

**NO STRAIGHT LINES:  
Local Leadership and the Path from  
Government to Governance in Small Cities**  
Edited by Terry Kading

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# Promoting “Community Leadership and Learning” on Social Challenges: Government of Canada Homelessness Initiatives and the Small City of Kamloops, British Columbia

*Terry Kading*

## Introduction

Kamloops, British Columbia, is one of many urban centres across Canada engaged in an effort to “end homelessness” in their communities. The impetus for this effort lies in the federal government’s *National Homelessness Initiative*, launched in late 1999 to “partner” with communities across Canada in addressing the immediate needs of the homelessness crisis emerging on the streets of Canada’s cities (Smith 2004; Graham 2011; Kading 2012). While first proposed for the ten largest urban centres in Canada, the initiative was expanded in 2001 to include another 51 designated communities confronting evident homelessness. This federal initiative was, and remains, a response to the withdrawal by this very same



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level of government from some 40 years of direct funding and support for low-income and social housing, in an effort to balance budgets and reduce the national debt. With an inadequate response from the provinces to this off-loading of responsibility in housing and social support, the Government of Canada returned with a new and revised funding model to address homelessness—a model that placed the onus on local communities to assume a leadership role in addressing an emerging homelessness crisis. This leadership role compelled designated communities (of which Kamloops is one) to enter into a complex area of urban planning for which many small cities lack both the experience and the resource capacity (Kading 2012).

This chapter examines the local response to homelessness in the City of Kamloops, focusing on the context that gave rise to this local leadership role, the achievements to date, and the multiple challenges that have arisen as a result of increased knowledge of local homelessness. Drawing on government documents (local and federal), local plans, press reports, interviews, and observations from participation in a local anti-poverty network—*Changing the Face of Poverty*—the chapter assesses accomplishments in improving *equality of quality of life* in this area, highlighting what has been learned about the local homelessness situation and detailing the challenges in the effort to end homelessness in Kamloops. This study is unique, as it examines the increased responsibility of local communities and local governments in addressing homelessness and the distinctive politics of the small city in adjusting to this devolution of responsibility. There is little doubt that the local response was initially a *coercive collaboration*—the Kamloops Community Committee—as a condition of accessing federal monies to address the immediate needs of the local homeless population. However, from this would emerge the Changing the Face of Poverty network, a *mimetic collaboration* that would ensure that housing the homeless and addressing poverty would be the local priorities.<sup>1</sup> The tension between the numerous limitations inherent in this devolution of responsibilities and partnership with higher levels of government, along with the positives—notably the gathering of detailed information on *lived realities* in this particular community—is the central focus of this chapter, and confirms the worst and the best qualities of the new models of *governance* and “governing through community” (see Introduction). This



FIGURE 1.2. Changing the Face of Poverty Network by Terry Kading. Design by Moneca Jantzen, Daily Designz.

chapter details the benefits of the transactional leadership resulting from this devolution, along with the myriad of constraints in moving toward transformational leadership outcomes in achieving *equality of quality of life* for our most marginalized residents.

## Fomenting Community Leadership and Learning

After decades of federal government dominance in social and housing policies, this critical leadership role was rapidly devolved to the local level in initiating solutions to complex social problems—notably the homelessness crisis. The required community planning process would involve broad consultation with numerous agencies, non-profit organizations, business groups, and the local community on multiple themes related to homelessness. At another level this process would include the contracting of consultants for research, the creation of an official “social planning / community development” position, new program budgeting, and substantial monetary commitments in city property, tax and development cost exemptions, and non-profit grants to fulfill these various social planning goals. This section examines the terms of the new model advanced by the Government of Canada in 1999 in addressing homelessness, and the local and provincial dynamics as communities assumed an awkward leadership role that had been thrust upon them by higher levels of government. Since 1999 the Government of Canada has established a firm position on addressing these social issues through what it refers to as *The Power of Partnerships*:

The basic theory behind partnerships is that working together and leveraging assets and resources is more effective than working in isolation. A partnership draws its strength from coordinating resources so that two or more individuals or groups can work toward a common goal. Partnerships are especially important in addressing issues such as homelessness and poverty. Because they are multi-dimensional, these issues require multi-dimensional responses (such as affordable housing, employment, justice, training, child care, mental health, addictions, etc.). (Government of Canada 2008)

What is noteworthy in this statement is the extent to which areas of jurisdiction understood as responsibilities of only the federal or provincial levels of government are passed down to the local level—with the justification that “no one level of government, sector or organization can claim to be able to address these issues in isolation. . . . Community-based approaches to addressing social issues like homelessness seek to empower local organizations and individuals through an atmosphere of dignity and participation, with the goal of achieving durable results” (Government of Canada 2008). It is against this understanding of the benefits of collaboration, both vertical (local, provincial, and federal) and horizontal (community level), that we will evaluate this devolution of leadership and learning.

By the end of the 1990s there were only a very small number of public housing units being built at the provincial level, and the majority of subsidies needed to promote the construction of low-income rental or housing units had been whittled away in a drive to rein in federal and provincial spending (Murphy 2000; Layton 2008).<sup>2</sup> These federal and provincial actions did not go unnoticed at the local level, as homeless issues (often linked to cold winter deaths) garnered media attention in Canada’s largest urban centres (Schwan 2016). By late 1999 the federal government had decided to re-enter the “housing” arena, but with a considerably narrower field of attention—support for emergency shelters and transitional housing, through the creation of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). The NHI initially invested \$753 million over three years to “help alleviate and prevent homelessness across Canada” (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2011). More than a renewed collaboration with provincial governments, the focus of the NHI was on a direct federal government partnership with communities with a demonstrated homeless problem. The NHI had the goal to “facilitate community capacity by coordinating Government of Canada efforts and enhancing the diversity of tools and resources,” “foster effective partnerships and investment that contribute to addressing the immediate and multifaceted needs of the homeless and reducing homelessness in Canada,” and “increase awareness and understanding of homelessness in Canada” (HRSDC 2011). The NHI was composed of three components: the Supporting Communities Partnerships Initiative (SCPI)—“a demonstration program, aimed at encouraging communities to work with provincial, territorial

and municipal governments and the private sector and voluntary organizations to address the immediate needs of homeless people”; the Youth Homelessness Strategy; and an Urban Aboriginal Strategy (NHI n.d., 2–5). Of the three the SCPI was the most important component. SCPI established nine criteria for an acceptable planning process as the bases for accessing available funds:

- designated Geographic Area
- *Objectives*—“to be achieved by March 31, 2003”<sup>3</sup>
- *Community Plan Development Process*—with particular attention to “involving Aboriginal, youth and homeless persons throughout”
- *Assets and Gaps* reports—updated on a regular basis
- Priorities
- *Sustainability*—ability to secure other sources of funding
- *Evaluation*—“that should be an annual process”
- Communication Plan
- Community Financial Contributions

These funding conditions compelled not just a local collaboration but considerable documentation as to existing resources and services and a commitment to ongoing local consultation, reporting, and promotion. Notable is the original short time frame in which to establish and meet all objectives, with only two years, including the completion of proposed projects. With no certainty of continued funding after 2003 despite local efforts to meet these criteria, and the fact that the Government of Canada was only committed to funding a portion of the overall initiative, it is clear that there was no comprehensive and long-term plan to empower local organizations.

