



Vibrant COMMUNITIES

Shaping – Not Simply
Enduring – Our
Communities' Future

Three Big Ideas

Champions of Participation
March 31, 2010

Liz Weaver
***Tamarack: An Institute for
Community Engagement***





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Mission: Engage citizens in inspired action as they work and learn together on behalf of their communities to create and realize bold visions for the future.



Locations: Waterloo, Ontario; Edmonton, Alberta

Date Founded: 2001



Services: tele-learning, coaching, training, facilitation, action-research, website, newsletters.

Websites:

Tamarack: www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Action for Neighborhood Change:

www.anchome.ca



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Three Ideas for Building Community Capacity

- Strengthening Social Capital
- Connecting the Dots, Untying the Knots
- Resiliency & Sustainability

**Big Ideas =
Big Results**





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#1 Strengthening Social Capital



Strong Relationships + Civic Activism + Local Institutions = Better Quality of Life



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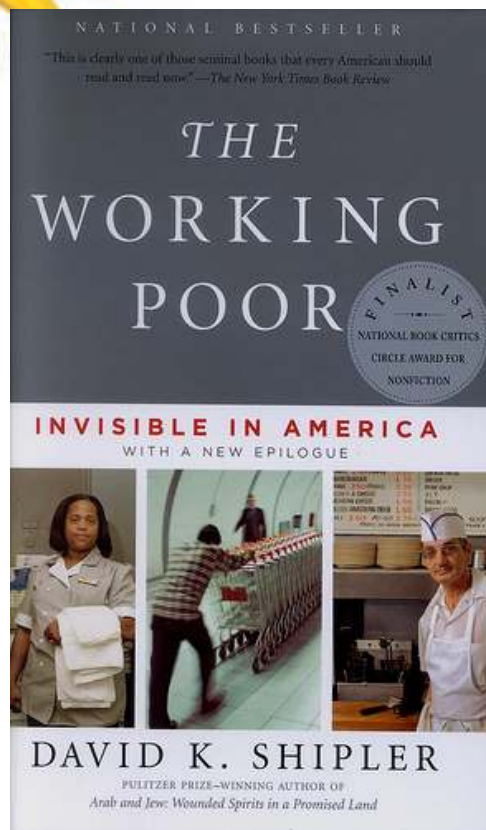
The New Dynamic: Complex Problems

- Complex problems are not just more complicated than other problems; they are different in kind.
- It isn't the *number* of elements they involve but the *dynamic relationship* among those elements.
- As a result, they can't be tackled effectively with the same techniques as other problems.
- New attitudes and practices are needed that enable a wide range of participants, each involved with different parts of the problem, to continuously adjust and re-adjust how they affect one another through the decisions and actions they take.





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“Every problem [or poverty] magnifies the impact of the others, and all are so tightly interlocked that one reversal can produce a chain reaction with results far distant from the original causes. A rundown apartment can exacerbate a child’s asthma, which leads to a call for an ambulance, which generates a medical bill that cannot be paid, which ruins a credit record, which hikes the interest rate on an auto loan, which forces the purchase of an unreliable used car, which jeopardizes a mother’s punctuality at work, which limits her promotions and earning capacity, which confines her to poor housing. “

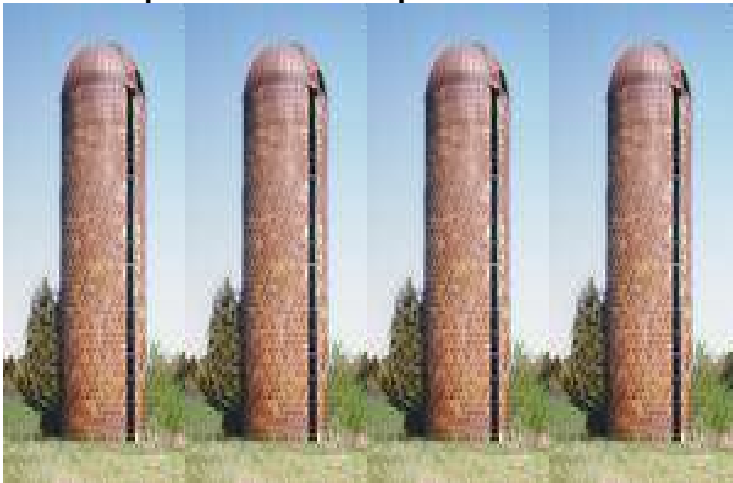
“If problems are interlocking then so too solutions must be [...]: a job alone is not enough. Medical insurance alone is not enough. Good housing alone is not enough. Reliable transportation, careful family budgeting, effective parenting, effective schooling are not enough when each is achieved in isolation from the rest.”



