Writing your Impact Story

Health Justice 2025

About Me

Liz Weaver
Former Co-CEO of the Tamarack Institute
and consulting director

Tamarack Collaboration Tools and Resources
www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Connecting with Each Other

One Breath Introduction

In 30 seconds or less, introduce yourself to others at your table and share **one thing** you or your work has accomplished this year.

The Power of Story

We don't need more information. We need to know what it means. We need a story that explains what it means and to make us feel like we fit in somehow.

Annette Simmons, The Story Factor
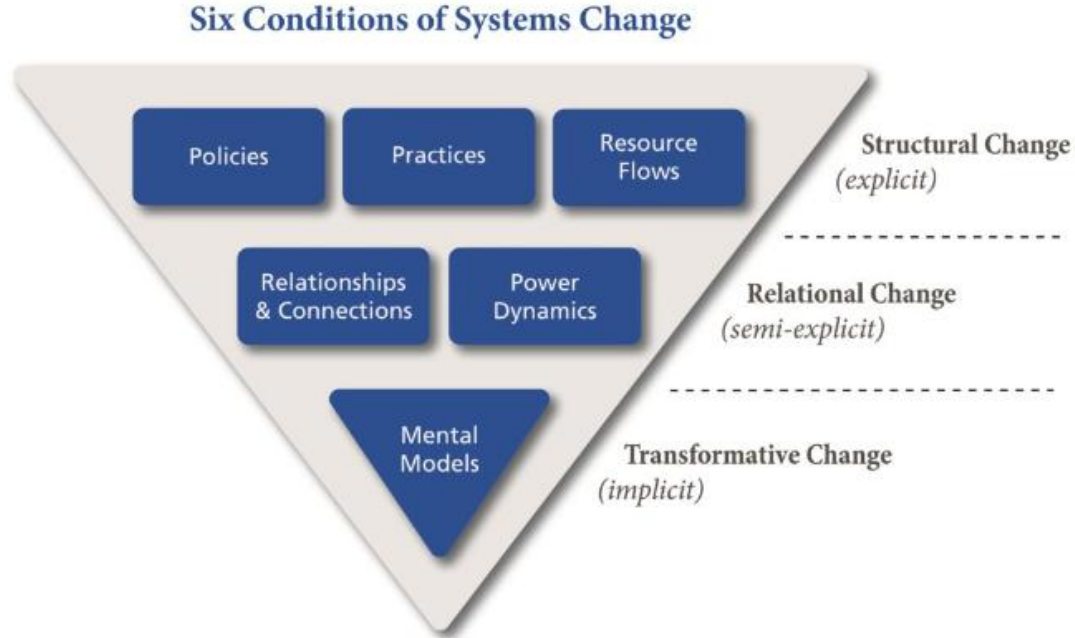
Harness the Power of Story

Storytelling is…

- **Powerful** – It's how humans are "hardwired" to make sense of the world

- **Anchoring** – It helps us to understand who we are and our place in the world so we can make sense of our past, navigate our present, and shape our future

- **Engaging** – It touches both mind AND heart and therefore is more easily remembered.

- **Effective** – Stories connect us to each other, encourage learning and shape our culture.

- **Compelling** – "Stories of change" can inspire and mobilize people & communities

- **Unifying** – Can create a shared story of the future we want to live into

10 Laws of Storytelling

1. Stories are about people.

2. The people in your story must want something.

3. Stories need to be fixed in time and space.

4. Let your characters speak for themselves.

5. Audiences bore easily.

6. Stories speak the audience's language.

7. Stories stir up emotions.

8. Stories don't tell, they show.

9. Stories have at least one moment of truth.

10. Stories have clear meaning.

A systems change story framework

Six Conditions of Systems Change

Policies | Practices | Resource Flows — **Structural Change** *(explicit)*

Relationships & Connections | Power Dynamics — **Relational Change** *(semi-explicit)*

