

FORMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

**COMMUNITIES BUILDING
YOUTH FUTURES**

NOV 2019 - JUN 2022



Equity

We engage and elevate the voice of the most impacted by issues and who have the greatest insight into possible solutions.

Youth-Centred Change

Youth are at the centre of the work, involved in decision making, leadership, and access to capacity building and opportunities.

CBYF supports young people on their journey through high school graduation to post secondary education, employment and training

WHO

Youth leaders and community partners collaboratively engage their entire community to create opportunities and transform systems

BY

moving at the speed of trust

WHILE

remaining flexible & adaptable to the needs of youth.

Peer Network and Support

We strengthen connections and collaborations and create opportunities for shared learning.

Geographic Diversity

Engaging small to medium sized communities and Indigenous nations who are mostly located in rural settings.

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This formative evaluation report provides an overview of the first two years of the implementation of the Communities Building Youth Futures initiative, which includes:

- The conceptualization and design of the initiative;
- The selection criteria for the original 13 communities;
- The onboarding of the original 13 communities; and
- The implementation of the CBYF model in communities and at the national level.

The questions addressed by this overview and analysis include:

- How well is the initiative working;
- What have been some of the most significant learnings, changes or pivots that have taken place; and
- What effects, changes, or outcomes are beginning to show up in various ways.

Given the two-year time period covered by this report, only communities who were fully onboarded into the CBYF by June 2022 (12 of the 20 current communities) will be included in the analysis for this report. At the time this report was written, 8 communities were in the process of being onboarded to the CBYF initiative.

Authored by [Michael Looft](#), with contributions from Tamarack and the CBYF Communities
 Designed by [Carmilla Sumantry](#)

HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVES:



1

Increased number of youth pursuing post-secondary education



2

Improvement of academic outcomes



3

Extend the number of community partnerships to support the reach and scale of the initiative

HUMAN BEINGS ARE HARDWIRED FOR COLLABORATION

People can only solve their most pressing problems when everyone works together. And if we want to tackle the problems faced by youth, we need large-scale change initiatives in the areas of poverty reduction, deepening community ties, and building youth futures by putting them at the centre of the work.

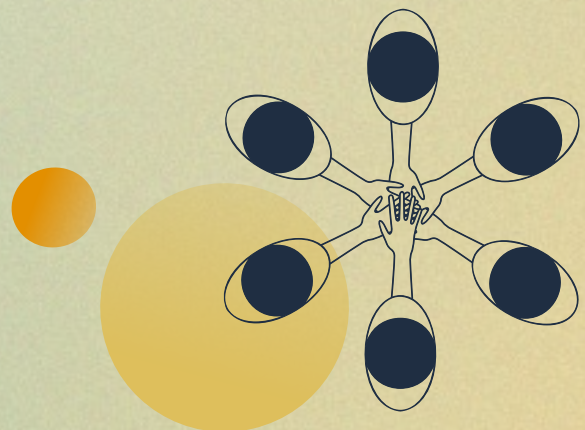
This is the conclusion communities across Canada are coming to after realizing that decades of traditional programs and resources targeting youth are simply not working for the most vulnerable among them. Many are falling through the cracks: not finishing high school, not going to university, not getting the jobs and the lives they deserve. The system is failing them. And worse... excluding them from the table.

Following a collaborative design process, the Government of Canada and Tamarack Institute developed a partnership to harness Tamarack's thought leadership and expertise using Collective Impact to bring communities together and support them through collaborative change and to engage youth through innovative opportunities.

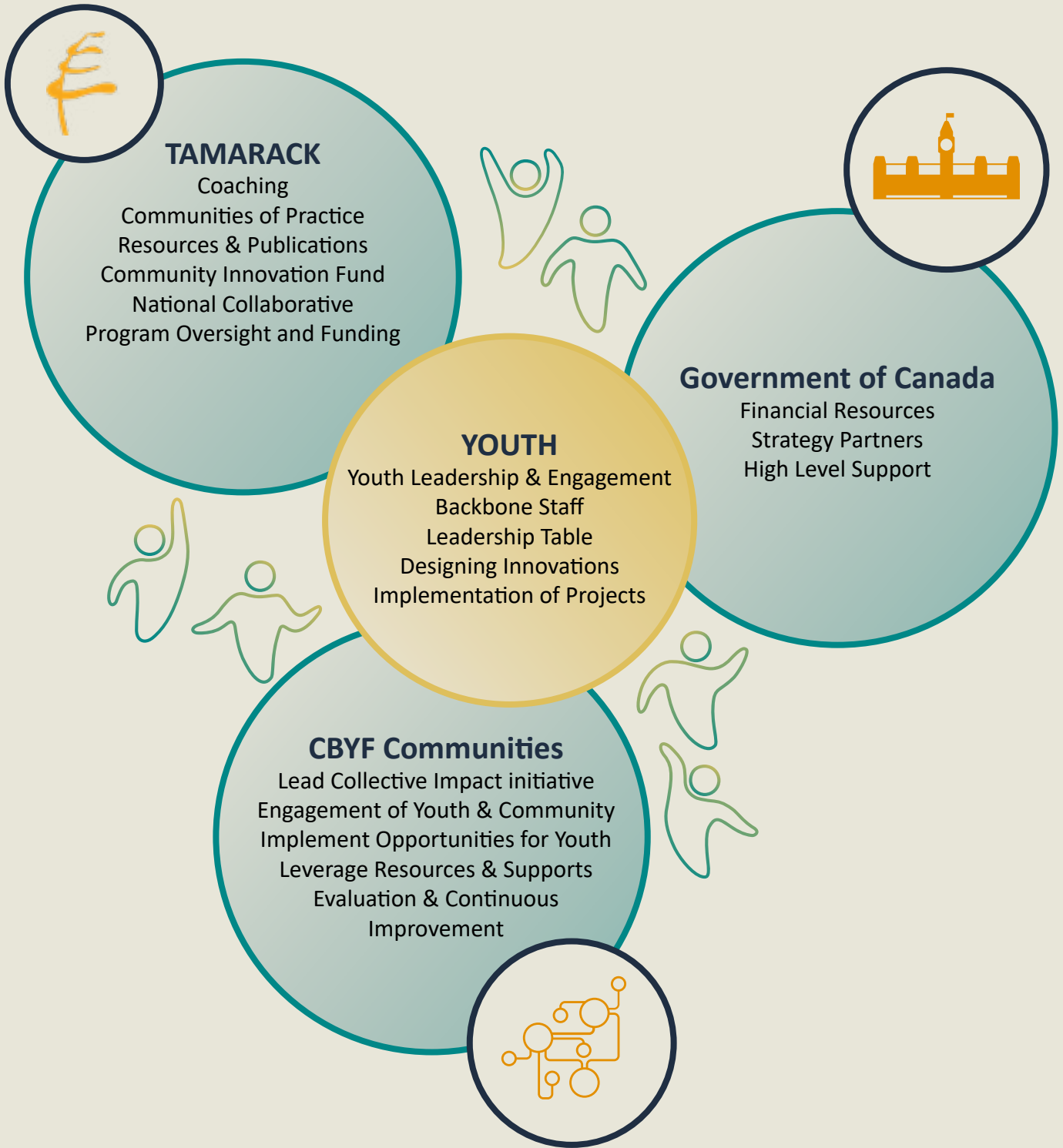
Communities Building Youth Futures

(CBYF) is a five-year strategy funded by Government of Canada to develop system-wide solutions for youth facing barriers to education and employment and to develop strategies that enable young people to be engaged in their communities and successfully navigate transitions from youth to adulthood. Initially launched for 13 diverse communities throughout Canada, it has since added seven more, with projects now spanning most provinces and territories.

Tamarack's Learning Centre exists to empower community changemakers to achieve greater impact. With over 15 years of experience leading community change and advancing practice to support municipalities, funders, non-profits, and community leaders, the Learning Centre provides CBYF communities monthly coaching and support to advance the communities' collective impact, engagement, collaborative leadership, innovation and evaluation.



While Tamarack provides the infrastructure, the expertise and the support, and Government of Canada contributes a budget, youth and communities play an equally important role in the relationship, not only as the targeted audience, but as essential contributors and leaders without whom CBYF wouldn't exist.



ALL ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT PROCESS

Tamarack Institute is a national organization that builds the capacity of changemakers in communities by catalyzing collaborative, community-led efforts to solve major community challenges. It provides structured, multi-year support to local communities to enable large-scale change initiatives in the areas of poverty reduction, community building, building youth futures, and climate transitions.

Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) employs a Collective Impact approach to support communities in implementing a change initiative that will create additional opportunities for young people to successfully navigate transitions to adulthood including the completion of high school (or equivalency) leading to post-secondary, training, and/or employment.

Rather than a program, CBYF reimagines community development where multi-sectoral partners steer the work and where youth play key roles in the efforts to shift their lives in a positive direction. This collaborative, person-based approach seeks to move away from traditional top-down efforts that employ a single organization or sector approach. With community and youth at the core, CBYF focuses on getting diverse perspectives, using data to inform priorities and outcomes, focusing on systemic and policy barriers, leveraging existing assets for high impact priorities, and using the Collective Impact Framework.

CBYF's primary strength is in **putting youth at the centre of the work, to flatten power dynamics** and to ensure their **needs are fully uncovered, explored and addressed**. By integrating them into the leadership space, youth are not just listened to, but finally seen for their contribution to the community and given the tools and the power to chart their own futures.