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Complex problems need a comprehensive approach

A reaction to so called 'categorical programs' that tend to direct energy and resources to isolated aspects of a problem



In contrast, CCIs operate on the premise that 'joined up problems' require 'joined up solutions'





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TRADITIONAL RESPONSE	CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPLEX ISSUES	ADAPTIVE RESPONSE
Specialization	<i>Multiple Root Causes</i>	Orchestration
Silos	<i>Multiple Stakeholders</i>	Cross Boundary
Crisp Problem Definition	<i>Difficult to Frame</i>	Working Framework
Plan the Work, Work the Plan	<i>Emergent</i>	Act, React and Adapt
Resolve	<i>Paradoxes & Dilemmas</i>	Cope
Standardized and Detailed Blueprint	<i>Unique</i>	Minimum Specs, Variation & Customization
Short Term	<i>Intractable</i>	Long Term



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Strengthening Social Capital

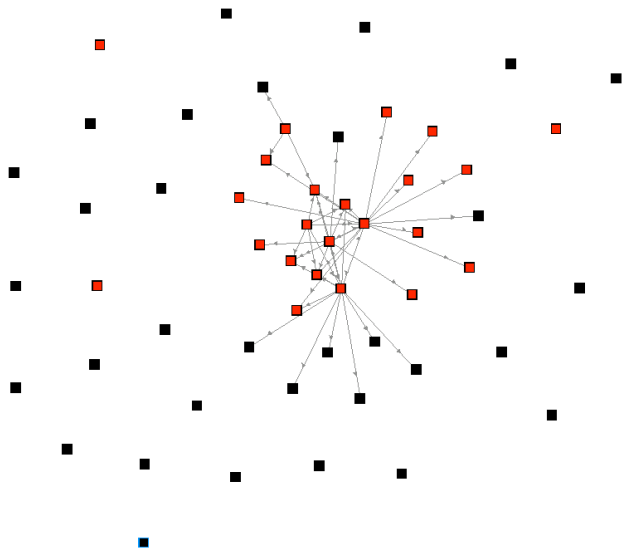


It is when we come together, in dialogue, each with our own experiences, perspectives and knowledge, that we can create solutions for communities.



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#2 Connecting the Dots, Untying the Knots





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The Culture We Want to Build in our Communities



An integrated
approach

GREATER SAINT JOHN'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER TO BREAK THE POVERTY CYCLE

Strategy Elements

Neighbourhood Revitalization

- * Resident mobilization and training
- * Housing and Energy Strategy
- * Social, physical, and economic improvements
- * Mixed Income Neighbourhoods

Young Single Mothers

Comprehensive programs and supports:

- * Housing
- * Childcare
- * School completion
- * Parenting
- * Health and Wellness

Children and Teenagers

Level the playing field:

- * Early Learning Centres
- * PALS / Community Schools
- * Youth Engagement / Leadership
- * Coordination of Services

Workforce Participation

- * Programs and supports for adults with education and employment challenges
- * Remove barriers: childcare, transportation, health insurance, GED, tuition
- * Employer Leadership
- * Living wage replaces minimum wage

How we do it!





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The Aspiration: Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child



Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

Tackling Root Causes: Affordable Housing, Food Security, Income Security, Accessible Transportation, Safe Neighbourhoods

How we will do our work:

- Move from alleviation to prevention
- Tackle root causes
- Work collaboratively across sectors
- Abandon blame – all can be part of the solution
- Emphasize innovation, risk taking, long term change

Linking & Facilitating Role

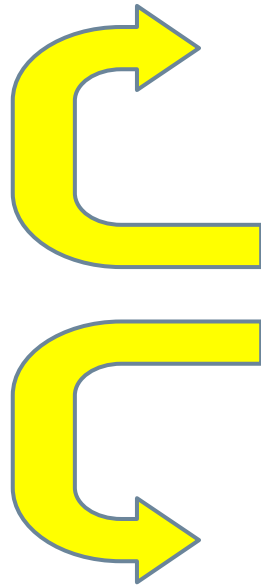
- Strategic Poverty Focus
- Community Engagement
- Change & Action
- Learning & Accountability





