers. Due to this diverse network of people, PNSG has been able to position itself as a vital voice in Peel for how to better support newcomers, in addition to an example for other regions to learn from.

**Engaging content and context experts meaningfully:** PNSG relies on a vast range of knowledge and experience in order to understand the local landscape of navigating a newcomer's journey when they come to Peel.

Finding the right balance and intentionality when engaging groups with lived experience and groups with sector and systems knowledge has been key in ensuring people's time is being treated respectfully, and that momentum can happen at the right times.

Documenting and sharing the work: A crucial element that has served PNSG in its work,

and one that is often taken-for-granted, is its attention to detail on documenting the work it is doing and sharing it in order to maintain momentum. Keeping detailed notes of action items, sharing reports, and ongoing communications have been important in ensuring people are informed. Doing so moves PNSG's work forward so that people feel engaged and properly informed.



## 10 Transition Salt Spring: Building Trust for Community-Led Action on Climate Change

After more than a year of immersing itself in climate science and technical detail, and after hearing from thousands of islanders, Salt Spring Island's innovative new Climate Action Plan 2.0 was released in February 2021. Its team of 30 experienced volunteers — which included engineers, ecologists, economists, and educators — discovered that while the threats climate change poses are undoubtedly very real, so is the power of its vibrant community to find creative solutions together.

Salt Spring is a gulf island nestled against the eastside of Vancouver Island, and Transition Salt Spring Society is its only organization

**Indigenous Land:** The unceded territories of Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOŦEN speaking Coast Salish Peoples.

**Province/Territory:** British Columbia

**Community Story Contributors:**

Darlene Gage, Ruth Waldick, Bryan Young

**Website:**

<https://transitionsaltspring.com/>

devoted exclusively to addressing the climate crisis. Its focus is on mobilizing islanders and the organizations that serve them to lower emissions and help prepare for the increasing climate change risks faced by their community and their ecosystems.

Salt Spring islanders are ahead of the curve in developing innovative and inspiring responses that build the resilient community required as the impacts from climate change accelerate, including fire risks, deeper droughts, increasing storms, and rising sea levels.

As an organization, Transition Salt Spring has been in existence for around 25 years, but in the last two years especially its work has catapulted forward and has exemplified characteristics of a resilient and sustainable collective. This small rural community of just over 11,500 inhabitants is fighting to “keep the island cool”. Here's how:

Two years ago a small group of passionate volunteers from different disciplines came together around the idea of creating a local climate action plan for their community, something which is typically spearheaded by local governments. They wanted to do things differently. They did not want to risk developing a sophisticated report that would not get read, but rather wanted to find ways



**Clockwise from top left: Electric Vehicles group members install a new E-bike charging station; Native Plant Stewardship volunteer Jean Wilkinson; Biochar Working Group members at work; Rainbow Road Park Allotment Gardens.**

**Photos courtesy of Transition Salt Spring.**



to deepen collaboration and trust in order to build ideas and bring them to life.

They posed a game changing question: “What if, by pulling together, we could not only withstand the increasing stresses arising from climate change, but also build a more just, healthy, and cooperative community?” And that is exactly what they are doing.

They called on individuals, families, organizations, businesses, Indigenous peoples, and all other levels of government to get involved in making Salt Spring “One Cool Island” and contribute toward leaving a legacy of justice and sustainability for future generations.

“Our journey into collective impact was somewhat sideways,” shares Darlene Gage, Executive Director of Transition Salt Spring. “I’m not sure that we necessarily knew that we were using a Collective Impact approach until we started looking at the Tamarack philosophy and theory around those elements. It has been teaching us a lot about how to be a better backbone organization within our community.”

After a year-long, extensive, participatory, community effort involving hundreds of islanders and thousands of volunteer hours, the Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0 (CAP 2.0) was created.

The plan is a blueprint to reduce emissions and build resilience into the island’s infrastructure and ecosystems. CAP focuses primarily on environmental targets, but they are trying to understand how those most impacted by climate change — including people experiencing poverty, Indigenous people, and the insecurely housed — can become a focus of the work, in addition to determining whose voices they are trying to centre.

Through the process of developing the CAP 2.0, Transition Salt Spring developed trust, built networks, and connected stakeholders that had never collaborated together previously.

One example is the Mt Maxwell Watershed Project (now the Climate Adaptation Lab), which secured \$100,000 in federal funding as well as other support for groundbreaking research surrounding fire-risk intervention and resilience. This project, which will span a two-year period, was developed in partnership with North Salt Spring Water District, SSI Fire and Rescue, and the two key covenant holders in this watershed, the SSI Conservancy and the SSI Water Preservation Society.

“Collaboration is at the core of almost everything we do, recognizing that the job is too big for a small organization,” says Gage. That being said, the organization has expanded quickly and has since become a registered charity committed to activating the plan.

Transition Salt Spring has helped create the collective tissue and lay the foundations for community-driven action. Its story exemplifies the importance of building community partnerships and maintaining relationships that contribute toward a common vision and agenda. And, ultimately, how trust can lead to change around a complex issue.



Photo courtesy of Transition Salt Spring.

# SECTION 7

## 10 Useful Resources

### 1 Tamarack Institute — [Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Developing a sustainable collaborative can be challenging. The Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool helps collaborations to consider ten factors and to assess the degree to which partners are engaged in building sustainability into their collective effort. It can provide an opportunity to have frank and important conversations about what a collaboration hopes to sustain, as well as help them to focus on strategies that will build sustainability.

### 2 The New Division — [17 Sustainability Lessons for Leaders](#)

In this report, The New Division describes 17 sustainability lessons, including leading with a sustainable vision, being ego-less, knowing your data, thinking exponentially, and involving the whole organization. The lessons are useful to consider and apply not only to leaders but also to organizations and collaboratives. The guide shares insights with a focus on sustainability.



### 3 Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy — [Generating, Scaling Up, and Sustaining Partnership Impact: One Tam's First Four Years](#)

The One Tam partnership case study is a thorough review of what it takes to develop, scale, and sustain collaborative work over the longer term. It identifies eleven impacts that might also be considered sustainability factors, including: connectivity, trust, creativity, resource sharing, added capacity, partner culture awareness, efficiency, scale, individual effectiveness and resilience, collaborative culture, and expanded connectivity. The case study also discusses the implications of collaborative work for practitioners and funders. The collaborative partnership has also developed a new report called [One Tam: The Next Five Years](#).

### 4 Healthy Places by Design — [Sustainability Framework](#)

Healthy Places by Design advances community-led action and provides place-based strategies to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Healthy Places by Design works with community partners and funders to turn health equity into lasting impact. In 2018, Healthy Places by Design developed their Sustainability Framework, which includes three core streams of work: partner, progress, and prepare. It describes dimensions from informal relationships and programs through to strategic and intentional, and is useful for assessing the current context of the collaborative. The Sustainability Framework is also useful for identifying the steps to move toward strategic and intentional outcomes and impact.



### 5 **inHive — Social Change Networks Playbook for Practitioners and Funders**

The InHive Social Change Networks Playbook is focused on increasing the efficacy and impact of networks. The playbook was designed by inHive team members through a participatory learning series called the Networks Learning Journey. The playbook describes the core elements of effective, sustainable, and resilient networks. The elements are described in detail and a short case study describes each of them as practiced by a network partner. The sustainability elements for networks identified by the partners in the playbook include: aligning towards a share purpose, fostering collaborative leadership, communicating clearly for buy-in, maintaining resources, developing unifying principles, nourishing deep relationships, generating mutual trust, holding spaces for openness, centering diversity, equity and inclusion, nourishing member well-being, aligning and deciding on a strategy, fostering long-term engagement, spreading valuable innovation, and co-creating system impact.

### 6 **National Council of Nonprofits — Nonprofit Sustainability**

The National Council of Nonprofits describes sustainability as finding a way to use

resources in a manner that prevents their depletion and also ensures that a not-for-profit or collaborative can sustain itself over the long term to fulfill its mission. The National Council of Nonprofits includes the concepts of financial sustainability, leadership succession planning, adaptability, and strategic planning. The webpage Nonprofit Sustainability includes a tool for achieving financial sustainability, as well as links to resources that encourage broader thinking about financial and organizational sustainability.

### 7 **Harvard Business Review — Cracking the Code of Sustained Collaboration**

This Harvard Business Review article by Francesca Gino focuses on the people aspect of creating sustainable collaborative efforts. Gino identifies six factors designed to build the relationship between collaborative partners: teaching people how to listen, to practice empathy, to be more comfortable with feedback, to lead and follow in collective work, to speak with clarity and avoid abstractions, and to have win-win interactions. In each of the factors, Gino provides advice for collaborative leaders and partners to follow and practice. While this article is written as advice for leaders, the six people factors can be applied equally throughout the collaborative through a shared leadership model.

### 8 **The Bridgespan Group — How to Build Nonprofit Resilience: Three Strategies to Strengthen Organizations**

The Bridgespan Group developed an approach that focuses on three strategies to strengthen the resilience of non-profits. While useful in the organizational context, these approaches are also useful to consider for collaborative efforts. The three approaches are: thinking long and short, tapping into a super-power, and knowing how to navigate crisis and opportunity. This resource was developed recently and focuses on what it takes for organizations and collaboratives to navigate through a crisis. The approaches ensure that organizations and collaboratives take an adaptive approach to their focus, develop skills to manage through tough times, and focus on the factors related to building collaborative and organizational resilience.

### 9 **Community Health Systems — Bringing the Future Into Focus: A Step-by-Step Sustainability Planning Workbook**

The Georgia Health Policy Center has developed this workbook for community health systems to explore how systems can sustain their programs and impact. The model of sustained impact includes: ongoing impacts

of collaboration, improved service mandate, improved capacity in local systems, and new policies to sustain impact and changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. The workbook provides a more detailed description of each of the factors, cases studies where appropriate, and opportunities for reflection. There are also specific activities that take groups through a process of asking questions, reviewing data, setting criteria for continuing elements, and identifying decision points for next steps. The workbook also includes steps that focus on determining what is needed to move forward, the costs of moving forward, and identifying potential funding strategies. All of these steps lead to producing a sustainability plan.

### 10 **Imagine Canada — Organizational Resilience Self-Assessment**

Imagine Canada has developed an online self-assessment tool that assists organizations in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. It provides a free report that charts competencies related to risk, governance, accountability, and trust. The focus of the self-assessment is on non-profit organizations, and may be a useful tool for collaborative partnerships that require strong and dedicated organizations around the partnership table.

## SECTION 8

### 10 Ideas for Funders

*These ideas were developed with contributions by funders and leaders who provided insight and perspective for this 10 guide.*

#### 1 Design funding that encourages equity and multi-sectoral participation in the collaboration

Provide funding that supports the engagement of diverse partners, including individuals with lived and living experience and those who might face barriers to participating in the collaboration (Black-led organizations, Indigenous Nations, youth-led groups, leaders from small businesses and non-profit organizations, emerging leaders, etc.). Flow funding through multiple partners (particularly grassroots groups or non-qualified donees) to enable more equitable support and participation in the collaboration.

#### 2 Fund the infrastructure/backbone of collective/collaborative action

The foundations of collaboratives need to be strong and sustained to support long-term innovation and community-driven, responsive action. Collaboratives tackle complex issues, and they won't be supported through specific project funding with use limitations that reinforce silos and create competition. This is systems change of valuing the collaboration/Collective Impact approach and the process as product.



#### 3 Offer more flexible, multi-year funding

Shift from a “dependency” mindset to one that is more honest about the deep investment required for real, sustained impact. Multi-year, unrestricted funding does just that — creating long-term viability for collaborations, empowering self-determination in the use of funds, and offering collaboratives the flexibility to respond to the unexpected. In addition, these funds must be accessed through more dynamic, efficient, and simplified application processes. Ensure that the time it takes to apply for funding doesn't outweigh the amount of funding that is available to support the collaboration.

#### 4 Collaborate with other funders to pool and align funds

Collaborations that work at the scale of community- and population-level impact are often engaged in multiple and diverse collaborative actions and strategies. Collaborating with other funders creates greater impact and enables the support of innovative solutions. This approach might include a “package of support” rather than applicants hunting down each piece of the puzzle themselves. It would require a shared focus across diverse funders. A leading example of pooling funding resources is the Collective Impact Project (CIP) in Montreal, which brings together

eight foundations to support local priorities from 32 neighbourhood-based collaborative roundtables. The CIP encourages alignment with programs from the City of Montreal and the Regional Public Health Department.

#### 5 Engage in trust-based philanthropy

Build long-term relationships based on learning, trust, and engagement between collaboratives and funding partners. This might include having a role on the leadership table of the collaborative, participating in evaluation, or learning and sensemaking opportunities with other collaboration partners. Through sustained engagement, you can ensure that collaboratives know they can count on your support through vulnerable times and unexpected events. Remember: trust is a two-way street.

#### 6 Offer innovation-focused funding

Develop or provide a special pool of funds designed to enable collaborative partners or organizations to explore opportunities that encourage innovation or prototyping of new solutions to long-standing issues. The Communities Building Youth Futures initiative has developed a “community innovation fund”, which enables community collaboratives to access shorter term, project-based funding to develop and scale innovations.

### 7 Engage in participatory grant-making practices

Funders might consider how to engage partners and collaborative efforts to co-create grant-making practices and reduce power imbalances. This could include community experts with lived experience and members of collaboratives in the design and decision making of granting. This approach role models collaboration at the funding level, and funding will be more responsive to the needs of the community by having their voice at the table. The World Education Services (WES) Mariam Assefa Fund recently partnered with the Tamarack Institute to co-design a participatory grant-making pilot in the Peel Region. Through this investment, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund, with leadership from the Tamarack Institute, engaged a peoples panel to determine community needs and funding priorities. The fund also invested in building the collective capacity of grantee partners through coaching supports and the development of a shared evaluation framework.

### 8 Focus on measuring what matters

Build in funding to support effective evaluation practices that are practical for the collaboration's use, as well as respectful of local data systems, capacities, and stewardship practices. The Evaluating Collective Impact Guide provides a useful three-phase evaluation framework. The first phase focuses on process-driven outcomes, the second

focuses on behaviour change outcomes, and the third includes population and policy change outcomes. When evaluating collaborations, work with collaboration partners to ensure they are reporting on the appropriate outcomes. Do not overburden the collaborators in their evaluation reports.

### 9 Support collaboration efforts beyond funding

Funders can provide many other resources beyond funding, including convening the collaboration, creating connections to other funders and partners, providing access to data, incorporating new insights and ways of thinking, and providing legitimacy to the focus of the collaboration. Consider the resources your foundation might want to contribute in supporting the collaboration and its partners.

### 10 Provide funding to support field catalysts

An emerging element of collaboration is the role of field catalysts, a bridging organization that brings multiple collaboration efforts together to learn, share resources, and work toward shared outcomes. Examples of field catalysts exist at the municipal, provincial/state, federal, and multi-national scales. Field catalysts provide unique supports to collaborations by leveraging their individual outcomes to create greater impact and shared population-level outcomes and impact.



# SECTION 9

## 10 Ideas for Going Deeper

### 1 Centre equity in the collaboration effort

Collaboration is about working toward better outcomes for the community or its citizens. [Centering equity](#) as a key element of the collaboration is about deeply understanding who is impacted, how they are impacted, and how the collaboration will change systems and structures, as well as enhancing programs and services to improve outcomes for the most marginalized. Equity also means ensuring that community experience and voice are at the core of the work. We are making collective progress in centering equity, but there are collaborations who do not yet embed equity in their design and practice.

### 2 Consider different revenue models

There are different revenue models available to collaborative initiatives. Engaging diverse partners from different sectors in the community — including citizens, the non-profit, and corporate and government sectors — will be beneficial to collaboration. While philanthropic, foundation, and government support can be pivotal, look for unique ways to raise the required financial and human resources needed to get the work done. This might include earned revenue and social enterprise, business investments, and shared services agreements with partners for items like website development, evaluation, and data. There are many ways to creatively generate resources.

### 3 Recognize that communities evolve and that collaboration is an eco-cycle

Community change efforts evolve across four phases: idea generation, development, growth and impact, and renewal. This is called a community eco-cycle. Consider where your collaboration is on the eco-cycle and develop strategies for the collaboration to move forward. Learn more about the [collaboration eco-cycle](#) and mapping community change.

### 4 Plan with a seven-generations perspective

Indigenous knowledge and wisdom invites us to [plan for seven generations](#) into the future. Consider the impact of decisions on the present generation and on future generations. Build reflection into your practice.

### 5 Build a storytelling mindset

Learn how to effectively communicate your vision and impact. Storytelling can be a helpful tool. A powerful story describes a compelling challenge and strategies that are being used to overcome that challenge. Consider the story of your community when crafting your collaborative story. How is your community equipped to overcome the challenges it faces? What previous challenges has it faced? A compelling collaboration

story will build commitment, connection, and momentum. Build your storytelling competency by reviewing [The Importance of Stories in Community Work](#).

### 6 Start with small experiments and proof of concept before scaling

Small, thoughtful steps when joined together can achieve a big impact. A small experiment that is done well will provide the collaboration with the proof that change can happen. This small experiment can create the case for funders and investors to jump onboard. Learn more about scaling by reading [Scaling Out](#), [Scaling Up](#), [Scaling Deep](#), [Scaling Innovation](#).

### 7 Build succession planning into the collaboration design

All collaborations will experience leadership changes, so build succession planning into the collaboration design. Develop orientation tools for new collaboration partners, which will be key resources that can bring partners onboard quickly. Ask people who are moving away for the table to help with the recruitment process. Build community engagement as a key strategy. A deeply engaged community will make succession planning easier. A useful onboarding tool is the [Key Milestone Report](#), which tracks collaboration progress and decisions in real time.



### 8 Focus on relationships built on trust

Collaboration is about bringing people together, and sustainable collaborations are built upon the foundations of strong relationship and trust between partners. To learn more about building trust, read [Turf, Trust, Co-Creation & Collective Impact](#).

### 9 Weave resilience practices into your design to prevent snapback

Brenda Zimmerman, a former Tamarack partner and York University professor, describes snapback as a way in which systems protect themselves from threats. To intervene with and change systems, collaborations need multiple actions, including weaving adaptive capacity and resilience into their change efforts. Watch this [short video about preventing snapback](#).

### 10 Leverage existing assets in your community

[Asset-Based Community Development](#) recognizes that all individuals, organizations, and communities bring a wealth of assets to collaborative change. Recognizing how to engage and leverage existing assets is instrumental to collaboration success. Don't build new — look around and see what already exists that can be built upon.

Finally, recognize when the collaboration has achieved its purpose. Collaborations often end quietly. Partners move away from the table and the energy is lost. Spending time recognizing that the collaboration has ended and celebrating accomplishments is good practice. There can be deep learning and reflection about the collaboration, its impact, and its failures. Be proactive about ending the collaboration experience and sharing your lessons learned. Future collaborative efforts will benefit from this thoughtful approach.



Members of the Tamarack team at the CBYF Annual Gathering 2022. Photo by Geoffroy Ingret.

# ABOUT TAMARACK INSTITUTE

Tamarack is a connected force for community change, building the capacity of change-makers in cities, within Canada, and around the world. Tamarack catalyzes collective action with diverse leaders to solve major community challenges, including ending poverty, building youth futures, deepening community, and addressing climate change. Our belief is that when we are effective in strengthening our collective capacity to engage citizens and lead collaboratively, our work contributes to the building of peace and to a more equitable society.

Tamarack was founded to be an institute that would deeply learn about and understand community change, and help organizations and citizens work better together for a collective impact to end poverty.

As a small organization, Tamarack had two transformative goals. The first was to establish a Learning Centre to research and document real stories, exemplary practice, and effective applications for community change. Currently, more than 45,000 active learners participate in the Tamarack learning community and engage in the interconnected practices of community change – Collective Impact, Community Engagement, Collaborative Leadership, Community Innovation, and Evaluating Impact. Formed as a social enterprise, the Learning Centre produces signature learning events and is regularly hired as community change consultants. These activities generate revenue that is reinvested to provide online learning resources accessible to all.

Our second transformative goal was to apply the knowledge generated to end poverty. Since then, we have effectively helped more than one million households rise out of poverty and have engaged more than 80 regions (360 municipalities) as partners as we continue pressing toward our goal of changing cities into places that work for all.

Tamarack currently supports four pan-Canadian issue-based networks:

- **Communities Ending Poverty:** A collective impact movement comprised of more than 90 regional members and representing more than 400 communities, collaboratively focused on ending poverty.
- **Deepening Community:** A collective that supports a network of neighbourhoods, towns and cities who are using an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach with collective impact to build their knowledge and skills to develop neighbourhood strategies that ultimately build a sense of connection and belonging for everyone.
- **Communities Building Youth Futures:** A national collective impact movement that is creating and supporting learning journeys for youth to better prepare their transition through high school graduation to post-secondary education, training, and employment.

- **Community Climate Transitions:** A movement to advance just and equitable climate transitions by bringing together diverse community members to seek collective solutions. national movement to reduce poverty.

These networks are active in more than 400 cities and communities across Canada. They bring together diverse community members, including municipal, community, faith, Indigenous, business and lived/living experience leaders to seek collective solutions. Together with our local partners, Tamarack addresses large-scale social issues, including poverty, unemployment, loneliness, youth disengagement, housing affordability, and food insecurity.

Learn more at [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca).



 **TAMARACK**  
I N S T I T U T E

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