THEORY OF CHANGE WEBINAR

NOVEMBER 15, 2012

Theory of Change

- Theory of Change defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks– interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process.
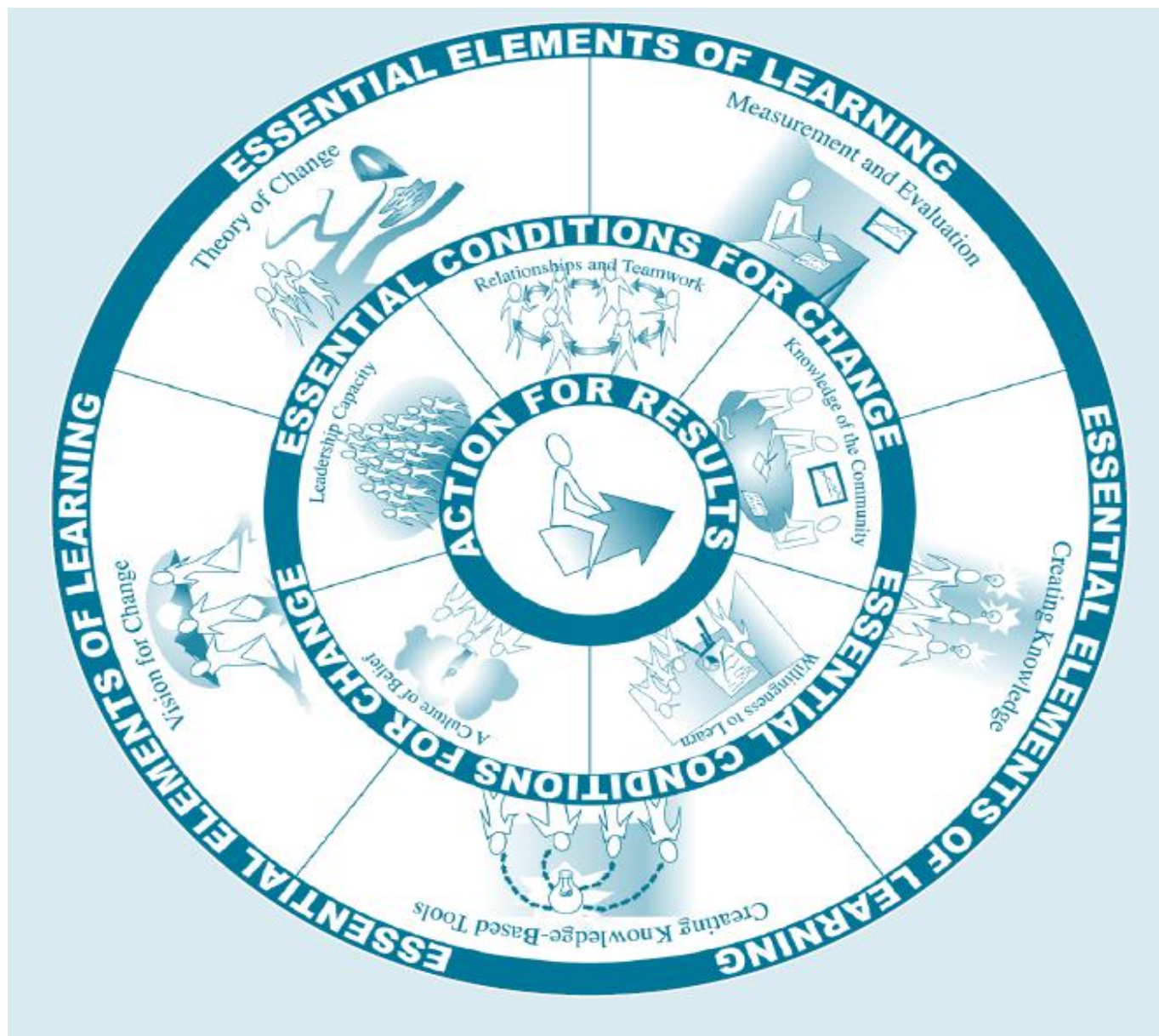
  » http://www.theoryofchange.org/about/what-is-theory-of-change/

Approaching Community Change

The Annie. E. Casey Foundation. 2006.