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Three Levels of Action



Policy and Systems Change

- Changes in public policy
- Changes in service and support systems
- Changes in material resources
- Changes in community-level assets

Community Capacity Building

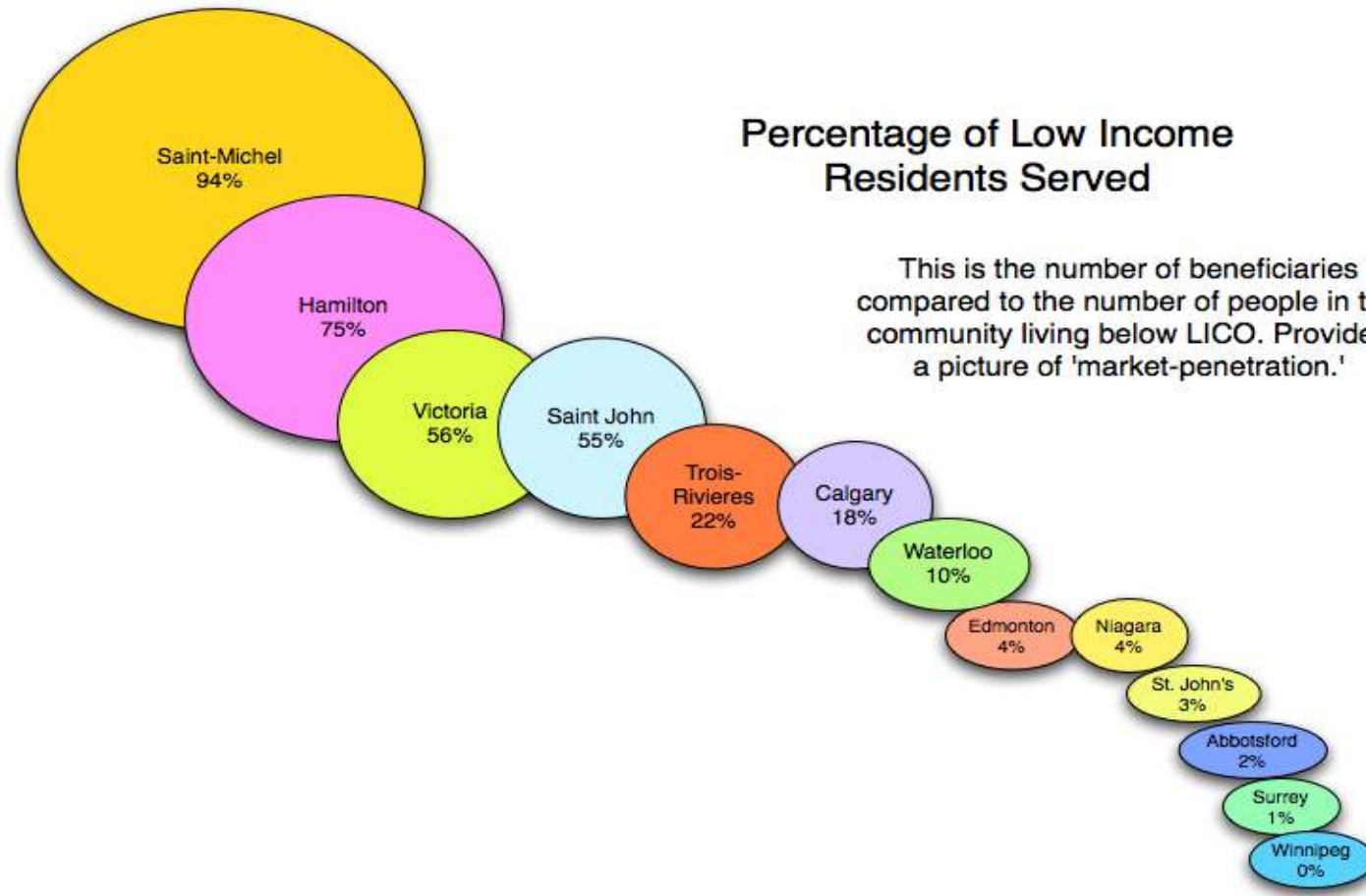
- Convening capacity
- Multisectoral leadership
- Collaboration
- Community awareness

Individual and Household Assets

- Personal assets
- Physical assets
- Social assets
- Human assets
- Financial assets