This requires shifting mental models for everyone in the community - drawing outside the lines with strategies that flip tradition on its head. For example, if some rural youth are at risk of not graduating for a multitude of reasons, why not see how programming can shift to address underlying challenges (later, you'll learn about how Portage La Prairie did just that with their Roving Campus initiative). **Because, the goal is not to change youth, but to ensure the system supports everyone in an equitable way no matter what.**

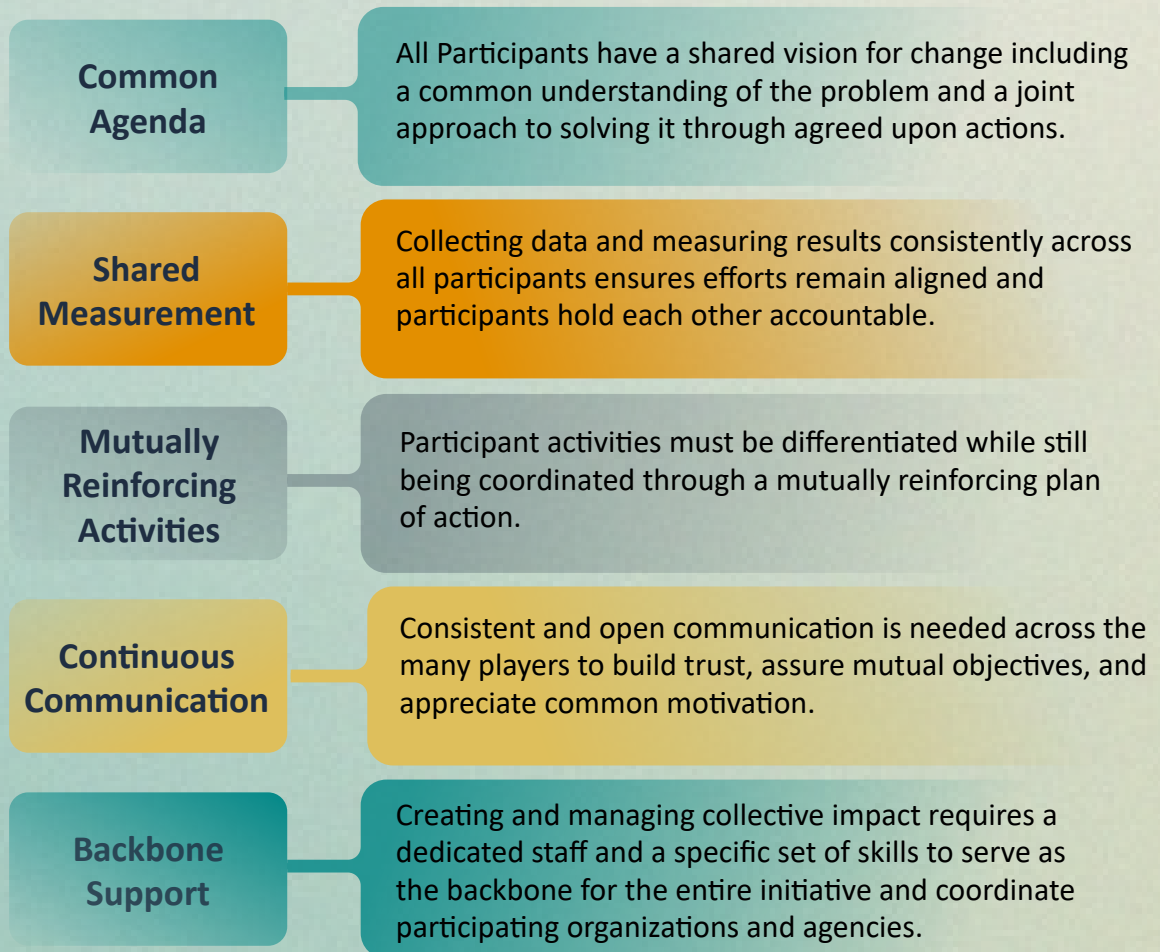
COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

Collective Impact is a collaborative framework that supports community change efforts at the local, provincial and national scales.

3 Pre-Conditions of Collective Impact

- Engaging influential champions.
- Understanding the urgency behind the issue.
- Securing adequate human and financial resources to support the collective work.

The 5 Conditions Of Collective Impact



Reprinted with the permission of FSG and the Stanford Social Innovation Review

Phases of Collective Impact

The collective impact process involves several phases within four broad categories. Much of this work is iterative in nature as each community works through these phases and might have to go back to a previous phase to make sure the conditions of collective impact are met and agreed to by the community.

Governance & Infrastructure

1. Convene community leaders
2. Identify champions in the community and form a cross-sector Leadership Table to guide the work.
3. Develop a Backbone Infrastructure (i.e. Backbone Staff, Leadership Table and Action Teams)
4. Launch Action Teams and formalize the Backbone Infrastructure
5. Evolve and equip Action Teams to address community priorities

Strategic Planning & Priority Actions

1. Hold dialogue about issues, community context, and available resources
2. Map the landscape to make the case for a collective impact initiative
3. Create a Common Agenda, clear problem definition, and population-level goals
4. Develop a blueprint & identify quick wins
5. Refine strategies and mobilize for quick wins. Reviewed progress of previous actions.

Youth & Community Engagement

1. Determine community readiness with moving forward. Create a youth & community action plan
2. Begin outreach to youth & community leaders
3. Gain youth & community perspective and input around the issues. Incorporate youth & community voice into the Common Agenda and priority actions.
4. Engage Youth and community more broadly and build public will
5. Conduct advocacy

Evaluation & Learning

1. Determine if there is a consensus/urgency moving forward
2. Collect & analyze baseline data to identify key issues and gaps
3. Establish shared metrics (indicators, measurement & evaluation approach)
4. Establish shared measures (indicators & approach) at Leadership Table and Action Team levels
5. Create a process to learn and improve

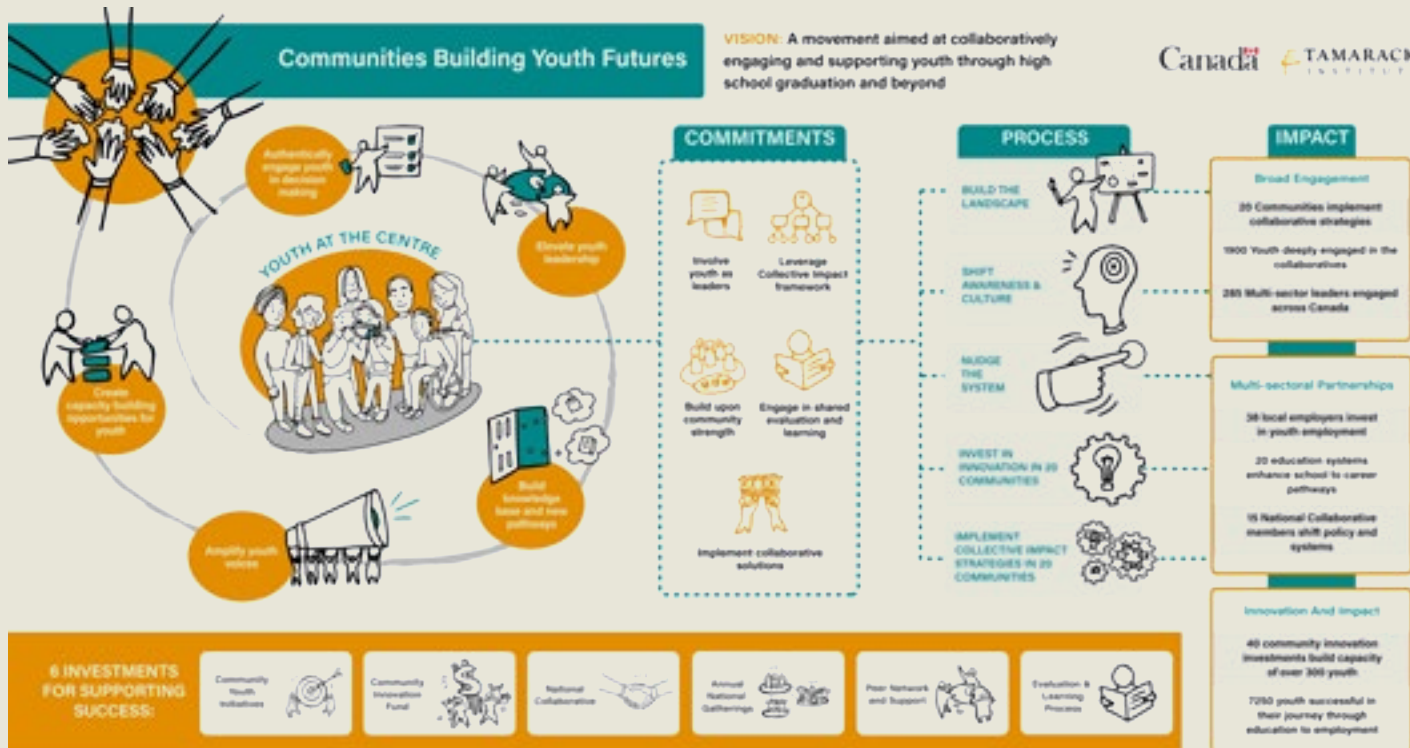
With the CBYF collective impact model, communities are becoming skilled at breaking down silos through cross-sector community collaboration where partners embrace cooperation and grow comfortable with discomfort for the sake of healthy policy and systems change.

Within the first 2 years, the CBYF communities have leveraged the collective impact process to accomplish the following:

- 1 Hiring Backbone Teams to mobilize, coordinate, and facilitate the process of collaborative action to support youth in each community **(102 youth hired)**
- 2 Creating a cross-sectoral Leadership Table made up of youth leaders, non-profit organizations, government, and businesses in each community, to guide the CBYF work at the community level and to elevate young people’s voice and ideas to change the system. **(355 local leaders** have been engaged including **122 youth, 27 employers, 125 non-profits, 81 government/education)**
- 3 Co-creating a common agenda with input from youth, partners, and communities to outline priorities and critical shifts in supporting youth **(12 of 13 common agendas** developed)
- 4 Uncovering the needs of youth and communities through formal and informal discussions, committees, and partnerships **(1025 new working groups, networks, partnerships** developed since beginning of initiative)
- 5 Through youth-led data collection, capturing resources available for youth in **10 out of 13 CBYF communities** (see the [Guides on a Page](#) for more information)
- 6 Setting priorities and implementing innovative strategies to tackle those priorities **(14 innovative projects** have already been implemented to better support youth outcomes and **11 more are part way through implementation** - see Community Innovation Fund section below



Three Feathers by JeenaLeigh Hill (recolored)



[VIEW INFOGRAPHIC](#)

YOUTH AT THE CENTRE OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Collective Impact Framework of systems change with youth at the centre of the work requires a paradigm shift. Tamarack and CBYF communities engage youth through leadership opportunities, amplifying youth voice, and creating new pathways for success. Only by working side-by-side with partners and youth can the community come up with unique solutions to solve its most pressing problems. And taking that journey together results in a stronger and more sustainable community that can address the current needs of youth and adapt and pivot as new information and data becomes available.