A Framework for Community Change

Annie E. Casey Foundation. Act. Imagine. Believe.

ACTION for Results

action → reflection → planning (cycle diagram)

1. **Challenge the status quo.** Is the community's current approach leading to the results we want?

2. **Getting out of silos.** Recognize that all problems and solutions are inter-related and design strategies in which everyone shares responsibility for all goals.

3. **Engage hundreds (if not thousands) of residents and stakeholders.** , especially the nuances and impact of race, policies, social networks, and other initiatives or progress that have operated in the area.

4. **Learning from the past.** Study previous actions to avoid reinventing the wheel and repeating past mistakes.

5. **Encouraging risk and fail forward**. Expect and tolerate failure as long as people learn from it.

6. **Sharing Credit**. Allow everyone involved to celebrate their successes as their own achievement.

Essential CONDITIONS for Change

1. **Willingness to learn** and imagine a better way of doing things.

2. **Belief** that the new way of doing things will work and the will to act on the conviction.

3. **Knowledge of the community's context and history**, especially the nuances and impact of race, policies, social networks, and other initiatives or progress that have operated in the area.

4. **Leadership capacity**, along with continual efforts to develop and replenish the supply of community leaders. The process of becoming a leader prepared stakeholders to participate in a democratic process and provides a structure for shifting power to those who are most affected by community conditions or by the desired changes.

5. **Relationships and a shared sense of teamwork**. Social relationships encourage provide neighbor to neighbor support, help people overcome the isolation of living and working alone and overcome geographical, racial, class and power differences.
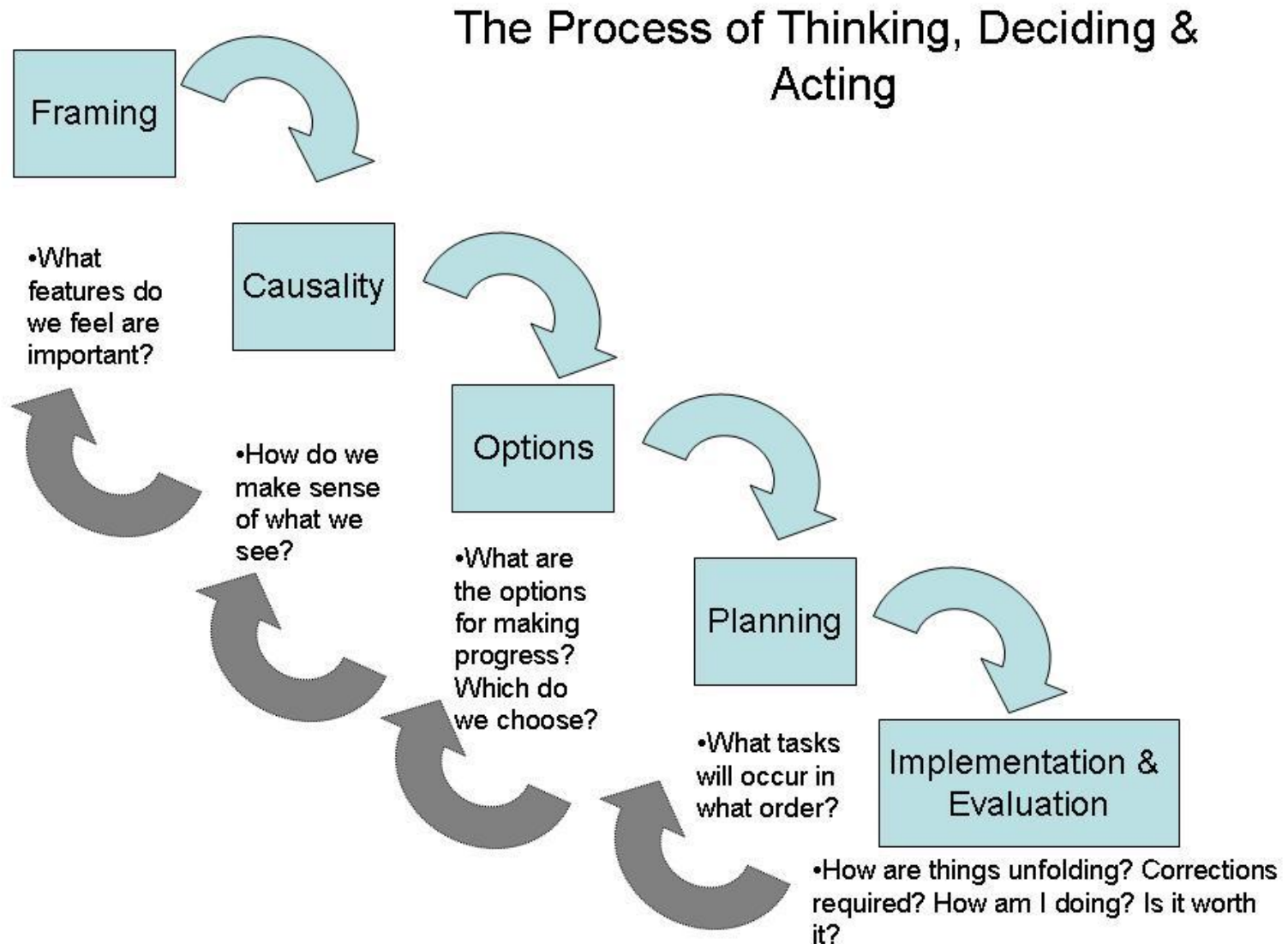
Essential Elements of LEARNING