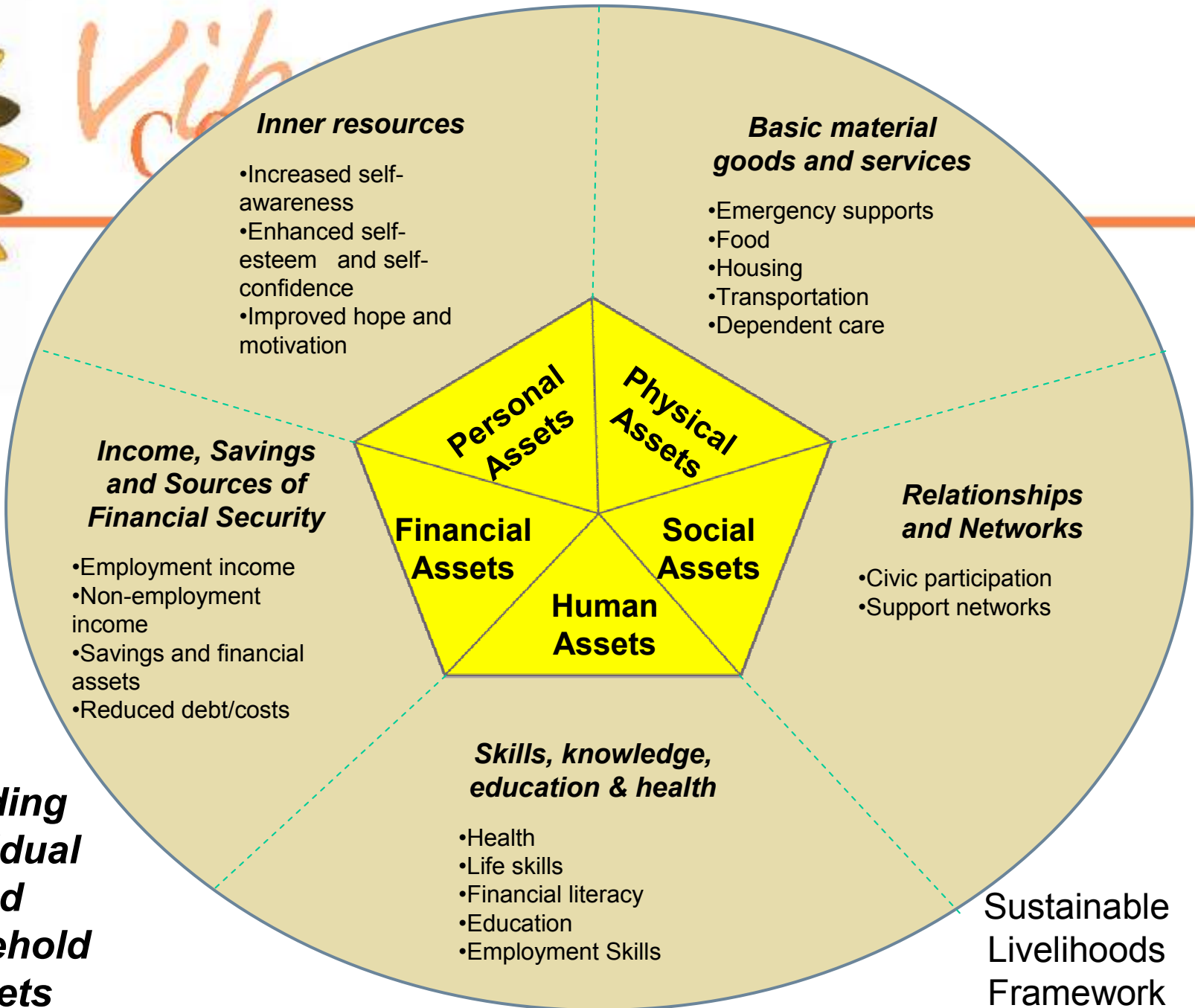
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Building Individual and Household Assets