Mental Models — **Transformative Change** *(implicit)*

Source: https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/

A systems change story framework

Six Conditions of Systems Change

Policies · Practices · Resource Flows — **Structural Change** *(explicit)*

Relationships & Connections · Power Dynamics — **Relational Change** *(semi-explicit)*

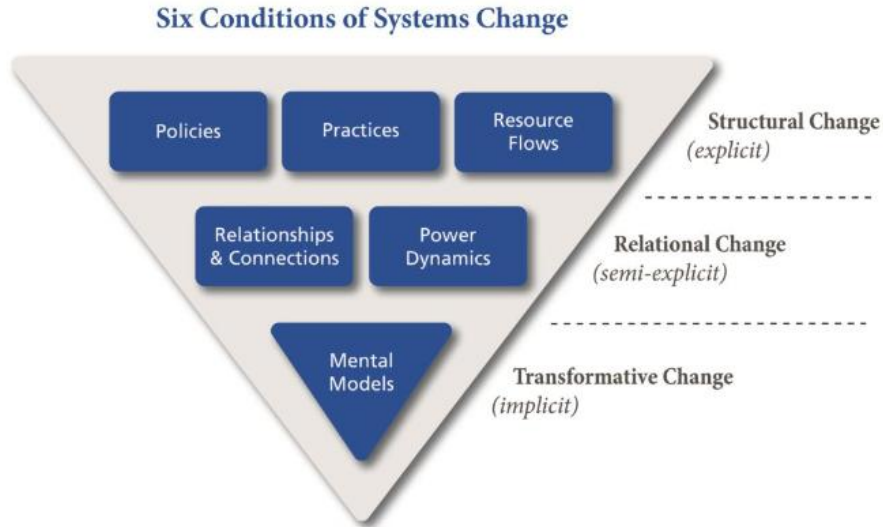Mental Models — **Transformative Change** *(implicit)*

Table Exercise

What systems shifts have you or your work contributed to or lead in the past year?

Use the Water of Systems Change handout to capture your ideas.

10 minutes

A systems change story framework

Six Conditions of Systems Change

Policies | Practices | Resource Flows — **Structural Change** *(explicit)*

Relationships & Connections | Power Dynamics — **Relational Change** *(semi-explicit)*

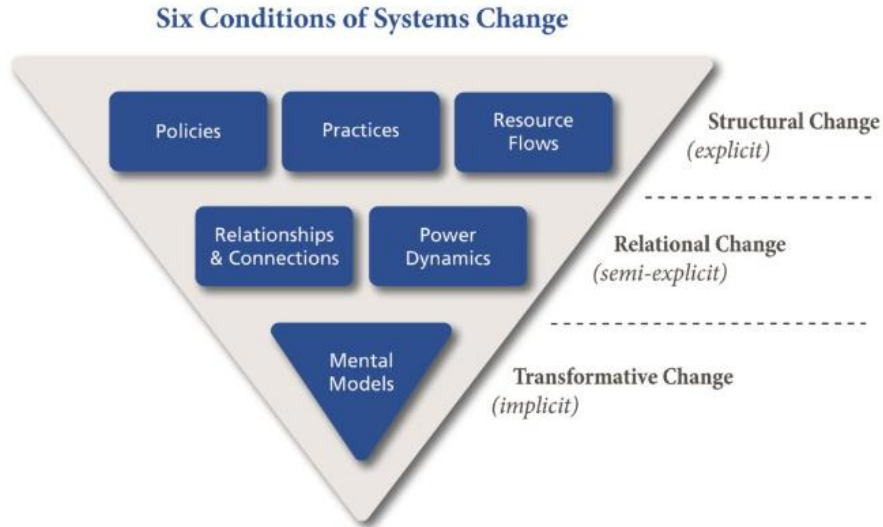Mental Models — **Transformative Change** *(implicit)*

Table Sharing

Share your highlights with your partners at the table.