1. A community held and understood **vision for change** that includes core values and principles of engagement.

2. **A theory of change** or plan that specifies where you are going (the results) and how you plan to get these (the strategies).

3. **Measurement and evaluation** of the outcomes and of interim benchmarks that show what is happening, what is working, and what needs improvement or adaptation.

4. **Knowledge creation:** an effort to develop new ideas, reflect on the links between what you do and what you accomplish, imagine a better way to do things, and dispose the knowledge widely..

5. Investment in creating, adapting and adopting **knowledge-based tools** that enable all stakeholders to move ahead with common insight, understanding, and accountability.

Framework for Change Questions:

- What is the "working definition" or key features of the community challenge you are trying to address?

- What are the inter-related root causes of this challenge? What pattern in the community are you trying change?

- Where are the "leverage points" for changing this pattern?

- What are the strategies that you may use to move these leverage points?

- What outcomes do you anticipate you will achieve? When do you anticipate you will achieve them? How will you know when you've achieved them?

Elements of a Framework for Change

The Process of Thinking, Deciding & Acting

Framing
- What features do we feel are important?

Causality
- How do we make sense of what we see?

Options
- What are the options for making progress? Which do we choose?

Planning
- What tasks will occur in what order?

Implementation & Evaluation
- How are things unfolding? Corrections required? How am I doing? Is it worth it?

A Vibrant Communities Framework for Change is…

A collaborative group's shared working hypothesis of how a group intends to reduce poverty.

For the Vibrant Communities Trail Builder Community

1.   Useful to communicate the group's 'strategic thinking' about how to reduce poverty – rather than the particular strategies, plans or activities that reflect that thinking.

2.   Assists a group make more explicit and deliberate choices about strategies and activities.

3.   Assists a group understand what to evaluate and how to assess progress.

4.   A device to encourage Trail Builders reluctant to have formal reflection sessions that include more than core staff to do so. Many may not need this 'prompt'; others might.

For Others

1. It is a document that people not from the local group can read to get a sense of what is happening in the community.

2. Vibrant Communities sponsors, researchers and evaluators can refer to the document as key resource in exploring overall patterns of effectiveness in doing place-based work.