Access to funds required a “Community Plan” that directly addressed the issue of homelessness, establishment of “Community Planning Groups” that had demonstrated broad consultation and inclusion, and a

“City Homelessness Facilitator.” The Community Plan was expected to “provide community service organizations with a framework in which to work together to achieve common goals; assist the community to make the best possible use of scarce resources by reducing overlap and duplication; enable the community to evaluate its progress in reaching its objectives; and identify other sources of funding that the community will use to meet its 50% matching requirement” (NHI n.d., 12). Further, “the plan must reflect the needs of the key groups at risk—Aboriginal peoples, women and their children, youth, immigrants, refugees, substance abusers and the mentally ill—and involve them in the planning process” (12). Of these, the clear identification of *Assets and Gaps* was the most important, as “research has shown that homelessness is most effectively reduced by implementing a seamless underpinning of support services that helps people—over time—move from a situation where they are without permanent shelter or in danger of becoming homeless, to one of self-sufficiency” (14). It was expected that the community “list the supports and services that currently exist in your community—programs, services, human resources, equipment, buildings, land, etc.” and use “this list to quantify the supports and services that are required to meet the needs of the homeless—the gaps” (14). In addition, an official *Community Entity* to administer funds needed to be in place, along with a *Community Advisory Board* to oversee the application process and the allocation of funds. Thus, this local leadership role comprised quite onerous demands in determining service assessments, matching funding, evaluations and reporting, and community engagement and outreach.

A renewal of the NHI would be introduced, extending initiatives and funding commitments until 2007. Government of Canada feedback from community partners on the usefulness of the NHI was generally positive. The main problem remained that there was no long-term commitment by the federal government to these communities. This situation not lost on community partners engaged in developing community plans, as the “duration of funding for these programs has been limited to only two to three years at a time. This lack of predictability and sustainability has led to uncertainty and inefficiency in delivering an adequate response to the homelessness crisis” (Kelowna Committee to End Homelessness 2009, 9).

More importantly, it was apparent to these partners that the NHI was only addressing the homeless crisis at a surface level.

Despite the progress that has been made as a result of the NHI, most communities identified gaps in their continuum of supports and services, particularly in the area of affordable housing. Although not within the mandate of the NHI, the continued gap in availability of independent, affordable housing at the final stage of the continuum was identified by evaluation respondents as having a detrimental impact on establishing the overall continuum of supports and services. (HRSDC 2008, 5)

In response to these shortcomings the NHI was reintroduced as the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS) in 2007. By 2009 the HPS would commit to a longer funding horizon, with financial commitments until 2014, ending the 2–3 year renewal process that had generated so much uncertainty within communities. It also included the encouragement of a Housing First approach, recognizing that little could be achieved for the most visibly street-entrenched individuals until stable housing was assured, and completing the “seamless underpinning of support services” earlier affirmed in the NHI as necessary to achieve self-sufficiency for many homeless individuals. There was also financial commitment of over \$1.9 billion to affordable housing and homelessness over five years, in which the transfer of funds and terms of use would be negotiated with the provinces (not with the local partners).

Despite these improvements, the HPS re-emphasized that it is a “community-based program that relies on communities to determine their own needs and develop appropriate projects” (HRSDC 2011), reaffirming that the municipal level must continue to take the lead and will only receive HPS funding if this is matched at the local level.

Designated communities must have an approved, up-to-date and comprehensive community plan before they can receive funding. The plan must identify long-term solutions to address homelessness and how the community intends

to continue these activities. Designated communities have to demonstrate in their plan that other partners will provide a contribution of at least \$1 for every dollar of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy allocation to the designated community (HRSDC 2011).

Even though the HPS funding involved a far more comprehensive approach to the homeless crisis, the continuation of past conditionality on funding meant a significant increase in the social responsibilities and financial commitments at the local level. Whereas the NHI had focused on front-line support such as emergency shelters and improving transitional housing, the HPS now placed the local level in the lead role in the provision of affordable housing. Not only did this require a considerably higher level of specialized planning (moving from community plans to “homeless action” plans), it also involved a sizable increase in the upfront local resource commitment to initiate projects. This created considerable uncertainty as to the long-term financial implications at the municipal level with respect to social housing and in-house social support (particularly in housing for addictions and mental illness).

As an exercise in effective planning, these conditions established clear criteria to maximize the benefits of funding, but there was minimal consideration for the disparities in preparedness of the various communities eligible for NHI/HPS funding to meet these criteria. Recognizing these limits within the NHI, the City of Kelowna, which had created a social plan in 1995 and a position to oversee implementation, moved instead to petition the province over a reliance on the NHI—“our senior management staff sat down with the Premier and with BC Housing people that were there (at an annual meeting of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities) and said look, we have a huge problem with homelessness and very little resources to deal with it, we need it to be a priority” (Walmsley & Kading, 2018). Shortly after this meeting the premier announced the formation of the Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) in 2004, and initiated ongoing consultation with select cities in BC.<sup>4</sup> Through 2005 the Provincial Housing Strategy that was emerging emphasized “the importance of partnerships to leverage provincial resources to maximize the number

of households who can be provided with assistance,” thus adopting the federal model with communities (Patterson et al. 2008, 26). At the end of 2006 the provincial government announced the creation of *BC Housing Matters*, with a priority being establishment of affordable housing and income support for those homeless with the most pressing care needs. In the case of British Columbia the broader HPS mandate served to further integrate the local government level into a far more complex leadership and planning role in the provision of affordable housing, as the local-provincial partnership with BC Housing became linked to the federal initiative on affordable housing. In 2008 the province stipulated that “municipalities with populations over 25,000 identify and zone appropriate sites for supportive housing and treatment facilities for persons with mental illness and addictions” as part of the local planning process (UBCM 2008). As noted by many observers, most local governments in Canada are subservient to provincial government dictates, financially dependent on upper levels of government to even meet basic infrastructure needs, and are treated as administrative extensions of provincial-level policy decisions (Haddow 2002, 101–4; Kelly and Caputo 2011, 37–42). Thus, the prospects of local governments realizing these social planning goals are highly contingent on the conditionality and discretion of upper levels of government, now integrated into a complex three-level intergovernmental collaboration that to date has been fraught, as we will see, with uncertainty and unclear lines of jurisdictional authority and financial resolve. It is within this context that we examine the local leadership initiatives and learning in addressing the challenge of homelessness in Kamloops.

## The Community of Kamloops and Federal Homelessness Initiatives

The experience of Kamloops as a designated city eligible for initial NHI funding reveals the complex planning process that quickly emerged, beginning in 2001, and the new demands on this small city as it became thrown into a complex social planning role. This account of the early years establishes a baseline as to issues, knowledge, and leadership capacity in this city from which to measure and evaluate Government of Canada homelessness initiatives and the accomplishments, constraints, and

limitations in ending homelessness at the local level. Representatives from the Government of Canada (Human Resources Development Canada), City of Kamloops planning department, the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Kamloops Women's Resource Centre, provincial agencies (health and social services), the Kamloops Indian Band, the John Howard Society, the AIDS Society (later ASK Wellness), youth outreach organizations, and the Phoenix Centre (addictions counselling), formed the Kamloops Community Committee (KCC). They quickly established committees, planning sessions, initial assessments, and priorities and practices to establish eligibility for federal funding. What this early period discloses is the general understanding of the dimensions of the local homelessness challenge, but also a need to rapidly adjust to the program criteria and requirements of the Government of Canada in order to ensure the maximum available funding.

