

Creating

*Vibrant*

Communities



**Thirteen Cities. One Goal. Reduce Poverty.**

# Reduce Poverty



# The Complex Nature of Poverty

***“Poverty is a complex issue. There is no single cause and no one solution. Its successful reduction, □ and ideally its eradication, require a set of linked interventions undertaken by all orders of government working in collaboration with communities.”***

*Poverty Policy*

Sherri Torjman,

Caledon Institute of Social Policy

October 2008



# **Vibrant Communities**

**An experiment designed to test a specific way to address the complex realities of poverty through local level action.**

## **Theory of Change:**

**Guided by 5 principles & assisted by extra supports provided by national sponsors – local organizations and leaders could revitalize poverty reduction efforts in their communities and generate significantly improved outcomes.**

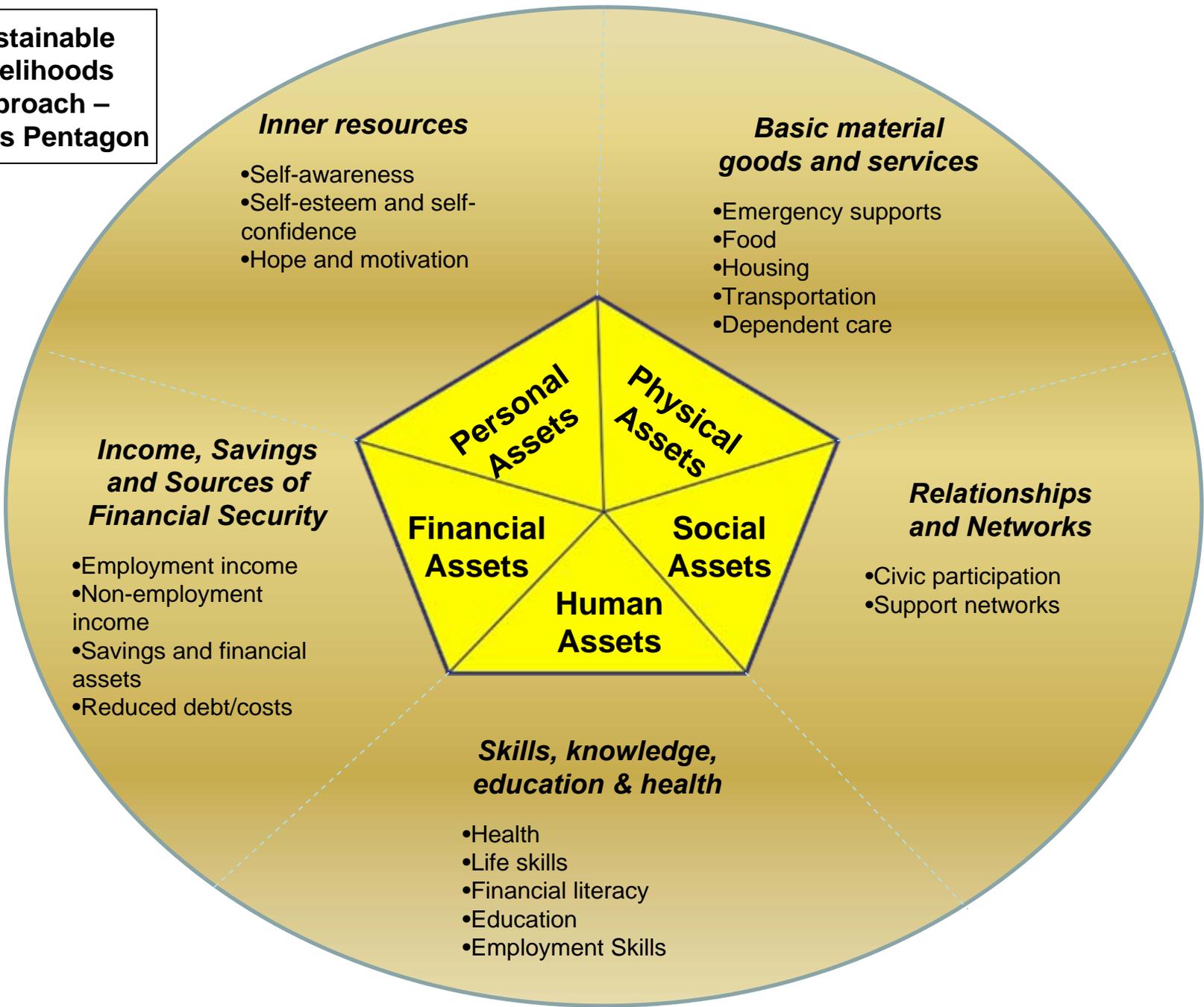
# The Communities



# The Approach



**Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – Assets Pentagon**





# Four Levels of Community Outcomes



- Policy and Systems Change
- Increased Community Capacity
- Increased Community Engagement
- Decreased Poverty



## Policy and Systems Change

- 35 substantive policy changes including
  - Affordable transit passes
  - Earning exemptions for people with disabilities
  - Extended health care benefits
  - Increased investments in early learning, afterschool programs and access to recreation
  - Minimum wage increases
  - Increased tax credits and changes to tax filing
  - Provincial/Territorial poverty strategies

# Enhanced Community Innovation

*the  
employer  
challenge*

*fair  
fares*

*make tax  
time pay*

*energy  
poverty*

*hostels  
to  
homes*



**164 poverty reduction  
initiatives**

*project  
comeback*

*arts & cirque  
du soleil*

*income  
support  
policy*

*the job  
bus*

*substantive  
contribution  
to 4 provincial  
strategies*

# Increased Community Engagement

*“We are all part of the problem and all part of the solution.”*

**2688  
media  
stories**

**223  
poverty  
reports**



**264  
learning  
events**

**80% of citizens  
indicate  
poverty  
critical  
concern**

**559  
Businesses**

**411 Govt.  
Departments**

**573 voices of  
experiences**

**720 non-  
profits**

**507 other  
individuals**

# HALTON POVERTY ROUNDTABLE

April 19, 2011

“How much more information do we need to know that a hungry child will not do well in school? Stop admiring the problem and get on with the work.”

Mark Chamberlain

# Reduced Poverty



**Nationally:  
170,903 households  
accessing  
322,698 sustainable  
livelihood benefits**



## Working Collaboratively, Communities can ...

- Raise the profile of poverty.
- Build a constituency for change.
- Encourage collaborative ways of working.
- Begin to shift systems underlying poverty.
- Contribute to the asset-building efforts for a large number of people.



# VC Success Factors

- Influential and credible convener(s)
- Cross-sector, connected leadership table
- Challenging community aspiration
- Clearly articulated purpose and approach
- High degree of resident mobilization
- Research which informs the work

# Collective Impact



- Common agenda
- Shared measurement systems
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous communication
- Backbone support organization

– John Kania and Mark Kramer, Winter 2011

# Vibrant Communities ~ Conclusions

City-wide efforts can make a big difference.

It requires the alignment of many things (e.g. multi-sector leadership, comprehensive lens, high aspiration, etc.).

There are no guarantees ... but this approach improves the probabilities of real progress on poverty.

**Under the right conditions, the impact is powerful.**



# Want to learn about Vibrant Communities Canada and its work?

[www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca)

Evaluating  
**Vibrant**  
Communities

2002-2010

- Launched **164** poverty reduction initiatives and raised **\$19.5** million in communities
- Reduced poverty for more than **170,000** households
- Engaged **2770** leaders including **559** businesses and **573** people in poverty

J a m i e • G a m b l e