Early in the implementation of CBYF, youth from CBYF communities were engaged in developing a [guide for meaningfully engaging youth](#). From this collaboration, the following principles for youth engagement have been implemented at Tamarack and in communities, creating new ways to collaborate for real and lasting change:

- **Authentically engage youth in decision making:** Youth are listened to by community members and valued for their contributions to the community
- **Elevate youth leadership:** Youth have key roles to help drive the collaborative process
- **Build knowledge base and new pathways:** Leverage the expertise and strengths of youth and organizations to collaborate on shared projects and priorities
- **Amplify youth voices:** Deep listening for “street data” stories that uncover the real struggles youth face, and demonstrating that advocacy and action will take place for true change
- **Create capacity building opportunities for youth:** Youth are treated as experts on their own lives, with opportunities to design, create, and implement strategies that address their unique needs

Here are all the ways Tamarack is engaging with youth in communities (for Cohort 1 March 2020 to June 2022):

Ways that communities engage youth in decision-making, leadership, planning and implementation of supports

Backbone structure / Convening



**Total
102**

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD](#)

Number of youth who participated in ongoing programs, supports and services, categorized by priorities for youth

Number of youth who receive supports and services through the innovation fund projects

Accessible Education



**Total
1,811**



**Total
846**

COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND

The Community Innovation Fund (CIF) acts as a catalyst to support innovation and test youth-driven solutions for CBYF member communities that can be rapidly prototyped and can inform projects that subsequently can be scaled. The Fund seeks to:

- Centre youth voice and youth leadership in community innovation by engaging youth to take the lead in collective action-planning and decision-making
- Enable and build capacity for experimentation and development of new models and local efforts that are not covered by other grants or funding streams, which support youth in the community.
- “Success” or “failure” of the project is less relevant than what was learned
- Improve education, training, and/or employment outcomes for youth as they transition to adulthood
- Address systemic inequities at the community level that create barriers for youth.

Tamarack has supported and tracked each CIF project to determine common strategies used across communities, what challenges and barriers they face, to what extent they’re taking risks, how the resources are being leveraging, what long-term systemic change is happening, and whether these projects can scale. Some of these projects tap into the deep needs of communities such as tutoring and digital engagement, especially for youth in small, rural, and indigenous communities, teaching and sharing traditional food cooking in **Kahnawà:ke, QC** and a [series of co-created films](#) on various topics from challenges youths face to all about taxes in **Chilliwack, BC**.

So far, there have been 40 CIF projects implemented: 14 have been completed, 11 are partway through implementation, and 15 have been launched in June 2022.

Five main types of projects have been created and implemented:

- Individualized & localized access to education and safe spaces
- Digital access to services & storytelling
- Empowering youth as system leaders
- Supporting champions within the system
- Innovation labs focused on educational attainment

You will read more about CIF projects starting on page 36.



Rich in Culture by Jeena Leigh Hill

Using the Innovation Profile methodology produced by [Observatory Public Sector Innovation \(OPSI\)](#), a public-sector innovation thought leader, Tamarack has started to deepen its understanding of the types of innovations implemented and the impacts they are having. See figures below:



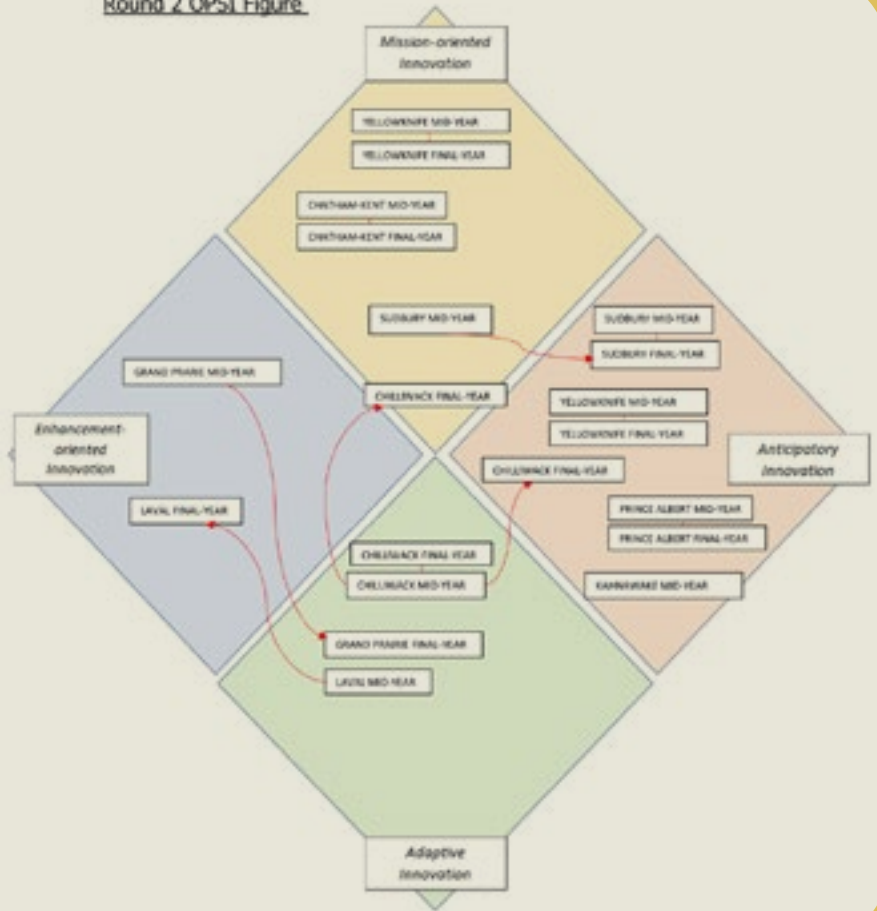
A key takeaway from this process is that many innovation projects started as Adaptive (Responding/Bottoms-Up), where undirected actions are to be expected during the first round. Gradually, they shifted to Anticipatory Innovations, which are based on disruptive changes,

exploration and Mission-oriented Innovations, top-down, directed and sustained changes. CIFs were more spread during the second round, which is very encouraging, as it shows that at the national scale, CBYF communities are attempting more diverse projects.

re.




Round 2 OPSI Figure



As communities share the impacts of these innovative projects, others are beginning to adopt and adapt them to their context. For example, CBYF **Digby, NS** is currently scaling the Roving Campus project from CBYF **Portage la Prairie, MB** (discussed later in the Accessible Education Shared Priority section). Even new projects approved in May 2022 are burgeoning through the innovative spirit of youth, including a

youth radio station in the **First Nations community of Chippewas of the Thames**, a Community FabLab (a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication) in **Saint-Léonard, QC**, a STEAM conference in **Yellowknife, NT**, and an alternative credit project through community reconciliation in **Prince Albert, SK**.

A woman wearing a light-colored baseball cap and a red apron over a blue t-shirt is working in a kitchen. She is looking towards the right side of the frame. In front of her is a wooden steamer basket filled with food, and a white box with colorful illustrations. The background is dark and industrial, with a red vertical post and a blue tarp. A yellow circle is visible in the bottom right corner.

Corner Brook: “None of us have the capacity to do it all alone. We need to work collaboratively... and youth feel like they finally are receiving a space to be heard.”

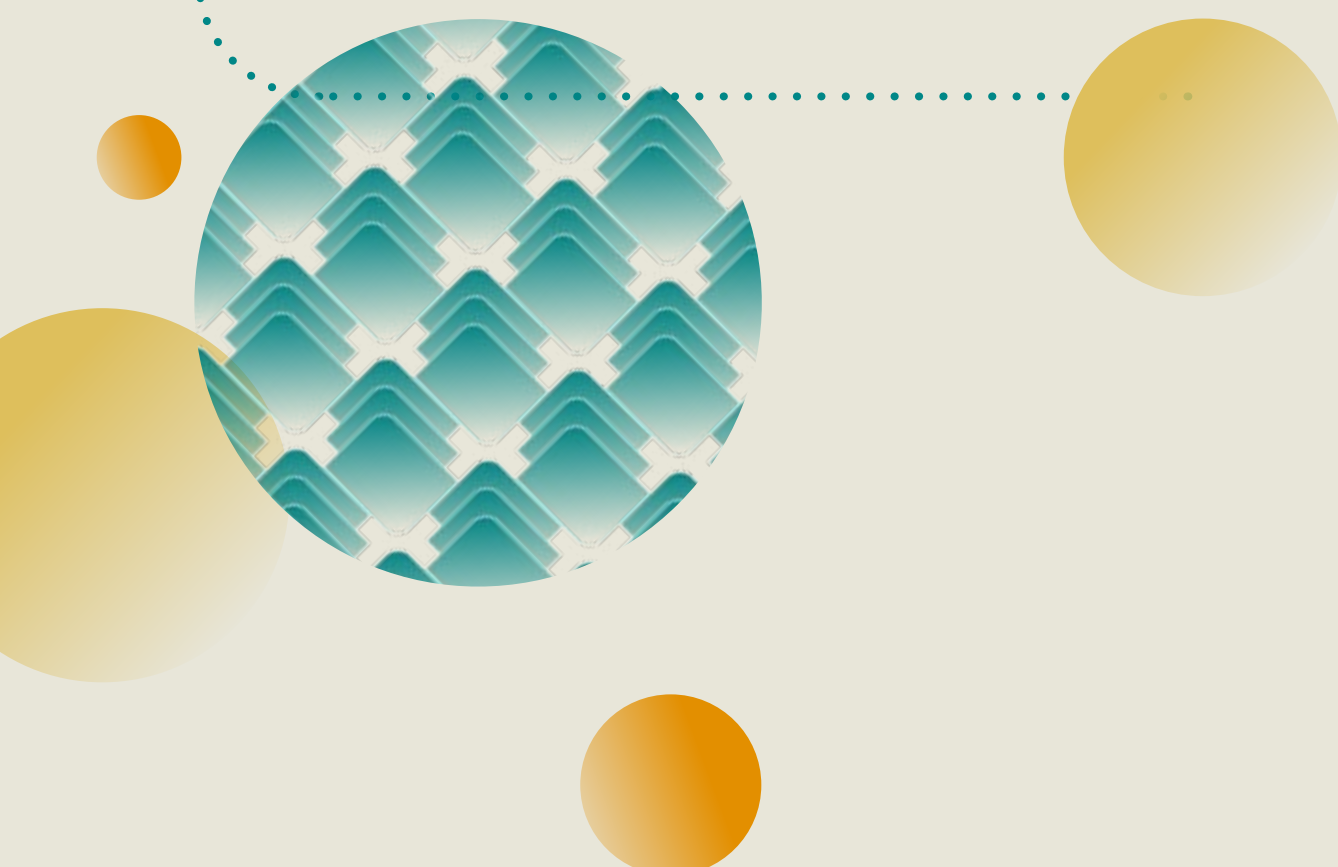
NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

The National Collaborative was established as a key part of the CBYF initiative as it provides a national network for accessing evidence-informed practices, leveraging resources and capacity, and identifying national opportunities for shifting policies and systems – all of which will help support improved outcomes for youth as they navigate transitions from high school to post-secondary education, training and careers.