VC Framework for Change Questions

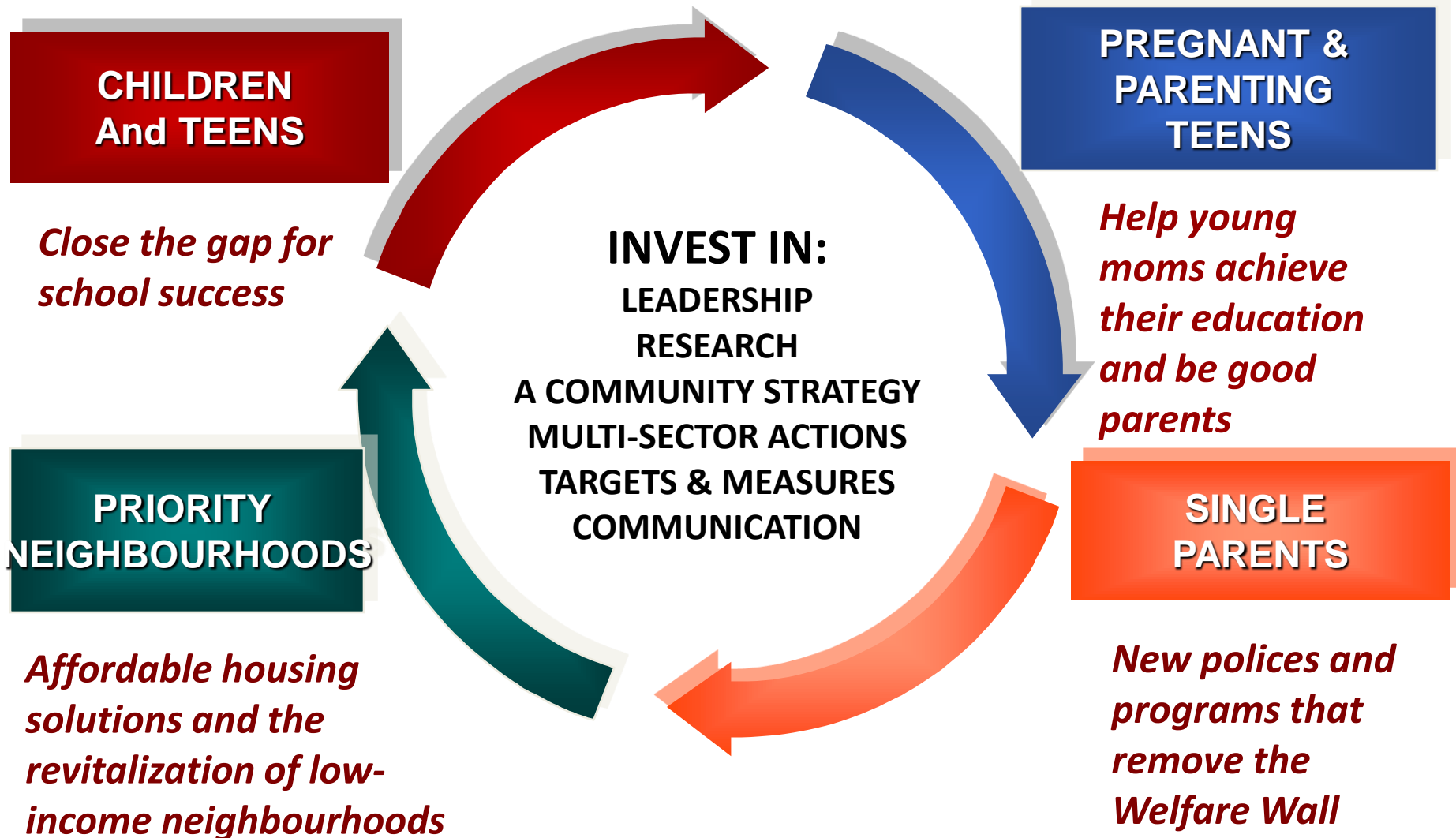| Area	Questions to Address
Understanding of Poverty and Poverty Reduction	• How does your collaboration define poverty? Why this definition and not another one? • What does your collaboration see as the key factors contributing to poverty in your community? • What changes need to be brought about in order to achieve substantial, deep and durable poverty reduction in your community?
Goals and Strategies	• What are the major goals of your initiative? • What specific strategies will your initiative pursue in order to achieve these goals? Why have you chosen these strategies rather than others? • How many low-income households do you expect to benefit and in what ways? Will you be seeking to assist any specific target groups? If so, which ones and why have you chosen to focus your efforts in these areas rather than others? • How will your collaboration contribute to the work of poverty reduction in your community? What are the key roles that your collaboration will play? • What does your collaboration mean by 'comprehensive,' and why is this approach important for achieving substantial, deep and durable reductions in poverty? • What does your collaboration mean by 'sustainability' and what do you see as the key factors contributing to achievement of this goal?
Signs of Progress	• How will you know if you are making progress? What are some key indicators of progress that you anticipate seeing as your initiative unfolds? What would be signs that your initiative is not making the progress you desire?
Underlying Approach	• Stepping back from the details of your plan, how would you sum up in a phrase or two the essence of your approach to generating substantial, deep and durable poverty reduction in your community?

