THE END OF POVERTY:

a people-centred, evidence-driven approach

YSM
YONGE STREET MISSION
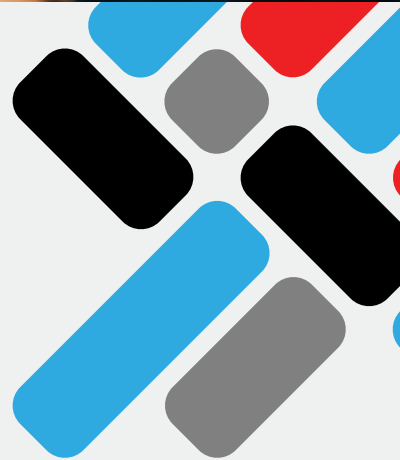
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a country with one of the highest standards of living in the world, the fact that we still haven't cracked the code on poverty is mind-boggling. As Angie Peters, President and CEO of the Yonge Street Mission (YSM) states in her new book *Just Act: We are the Solution to Poverty*, "The truth is that nobody wants poverty. I've never met a business leader who said, 'I'd like to build businesses where all our entry-level employees will need a food bank to get by.' The people that I work with in government and the social sector certainly did not intentionally design a system that traps people in poverty. Developers that I know didn't set out to build whole cities that nobody can afford to live in. None of us want to support unfair workplaces when we buy low-price products. We did not set out to design for poverty."[1]

With our increasingly data-driven economy, tracking poverty and its various facets has become standard practice. Poverty reduction strategies exist at the national, provincial, and municipal levels for large urban centres like Toronto. While these strategies identify policy measures and tactical approaches to make it easier for people below the poverty line to get by, poverty rates are still on the rise[2]. No longer is poverty a phenomenon faced only by people living on the streets, in shelters, and in government-supplemented housing. Dual-income families now frequent food banks. It's becoming more complicated.

While we know that poverty alleviation efforts do make a difference, as an agency that has been alleviating poverty in Toronto since 1896 YSM has struggled to truly *understand* the difference we are making. How many people have moved beyond poverty because of the services we've provided? What, specifically, were the services that were most effective for families living in poverty generation after generation; for vulnerable youth with precarious housing situations; for newcomers looking for a fresh start; for adults and children struggling with multiple disabilities? What we *have* learned is that people need to have capacity in multiple facets of their lives to be able to rise out of poverty. We believe poverty is a highly intersectional phenomenon and each person has a unique experience. If we are to help people move beyond it, we need to understand and approach it from this lens.

In 2016, YSM created a measurement framework for well-being called *Transformation Integrated Measurement and Evaluation System (TIMES™)* as part of our 20-year strategic plan so we could get to the root of understanding poverty. We began to look for the indicators that would need to move in someone's life to help them rise above the poverty line. These include tangible indicators such as shelter, education, and health, as well as personal agency indicators such as a sense of power, self-awareness, and values. In the last five years, we have learned much about what moves the needle on poverty and have begun making changes to our programming.

But we can see that our efforts alone are not enough. Developing TIMES™ was YSM's first step towards our goal of ending long-term poverty.* We knew from the start, however, that no agency, government, corporation, or institution could do it alone.

We envision a city where everyone works together to end poverty, applying a people-centred approach to measuring progress, where we learn and change together.

Will you join us?

---

* YSM defines 'long-term poverty' as second generation (or greater) reliance on social assistance

WHY DOES POVERTY STILL EXIST?

Whether via census data, listening to the news, or just walking through the streets, it's not hard to see that poverty continues to be a significant challenge in Toronto. Although census data shows a sharp decrease in the rate of poverty in 2020, we've since come to understand and accept that this seemingly impressive decrease was a result of emergency government assistance in response to COVID-19 and is not sustainable[3]. In fact, the latest Statistics Canada information shows that the percentage of Canadians living in poverty dipped to 6.4% in 2020 but then rose to 9.9% in 2022, mere decimal points from its state of 10.3% in 2019 (Figure 1). More concerning still is the widening poverty gap which has increased from pre-pandemic levels in 2019, indicating that those who are experiencing poverty in Canada today are further below the poverty line than before[4].