KCC minutes from 2001 attest to the dearth of detailed information available to fulfill the federal government criteria for funding, but also to a committed leadership and network that emerged in response to the short timelines to access funding. While the City of Kamloops put together an initial inventory of "gaps and assets" based on existing service providers at the time, the KCC worked on a definition of "homelessness," a communications strategy, and a procedural model for adjudicating projects under the SCPI. While KCC consultants conducted focus groups and interviews to enhance the report on assets and gaps, the KCC Working Group developed the mandatory Community Plan on Homelessness. Conclusions from the initial Assets and Gap report emphasized:

- Need for housing at all levels (short-term, transitional, affordable, supported, etc.)
- Need for additional services such as life skills, self-esteem building, employment programs and drop-in multi-purpose centres that provide a wide range of services
- Location of housing and services as a key consideration when developing services/housing because travel is challenging for low-income earners

- Increased coordination of services and better information on existing services
- Importance of recognizing that some individuals will choose a particular lifestyle (e.g., to live on the street) and may not want to access any services. However, there should be appropriate choices available for people when they are ready to make lifestyle changes (KCC June 4, 2001).

With minimal financial commitments, suggested local improvements included “better coordination of services and communication between agencies; respectful treatment of homeless people; more accessible information on services available; advocacy for the homeless, especially for monitoring standards of housing; support and education for landlords; and community education.” Concerted efforts were made to have the plan approved by the federal government within two months in order to receive proposals by early fall, with the goal of having “funding out to the Community in early fall before the cold weather hits” (KCC June 4, 2001). By July 2001, Kamloops had been allocated total funding of \$1,769,000 for 2002 and 2003, to be disbursed as set out in Table 1.1.

Funds would be provided by the provincial government to meet this critical NHI matching funding requirement, and the City of Kamloops would assume the role of *Community Entity*. In addition, committee members travelled to Vancouver for workshops on completing federal government requirements on the community plan, ran training sessions for potential local applicants seeking SCPI funding, and were active in writing articles and appearing on local news shows to increase community awareness on homelessness issues and funding opportunities. Initial monies were used to renovate and upgrade facilities for the homeless and at-risk youth, including the purchase of equipment for dental services (in which 12 local dentists came forward to volunteer their time), the purchase of a home to provide emergency and transition space for women, and mobile outreach services for at-risk youth. Only six months later it was reported that from these funds some 100 individuals had received dental care, 50–70 youth were being assisted each night, and at the new

TABLE 1.1. Kamloops Allocation of Federal Funding from the National Homelessness Initiative, 2002-2003

<b>Apportioned</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>Total</b>
Community	740,000	370,000	1,110,000
Aboriginal	243,000	164,000	407,000
Youth	126,000	126,000	252,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,109,000</b>	<b>660,000</b>	<b>1,769,000</b>

emergency shelter for women “demand had been overwhelming.” Thus results of these achievements demonstrated the potential power of collective action in the community. What had emerged in a short period of time was an impressive and complex partnership between three levels of government and local community groups and professionals supporting a range of critical new services and facilities for those in need. However, it was evident that the local leadership had to contend with the multiple vicissitudes of the other partners, provincial and federal, in addressing local gaps and establishing goals.

From the beginning, uncertainty surrounded the NHI itself, as the first three-year mandate would have a one-year extension before then being renewed for another three years. The KCC never knew until near expiration whether the NHI would continue or whether the level of financial commitment would change. Other federal partnership issues revolved around compliance with processes, as it was unclear how to evaluate, for reporting purposes, programs that had been funded, and there was a need for someone with “program evaluation experience” (KCC February 11, 2002). Another concern was the lengthy project approval times at the federal level, which had eroded project-life from three years down to one and also resulted in costs (e.g., for renovations) being different from those originally proposed. Perhaps most significant, “for unincorporated or volunteer organizations the application process was seen to be onerous and perhaps some SCPI projects that would have served the community well were abandoned because of the resources required to apply” (KCC February 11, 2002). The bigger problem that emerged, though, was from the “provincial partner” providing matching funds, which began to

engage in extensive spending cutbacks, thus affecting the sustainability of initiatives and creating a sense of lost ground in addressing homelessness due “to recent adjustments to provincial funding for social programs” (TRUE Consulting Ltd. 2003, 12). Thus, services and facilities that were originally deemed assets became vulnerable and emerged as new gaps in serving homeless residents. At the local level, issues included the lack of hard facts as to the homeless population, and concerns over an onerous compliance and reporting process that had further deterred local groups from applying despite innovative ideas. Other problems revolved around local partnership arrangements and a sense that the committee lacked broad enough representation (e.g., from seniors, business community, churches, immigrants, and at-risk families), and that the time commitments on various committees were taking staff away from actual service delivery for the homeless. Overall, the sense was that SCPI funding had allowed for the short-term priority issues for the homeless to be addressed, but that longer-term projects (i.e., creation of supportive and transitional housing) were less successful. At the time, then, local bridging links and social capital were weak within the KCC, a situation no doubt fuelled by the unclear resolve of the Government of Canada.

With the formal announcement in 2003 of the renewal of the NHI for another three years, the KCC and its Working Group on Homelessness (KWGH) became more formalized, with the Working Group establishing a clear mandate and set of responsibilities: attendance requirements, conflict of interest guidelines, satisfying reporting requirements of the federal government, advising city council, oversight on the application process for funding, developing links to the private sector, and overseeing research (e.g., homeless counts).<sup>5</sup> Under this new structure the City of Kamloops would remain as the Community Entity that would administer funds, the KWGH would be the official Community Advisory Entity responsible for the allocation of NHI funding, and the KCC would only serve to ratify decisions by the KWGH (with KCC meetings to be determined by the KWGH).

With this more formal structure the KWGH would oversee the funding of a number of important research initiatives that would significantly enhance the local understanding of homelessness in Kamloops. The first was the 2005 Kamloops Homeless Count, comprising both a numerical

count and an extensive survey of willing participants, using a definition of “those who do not have a place (room, apartment or house) of their own and not paying rent” (TRUE Consulting Ltd. 2005, 7). From the 168 counted, 134 provided invaluable survey information about the age, living conditions, use of local facilities and services (shelters, meals, and supplies), needs, and most importantly the length of time and reasons for being homeless. Of note, findings found that the majority were not transient, and the largest group surveyed—in an age range of 13 to 68—were between 40 and 60 years of age (suggesting an older homeless population than in larger centres). Only two respondents chose to live without a home—and thus less than 1% were homeless as a “lifestyle choice.” This report provided a baseline count on visible absolute homeless from which to inform government and community-based policy makers about the extent and makeup of homelessness in the Kamloops area (TRUE Consulting Ltd. 2005, 2). This report would be the basis for the *Homelessness Awareness Guide*—a document that combined local research with “best practices” from across North America in advising concerned citizens and organizations on potential initiatives to increase community awareness of the gravity of the challenge and/or support the needs of the local homeless population (with information about local organizations that may be contacted to support initiatives).