The Culture We Want to Build in our Communities

An integrated approach

BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY in Saint John

CHILDREN And TEENS

Close the gap for school success

PREGNANT & PARENTING TEENS

Help young moms achieve their education and be good parents

INVEST IN:
LEADERSHIP
RESEARCH
A COMMUNITY STRATEGY
MULTI-SECTOR ACTIONS
TARGETS & MEASURES
COMMUNICATION

PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

Affordable housing solutions and the revitalization of low-income neighbourhoods

SINGLE PARENTS

New polices and programs that remove the Welfare Wall

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!

Governments
Businesses
Community Groups
Residents

LEADERSHIP
PARTNERSHIPS
RESEARCH &
EVALUATION
POLICY
IMPROVEMENTS

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

Quality Early Learning & Parenting

Skills through Education, Activity & Recreation

Targeted Skills Development (PSE)

Employment

Asset Building Wealth Creation

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
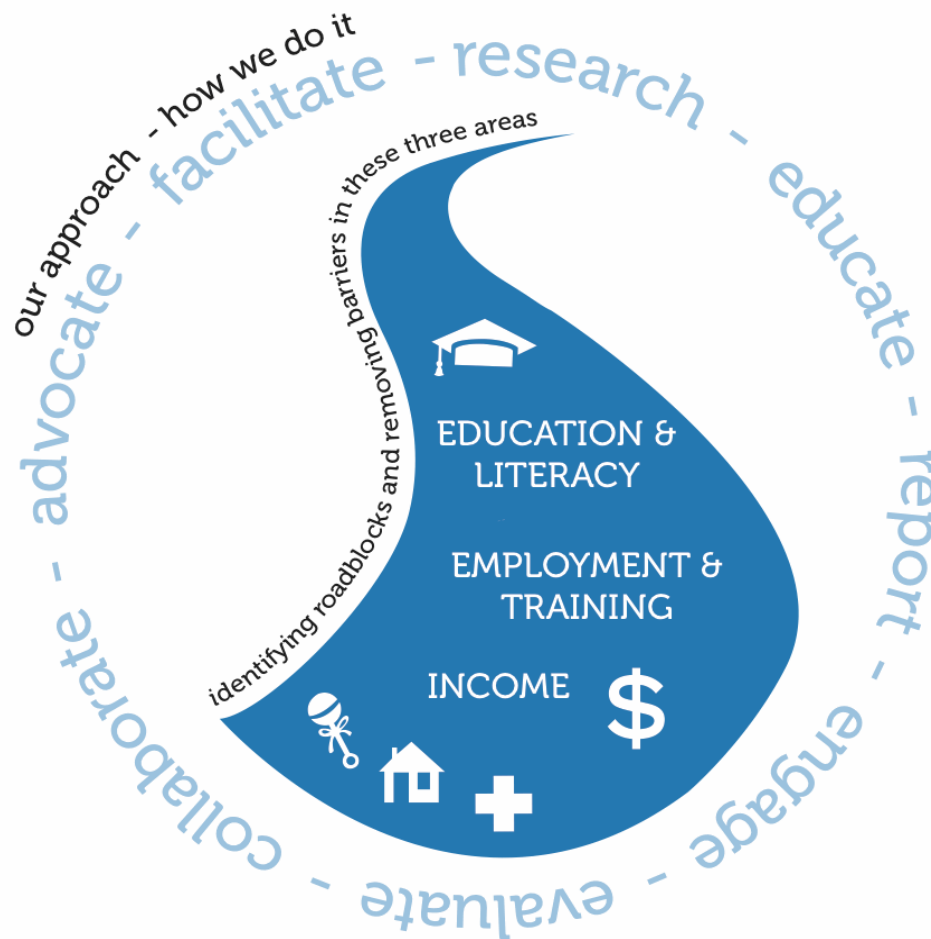
Linking & Facilitating Role