- What patterns are you seeing?
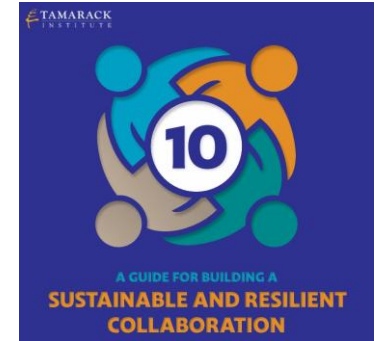- How did listening to others shift your thinking?

10 minutes

Writing your Impact Story

Clarifying your audience and purpose

- Why is your impact story needed?

- Who are the audience(s) for your impact story?

Who needs what, packaged how, for what purpose.
Mark Cabaj

Stage	Purpose
Early-Stage	• Celebrate partner contributions • Demonstrate momentum • Build awareness of collaborative & issue
Annual	• Highlight growth, progress & change over time • Continue building awareness & momentum
Later-Stage	• Profile successful achievements • Demonstrate evolution & changes • Highlight impact

Tamarack | Sustainability Guide

People Factors
- Equity & inclusion embedded in design
- Strong ties between partners
- Broad community engagement

Resource Factors
- Adequate human and financial resources
- Partners contribute to shared outcomes

Process Factors
- Compelling case drives work
- Ongoing reflection and learning

Impact Factors
- Data and evidence inform approach
- Progress and impact are tracked and reported
- Influence policy and systems change

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

10

A GUIDE FOR BUILDING A
SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT COLLABORATION
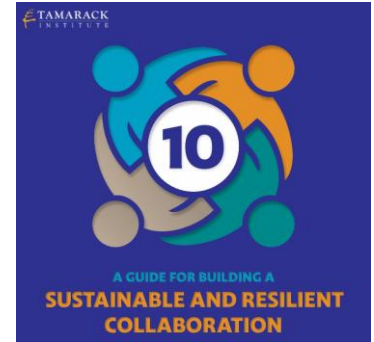
Resource Link

Steps to writing an impact story

1. Build the commitment to contributing to the collaboration impact story

2. Engage collaboration partners in identifying shifts which have taken place

3. Create an opportunity for review and reflection

4. Write the collaboration impact story

5. Test the collaboration impact story and revise as needed

6. Share the collaboration impact story with key partners and funders

Resource Link

Elements to include

Title	Develop an engaging title for the story.
Introduction	Highlight the reason for writing the collaboration impact story and provide an overview of the content of the story.
People	Describe who is involved and why they are involved in the collaboration, be sure to identify how individuals most impacted by the problem are engaged in the change effort.
Process	Describe how the theory of change was developed, the data and outcomes the collaboration will achieve.
Resources	Describe the human and financial resources that are being invested in the shared effort.