Key Objectives:

- Leverage existing national capacity, knowledge, and resources to share with local communities
- Develop national policy and systems change agenda
- Establish strong involvement and linkages with youth
- Support the development of a sustainability model for the CBYF initiative

The journey so far of the National Collaborative to ensure systems change across Canada is captured on the following pages.





Connection to CBYF Community Priorities

Heard about current priorities for CBYF communities

Chose **top 3 priorities** for our work:

1. Connect Communities to Opportunities
2. Reduce System Barriers
3. Create Connections & Linkages

SEPTEMBER
2020

MARCH
2021

JANUARY
2021

Original List of National Collaborative Priorities

- Skills & Capacity Building
- Youth Engagement
- Connect Communities & Opportunities
- Share Best Practices
- Reduce System Barriers
- Create Connections & Linkages
- Evaluation & Learning

Brainstorm what the NC can do to support the work of communities

Focused on Priority Area: Connect Communities to Opportunities

Results of conversations presented to the Service Navigation working group being launched with communities

Refining How to Have Greatest Impact

Shared research findings on Future of Work and Digital Divide

Discussed a prototype to bridge the digital divide

Developed decision-making matrix

Focus on how to create policy shifts responding to barriers at the community level

Exploring Future possibilities

Provided input on Factors that are Important to Building Sustainable and Resilient Collaboratives

Discussed Future of Work Survey Results

NOVEMBER
2021

JUNE
2022

JUNE
2021

FEBRUARY
2022

Foundations for Action

Established principles in systems change

Established conditions to prototype and building a prototype together

Spearheading National Innovation Project

National research project on diverse credit pathways initial discussion

Creating Systems and Policy Level Change

See project description on next slide

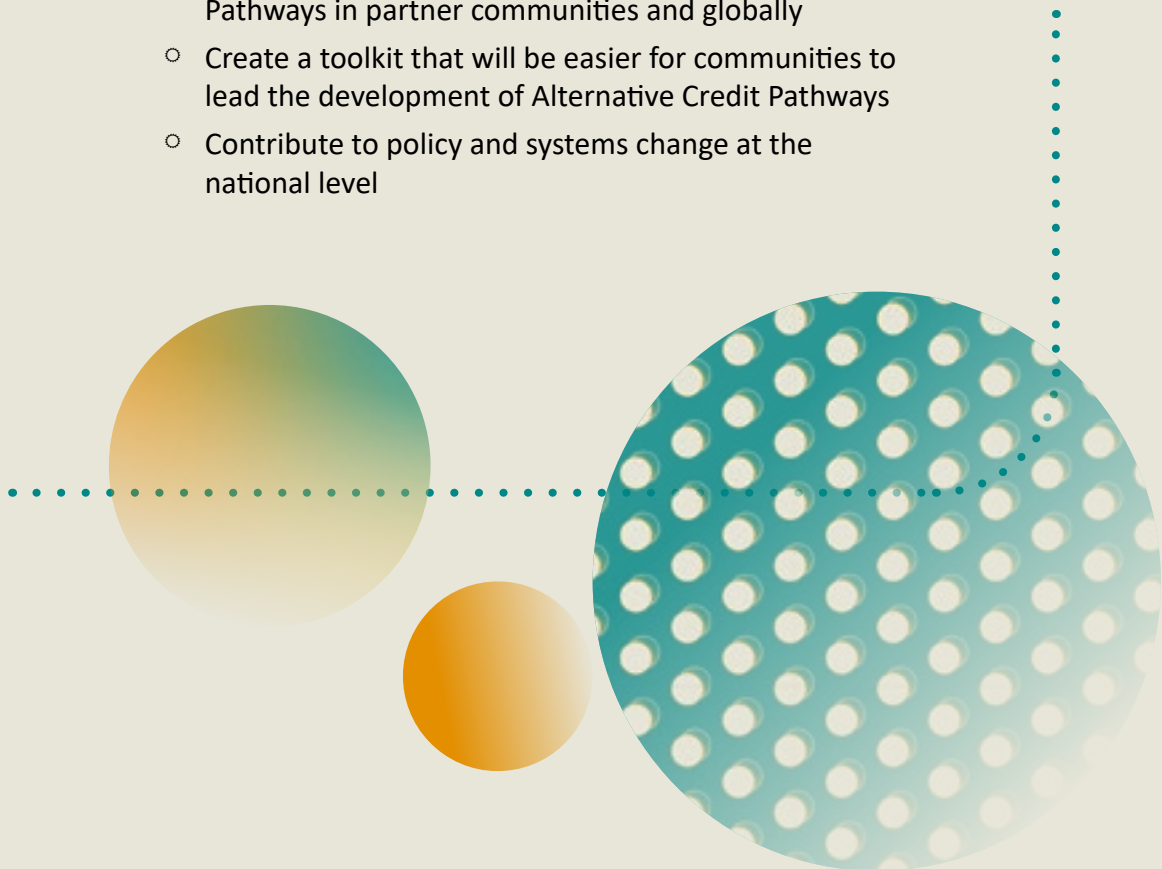
DIVERSE CREDIT PATHWAYS NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Through several CBYF community Innovation projects, it was identified that youth are seeking diverse educational pathways to acquire credits and skills. They want to access diverse opportunities that equip them with the competencies to contribute to their local communities, obtain recognized credentials, and build their futures.

The Diverse Credit Pathways National Research Project aims to highlight and advance what was learned through community innovation projects. The intention of this project is to document, amplify, and recommend innovative and actionable opportunities in creating educational pathways that meet the diverse needs of young people in small and medium rural settings.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Complete a scan of current Alternative Credit Pathways in partner communities and globally
- Create a toolkit that will be easier for communities to lead the development of Alternative Credit Pathways
- Contribute to policy and systems change at the national level





CBYF Community: “We have realized what a rich variety of expertise, experience, and passion there is at our table, and we have identified that our biggest hurdle to youth engagement locally at this point is not the youth themselves, but the older generations who are not ready to hand over decision making powers and to meaningfully engage youth. This realization will help us refine and target our plans.”

SUPPORTING LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

To build capacity for collective impact, Tamarack acts as a backbone for each community backbone and makes coaching, technical supports, Communities of Practice, and peer networks available for communities.

By facilitating peer network and support throughout the CBYF network, communities connect locally and nationally through developing and nourishing relationships, partnerships, networks, and ecosystems for supporting youth. Once a strong foundation is built in the community, less coaching and direct community supports are required as the community partners focus on their community-based work.

SUPPORTS RECEIVED BY COMMUNITIES (FOR COHORT 1)



TOOLS, RESOURCES, PUBLICATIONS DEVELOPED SINCE LAUNCH OF CBYF (THROUGH JUNE 2022)



¹ Comprises live events (in English, French or both), recordings and follow-up emails with relevant resources sent to all registrants, emailed in the language(s) of the original live event

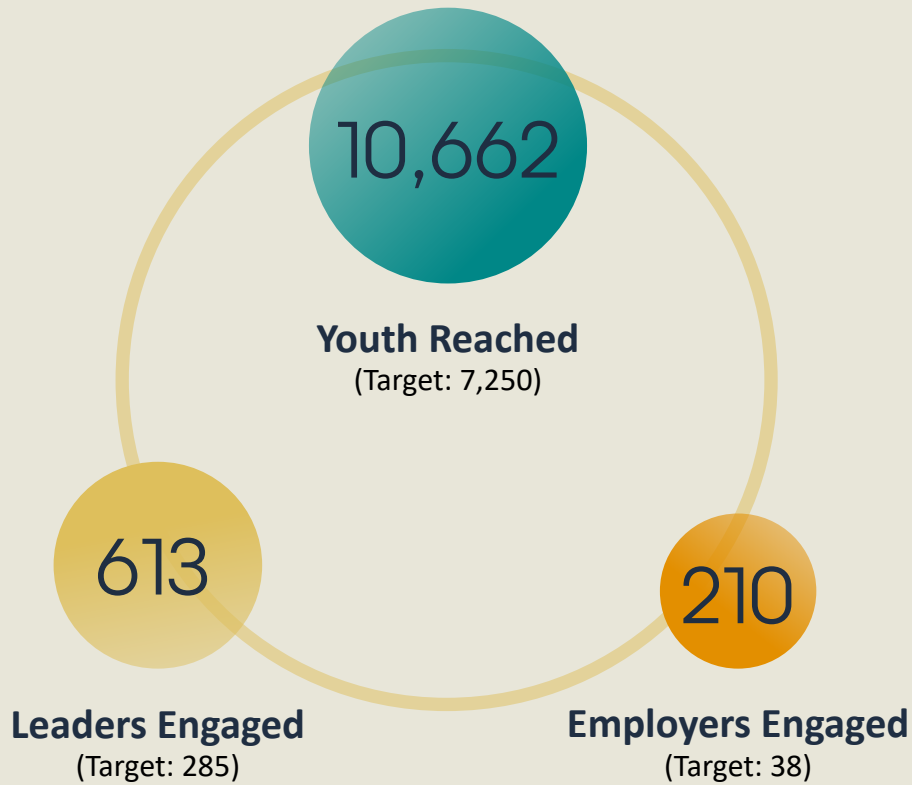
² Comprises live meetings (in English, French or both), recordings and follow-up emails with recording and relevant resources sent to all Community of Practice members

³ Includes each individual Guide on a Page, the 10 Guide, and two case studies (English/French counted as a single product)

⁴ Includes Brock University student posts

HIGH-LEVEL IMPACT TO DATE*

HIGHLIGHTS:



CBYF Community: “50% of the [CBYF innovation project] students will graduate on time, and the other 50% are on track to graduate as an adult. This is significant... when the [program] was initially taking referrals for its pilot year, none of the students referred were set to graduate on time.”