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

Changes in:
- Structures   • Processes
- Policies   • Indicators

Community-Level Macro Strategy

Critical Points of Investment Strategy

Community-Led Initiatives

Knowledge Transfer:
- Outputs   • Outcomes
- Evaluation   • Learning

Pathway To Potential | Windsor Essex County's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Our aspiration: Windsor Essex is a thriving community where every family and individual builds potential through access to quality opportunities, supports, and resources that work for them.

our approach - how we do it

facilitate - research - educate - report - engage - evaluate - collaborate - advocate

identifying roadblocks and removing barriers in these three areas

EDUCATION & LITERACY

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

INCOME $

Our Focus Areas and Community Outcomes

Together with community partners, we will focus on the following priorities and achieve the following community outcomes

Education & Literacy
Increase literacy rates for all ages
Increase graduation rates for post-secondary education

Employment & Training
Remove barriers to workforce participation and improve employment outcomes

Income
Improve income security system and increase wages

Support efforts in the following areas:
• housing
• health - recreation and food security
• childcare
• civic participation

PATHWAY TO POTENTIAL
Windsor Essex County's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Level 7: Stronger Families and Communities

Level 5 & 6: Resilience, sustained participation and self-determination

Level 4: Application of capacity to address challenges and seize opportunities

Level 3: Greater capacity

Human capital	Economic capital	Social capital	Organizational capital

Opportunities to apply capacity
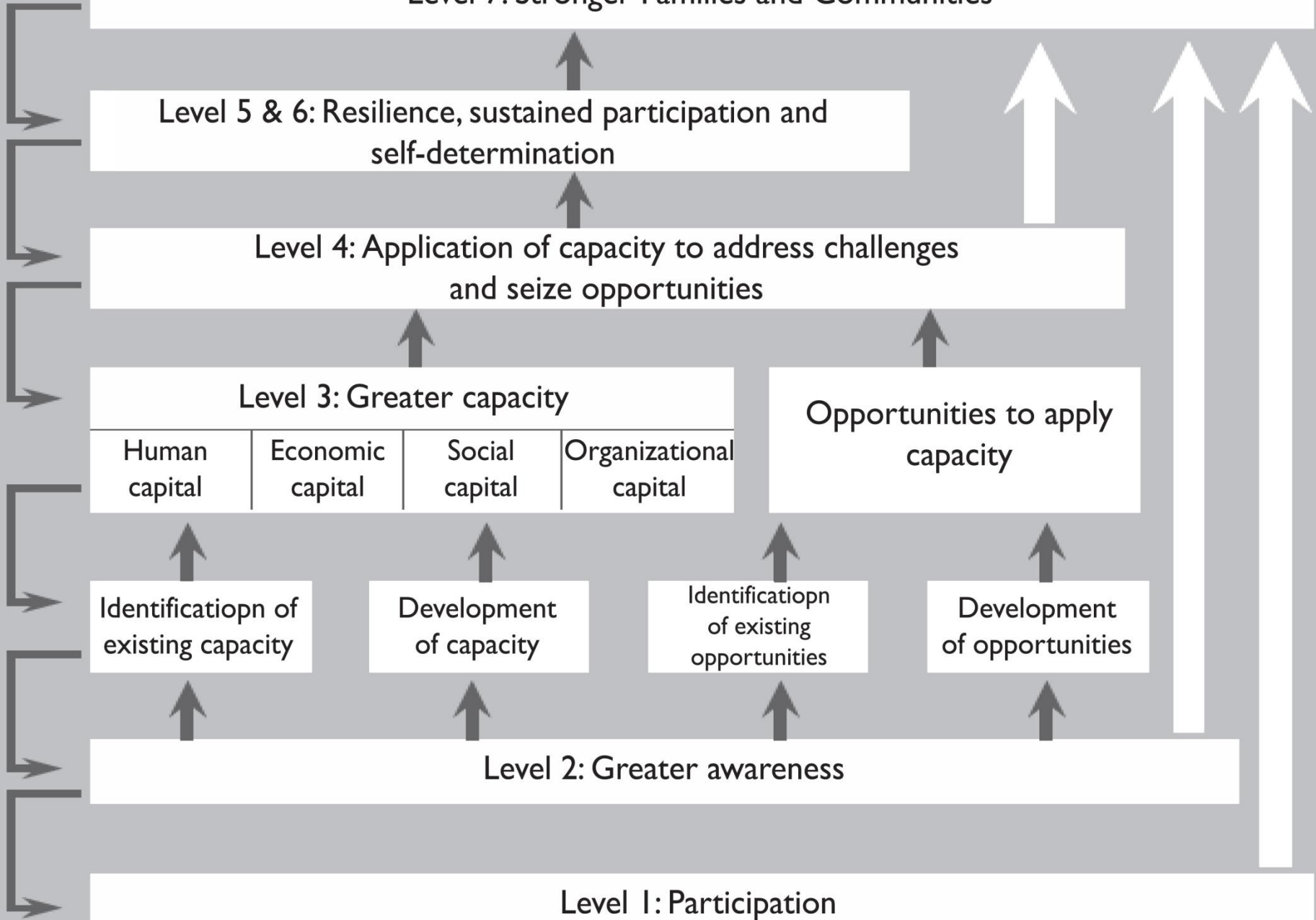
Identificatiopn of existing capacity