The KWGH then produced the most significant report on homelessness, with the *Inventory of Service Assets and Gaps For the Homeless—Kamloops, B.C.—2007* (TRUE Consulting Ltd. 2007). This report adopted a definition of homelessness recognizing both “absolute homelessness” (“a situation where an individual or family has no housing at all or is staying in a temporary form of shelter, or in locations not fit for human habitation”) and “relative homelessness” (“a situation where people have a home but are at risk of becoming homeless; those living in accommodations that are inadequate, unsafe, and unaffordable; and those who face multiple social economic barriers”). In Kamloops, those affected by “relative homelessness” constituted the largest homeless subpopulation, in which “significant attention must be given to preventative measures which can have a major impact on keeping people from becoming homeless” (4). The report contained community stats demonstrating that rental vacancy rates had declined from nearly 8% in 2000 to below 1% in 2006—making the

transition out of homelessness “more challenging.” In addition, provincial income assistance did not reflect the reality of housing costs, insufficient affordable housing existed through the current economy, and more and more working poor were ending up homeless. With an inventory of housing (emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, and independent subsidized housing) the report provided an extensive list of service delivery gaps for homeless youth, Indigenous peoples, women, men, senior citizens, offenders released from correctional facilities, and people with substance misuse issues. The report concluded with the position that the highest local priority was affordable housing.

Within a short period of time the KCC and KWGH were able to progress from just a general understanding of the local homelessness problem to a very detailed and sophisticated understanding of the economics and policies that generated homelessness, the local capacities and limits in services and facilities to address targeted groups, and the priorities necessary to address immediate needs and reduce local homelessness. This initiative was complemented by the City of Kamloops initiative in 2006 to develop a Social Plan for the city (which would be adopted in 2009), in which housing and homelessness would be a primary theme. With the adoption of the Social Plan, the city committed to the long-term goal to “continue to position the City of Kamloops as a leader in addressing the social issues in the community by serving a partnership building and information sharing role” (City of Kamloops 2009, ii), supported by the hiring of a Social Development Supervisor to undertake the implementation of the plan. This period, then, is marked by two features: a solid determination of local gaps and needs based on comprehensive and extensive research; and the consolidation of critical local community entities buttressed by a social planning position within the municipal government. With this consolidation, though, it was evident that the broad community and government dynamic of the original KCC had been pared down as federal and provincial funding to manage the immediate needs of local homeless residents had become more stable. It was within this context that a new network emerged, with experience within the KCC, to advance a more comprehensive and aggressive approach to addressing local homelessness.

## New Leadership and Learning in the Drive to “End Homelessness”

The Changing the Face of Poverty network (CFP), which emerged in 2004, “is a network of community and faith based organizations, individuals, and businesses working collectively to coordinate, connect, and create resources and solutions related to the issue of poverty in Kamloops” (CFP). Notable goals have included: developing creative solutions for poverty-related challenges; building partnerships to create long-term solutions; increasing access to safe and affordable housing; developing funding supports through partnerships and collaboration; expanding the current network of partnerships; engaging partners in solution-based action planning; and liaising with community decision makers on strategies to reduce poverty. By 2006 the CFP moved to a more aggressive strategy, going beyond managing and alleviating homelessness to solving the local homeless problem through services and advocacy for the building of transitional and affordable housing. It is these efforts that are credited with the more detailed knowledge, solution-oriented services, and coordinated plans with the City of Kamloops that now exist in advancing long-term solutions (Personal communication). By 2008 the CFP had linked with the United Way on initiatives, and in 2009 created a Homelessness Action Plan Steering Committee that had approached the city and the mayor directly in making the case for more affordable housing. This led to the hiring of a Homelessness Action Plan Coordinator and the development of the *Kamloops Homelessness Action Plan—2010* (HAP 2010), comprising the following goals and strategies:

**GOAL 1**—Assess the local housing situation, enhance the stock of acceptable housing, and respond to changes in the housing market

- Strategy—establish a local housing board

**GOAL 2**—Provide greater housing stability and reduce evictions

- Strategy A—promote housing support agreements
- Strategy B—establish a Homeless Resident Program

**GOAL 3**—Connect people with the help they need

- Strategy A—improve outreach
- Strategy B—adopt a network approach to support services

**GOAL 4**—Build the basic skill that people need to maintain housing and financial independence

- Strategy—improve access to life skills coaching

**GOAL 5**—Improve fairness, accessibility, and responsiveness

- Strategy—create changes to laws, procedures, regulations, and protocols

**GOAL 6**—Help people build and maintain employment

- Strategy—improve workplace supports

The approach adopted to end homelessness in Kamloops was a comprehensive model that went beyond just the creation of new housing to the development of a broader system of supports, education, and training while maintaining a strong role for advocacy with respect to the provincial and federal levels of government (i.e., Goal 5). This model also involved a range of tasks to deepen engagement with the City of Kamloops and to expand links with local landlords, property developers, the university, and employers as partners in addressing homelessness. Endorsed by the City of Kamloops (particularly the mayor), the Homelessness Action Plan created the framework within which the city proceeded to allocate four parcels of land zoned for social housing initiatives advanced by community organizations, and for the creation of the Kamloops Housing Authority as a municipal government entity to formulate policies to support the goals of the plan. The plan also made possible two years of HPS funding of \$75,000 to support a Life Skills network and the development of a plan to improve life skills training in the community. (Personal communication; HAP 2012),

which has since continued on with the support of established and new member organizations within the CFP.

The CFP has also significantly increased our understanding of the extent of the homelessness challenge in Kamloops and determined the extent of the local housing needs. In 2010, in collaboration with community groups from four other small cities (Kelowna, Prince George, Nanaimo, and Nelson), and overseen by the Social Policy and Research Council of BC, researchers investigated the number of “hidden homeless” in each of these small cities. The results revealed a significant discrepancy between “street counts” (in which it is often assumed that the larger homeless population is roughly three times the size of the visible homeless) and those confronted by ongoing housing insecurity in which the street or a shelter were utilized on an occasional basis. For Kamloops the projected hidden homeless over the previous year (2010–11) were 1,167 (range of 808–1,631) (SPARC BC 2011, 23). Interviews with hidden homeless revealed both the broader dynamics of homelessness and the complex housing needs of many of those who are “sometimes” visible on our streets. Some 80% were staying with friends or acquaintances for various lengths of time, and then forced to find “other” arrangements (45). The most common “other” arrangement was couch surfing, camping, a rental suite, or sleeping in the streets. Some 64% included the use of emergency shelters or transition housing in the last year, and 82% had used community or government services to try to get their own place. The majority of hidden homeless were 25–45 years of age, with a higher percentage female than the visible homeless—53% female and 47% male (46). Some 65%+ reported having mental health challenges, while over 52% had substance use challenges, and 48% had physical challenges—with 22% reporting having all three challenges (47). Of note, 74% already relied on income assistance—either social assistance or provincial disability benefits (45). The vast majority identified “low income” and the “lack of affordable housing” as the two most significant barriers preventing them from getting their own place (51). While the numbers were not a surprise to CFP participants, the data was seen as critical in demonstrating the depth of the challenge and in advocating for funding from various levels of government (Personal communication with participant in research for report).

TABLE 1.2. Kamloops Affordable Housing Needs Assessment 2013

Type of Housing	Additional Units Needed (as of 2013)
Temporary Supported Housing <i>transitional housing—120 units at present</i>	99
Permanent Subsidized Housing <i>social housing—448 units at present</i>	120
Private Market Rental <i>affordable rents—7,421 at present</i>	1,632
Entry Level Ownership <i>less than \$240,000—695 at present</i>	371
<b>Total Number of Affordable Housing Units Needed</b>	<b>2,222</b>

This research would be followed by an in-depth investigation of the specific housing needs of the homeless and at-risk citizens based on an inventory of housing options at the time. The *Kamloops Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* (HAP 2013) captures the spectrum of housing needs for the homeless and at-risk and the appropriate housing units that need to be constructed, as set out in Table 1.2.