*June 2022

Outcome Indicator Dashboard

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD](#)



10,662



1,328



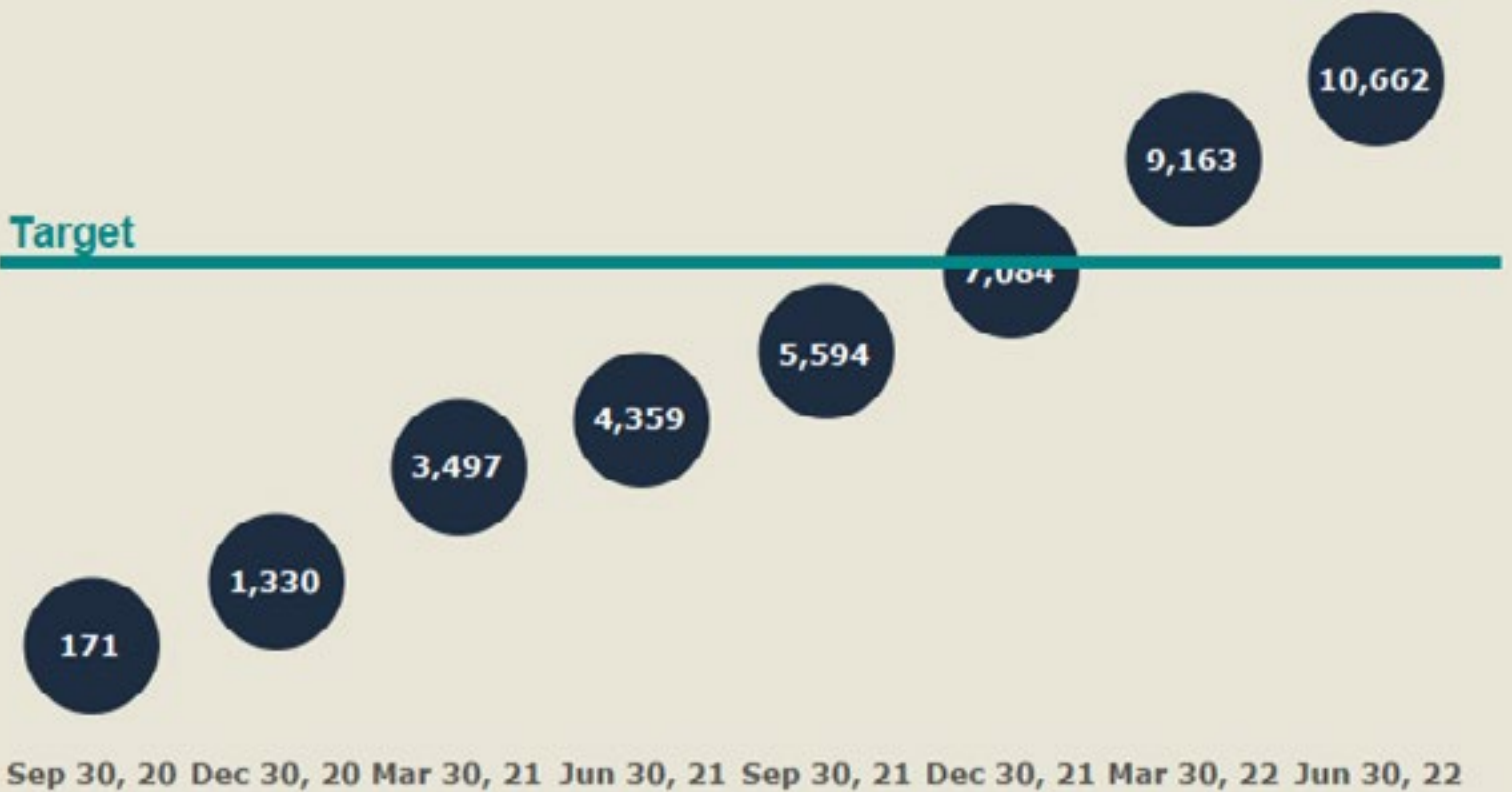
613



13



40



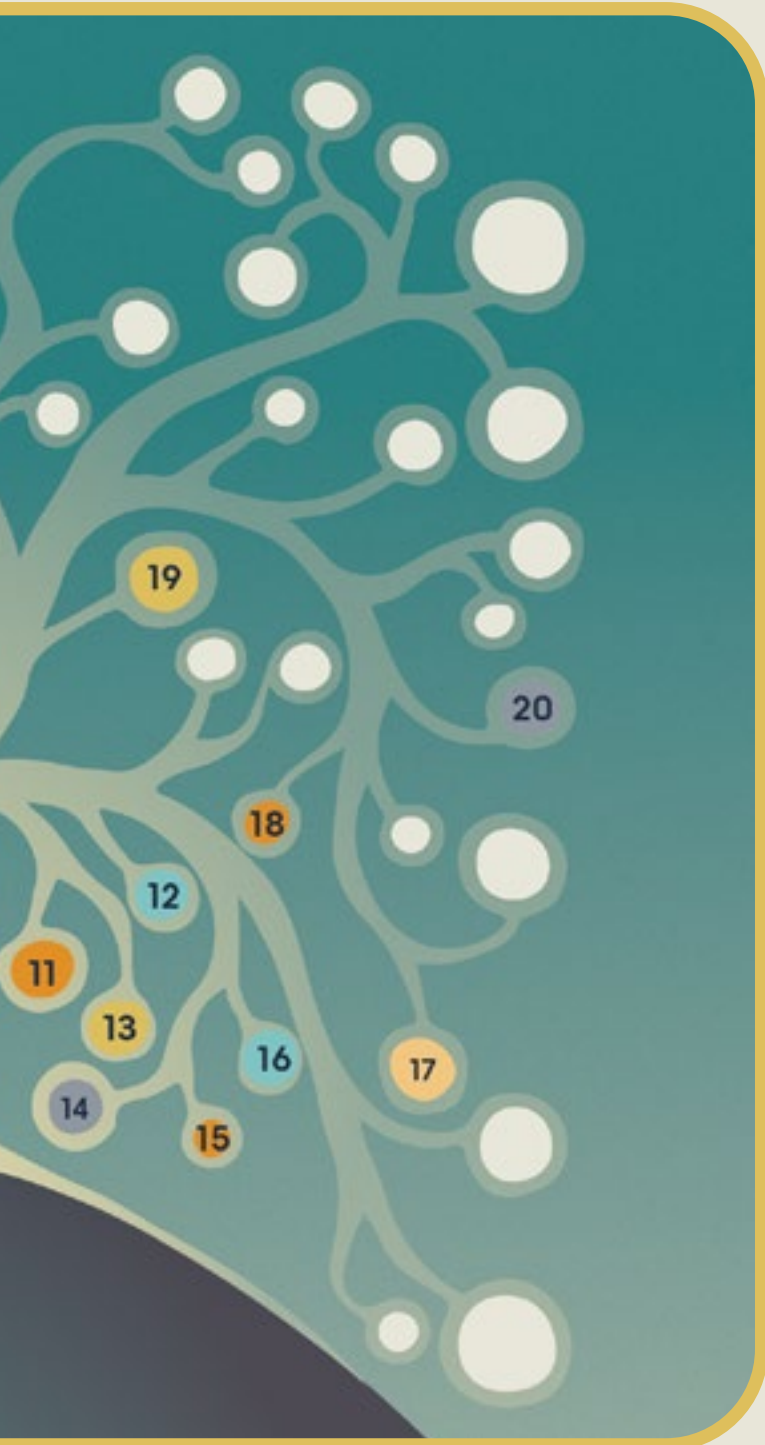
- Youth engaged in developing or implementing Innovation Fund projects 416
- Youth engaged on local leadership tables 197
- Youth hired as backbone staff 149
- Youth participated in engagement activities, programs, and projects 9,900

CBYF COMMUNITIES AT A GLANCE*



Tree of Collectivity by Rana Nemat Allah (modified)

* See Criteria for Selecting CBYF Communities in the Appendix



1. Yukon
2. Alberni-Clayoquot
3. Chilliwack
4. Grande Prairie
5. Yellowknife
6. Regina
7. Prince Albert
8. Portage la Prairie
9. Nunavut
10. Sudbury
11. Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
12. Laval
13. Oxford County
14. Chatham-Kent
15. Kahnawà:ke
16. Prince Edward County
17. Corner Brook
18. Digby
19. Saint Léonard
20. Moncton

NORTHERN TERRITORIES

Yukon

Youth Population: 10,345

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *All Yukon youth are engaged, included and respected as they move from school into life.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Yellowknife, NT

Youth Population: 5,990

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Young people are supported in finding and safely pursuing their dreams and passions.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Alberni-Clayoquot, BC

Youth Population: 7,105

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *Currently being developed*
Website under construction

Chilliwack, BC

Youth Population: 21,900

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *A place EVERY youth is empowered to become who they want to be!*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

PRAIRIES

Grande Prairie, AB

Youth Population: 19,300

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Powerful youth building solid foundations for our future.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Prince Albert, SK

Youth Population: 10,605

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Youth will take the lead in identifying and addressing barriers to achieving their educational and employment goals.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Portage la Prairie, MB

Youth Population (15-29 only): 2,400

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *A youth-oriented, inclusive and diverse community, where every young person thrives, feels supported, and looks forward to the bright future.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Regina, SK

Youth Population: 60,845

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *Together, we will build a common youth agenda and seek innovative solutions to improve outcomes for youth in Regina.*

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Included in the profiles for each community are:

- Youth population (15-34) based on 2021 census data
- Date that the community joined the CBYF network
- Vision for the CBYF Collective Impact work that has been developed by youth and the community
- Community Plan on a Page – an infographic that tells the collective impact story, including a vision and priority areas for action
- Community Guide on a Page – an infographic that compiles what resources are available for youth in each community (based on a common set of youth-focused indicators)
- A website link for the CBYF community initiative (if it exists)



ONTARIO

Chatham-Kent, ON

Youth Population: 22,450

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Youth have opportunities to develop, discover, and explore their own paths, and are empowered and supported to reach for and achieve their personal and professional dreams in Chatham-Kent.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

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Website under construction

Sudbury, ON

Youth Population: 3,980

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Our Commitment: To work side by side with young people in the community to understand their experiences, and to work to influence change, so together we can improve available resources and create opportunities in our community.*

[GUIDE ON A PAGE](#)

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, ON

Total Population: 195

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *Currently being developed*

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Oxford County, ON

Youth Population (15-29 only): 20,565

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *Youth in Oxford County will feel a sense of belonging in our community and hope for their future. They will be empowered to set and achieve their goals, and actively participate in the systems and processes that affect them.*

Website under construction

Prince Edward County, ON

Youth Population: 3,940

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *To create a community culture that embraces learning and personal development and enables everyone to reach their potential.*

[WEBSITE LINK](#)





QUÉBEC

Kahnawà:ke, QC

Total Population: 7,965

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *An INITIATIVE to provide OPPORTUNITY YOUTH (ages 16-21) with the freedom to learn and create their own group driven, individual respecting 1-year initiative in PREPARATION FOR LIFE.*