Development of capacity

Identificatiopn of existing opportunities

Development of opportunities

Level 2: Greater awareness

Level 1: Participation
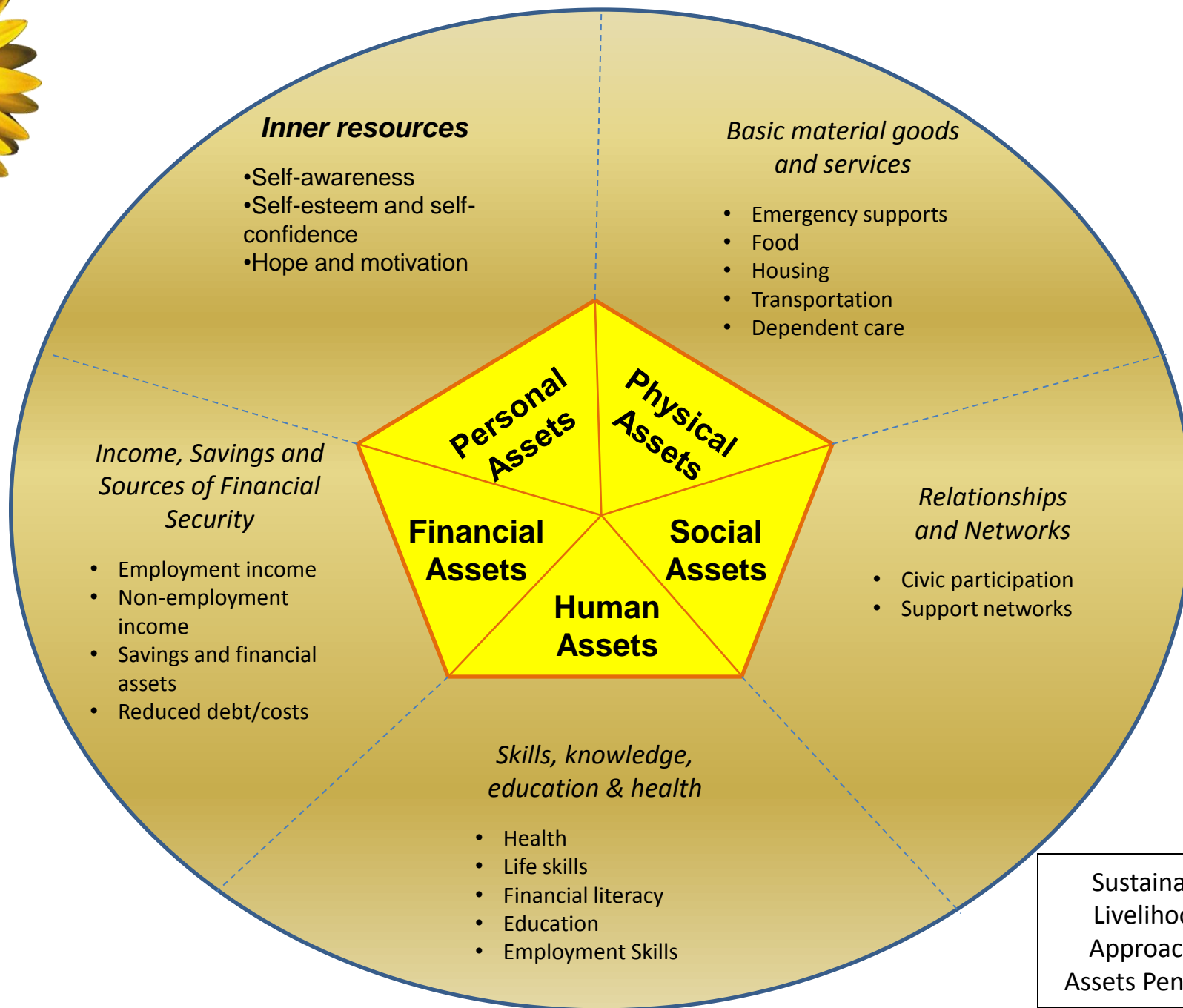
The Culture We Want to Build in our Communities

