



# LONDON FOR ALL

## A ROADMAP TO END POVERTY



## System Change

### 8.3 Engage people with lived experience in democratic processes and institutions

#### **London For All (LFA)**

More than 160 volunteers from diverse backgrounds are engaged in the work of London for All. 38 individuals have identified with lived/living experience in poverty and are involved as key decision-makers in the work of London for All.

All individuals with lived experience are eligible for compensation of their time, travel, expenses to participate in our work. Several individuals have represented LFA at conferences, meetings and various speaking engagements. They have also been interviewed / profiled / published through local media and Tamarack Institute.

#### **Circles Guiding Coalition**

The Guiding Coalition provides the inspiration, support, planning and leadership necessary for Circles to be successful. It is a potent force for changing the mindset of our community and addressing issues that require systemic change.

Each member is committed to attending weekly dinners frequently enough to become "known" to the Leaders and Allies. These relationships are the very foundation of the model, providing community members from all classes with direct access to one another.

The Guiding Coalition is comprised of several sub-committees and is responsible to modify the Circles model to best fit the unique needs and resources of our community.

#### **NEET Youth**

While most youth in Ontario are experiencing success in school and work, there remains a significant proportion of Ontario's youth population that is not in employment, education or training (NEET). There was little research on the needs, perspectives, and challenges faced by these NEET youth, or on the costs associated with the disconnection of youth from school and work.

This initiative was launched to generate new knowledge about NEET youth in London and ensure that future policies and programs are informed by a better understanding of their needs and experiences.

### **The Child and Youth Network (CYN)**

The Child and Youth Network (CYN) is composed of over 170 agencies and individuals that span the education, health, recreation and social services sectors. Individuals with lived experience across the community are engaged in this initiative and serve as co-chair of the CYN Ending Poverty priority area.

### **London Youth Advisory Council (LYAC)**

The London Youth Advisory Council is an organization by youth, for youth that strives to ensure young people have decision-making power in public processes. LYAC believes young people's priorities, perspectives and experiences matter just as much as anyone else's.

### **Tamarack Institute – Cities Reducing Poverty**

Living / Lived Experience Community of Practice is designed to engage individuals who are currently living in poverty or who have lived experience of it, and who want to connect with like-minded others in a supportive, online learning community. Meetings will be focused on the sharing of experiences and advancing the value of lived experience in poverty reduction.

By joining this unique community of practice individuals are able to share their experiences and knowledge in a community of individuals who are working on similar challenges or issues. By engaging in facilitated conversations with peers, individuals uncover new approaches to problems, build their professional skill set, access new ideas and contribute to the transfer of best practices.

### **Tamarack's Commitment**

- Provide a system of support for individuals who are working to leverage the value of their lived experience
- Support the development and sharing of skills and expertise
- Provide a facilitated communication channel for exploring themes and applications related to lived experience and poverty reduction

## **Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience in Poverty Reduction**

People with lived/living experience deeply understand the realities of poverty. Their stories and experiences serve as powerful tools for building compassion, and for disrupting and clarifying a community's understanding of its root causes and scope. The invaluable expertise of these individuals adds strength and resiliency to poverty-reduction work, and their first-hand knowledge of systemic barriers is invaluable in co-creating innovative solutions to overcome them.

The recognition of people with lived/living experience as context experts alongside government, business, and non-profit counterparts challenges power imbalances and counters the tendency for practitioners in leadership positions to dominate agendas, discussions, and ultimately, decisions.

***10 - Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience*** was written to support the social justice and human rights imperative that people with lived/living experience of poverty must be included as equal partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of solutions that affect their lives.

Content for this guide was generated primarily by the 10 Lived/Living Experience Advisory Committee – a team of experts with lived/living experience of poverty and their Cities Reducing Poverty counterparts from across the network. London For All is proud of its participation in this project.

[Learn How to Engage People With Lived/Living Experience](#)