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Laval, QC

Youth Population: 100,425

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *Une communauté qui bâtit l'avenir avec les jeunes pour favoriser la persévérance scolaire et l'insertion socioprofessionnelle des 14-30 ans ayant des parcours plus difficiles.*

[PLAN ON A PAGE](#)

[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Saint Léonard, QC

Youth Population: 17,685

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *Currently being developed*
Website under construction

MARITIMES

Corner Brook, NL

Youth Population: 5,920

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *As a committed community collective we will INSPIRE, ENGAGE AND EMPOWER YOUTH to THRIVE in our community, at home, in school and in the workplace.*

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[WEBSITE LINK](#)

Digby, NS

Youth Population: 2,815

Date Joined: June 2020

Vision: *The Digby Area is a place where youth belong and are valued. Youth have the opportunity to lead and participate meaningfully within this growing community in employment, leadership and decision-making roles.*

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[WEBSITE LINK](#)

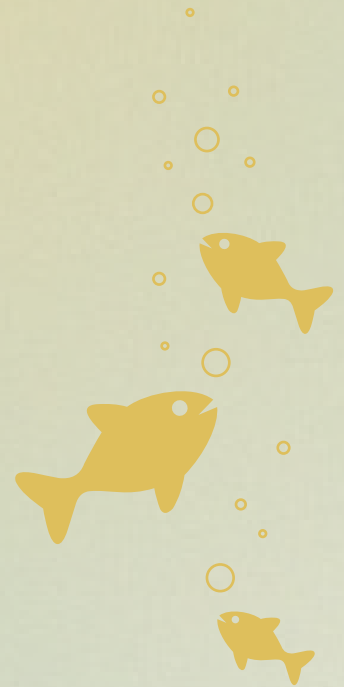
Moncton, NB

Youth Population: 38,075

Date Joined: March 2022

Vision: *We believe our community can be a better place for everyone to live. Our funded agencies offer exceptional programs and we help them be all they can be (United Way).*

[WEBSITE LINK](#)





NOT YOUR
LAND
NOT
YOUR CALL

SHARED PRIORITIES

The first step CBYF communities took was to conduct factor analyses to determine what challenges and barriers they face. By December 2020, six themes emerged as priorities collectively shared by the communities:



Employment & Mentorship



Accessible Education



Identity & Social Connections



Service Navigation and Access to Supports



Youth Engagement and Leadership



Holistic Health & Wellbeing

Since then, each community has developed their own unique youth-driven strategies to address each of these priorities. Because these strategies are expected to ultimately move the needle on the overall goals of high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment, it will be critical to continue to develop contributing indicators and improve data collection that connect to these strategies over the next two years.

Some of this work is already well underway, including defining systems-level contributing indicators, but a direct causal throughline from priority to overall goal for each strategy should not be expected in every case. Systems change is more complex than that.

In fact, the *true* measure of the efficacy and strength of CBYF can only be seen through a holistic lens in which relationships, power dynamics and contributions of the various partners within a healthy and supportive community are considered together rather than in isolation. **A key strength is the collaborative process itself**, teaching both youth and communities how to exercise their **resilience and adaptability**.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

The following pages provide examples of how different CBYF communities are addressing each priority using the collective impact process shepherded by Tamarack. Every community is focused on all six priorities with multiple strategies for each, meaning these examples merely scratch the surface of all the work being done across Canada to tackle the obstacles youth face on their life paths.



Yukon: "By building skills for people who live in Whitehorse, it contributes to the capacity building of the community overall."

EMPLOYMENT & MENTORSHIP

Chatham-Kent: Two Youth-centred Projects: [Not Just A Handyman](#) & [Ignite](#)

For CBYF Chatham-Kent, mentorship is a relationship between two people wanting to grow with each other - an opportunity to create the best environment for the relationship to flourish and to be fostered over time.

As CBYF Coordinator Phillip Mock puts it:

“For me, the word ‘mentorship’ conjures the stereotypical image of a successful person providing wisdom and knowledge to a student that wants to learn that wisdom. In reality, mentorship is anything but this... To us, mentorship is the building of mutually beneficial relationships that are rooted in sharing, reciprocation, affection, and co-construction of goals.”

Taking an organic approach that instills these values into all their projects at different levels, ranging from structured to organic, Chatham-Kent instills mentorship in a variety of ways. In their Not Just A Handyman project, they intentionally pair youth to work together. Their Ignite projects place adults as supportive structures surrounding youth-centred action teams.

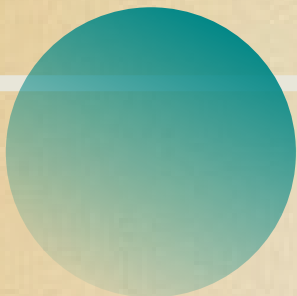
For youth, there is a sense of support in addition to an opportunity to access a position of power to impact decisions, knowing there is a safety net if needed, and more importantly, a means to scale their work with the knowledge and experience of adult allies that have been there before. For the adults, they learn not only how to better support youth-centred change in their community, but also become intimately familiar with the lived experience of youth by working as close confidants, allies, and supporters.

This form of mentorship reinforces to each member that:

1. They are not alone
2. Everyone is learning, regardless of experience level
3. Everyone learns differently, and what we learn can be shared to broaden our collective understanding
4. Relationships are the key to one’s success.

Read Phillip Mock’s blog post on mentorship [here](#).

This type of deep engagement has also led to the Province of Ontario funding [CK Prosperity Roundtable’s](#) skilled trades training program unique to Chatham-Kent with an initial investment of \$215,000 (you can learn more about it [here](#)).



ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

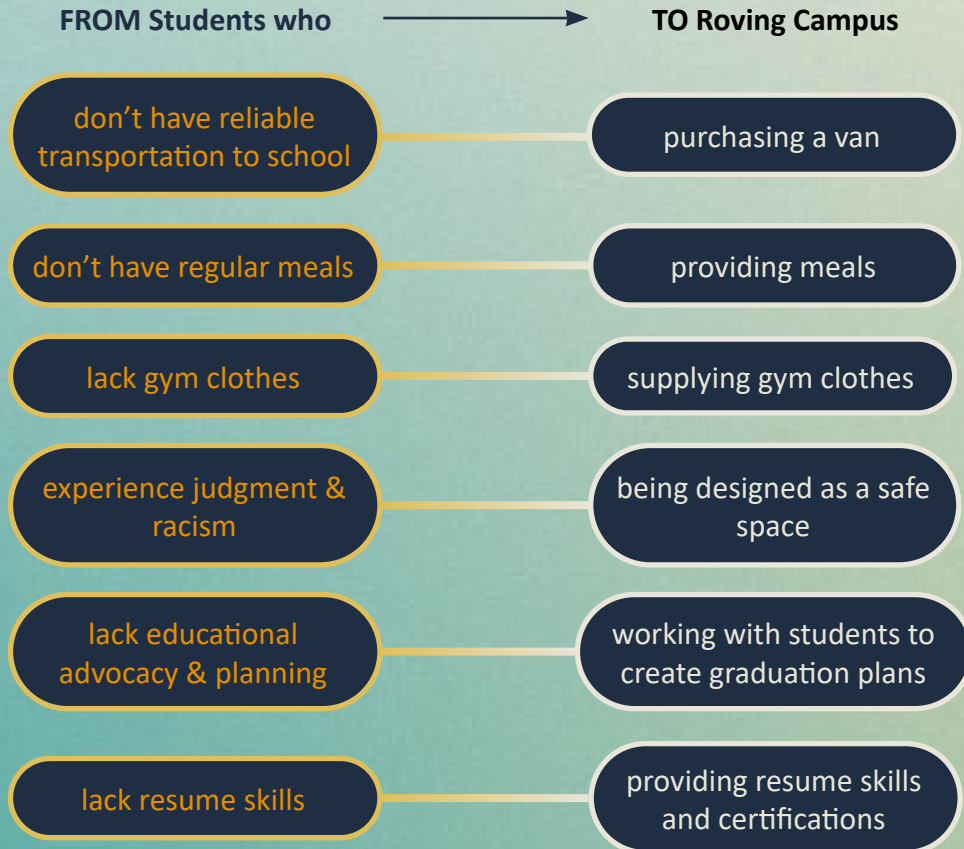
Portage La Prairie: Roving Campus Re-Engages Students

Portage La Prairie’s Roving Campus provides a learning experience for up to 30 young people struggling in the traditional high school environment with an alternate pathway to a high-school diploma, employability skills and other trainings and certification.

The Roving Campus considers the entire community as its “classroom” and moves its location from week to week. Students spend the majority of their time outside the “classroom” and are offered different hands-on and experiential learning opportunities that cover an array of high school courses. With two local youth leaders on staff, the Roving Campus provides students with transportation, lunch, a laptop and Internet access.

The greatest success of the Roving Campus is that it offers students who were once at risk of not completing high-school the engagement and support they need to chart a path to a brighter future.

How the Roving Campus is Overcoming Barriers



One of the most powerful – and sustainable – features of the Roving Campus is the participation and partnerships it has fostered with a diverse set of community partners, including sports complexes, businesses, the Keeshkeemaquah Urban Reserve, and even the Leader of the Official Opposition of Manitoba, Wab Kinew, who took time to speak to students about Louis Riel when Roving Campus visited the Legislature. 90% of students are Indigenous or Métis, so Wab was able to connect with them on a level that other political leaders may not have been able to. Based on the success and sustainability of this new model, other communities are now exploring how they can create their own roving campus.

Click [here](#) to read the case study of this initiative.



IDENTITY & SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Digby's youth-centred Initiative Creates A Space For Youth In Nova Scotia

As the global pandemic hit Nova Scotia, most youth immediately lost important physical spaces, as well as the social connections linked to those physical spaces. Many were also suddenly facing uncertainty with respect to important milestones like graduation, entering postsecondary education and finding employment. In rural areas like much of Digby County, transportation barriers further limited access to social and other types of interactions.

Youth leaders from CBYF quickly came together and created the Digby & Area Youth Space (DAYS) to foster connection and support through programming and a hang-out space for youth. It opened in March 2021, with the original intention of providing Internet access and devices. But after finding out that the province was already addressing this need, youth leaders brainstormed other ideas for a youth-centred initiative, eventually deciding to provide lessons on taxes and banking. As COVID-19 numbers soared in April 2021, the province went back into lockdown, and with it the need to shift quickly from in-person programs to online offerings. After soliciting feedback from youth, who needed an outlet from long days of online learning, DAYS staff pivoted to online programming of fun activities and games not just for youth, but also for other members of their family.



Yellowknife: “We are all connected - connecting youth to culture and land.”