Prominent in the assessment is the focus on transitional and social housing as opposed to any discussion of emergency shelter—in an effort to move beyond managing and toward resolving local homelessness. Projections of population growth in the report also showed that if these housing needs did not begin to be addressed, the numbers in each category would only continue to increase. With these two reports, the knowledge and understanding of the dimensions of homelessness in Kamloops had never been more complete. However, the local leadership needed to rapidly address these needs is severely compromised by the partnership model—particularly as the provincial and federal partners control the critical funding components.

Key figures in the CFP network recognize the general merits of the “partnership” model originally proposed by the federal government in addressing homelessness (Personal communication). Strengths of the model include the local research component focused on understanding

the extent and character of homeless/at-risk residents and determining the particular needs of these varied residents to ensure that specific services and the appropriate housing are provided. Thus, there is agreement with the federal government that homelessness is a complex challenge in which needs and responses will vary from community to community based on the findings from local research. Weaknesses of the model involve the highly bureaucratized nature of the relationship with respect to reporting and the disbursement of funding, characterized as “stringent and ridiculous.” Even small amounts of funding for locally approved proposals required multiple reviews and signatures by senior officials of the city (as the *Community Entity*) before approval could take place. This is viewed as a demeaning level of accountability for this partner in light of the large budgets for infrastructure and other services the city is responsible for on an ongoing basis. The increased pressure for “evaluative measures / measured outcomes” linked to applications and ongoing funding was also becoming a large administrative burden, one that needed to be accepted, as these requirements were becoming a standard adopted by other sources of funding outside of government. However, “they also haven’t added any funding to accomplish that with, so it actually takes away from providing the service.” The effect of these onerous application and reporting procedures was seen as discouraging proposals and participation by smaller community organizations with limited staff and resources, as “you’ve got to jump through all these hoops and if you are not ready to go, if you are not a big enough organization with your poop in a group enough, then you are SOL” (Personal communication). The hiring by the city in 2012 of a *Project Manager—Housing and Homelessness* (a position funded by the Government of Canada), responsible for the implementation, administration, coordination, and financial monitoring of programs and services funded under the HPS, has served to narrow the communication gap between community organizations at the CFP and funding opportunities for new collaborations. And one initiative has led to Kamloops being only one of two communities selected for a five-year pilot program to develop a plan to end youth homelessness, “a model that is [to be] shared with communities across Canada in the coming years” (City of Kamloops 2014).

The largest concern though, was that there was still too much focus by the federal and provincial partners on emergency/temporary shelters and

services rather than long-term housing solutions. Present levels of HPS and provincial funding directed at the development of new housing units would have to be at the expense of ongoing facilities and services, as the majority of services were still unsustainable without federal monies and would always remain vulnerable to losing their ongoing funding:

The federal government's approach to addressing homelessness and working with local groups . . . is totally disrespectful. It has no sense of the legitimacy of running programs and how long it takes to build an effective, solid program. They chunk them into these little sections and they go, "Okay, here it is for two years" . . . and we don't know what the new one is going to look like. Up until now, every operating agreement had to have an exit clause, meaning "how will it be sustainable once we pull the money out?" Social issues just don't disappear, right? I mean do a renewal. Have a sense that you have to meet certain expectations by the end of it, but if you've got to write a contract to say you are going to resolve the issues that you've encountered, such as homelessness, in a two or three year span, and you have to write a sustainability plan, I don't know how you do that. (Personal communication with executive director of community organization)

There was also a sense that provincial and federal funding was becoming more difficult to access, not easier, despite ample local research confirming the extent of needs. Notable was the feeling that the local Member of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and local federal and provincial staff from various government entities (e.g., BC Housing), had all played a supportive and constructive role but were themselves limited by the administrative procedures and the priorities that had already been established at the top. There was also an awareness that the "city here is very clear that it doesn't want to be a social housing provider or housing provider of any kind." From a municipal perspective, homelessness and related social issues were regarded as a "grey area," "tricky," and in "limbo" until the jurisdictional issues between the federal, provincial, and local

levels were resolved. Observing that most social issues are “health-related,” the sentiment was that the provincial level should assume responsibility, as “that would be a much simpler, more effective way for social issues to be addressed” but “that’s not clearly defined now” and “no level of government wants to take on new responsibilities” (Personal communication with member of city council).

The author’s participation in the monthly CFP meetings revealed the multiple initiatives in place to provide and enhance services for the homeless and at-risk residents in Kamloops (food, meals, supplies, healthcare, temporary shelter). Also apparent was the complex set of provincial and federal policies in place, and persistent uncertainties over funding that complicate and frustrate efforts to achieve these service outcomes. This was most evident as everyone awaited news as to whether HPS funding would be continued or terminated after 2014, with little surprise if the latter occurred. Thus, after 15 years, there was still no faith or trust built up in this partnership.

Most important at these meetings are the observations and concerns of front-line workers from community organizations who document the true dimensions of the local challenges. Observations range from the recognition of a surge in new “homeless faces,” a visible increase in homeless youth, out-of-town individuals awaiting postponed medical procedures using the shelters for weeks, to single-parent post-secondary students being referred to a local community agency as their students loans did not allow enough for food and rent after tuition was paid. Meal programs offered by different community and religious organizations—serving some 150–170 people per week—were working well and coordinating efforts to prevent overlap and to meet varied health needs, and a new organizer—Jubilee Urban Movement & Partners (JUMP)—was building support to fill some of the “gaps per week” in meals for the visibly homeless. Shelter programs had effectively addressed all those in need over the winter, but provincial funding, which only covers supplies, was only claimable when the temperature dropped below  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  (later increased to  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 2013/14, and  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  by 2016–17). Nevertheless, the Out of the Cold program was considered a “success”—no cold weather deaths—with discussions as to facilities for “out of the heat” for the summer.<sup>6</sup>

On a more positive note, the new Rent Bank was operational through the Elizabeth Fry Society.<sup>7</sup> The bank was initially supported by a contribution from a local credit union to provide short-term loans and prevent at-risk families from being evicted, and there was the prospect that the city might contribute on a yearly basis to the fund (which has since been confirmed). On the downside, there was a significant demand by single individuals that could not yet be accommodated until more funding was in place—but as the director noted—“we’re used to having to say ‘no’” (however, by the fall of 2013, funding allowed for single individuals to access support). Cumulative efforts continue to demonstrate a commitment to *equality of quality of life* outcomes and reducing hardship, by filling gaps and ensuring improved services for marginalized or vulnerable residents. The formation of a CFP Sub-Committee on Anti-Poverty Strategies (see Figure 1.2) to research and advance local policy options for creating affordable childcare spaces, advancing a “living wage,” increasing employment opportunities, and improving service and access to public transit, has resulted in a more flexible scheduling model to accommodate focused contact with local organizations and government institutions in exploring opportunities grounded in the experiences from other communities. These deeper horizontal linkages within and outside the community (via direct contact with other planners and community organizations) have provided important insights and initiatives, but also revealed the extent of the frustration in other small cities.

