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Beautiful Thinking for February

Belonging and Community: Community Survey Being Released

Connection, identity and emotional bonding are the aspects most often identified by respondents when describing belonging and how belonging contributes to a sense of community.



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Abimelec Olan

The question “What does belonging mean to you?” drew a strong consensus from the 500 people who responded online to Tamarack’s Community Survey last April. Respondents answered sixty-five percent of the time that it meant being a part of something, or feeling included and connected.

Forty-four percent of the time, they spoke to the emotional aspect of belonging: a feeling of acceptance, being valued and “fitting in.”

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When asked, “What does “belonging to community” mean to you?” fifty percent of the time respondents shared that belonging to community meant some form of connection, or being a part of a greater group. Somewhat less often (thirty-seven percent of the time) people referred to the emotional bond that belonging to community gave them. Community is a place where they feel accepted, safe, and valued. Another fairly significant response (twenty-seven percent of the time)

highlighted an aspect of mutuality, in which people referred to helping others and being helped themselves.

The process of analysis is somewhat subjective and we recognize the limitations; however, we feel that the results provide a good overview of how people feel about a particular issue and we're looking forward to releasing the results of the study, one theme each month throughout the year.

Read the survey summary [here](#) or access the detailed responses [here](#).

Tamarack has had conversations and engaged with groups and individuals across Canada and internationally for many years. The conversations tended to be about community: how to reduce poverty, how to connect schools to their communities, or how to advocate for fair wages or safe working conditions. In all of these really interesting conversations, there was a question that hadn't been asked outright: *Why is community important?* With your help, we are finding the answer.

Related Links:

- [Sign up here to be informed when *seekingcommunity.ca*, a new interactive community website, is released this spring](#)
- [Join us February 17th for a special tele-learning seminar entitled, *A Revolution of Belonging*, featuring Vickie Cammack and Zoel Breau. Register now!](#)
- [Janet Dunnett writes about belonging in a community hospice](#)

By: Paul Born and Anita Fieguth

A Powerful Story of Hope

Eric (Ric) Young is founder and president of E.Y.E. His projects address some of society's most crucial and complex challenges and he is a driving force for social innovation in Canada. In December during an interview he recalled this remarkable and uplifting story of change and how a territory was designated the Kitlope Heritage Conservancy preserving it forever.



The story of what happened over four years is long and complex and involves many players, but it centers around the 77-year old Chief of the Whale Clan in B.C., Cecil Paul.

An excerpt from the story:

"At first there was just Cecil. As he describes it, "I was alone in a canoe. But it was a magical canoe. It was a magical canoe because there was room for everyone who wanted to come into it, to paddle together. The currents against us were very strong. But I believed we could reach our destination. And that we had to for our survival." Not everyone agreed. The community was divided. A sense that the community had no capacity – and no authority – to stand up to more powerful forces. To change the inevitable.



*©istockphoto.com/
Daniel Loiselle*

But Cecil held to his ambitious dream."



[Read the full version of this remarkable and moving story](#)

Related Links:

- [Access *The Story of Somewhere* online seminar with Paul Born and Ric Young](#)

By: Ric Young of E.Y.E.



Community Role in Policy Reviewed by Paul Born

There has been growing interest in recent years in place-based interventions and their unique contribution to tackling complex issues, such as poverty. Place-based strategies are exactly that: a range of efforts that seek to achieve a desired objective through interventions in the neighbourhoods and communities where people live. This paper explores the various ways in which communities are engaged in policy through formulating, modifying or seeking improved access to public programs and services. The purpose of this exploration is both to showcase the exemplary work under way in the country and to share these efforts with other communities. The examples draw primarily, though not exclusively, from policy work related to the pan-Canadian *Vibrant Communities* initiative that seeks local solutions to reduce poverty. However, the types of policy interventions described here can apply to other areas as well, such as crime prevention and neighbourhood revitalization.

- ◆ [Read the full Caledon paper](#)
- ◆ [Learn more about Vibrant Communities](#)
- ◆ [More resources on Policy Development](#)

Focusing on Resilience Submitted by Eric Leviten-Reid

The remarkable capacity of individuals and communities to bounce back from adversity and even thrive in a world of turmoil and change” is the subject of an upbeat and inspiring report by Arizona Health Futures.

A concise, reader-friendly and compelling overview, these “briefing notes” will be of interest to anyone working in community-based settings today. It counters the risk-based approach – what’s missing, what’s negative, what’s in deficit - with a systems approach to resilience, “the ability to create a positive world for ourselves, often in the face of stressful life experiences, and the ability to resist being overtaken by negative experiences when they seem to be overwhelming.

- ▶ Download the full report, *Resilience – Health in a New Key*
- ▶ Check out the Arizona Health Futures blog
- ▶ More resources on Quality of Life

Metrics & Stakeholder Engagement Submitted by Mark Cabaj

Here's a participatory, learning based approach to evaluation that explores one way of assessing outcomes and impacts of multi-stakeholder projects. How can metrics and evaluation help to increase the effectiveness of collaborative projects? What kinds of metrics and indicators are the most appropriate for evaluating stakeholder engagement processes, outcome and impacts?

Ann Svendsen and Tara Addis of *Collaborative Learning and Innovation* include a real life case study involving a diverse group of health, academic and industry stakeholders to address issues related to Lung Health in the Health Care system.

- ▶ Read the full report
- ▶ Visit the Collaborative Learning and Innovation website
- ▶ Access the Tamarack report, *Our Growing Understanding of Community Engagement*
- ▶ Interested in evaluation? Read the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation's "A Developmental Evaluation Primer" by Jamie Gamble
- ▶ More resources on Evaluation

Lost Generation, Generation Lost? Submitted by Paul Born

Created for the American Association of Retired Persons, this video stands doom and gloom on its head. If you want to feel inspired watch it now! It's been viewed by 2.5 million people and it's well worth your time.

- ▶ Watch *Lost Generation* on YouTube

Engage!

to create vibrant communities

Engage! is published by Tamarack to bring you inspiration, ideas, and the skills you need to envision and create vibrant communities. Learn more about Tamarack at:

<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g1s2.html>