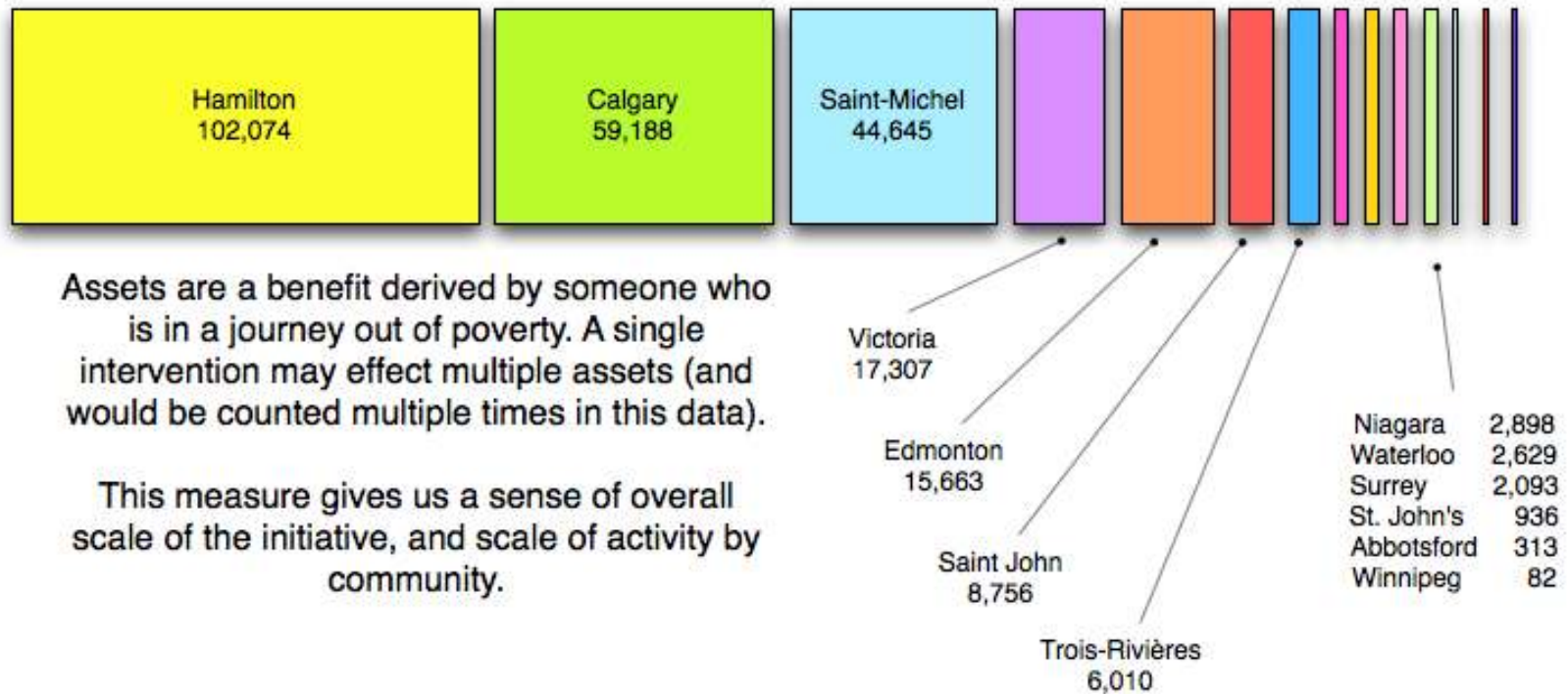
Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



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Total Assets By Community

Total Number of Assets Developed = 262,594



Assets are a benefit derived by someone who is in a journey out of poverty. A single intervention may effect multiple assets (and would be counted multiple times in this data).

This measure gives us a sense of overall scale of the initiative, and scale of activity by community.



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Significant Improvement in Life Circumstances

Hamilton 13,274
Calgary 10,022

Edmonton 4,271
Trois-Rivières 2,712

Saint John 710
Niagara 638

Saint-Michel 354
Surrey 347
Victoria 151
Waterloo 57
St. John's 21

Abbotsford 0
Winnipeg 0

Developmental

Hamilton 33,392
Saint-Michel 26,581
Calgary 23,338

Edmonton 6,821
Saint John 3,538
Trois-Rivières 2,880

Niagara 1935
Waterloo 1157
Surrey 868
Victoria 457
St. John's 306

Abbotsford 28

Winnipeg 0

Modest Economic

Victoria 16,694
Calgary 10,373
Hamilton 8,928

Saint John 1,180

Waterloo 222
Edmonton 218
Saint-Michel 125

Surrey 57
St. John's 13
Abbotsford 9

Niagara 0
Trois-Rivières 0
Winnipeg 0

Broad Conditions or Temporal Assistance

Hamilton 46,665
Saint-Michel 17,470

Saint John 2,756

Surrey 636
St. John's 511
Niagara 360
Trois-Rivières 358
Waterloo 322
Abbotsford 276

Edmonton 90
Winnipeg 82

Victoria 5
Calgary 0



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- **Make Tax Time Pay Campaign** (Edmonton) – helping people access to 7 benefits, credits and subsidies through annual tax preparation.



- **Employer Challenge** (Victoria) – encouraging employers to create better workplaces, benefits and incomes.



- **Project Comeback** (Surrey) – integrated supports to help homeless day labourers secure employment, housing and income.

Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategies –
Vibrant Communities are key influencers



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Implications for Community Partners

- **Help create an ecology** to work as a partner
- **Help create the appropriate mechanisms** including staff, resources and funding to support comprehensive collaborative processes
- **Help create internal processes** which facilitate engagement on substantive issues related to poverty (e.g. income support programs, workforce development programs).



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Lessons Learned

- Mobilize partners around shared aspirations
- Be prepared to learn as you go; don't expect to follow a straight line
- These initiatives demand a significant investment of time, energy and resources; insist on a payoff
- Find the synergies from working across sectors, issues and levels of action
- Specialized convening bodies are needed to support the process
- Don't hold out for the perfect plan; start somewhere and build from there



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#3 Resiliency

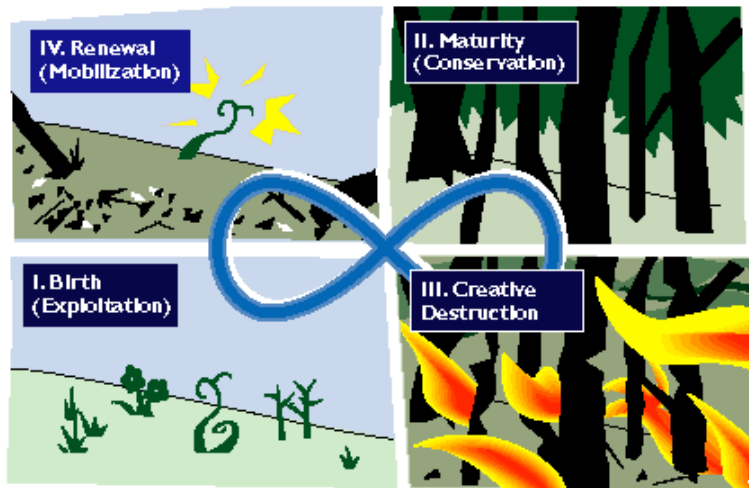




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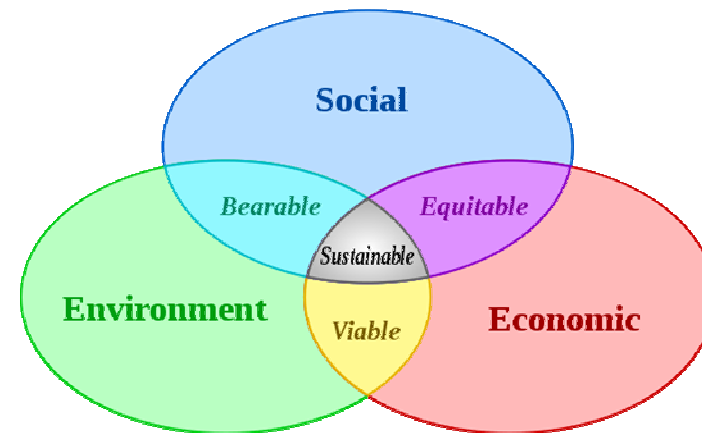
Resiliency

- The capability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change (Canadian Center for Community Renewal).



Sustainability

- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development 1997, 8).





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Resiliency Ingredients

- **People:** Residents' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour in matters of leadership, initiative, education, pride, co-operation, self-reliance, and participation.
- **Organizations:** The scope, nature, and level of collaboration within local organizations, institutions, and groups.
- **Resources:** The extent to which the community builds on local resources to achieve its goals, while drawing on external resources strategically.
- **Community Process:** The nature and extent of community economic development planning, participation, and action.





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- Strengthening Social Capital
- Connecting the Dots, Untying the Knots
- Building Resiliency & Sustainability

**Big Ideas =
Big Results**





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Communities that work are places where people from different walks of life come together to discuss ideas that matter to them. Over time, trust and understanding emerge and individuals agree to work together...Once the foundation for action is set, people engage deeply and work together relentlessly to realize the dreams they share.

Creating Vibrant Communities

Paul Born. Editor. 2008.





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Resources:

- Vibrant Communities Canada
- Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement
- Caledon Institute of Social Policy



Local solutions for reducing poverty in Canada