By June 2013, there was confirmation that the Government of Canada would renew the Homelessness Partnering Strategy for another five years, but with a reduced yearly financial commitment—thus reinforcing the local uncertainty over future funding. Then, in early 2014 it was reported that new conditions in HPS funding (colloquially referred to as “HPS-Version 2.0”) had placed a priority on the Housing First model as the most effective method in terms of cost and outcomes in addressing the needs of the most visibly street-entrenched homeless.<sup>8</sup> This would gear the majority of (reduced) funding toward services and infrastructure to support this model—suggesting that the Government of Canada was moving from just managing homelessness to actually solving homelessness (CFP). This was to be supported at the provincial level by the monies committed for affordable housing in 2009, in which it had taken five years to reach separate

agreements with each province (Scofield 2011), finally leading to provincial announcements regarding increased opportunities for community organizations to access funds for affordable housing initiatives. This combination of factors led to a local effort to reconfigure the Kamloops Working Group on Homelessness as a more dynamic and “action focused” entity to end homelessness—called the HomeFree Collective. Comprising very broad representation and featuring consultation to determine local needs and priorities (including an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal co-chairs),<sup>9</sup> with overlapping representation from the council on various subcommittees to advance policy proposals directed at all three levels of government, the collective has gradually been pared down in structure to accommodate an onerous meeting schedule, unclear lines of communication and authority, and an absence of focus. There is now a primary emphasis on advocating for local and provincial support for the affordable housing component needed if any headway at all is to be achieved in advancing a Housing First strategy as directed by the Government of Canada (see Chapter 7: Conclusion).

There is little doubt that in the case of Kamloops the Government of Canada homelessness initiatives—NHI and HPS—have fuelled an unprecedented level of collaboration among community organizations, and between the local government and community organizations. In this respect, a government-led, *coercive collaboration* was initially very effective in creating a local network and leadership structure in an effort to maximize the amounts of funding available to address the immediate needs of homeless residents. From this has arisen a vast output of research, reports, and planning documents that not only provide a compendium of information on the range of issues but also demonstrate the more sophisticated forms of data collection and analysis that have been employed to determine specific local needs and priorities. However, it is also evident that within this type of transactional collaboration there was only the potential to maintain efforts at managing the local homelessness challenge—as prescribed by the terms and focus of the NHI and HPS. The emergence of the Changing the Face of Poverty (CFP) network, a local *mimetic collaboration*, was necessary in order to expand the participation of community groups and local organizations, foment the level of local planning and

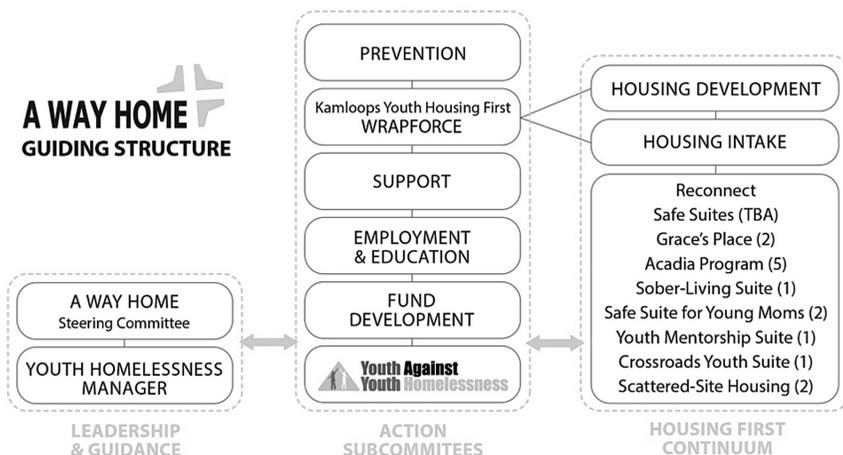


FIGURE 1.3. A Way Home Committee Structure. Courtesy of Katherine McParland, Youth Homelessness Manager for A Way Home Committee.

coordination of services, develop new initiatives, and advance the agenda to end homelessness.

Together, these two types of collaborations have generated an impressive level of community understanding and local knowledge, and, due to the CFP, a leadership initiative with transformational goals, the community appears well-placed to respond to the new Housing First model being adopted by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy should the adequate financial resources ever arrive from provincial and federal sources. Most notable has been the high level of ongoing collaboration despite each organization being ensconced in a competitive environment for federal (HPS), provincial, and local / private sector (e.g., United Way) grants, in which there is a shared conviction that it is most important to just get the money to the local level for services and programs. This has been most evident with the initiative to end youth homelessness, which resulted in a nationally recognized report in 2014 entitled *A Way Home—A Plan to End Youth Homelessness in Kamloops* (City of Kamloops 2014). More impressive, though, is that the Youth Against Youth Homelessness group (YAYH) that drove the planning report process (with support from the City of Kamloops, United Way, the Kamloops Indigenous Friendship

  
**A WAY HOME**  
 Kamloops Youth Housing First  
**WRAPFORCE**  
**GUIDING STRUCTURE**

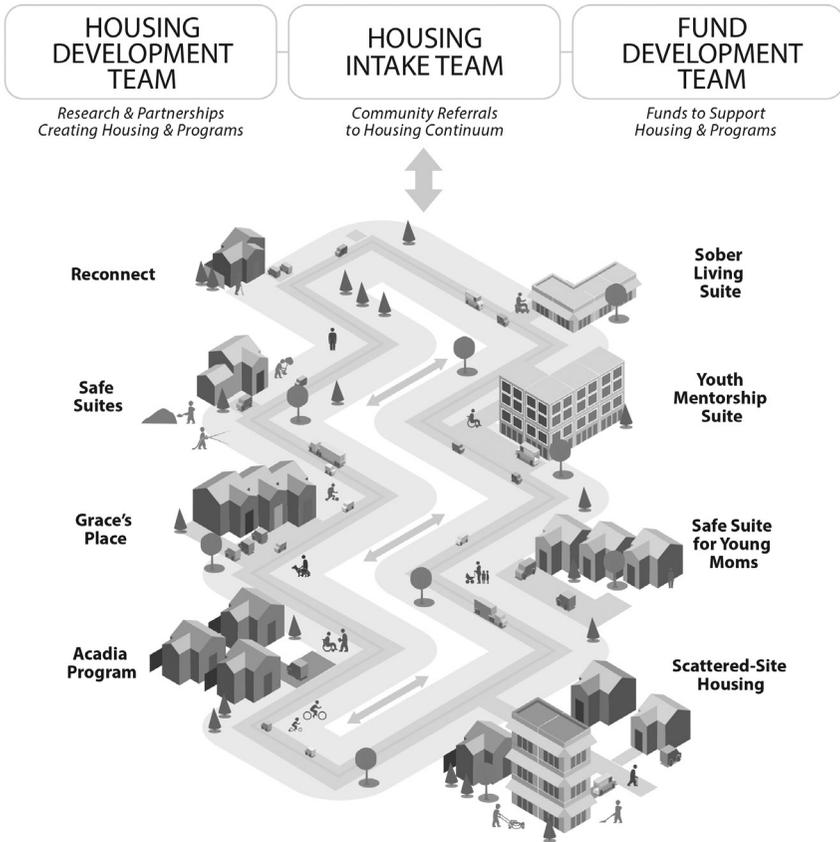


FIGURE 1.4. WrapForce – Guiding Structure. Scaled Space Studios. Courtesy of Katherine McParland, Youth Homelessness Manager for A Way Home Committee.

Society, and the Homelessness Action Plan Coordinator) has persisted as a vibrant body since the release of the report, to become the A Way Home Committee. Initiating aggressive outreach to a largely hidden homeless population, and adopting a Housing First model (entitled the *WrapForce*) for those homeless youth between 13 and 24 year of age (many who have “aged out” out of the provincial foster care system and been left with inadequate education and life skills), the A Way Home Committee has developed a strong working relationship with organizations from both the CFP and the HomeFree Collective, and with new partners.<sup>10</sup> The ability of the A Way Home Committee to quickly gain traction, create unique services, and secure local housing space is testament to the flexible leadership within established organizations and the supportive social capital that has developed over many years in Kamloops, with increasing capacity to engage, incorporate, and challenge provincial government agencies and practices. However, local resource limitations for appropriate housing and support services, as in other cities across Canada, have hampered the early momentum in addressing the extent of local needs for youth (see Chapter 7: Conclusion).

## Conclusion

The collaboration and leadership initiative generated at the local level by the Government of Canada through the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) and subsequent Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) exemplifies the strengths and limitations of a *coercive collaboration*. With the purpose of incentivizing a leadership structure at the local level to address the immediate needs of the homeless, the criteria established to determine local needs and priorities were very effective in generating a local collaboration, detailed research findings, and specific services. However, once this leadership was in place, and particular learning outcomes had been achieved as prescribed by the Government of Canada, the collaboration remained limited to the objectives set from above in addressing homelessness at the local level. With a focus on the terms and conditions of membership, “conflict of interest” guidelines, procedural oversight on funding initiatives proposed from within the community, and program compliance, the Kamloops Working Group on Homelessness (KWGH)—while

performing a critically important purpose—became bureaucratized and constrained by the limited goals and parameters set by the Government of Canada. Thus, this *coercive collaboration* became an effective mechanism for “managing homelessness” at the local level but not for utilizing the research findings on issues of poverty and affordable housing in advancing a more transformational agenda.

In marked contrast, the *mimetic collaboration* that arose in response to these limitations—the Changing the Face of Poverty network—used the research and local knowledge to focus on the direct link between poverty and homelessness, attempting to fill gaps in services through coordinating initiatives, increasing local awareness on homelessness, and advancing the goal of affordable housing and strategies to prevent homelessness. The strengths of this leadership initiative have been the flexibility in membership, the fostering of smaller collaborations to respond to immediate needs, and the advancement of targeted initiatives to fill service gaps. Most importantly, monthly meetings serve as a critical venue to keep organizations and engaged citizens updated on events, on initiatives from within particular agencies or organizations that provide opportunities for other community groups and their clientele, and on new local challenges, funding opportunities, and the shifting terrain at the provincial and federal levels as to regulations, criteria, and spending commitments. Thus, while the KWGH could create a snapshot of local homelessness needs, the CFP is the main repository of the most current collective understanding on services and gaps in addressing and preventing homelessness. The challenges (and the frustrations) are evident, particularly because the larger federal and provincial partnership that generated these initiatives is divided over goals and responsibilities. There is a sense of critical resignation and lack of trust toward the partners as the collective knowledge on local homelessness has not translated into the necessary financial support to meet these needs and support goals—an aspect of this partnership that still remains elusive after over 15 years. Still, the CFP continues to explore options and opportunities, undaunted by these limitations, by fostering opportunities for community engagement and flexibility in promoting initiatives. As an increasingly young and dynamic core of leaders emerges to continue advancing the goals of the CFP, this collaboration expresses

the diverse representation, flexibility, and adaptability that is necessary in addressing such substantial and long-term goals.

In understanding the leadership that has led to this level of social-creative capital, small to mid-size city scale and proximity only provides a context for this ease of engagement—as it is not hard to envision small and mid-sized cities where the more limited goals and transactional leadership set by the Government of Canada have prevailed over a broader agenda and initiatives being taken up by a separate leadership initiative. Community advocates and visiting speakers from other centres have often remarked on the very strong collaborative dynamic in Kamloops, and formerly homeless residents have mentioned the significant availability of services and support compared to other cities. Local advantages in having established organizations and provincial entities are evident, as is the resolve within these organizations to engage with the transformational goals of the CFP. Such continuous multi-sectoral representation and “adaptability” to challenges and initiatives suggest that bureaucratic silos are not as rigid as in higher levels or government, or in large urban centres with more specialized and complex administrative structures. Although local resources are tight and limited and participants confront a demanding meeting and grant application schedule, new initiatives (e.g., A Way Home Committee) are actively taken on out of a larger commitment to ending poverty. The regular participation by city councillors and staff from provincial agencies and the city reveals the high levels of engagement and advocacy in place connecting community groups with various branches of government, but the inability of these connections to translate into resources to match local learning reveals the highly centralized nature of our federal system. Still, with this broad and diverse representation, substantial research and understanding, action plans and ongoing initiatives, there is a firm “community will” to “end poverty and homelessness,” supporting multiple goals, including minimizing hardship, fostering cooperation and empathy, and increasing fairness in this city (see Chapter 7: Conclusion).

In contrast, the larger partnership model—comprising the Government of Canada, the provincial government, the local government, and community groups—is more problematic. This stems from the fact that these partners do not share the same goals. While the local level is committed to “ending homelessness” through an increase in affordable housing

(but lacks the resources to achieve this), the federal and provincial “partners” are not willing to establish the same outcome at this time. At the provincial level, funding for affordable housing and services is prioritized and targeted based on highest need, which may vary from housing for seniors to mental health to shelter services, without the goal of or commitment to ending homelessness (Personal communication with executive director of community organization). While there is ample evidence of the cost advantages of housing the homeless over just managing homelessness, the provincial government is not alone in reserving a commitment to this goal. Only the governments of Alberta and Ontario have made a commitment and endorsed plans to end homelessness, and it remains to be seen if their financial resolve will endure long enough to achieve this goal (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness 2008; Schwan 2016). More elusive has been the position of the Government of Canada, which, despite wanting “measurable outcomes” for HPS-funded initiatives at the local level, *does not measure the impact of its funding on homelessness* (Graham 2011, 175). Rather, HPS as a leveraging device is seen as successful for raising matching funds—calculated at approximately \$2.61 for every \$1.00 dollar invested through HPS. Thus, the Government of Canada does not have a sense of the how many homeless there are in Canada or if cumulative funding over the years has actually reduced homelessness, a fault recognized at the local level. “I’m realizing that if you look across the country, at these Homelessness Action Plans, in cities that have them, [do] they have declines in the number of homeless people in the communities? No. So as an outcome, as to say that we are eradicating homelessness, is a total fallacy. So it becomes something where I support community collaboration to a certain extent, but what interferes with its authenticity is it has to meet the expectations of the funding source, which is Service Canada [Government of Canada]” (Personal communication with executive director of community organization). Having devolved leadership on this issue to the local level, the federal government has adopted a facilitator role, yet retains all the powers to determine the amount of funds available, timelines for renewal, and the criteria and requirements for accessing support (with a confirmed willingness to abruptly end the HPS with little notice—see note 8). This leadership initiative, then, is not a meaningful partnership given the lack of shared goals and unpredictable

commitments among the participants and the inability of the local leadership to influence or access the necessary resources to fulfill the goals they have set (let alone the Housing First criteria adopted by the Government of Canada). Rather, as understood locally, the federal government is “just basically off-loading responsibility, under the auspices that we are empowering the community” (Personal communication with executive director of community organization). This confirms that our centralized forms of government “impede and undermine” local initiatives (even when initially funded by the Government of Canada and the provincial government), and inhibit the creation of highly effective horizontal and vertical forms of governance and the strong leadership needed for long-term transformational outcomes (Sotarauta and Beer 2017, 213; Bentley, Pugalis, and Shutt 2017, 196).<sup>11</sup>

Despite the severe limitations within the partnership model, from a local *equality of quality of life* perspective the brief examples of programs and new initiatives reveal the significant contributions of numerous community and religious organizations, concerned citizens, local businesses and employees, and public officials in addressing a major social challenge and supporting thousands of local residents. While occasional grievances are expressed in the local media regarding issues of panhandling, public intoxication, and visible homelessness in various areas of the city, only a cumulative retrospective provides insights into the considerable time, efforts, and local resources that have prevented these issues from becoming a major local crisis generating highly negative impressions of particular areas of the city (for more details and analysis, see Chapter 7: Conclusion). In this respect, the goal of reducing poverty and ending homelessness is a collective effort not just to address the needs of less fortunate residents but also to ensure that the livability, accessibility, and integrity of the whole city is preserved for all residents (as per Montgomery 2013). To this end, the following chapters by Lisa Cooke—on the Shower Project, and Dawn Farough—on the Homeless Theatre Project—exemplify the further unique initiatives that have emerged from these earlier leadership and learning initiatives in minimizing hardship, fostering empathy and cooperation, and building lasting bonds among community members and former strangers.

My research on federal-local homelessness initiatives has its origins in an earlier research project focused on the emergence of social planning by local governments in small and mid-sized cities in BC. Finding that the main incentive for local governments to take up this task had its origins in the funding opportunities from the Government of Canada led me to evaluate the challenges for this local leadership model. Through interviews and ongoing attendance and connections at CFP meetings, other research opportunities emerged from within the community for our undergraduate students. To date, these have included a “needs assessment” report and a study of *best practices in transitional housing for women with children* to support a funding application for a transitional housing facility for women in Kamloops, two policy-options reports for the City of Kamloops, on utilizing the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund and new regulations to preserve affordable rental properties, and three research reports to support initiatives in the local Homelessness Action Plan—one on the range of programs in other cities to increase the availability of affordable housing, a second on the different “housing first” models utilized by community groups in other urban centres, and the latest on anti-poverty initiatives adopted by the other cities (e.g., transportation, affordable childcare). Through the active participation of undergraduate researchers (researching themes, developing survey questions, leading on ethics approval, conducting surveys, editing final reports), new opportunities have emerged on investigating employment opportunities for formerly homeless residents, transportation services for disabled residents, and evaluation tools for the A Way Home Committee’s *WrapForce*. These types of focused research projects have been quite effective for developing connections, integrating undergraduate students, and serving particular needs of local community organizations and the City of Kamloops. TRU administration has been increasingly supportive of these projects in recognizing their value in time commitments and as professional outcomes, with flexibility in the use of financial resources and/or course credit recognition for interested students (see Chapter 7: Conclusion for more details). In addition, student understanding of homelessness and local affordable housing challenges has increased, with more events to raise awareness promoted by students groups and faculty in collaboration with community organizations.<sup>12</sup> However, my experience with a large, multi-year

community partnership research grant application was revealing as to the local limitations. Over a three-month period of consultation to meet the Fall deadline it was evident that the overlap with other grant application deadlines, board approvals for research participation by community partners (not always forthcoming), prior ethics and workload approvals for provincial government partners, and frequent changes in positions and responsibilities within community organizations prevented the engaged and detailed preparation needed to create a competitive grant application. Overcoming such barriers would not be without major challenges and changes in local financial resources and capacities, and would support the benefits of community-engaged research and efforts within our university to be a more effective knowledge-support structure (see Chapter 7: Conclusion, on developments).

## NOTES

I would like to thank Tim Norman, Whitney Mahar, Steve O'Reilly, Brayden Wilson, Theresa Thoms, and Daniela Corno—TRU undergraduate researchers who have made a significant contribution to my understanding of the city. A special thanks to Keely McKibben for all her support and insights in completing this project.

- 1 An idea taken from large urban centres in Canada, where anti-poverty collaborations were becoming more evident by the 1990s.
- 2 Only British Columbia and Quebec continued, but with substantially reduced funding (Kelowna Committee to End Homelessness 2009).
- 3 Kamloops received funding in July 2001, leaving less than two years to meet objectives.
- 4 The “Task Force convenes local and provincial governments to develop new resources to address issues related to homelessness” (Patterson et al. 2008, 26), and the cities involved were Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Fort St. John, Terrace, New Westminster, and Surrey.
- 5 The specific funding stream for Youth Homelessness was ended with the renewal of the NHI in 2003 (see Gaetz and Redman 2016, 3).
- 6 Collaboration between St. Paul’s Cathedral, New Life Mission, and Emerald Centre (CMHA) to ensure food and shelter throughout the winter (with space at ASK Wellness facilities if needed). See Sperling (2016).
- 7 Rent Bank provides low-interest emergency loans for low-income working families threatened with eviction or an inability to pay utilities—providing an alternative to the high-interest loans available through fringe financial institutions. See <http://www.kamloopsefry.com/programs-services/housing/kamloops-rent-bank/>

- 8 It was later reported that the Government of Canada had intended to terminate the HPS, confirming local suspicions as to federal resolve, and that the program was only preserved after last-minute lobbying efforts by important figures in Ottawa familiar with the issue and the latest research on the potential cost-saving benefits of a Housing First approach (Macnaughton et al. 2016).
- 9 “The HomeFree Collective is a community-wide approach to ending homelessness in our community. Members include non-profit housing providers and social service agencies, landlords and property management companies, developers and builders, realtors and mortgage brokers, persons with a lived experience of homelessness, urban Aboriginal community representatives, foundations and individual funders, university professors and student researchers, government agencies, community leaders and concerned citizens, and political representatives from all four levels of government” (City of Kamloops 2015).
- 10 Support and stable representation from the local business community have been more evident on the A Way Home Committee—perhaps because of the focus on youth and the sense that this early intervention can be most effective in altering life outcomes for this demographic.
- 11 “However, the scope for strong leadership will also be dependent on the *acceptability* of the degree of the restrictions on decision-making on strategy and action. If the controls or conditions are not *acceptable* to the sub-national body, this will weaken the power of the leadership to shape strategy and action at the sub-national level that address local needs and priorities (i.e. hindering place-based modes of leadership)” (Bentley, Pugalis, and Shutt 2017, 196).
- 12 Examples of ongoing and expanding university-community engagement in this area include the TRU promotion of local events to raise awareness (see Figure 1.1) and campus forums, such as the well-attended Kamloops Affordable Housing Panel Discussion (October 17, 2017)—hosted by the TRU Student Union Equity Committee and consisting of Jen Casorso (City of Kamloops), Kim Galloway (ASK Wellness), Kelly Fawcett (Kelson Group), Audrey Shaw (Kamloops Real Estate Association), and Terry Kading (TRU).

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