As the local CBYF Coordinator expressed:

“Having youth involvement from the beginning has been powerful. We have seen growth and capacity building throughout the process. Youth have stepped into a leadership role. A positive change we have seen is youth grow in their leadership through planning and implementing DAYS and watching their ideas come to life, as well as their pride in what they have been able to accomplish. It has been great to be able to give youth a voice in what they want to see and learn about at DAYS. Youth have also been able to build new connections and relationships with each other and with community partners.”

Click [here](#) to read the case study of this initiative.



SERVICE NAVIGATION & ACCESS TO SUPPORTS

Prince Albert Bridges The Digital Divide With Local Youth

In 2020, Prince Albert's CBYF youth leaders in central Saskatchewan launched an innovative approach to working with youth that provides wraparound support, while also bridging the digital divide. Youth shared that they often encountered barriers to accessing services in the community based on strict eligibility requirements and that they were looking for more flexible supports focused on a more holistic approach to youth wellbeing. Using the iterative approach from Tamarack's [Guide for Meaningfully Engaging Youth](#) as their model, CBYF Prince Albert took a path of unrelenting youth engagement

As a result of these efforts, The Beading Circle was designed by CBYF's Youth Project Coordinator and further developed and adjusted based on feedback from youth. Beading is a traditional art form among Indigenous groups, and many youth expressed a desire to learn how to bead and to share their skills with other youth. The story of Hannah, a fiercely independent single mother of Metis heritage, illustrates the incredible power and effectiveness of the Beading Circle to connect youth and to ensure they have access to the supports they need.

After responding to a Facebook event post and receiving the free kit, Hannah began attending the online group. Over time, her engagement deepened and she slowly shared her personal story and desire to break the generational cycles of trauma, poverty, and addiction for her children - desires which deeply resonated with other Beading Circle members. The solidarity and support of the group enabled Hannah to obtain her Metis card to access crucial services for her and her children, connected her to one-on-one counseling, and provided encouragement to enroll in a program at the local Polytech. Hannah says that being involved with CBYF has changed her life. The Beading Circle is still going strong and is now co-facilitated by the CBYF youth intern and other participants like Hannah.

Click [here](#) to read the case study of this initiative.



Hannah says that being involved with CBYF has “changed my life after becoming a single mom it is difficult, but they help me feel support when I don’t get it anywhere else. They filled my life with positive change! By helping me with stress by dropping off sage and food around Christmas time. Helped me get back into beading which made me feel like I belonged and helped me with my patience. They also helped me get accepted into school by supplying me with a laptop for my courses. They are awesome...! Thanks so much CBYF”

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Sudbury Youth Co-Design Digital Strategy To Improve Service Access

The goal of CBYF Sudbury's Brand Identity and Digital Strategy project was to develop an in-depth understanding of youth and how to best engage, recruit and maintain youth participation. Additionally, the project served to create a virtual platform to enable youth to connect and more easily navigate services within their community with a unique brand, championed by youth.

The initial project proposal described youth developing the logo and overall brand; however, this plan evolved to enable youth to be actively involved at every stage of the project, from development to evaluation. They received professional support from design and marketing professionals during logo and brand development. Youth also led survey design, where a routine question asking respondents if they were a member of a visible minority was deemed insensitive and changed to asking youth to describe their ethnic identity.

CBYF Sudbury was able to gain valuable insights about the needs of youth in the community by leveraging youth focus groups to have more in-depth meaningful conversations. They learned that providing questions to participants prior to the session enabled youth to prepare for and have greater confidence during the session, especially with youth living with autism, or who experience anxiety or just need time to process. The virtual space also made participation more accessible to those experiencing precarious employment by accommodating their working hours, eliminated travel as a barrier for rural youth, and shortened sessions for shorter time commitment. The chat box within the virtual room provided a safe space for youth to contribute their insights. Peer-to-peer interviews also created a youth-centred space that encouraged open communication and honesty.

As a result of these shifts, the project became a more inclusive process and resulted in a product that has a look and feel that is inviting and relatable to youth of all backgrounds. This youth engagement and leadership project in Sudbury also resulted in a very successful online [interactive community map](#) designed to create a central location for youth services, resources and activities in that area. This has inspired other communities to pursue similar service navigation projects. Click [here](#) to read the case study of this initiative.



HOLISTIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

A squad of young tech tutors responds to the challenges of pandemic digital learning

When the COVID-19 lockdown threw Laval’s large school system into chaos, CBYF Laval sprang into action, creating “Jeunes branchés : Escouade numérique.” Its mission: to provide real-time technological support services for youth, by youth. The squad was made up of eight high school and college students, each trained to act as a “tech tutor” for other youth. Any student in the Laval school system could connect with the squad and ask questions. Active on social media to spread the word and provide communication channels for students and parents, the service also developed and launched its own website.

The COVID-19 rollercoaster required the squad to adapt on a daily basis, where it faced many ups-and-downs. Initial applications in the spring of 2021 were low given the timing of the rollout, and the service was put on hold until August 2021, adapted for back to school (online tutoring, etc.). Then in January 2022 when students shifted back online, the squad was surprised to see that most requests for support came from parents of elementary school children, even though the advertising campaign had been more aimed at high school, vocational training, and college students.

While the squad learned a few lessons about the need to communicate with teachers to get the word out and to get referrals, the entire venture came with a silver lining. As the CBYF Coordination Team put it:

“We formed, maintained, and bonded a team of eight fantastic young people. We had the privilege of working with engaged and motivated youth. These were students who care about doing a good job, who are invested in their tasks, and who respect their commitments. It was a great opportunity to witness a team’s development. From eight strangers, they became eight friends who supported and accompanied each other throughout the project and beyond. For us, most particularly in these difficult times when young people need to feel connected and supported, this is quite an achievement.”

Click [here](#) to read the case study of this initiative.

Jeunes Branchés
L'ESCOUPE NUMÉRIQUE DE LAVAL

Tu as besoin d'aide avec les outils numériques?

Visite notre site web pour en savoir plus!
JEUNESBRANCHES.COM

Icons: MOTIVATION, PLATEFORMES, ORGANISATION, EQUIPEMENT, CONNEXION

Social media icons: Facebook, Instagram, Discord



IMPACTS OF COVID-19

CBYF rolled out at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacting youth and service providers as well as the communities' ability to implement their CBYF initiative. This impact was felt to varying degrees in each community in similar ways:


- Youth mental health affected by increased social isolation
- Diminished access to services and supports and youth engagement in education due to an increased digital divide
- High stress of service providers
- High volume of work of community organizations
- Difficulty to bring people together and to leverage community resources

Additionally, critical relationship-building elements important for developing a common agenda could not happen in the initial months of implementation, and data collection from partners became difficult, if not impossible.

BUT... the COVID-19 experience offered a silver lining:

To navigate this and maintain engagement, the network quickly pivoted to technology. The creative ways taken by communities to address these challenges and embrace new strategies actually resulted in increased youth engagement, understanding that:

- Online tools and formats are more comfortable for youth to navigate
- Online spaces reduce the intimidation factor and help level the playing field so that everyone can participate (e.g. using chat box to share questions and comments)
- Youth who might not typically be able to join in-person meetings due to logistical issues (e.g. lack of transportation, single parents needing to put kids to bed, etc.) could now participate
- Technology brings greater efficiency

A young man with glasses is sitting on a bed in a dimly lit room. He is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. The room is dark, with light coming from a window with blinds in the upper left corner. The man is wearing a dark t-shirt and is holding a smartphone in his hands.

CBFY Community Member: "The most significant learning about youth engagement is to be accepting of the dynamic nature of youth engagement. Being a youth comes with many challenges and competing priorities and with COVID, our youth are feeling more overwhelmed than ever. We have learned to accept the fluctuations in engagement and to not give up on the youth and to believe that the engagement will return. We have learned that our youth appreciate the relentless outreach and that it continues to build a sense of belonging and support, even if the youth is not able to engage in return. We have also learned that by taking this approach, we build trust with our youth, as they are accustomed to service providers and other adults walking away from them when they aren't meeting expectations. We are proud to challenge that experience that they have and show them that we are truly meeting them where they are at and are here to support them and their voice."

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTING CBYF*

Tamarack and the CBYF Communities have proven that a youth-centred collective impact process works. But this did not come about without a great deal of learning across the board. As communities sustain their commitment to youth going forward, these lessons and how they were overcome will help them navigate and expand their reach over the next two years and beyond.

YOUTH VOICE DRIVES INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Among the common barriers youth face (as reported by CBYF communities) are lack of opportunity for career exploration and mentorship, struggles with mental health and sense of belonging, and access to technology and technological support. Through their leadership table and by co-designing with youth in communities to pivot to their needs, interventions to address these barriers included:

1 Collaboration with community leaders, within their Leadership Table, to create programming and engagement opportunities to increase belonging and reduce mental health challenges

Example: **CBYF Kahnawa:ke** developed the youth action team, by gathering a group of youth that focus on holistic health and wellness, and to build capacity for addressing challenges being faced by local youth and support their action team. It has also shifted its communication strategy with youth by creating a standard of changing the language used, the spaces used to advertise, and the types of initiatives to attract the most youth.

Additionally, subtle shifts in how CBYF Communities interact with youth have increased their engagement. When youth were given the option to turn off their video, opt out of check-ins, or use chat boxes, participation rates went up. These shifts might seem inconsequential, or even testing established social norms, but to youth they translate into safer spaces where they can share without being put on the spot or facing down imbalanced power dynamics.

Grande Prairie: “Our staff are spending more time listening to youth feedback and having discussions with youth than we have in the past. Presumably because youth who have been involved in CBYF for a while are feeling more comfortable with voicing their experiences and opinions but also require staff engagement as they navigate community guidelines that they may not understand or be familiar with.”

2 Giving access to technology and technological support

Example: **CBYF Yellowknife** provided new laptop bundles to youth who did not own a laptop or have access to a computer outside of school or the project.

Additionally, CBYF Communities are recognizing that hybrid models might be here to stay. The quarantine mandates and social distancing guidelines presented significant challenges to relationship-building and creating a common agenda (a crucial first step in the collective impact process). Nevertheless, as was pointed out in the Impacts of COVID-19 section, switching to online meetings helped in connecting with certain youth and community members who might not have been engaged otherwise.

3 Creating Connections between young people and educational/ career supports

Example: **CBYF Chatham-Kent** Developed an employment training program called Employment Bootcamp that leveraged local resources in new ways to deliver a 3-week pre-employment training program to youth 14-29.