COMPREHENSIVE THINKING & ACTION

MULTISECTORAL COLLABORATION

POVERTY REDUCTION

COMMUNITY ASSET BUILDING

COMMUNITY LEARNING & CHANGE

An integrated approach

What is the Impact?

- Increased Community Engagement
- Enhanced Community Innovation
- Policy and Systems Change
- Decreased Poverty

Inner resources

- Self-awareness
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Hope and motivation

Basic material goods and services

- Emergency supports
- Food
- Housing
- Transportation
- Dependent care

Income, Savings and Sources of Financial Security

- Employment income
- Non-employment income
- Savings and financial assets
- Reduced debt/costs

Relationships and Networks

- Civic participation
- Support networks

Skills, knowledge, education & health

- Health
- Life skills
- Financial literacy
- Education
- Employment Skills

Personal Assets
Physical Assets
Financial Assets
Social Assets
Human Assets

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – Assets Pentagon

Key Numbers in Vibrant Communities

439,435 poverty reducing benefits to 202,931 households in Canada

256 poverty reducing initiatives completed or in progress by local Trail Builders

$22.8 million invested in local Trail Builder activity

2,278 organizations partnering in Trail Builder communities

1,539 individuals playing substantial roles including 840 people who are living in poverty

53 substantive government policy changes

Theory of Change Resources

- Research to Action website - http://www.researchtoaction.org/2011/05/theory-of-change-useful-resources/
- Using Programme Theory to Evaluate Complicated and Complex Aspects of Interventions - http://www.rismes.it/pdf/rogers_complex.pdf
- Annie E Casey Foundation. Imagine Believe Act. http://ccitoolsforfeds.org/doc/ImagineActBelieve.pdf
- Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement – www.tamarackcommunity.ca
- Vibrant Communities Canada – www.vibrantcommunities.ca
- Annie E Casey Foundation – Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning - http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/cc2977k440.pdf
- Aspen Institute – Performance Management in Complex, Place-Based Work - http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/images/rcc/Aspen_Performance_Management.pdf

Want to Learn More?

Email:
learnmore@tamarackcommunity.ca

Visit our websites at:

www.vibrantcommunities.ca;
www.tamarackcci.ca and
www.seekingcommunity.ca

Questions?