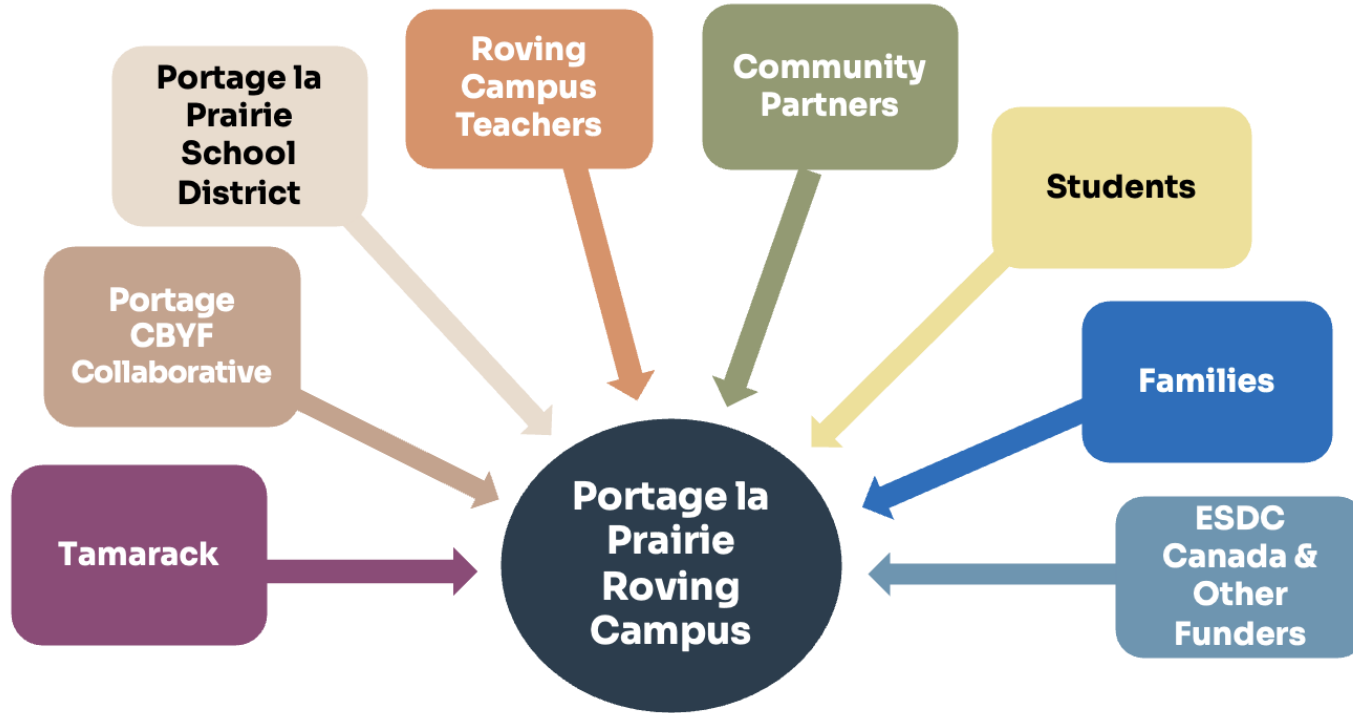|	
Impact	Describe the impact achieved to date – this might include leveraging resources, engaging the community, engaging individuals, achieving funding goals, influencing policy change, etc.
The Future	Highlight the hopes for the future of the collaboration and what it will take to achieve deep and durable change. Consider including a "call to action" inviting others to join and/or suggesting ways readers can contribute to the work going forward.
Recognition of Partners	At the end of the collaboration impact story, recognize and name all the partners and funding sources contributing to the success of the collaboration.

An Impact Story Example

The Roving Campus | Reimaging the Classroom

3 Goals of Roving Campus

1. Increase attendance

2. Educate students for democratic citizenship

3. Raise graduation rates

- Portage la Prairie's Roving Campus reimages education for up to 30 students not succeeding in traditional high-school

- Considers the entire community as its classroom and emphasizes hands-on and experiential learning covering an array of courses and subjects

- Includes transportation, meals, a laptop and internet access to address gaps experienced by students

- Addresses systemic inequities at the community level that create barriers for youth success in school and life

The Roving Campus | People Factors

The Roving Campus | Resource Factors

Portage la Prairie CBYF	• Convening of multi-sector partners with a focus on youth success • Innovation Fund Grant
Portage School District	• Endorsed/supported the Roving Campus Pilot • Physical space • Qualified teachers
Roving Campus Teachers	• Curriculum development • Knowledge & expertise • Development of 35 essential learning outcomes
Roving Campus Students	• Input and feedback on the program • Commitment to the outcomes • Spokespeople for the Project
Tamarack Institute	• Coaching and consulting support • Connection to a national learning network • Support documenting and disseminating knowledge & impact
ESDC Canada	• Funding for the collaborative table • Funding for Innovation Pilot project

The Roving Campus | Qualitative Impact Factors

8 students showed up to Roving Campus... on a storm day... because they had "important work" to complete.

"One of our security guard graduates has a job offer. We have three more students looking to take the course."

"One of our students had a medical appointment. He didn't have a ride home, so I picked him up. We thought it was a check-up, but it was surgery. He had to have a .177 pellet removed from his nose. It had been stuck up there for 4 years."

"C… was shortlisted for pilot training. He is allowed to start training in July and will be moved to the training group if anyone drops out during the first three days."

"M talked to me a month ago about how she was saving money for a bicycle to get to work. PCRC found funding for 4 bikes. Students who demonstrated need, by letter, will be getting a bike, a bike lock and a helmet. We will probably present them next week."

"G*** slept in one morning and was feeling under the weather. He recuperated by lunch and took a cab to the Glesby Centre, using his own money, so his attendance wouldn't be negatively impacted!"
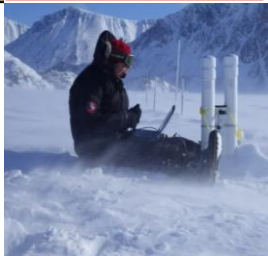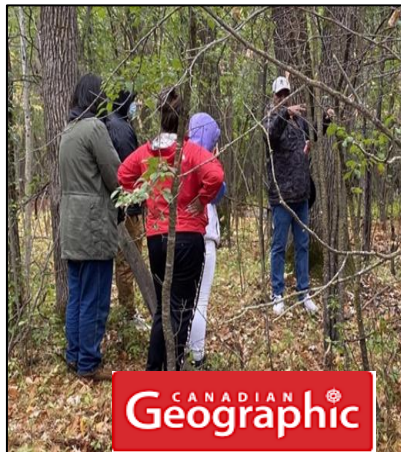
One student opened his 1st bank account before starting his 1st paying job

12 students completed their flagging certifications

"G**** "accidentally" flew our classroom drone onto a light fixture. I made him explain the situation to the principal because I was the one who was going to have to put in the work order to deal with his lousy flying skills. He spun a tale worthy of Mark Twain."

SOURCE: Roving Campus Teacher 2020-21 Reflections

The Roving Campus | Changing Policies & Systems

- Adopted as a permanent program in the Portage la Prairie school district

- The high-school has expanded Roving Campus to begin in Grade 10

- The Roving Campus teachers were nominated for Teacher of the Year in Manitoba – and won

- The Roving Campus is now being replicated in 2 other Canadian communities including Digby N.S.

- Pilot attracted an additional $250,00 in funding from another Foundation

- Gained national recognition in Canadian Geographic magazine as one of "20 Canadian innovations you should know about"

The Roving Campus | Impact Factors

Roving Campus Indicators

ROVING CAMPUS PROJECT DATA

- **22,000** Steps taken on first day of class
- **600** kilometers driving students to school
- **400** meals provided
- **40** certification programs started
- **35** provincial essential standards developed
- **15** credits taught concurrently
- **11** local businesses supported
- **10** guest speakers featured
- **9** student-specific learning plans created
- **4** students panning to attend post-secondary schools
- **0** number of student suspensions

Roving Campus Progress

- 100% graduation rate for Roving Campus participants

- All Roving Campus students received professional accreditations

- 4 Year graduation rate in Portage la Prairie rose from 73.5% to 78.2% (2019-2023)

- 80% of Roving Campus students secured summer employment

- 30% of Roving Campus students chose to go on to further education

SOURCE: CBYF Community Innovation Fund Impact Report

Example: The Portage La Prairie – Roving Campus Story

In rural communities, secondary schools play a particularly vital role in shaping the identity, purpose, and engagement of young people. Students in these regions often rely more heavily on schools due to limited resources and services in remote areas, turning schools into essential community hubs that offer food security, role models, and extracurricular activities. However, students in these areas may face unseen barriers that prevent them from attending school or meaningfully engaging in the classroom.

When surveyed, 20% of students cited a lack of mental health support as a major barrier to success in traditional schooling. Another 10% expressed a desire for smaller class sizes with many flagging that larger class sizes, in addition to reducing one-on-one time with a teacher, exacerbated their social anxiety. Socio-economic inequality was a factor too, with 10% mentioning the high cost of transportation to and from school.

Instead of memorizing textbooks, students learn history by tasting a WW1 inspired menu and touring a former military training camp. Civics? That credit is earned by delivering in-person speeches to the Mayor. Students can even gain professional certifications like CPR, carpentry & food handling, bolstering their CVs and easing the transition into adulthood.
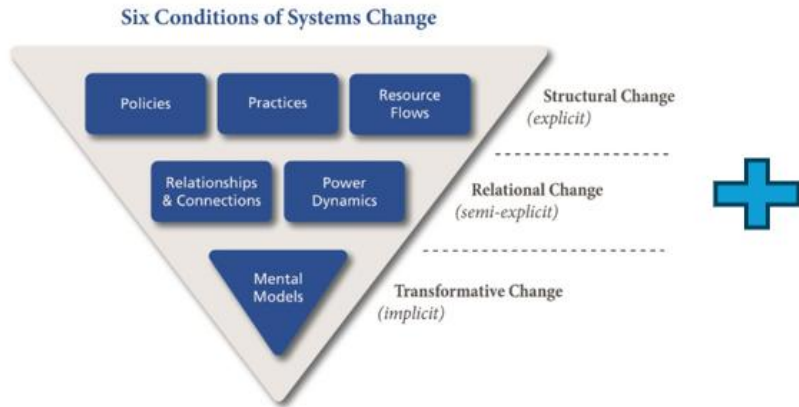
Portage La Prairie's innovative approach to education proves that young people, especially those struggling in traditional education settings, can excel in programs that prioritize well-being and hands-on learning over rigid adherence to standardized testing. The novel curriculum that considers the entire community its "classroom," fosters valuable partnerships that not only contribute to the initiative's sustainability, but offer students new avenues for employment.

Source: Accessible Education Case Study

Let's Practice

Weaving two frameworks together

Write your impact story

Spend the next five minutes writing your 250-word impact story.

- Use the questions as a guide.

- Use the Water of Systems Change ideas as a resource.

| Impact Factors | • Describe how progress and impact is being tracked.
• Describe useful data or evidence (quantitative & qualitative) that is shifting and changing – for example, the number of individuals accessing services, changes in understanding re: the issue, growing community awareness and/or capacity, personal impact stories by individuals accessing services etc.
• Describe any policies changes that have occurred as a result of the collaboration influencing change – for example adoption of new practices, changes in funding flows, changes in policy etc.
• Describe any systems which might have been positively impacted – for example, a non-profit changing their internal practices or a government department becoming more open and transparent in-service delivery models | | |

Share your impact story

Spend 10 minutes in small groups sharing your impact stories:

- What are you learning?

- How might you change your story?

- Why is impact an important part of the impact story?

| Impact Factors | • Describe how progress and impact is being tracked.
• Describe useful data or evidence (quantitative & qualitative) that is shifting and changing – for example, the number of individuals accessing services, changes in understanding re: the issue, growing community awareness and/or capacity, personal impact stories by individuals accessing services etc.
• Describe any policies changes that have occurred as a result of the collaboration influencing change – for example adoption of new practices, changes in funding flows, changes in policy etc.
• Describe any systems which might have been positively impacted – for example, a non-profit changing their internal practices or a government department becoming more open and transparent in-service delivery models | | |

Multiple approaches to storytelling

- Case Study or a Case Story

- Webpage story with associated resources

- Quotes or vignettes from key participants included in digital formats: email or Facebook, Instagram

- Power point format

- Short Video

- Visuals or Photo-Essay

- Combination of different formats

Resource Link:

Rockefeller Foundation – Digital Story Telling Guide - https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/digital-storytelling-for-social-impact/

I'm writing my story so that others might see fragments of themselves.

- Lena Waithe, screenwriter for **Bones** and **Master of None**

Health Justice 2025

Reflections, questions and feedback!

Health Justice 2025

Thank You

Connect with me | Lizcweaver@outlook.com