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO SYSTEM CHANGE

When all members of the community participate, everyone benefits. This truism is particularly important when addressing systemic barriers faced by youth. However, community partners face their own set of barriers to generate that change. These include the lack of available data on youth experience, struggles in connecting and engaging with youth, and limited or no access to youth networks in the community. In order to mitigate these barriers, to collaborate and engage on a more meaningful level, CBYF community partners have sought to access youth stories and experiences to inform policy in their communities reflective of youth needs. By listening to these stories and co-designing with youth in communities, partners are addressing these barriers in a variety of ways:

1 Providing training, tools, equipment and physical spaces to alleviate financial burden and support internal capacity.

Example: **CBYF Laval's** Digital Squad created the Digital Squad tutors, providing workshops, resources such as technology and guidance and how to learn in a digital space during the pandemic (see page 48 for a detailed description of this intervention).

2 Providing support for youth data collection and distribution to other interested parties.

Example: Tamarack contracted with Youthful Cities to build capacity within each community for youth performing data collection. This resulted in the CBYF Index, a central repository on The Grid (an open data portal powered by Youthful Cities). Each CBYF community now has access to a growing number of datasets across all the communities ranging on topics from Education and Training, Youth Employment, Civic Engagement, Health Services, Financial Services, Public Safety, Cost of Living, and Digital Access.

3 Collaboration with their Leadership Table, to create programming and engagement opportunities.

Example: **CBYF Prince Albert** completed intake surveys for 77 youth, gathering knowledge on barriers faced by youth in their community. This built the capacity of the Leadership Table, as they were able to share these youth voices back to community networking sessions and implement them in the Common Agenda, and share them with over 40 local partners.

CBYF IS THE GLUE THAT BRINGS YOUTH AND PARTNERS TOGETHER

CBYF has done a great job ensuring that each community remains youth-centred and committed to their goals. Yet, CBYF leaders still face a lack of internal capacity to meet the demands and needs of youth, struggles to connect and engage with youth, and the absence of collaboration with partner organizations. In order to mitigate these barriers, CBYF Communities strive to build their internal capacity, to encourage innovations on new communication strategies to youth. Moreover, there is a desire to collaborate with

other organizations, leaders and other interested parties to create long-term and sustainable impact in the community. Through their leadership tables and by co-designing with youth in communities, some of the interventions to address these barriers included:

1 Collaborating with partners in the community to address limited capacity.

Example: The Regroupement lavallois pour la réussite éducative (CBAJ) leadership table granted \$70,000 in the form of financial support to Laval organizations in order to support initiatives aimed at maintaining the academic motivation of 14-24 year olds during the COVID period. This measure allowed them to intervene quickly and directly in order to support youth. It was also a great opportunity to establish partnerships, to expand the CBAJ network of contacts and to make the approach known to several actors interested in the educational success of youth.

2 Focusing and designing projects around youth belonging and wellness, to encourage meaningful connections. Diversifying communication tools and strategies to reach more youth.

Example: **CBYF Sudbury's** backbone staff surveyed opinions from multiple agencies on youth engagement and the difficulties of engaging youth meaningfully in decision-making conversations. Their strategy of building trust with youth includes creating space for 1:1 conversation with each youth and creating space for their voice to be heard. To reach more youth, backbone staff have also shifted the language/vocabulary used in their communications, as well as increased accessibility of project delivery to youth with disabilities, including youth that lack technology.

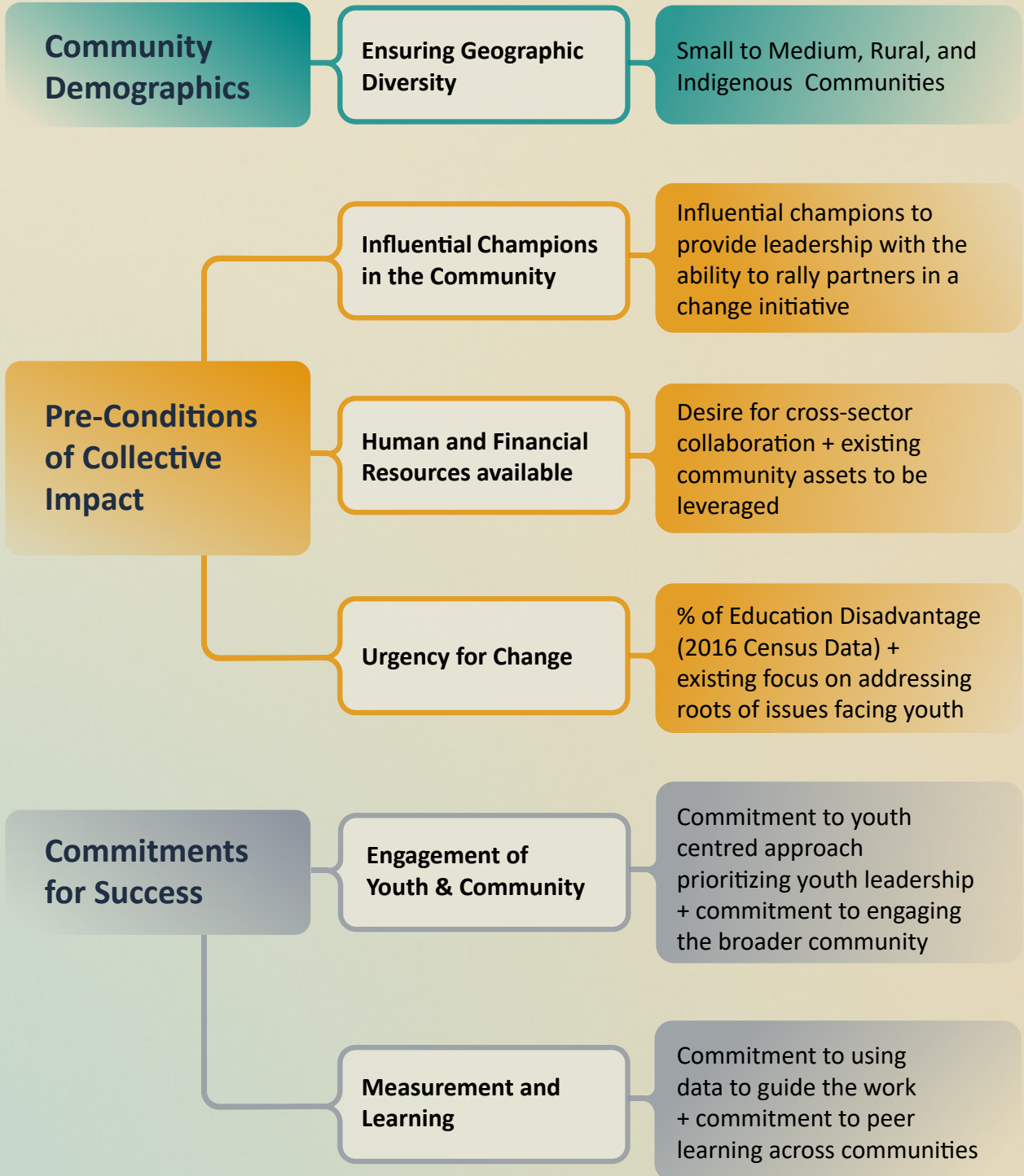
Additionally, they invite youth context experts to their leadership table meetings, who are experiencing barriers accessing the systems in their community. This ensures that the leadership table keeps its finger on the pulse of the needs of all youth in the community.

3 Training and building leadership tables and action teams to include more youth at decision-making opportunities.

Initially, some communities with experience in the collective impact process were perceived as seasoned experts on the process, needing less up-front support. In fact, the youth-centred approach presented unexpected challenges to more established groups with entrenched relationships where youth disrupted the current power structure. This demonstrated that sometimes an uncarved block is easier to work with than one that needs reshaping.

APPENDIX

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING CBYF COMMUNITIES



CBYF TIMELINE

Building Youth Futures Co-Design

- Government of Canada, Tamarack, youth, youth-serving orgs collaborate to co-design the core elements of a collective impact approach

JUN
2019

SEP
2019
-
FEB
2020

Launch of Initiative

- Partnership between Government of Canada and Tamarack & development of criteria for community selection
- Information sessions and calls with potential communities
- Community site visits with interested communities

Community Onboarding

- 1st Annual Gathering to develop linkages between CBYF communities and create the momentum for building youth futures
- Collaboration Agreement signed between Tamarack and 12 communities (June 2020)
- Workshops, training and peer learning agenda supports capacity building of communities

FEB
-
JUN
2020

JUN
2020
-
MAR
2021

Year 1 Launch Year

- Development of local Leadership Table & hiring of Backbone staff
- Engagement of youth and community in community mapping and development of community plan
- Launch of the National Collaborative focused on policy and systems changes at the national level to support youth in CBYF communities
- Launch round 1 of Community Innovation Fund projects

Year 2 From Launch to Early Impacts

- Launch Action Teams to implement priority areas from community plan
- Incorporate youth and community voice to gain perspectives on priorities
- Develop and implement shared metrics and data collection approaches
- Begin to communicate early impacts
- Launch round 2 & 3 of Community Innovation Fund projects
- Onboard 6 new communities into the CBYF network

APR
2021
-
MAR
2022

Priority Areas for Next 2 Years

- New communities continue to develop common agenda and implement priorities
- Continue to implement innovation projects and scale promising practices
- Enhanced evaluation & data collection related educational outcomes
- Deepening understanding and communication of impact and results
- Further develop sustainability plan

CBYF NATIONAL PARTNERS

[Tamarack](#) is a connected force for community change, building and supporting the capacity of changemakers. Tamarack believes that communities are the integral drivers of change and critical in building strong and inclusive societies. Through its place-based approaches to addressing complex challenges, Tamarack emphasizes action and focus on impact.

The Tamarack Institute, has implemented Communities Building Youth Futures (a brief overview can be found [here](#)) funded by the Government of Canada’s Goal Getters and Supports for Student Learning Programs, to develop collective impact and system-wide solutions for youth as they build and act upon plans for their future.

The **Goal Getters Program** is designed to partner with a broad range of national, regional and community organizations to reach youth facing barriers to education and provide them with the comprehensive, wrap-around supports they need to improve their educational outcomes, complete school and access post-secondary education.

The **Supports for Student Learning Program (SSLP)** aims to bridge gaps in educational attainment, address systemic inequities, and reach students with the greatest needs. The SSLP supports national, regional, local, and grassroots organizations who work to ensure that vulnerable children and youth can graduate high school, and do not become further marginalized because of the pandemic.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada

