



View Engage online at: <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/newsletter/engage.htm>!

Engage!

Part of the Solution - Engaging Business in Local Efforts to Reduce Poverty

Businesses create jobs, pay taxes, purchase goods and services from other businesses, locate their facilities in neighbourhoods, and help shape public policy. They can also play a key role in efforts to help residents achieve family economic success and strengthen the local economy.

However, attempts to involve business in these efforts are frequently short lived, on a small scale, and have limited impact.

Often, this failure can be attributed to the approach community groups take. Some community groups approach businesses with the hope that their "community spirit" will be enough to develop a sustained and productive partnership.

As John Weiser, author of the Ford Foundation's groundbreaking research report, *Part of the Solution: Leveraging Business and Markets for Low-Income People*, writes, "Relying on the good intentions of local companies is important – even critical – but it's not enough. They have a business to run and if you are not interested in helping them strengthen their business, they won't be as interested in helping you build stronger communities."

 [on Part of the Solution](#)

Related Links:

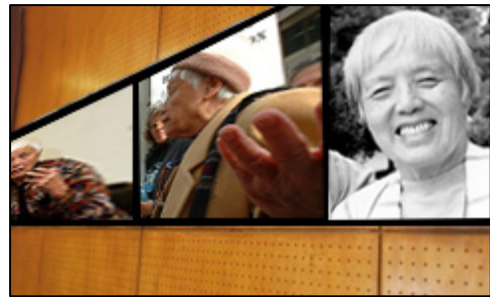
- [Learn more about the Engaging Business Learning Initiative](#)
- [Part of the Solution: Leveraging Business and Markets for Low-Income People](#)
- [Win-Win Partners website](#)

By: Mark Cabaj

Seven Great Ideas For Movement Builders

Grace Lee Boggs has been intimately involved in many social movements, including the American Civil Rights movement.

In the article, *Seven Great Ideas for Movement Builders*, Boggs offers helpful insights into the difference between radical organizing and movement building and outlines seven core characteristics of movements for change.



The seven great ideas include:

1. A movement begins when the oppressed begin to see themselves not just as victims, but as pioneers in creating new, more human relations.
2. Movement builders recognize the humanity in others, including their opponents.
3. Movement builders go beyond slogans to create programs that transform and empower participants.
4. At the heart of movement building is the transformation of our institutions and ourselves.
5. Thinking dialectically is pivotal to movement building.
6. Movement building is intergenerational.
7. Movement building is essentially counter-cultural.

At 90 years old, Boggs is still actively involved in social change efforts and is an inspiration for younger generations.



[Great ideas for movement leaders!](#)

Related Links:

- [Al Etmanski and Vickie Cammack on "Thinking Like a Movement"](#)
- [Profiles of Movement Thinkers](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Calgary's Theory of Change

An informed community will take action. This principle underlies Vibrant Communities Calgary's Theory of Change.

By providing residents with information challenging the predominant view of poverty – that it is caused by individual choices and can be overcome by pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps – Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) seeks to increase civic engagement and bring about policy change.

Collaborative partnerships with The City of Calgary and Calgary Transit resulted in the establishment of a Low Income Transit Pass program in 2005; thousands of low income Calgarians are now able to purchase monthly transit passes at a discounted rate of \$35 (the regular rate is \$70). The VCC Fair Fares Action Team is now mobilizing communities throughout Alberta to request financial support from the Government of Alberta for province-wide affordable transportation.

The VCC Living Wage Action Team is working collaboratively to engage employers across public, private, non-profit and quasi-governmental sectors in an ongoing dialogue about the benefits (to employers, employees and their families, and community) of engaging in progressive employment practices including the development of living wage policies. The diversity of involvement in this initiative (business, government, labour, faith communities, health, education, non-profits, people living in poverty) has the added benefit of bridging differences between sectors that do not have a history of working together.

VCC sees one of its primary roles as creating a safe space for public dialogue about poverty, its root causes and solutions.



[Vibrant Communities Calgary: Awareness, Engagement, and Policy Change](#)

Related Links:

- [Fair Fares Calgary Celebrates Reduced Transit Fare Passes](#)
- [Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Public Policy Initiative](#)
- [More information on Vibrant Communities Calgary](#)

By: Susan Eckerle Curwood

Vibrant Communities Update

B.C.'s Capital Region - The Quality of Life CHALLENGE shines a light on the benefits of flexible job scheduling in their continuing series of the 50 productive workplace practices employers can use. Learn more [here](#).

Calgary, AB – As of January 2, the City of Calgary is providing a subsidized transit pass to ensure that a greater number of Calgarians living with low incomes can continue to access the city's public transportation system. Read the story of Fair Fares [here](#).

The Youth Vote - Young Canadians at the polls

Political pundits and news anchors have long bemoaned the low youth turnout at the polls. The issue was a consistent theme in the most recent election campaign.

Some explain it away with the argument that young Canadians are political in other ways (e.g. through protest, through involvement with community groups), while others opine that the issues that matter most to youth (e.g. tuition, environment) are not given appropriate attention.

A new partnership has launched a project to determine the best ways to engage young Canadians in the electoral process.

Canada25, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that brings the voices and ideas of Canadians, aged 20-35, to the nation's public policy discourse, is teaming up with Elections Canada on the project which will focus on the electoral participation of young Canadians.

The project will provide Elections Canada with concrete recommendations on how to engage young Canadians more fully in the electoral process. Project organizers are planning a number of roundtables and forums to gain input on such topics as voter turnout, election advertising, voting systems, and methods of voting.

 [information on the Electoral Participation Project](#)

Related Links:

- [Learn more about Canada25](#)
- [Elections Canada Online - Young Voters](#)
- [Youth Voter DNA Report from D-Code](#)

By: Louise Kearney

New Year, New Team at Tamarack

Tamarack began 2006 with two new dynamic team members – Susan Eckerle Curwood and Susan Taylor Simpson.

Susan Curwood comes to Tamarack with a strong background in community-based work, which will serve her well as the Coordinator of the Pan Canadian Learning Community. She will provide a great deal of support to Vibrant Communities and we are excited about the knowledge that she brings to this work. Susan is active outside of work reading, cooking and keeping fit through running and exercise. You can reach Susan Curwood [here](#).



Susan Taylor Simpson has joined the team as one of Tamarack's coaches, bringing with her over thirty years of experience in community development and integrated human service delivery, most recently as the Director of Human Service Planning at the Regional Municipality of York. Susan and her husband live in Toronto where they enjoy the many cultural amenities that the city has to offer. You can reach Susan Taylor [here](#).



We are thrilled to welcome them both to the Tamarack team, and know that their extensive abilities and enthusiasm will be a great addition to Tamarack. (Now, if we could just get one of them to change their name!)



Meet the rest of Tamarack's team!

By: Sharalynn Krahn

Ideas we're following ...

A Crisis Away From Catastrophe - According to the Urban Institute, many low-income working families today live one health crisis or job setback away from catastrophe. We're just now starting to see strategies that might bolster economic stability, thanks to careful study rooted in family needs, the workplace, and public programs. Learn more [here](#).

Youth Voter DNA - In the face of declining political participation among young people, some commentators are proposing extreme measures such as raising the voting age to 21. But are young Canadians staying away from the polls because of apathy and ignorance or because they have lost faith in their leaders? D-Code has released a Youth Voter DNA Report, a 1000-person national study on politics, voting and political action. Read the report [here](#).