Toronto itself continues to realize a higher rate of poverty than is observed across Ontario as well as the country. According to 2021 census data, 13.2% of the population (363,955 people) were living with an income below the Low Income Measure[5].

Canada's Official Poverty Line
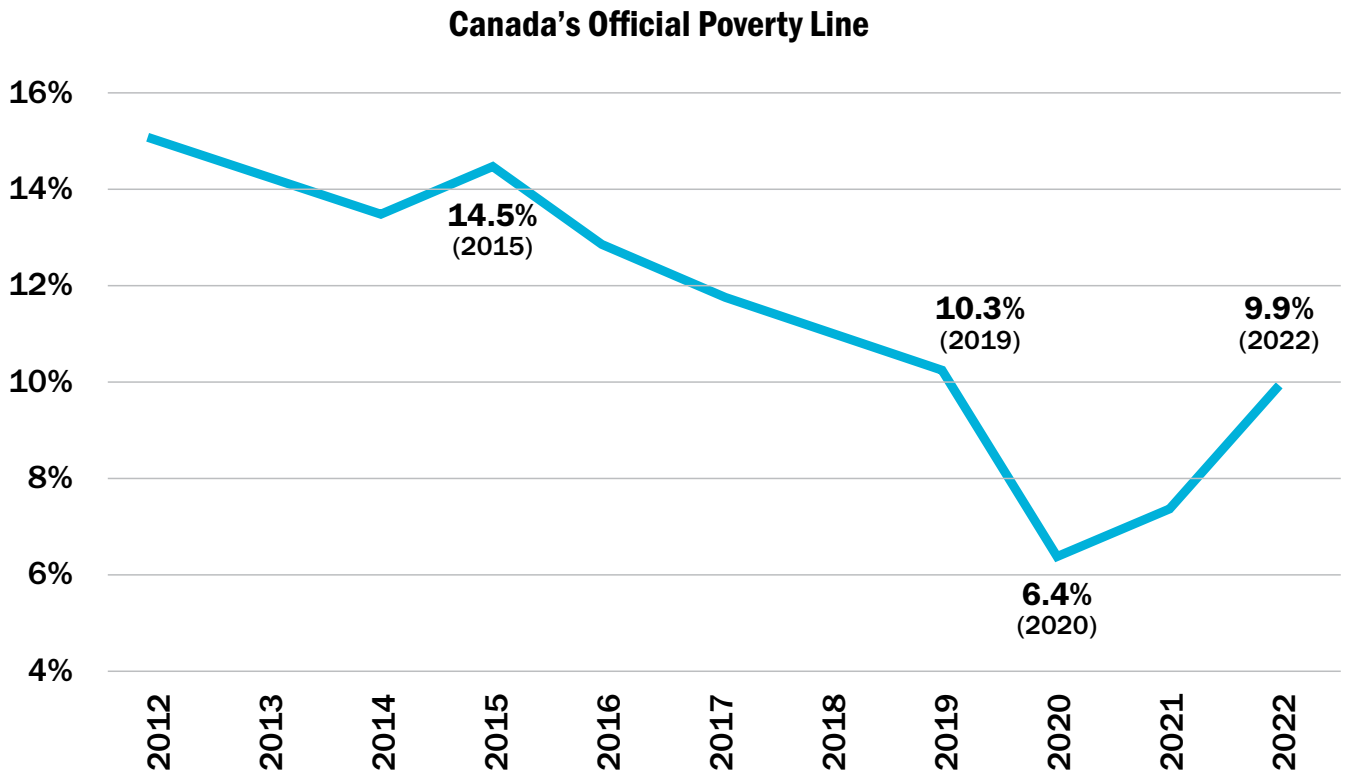
Figure 1. Statistics Canada (2024) *Dimensions of Poverty Hub*
https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/topics-start/poverty

And yet, hundreds of organizations and groups work tirelessly to help alleviate poverty in this city. While it is difficult to estimate the number of such organizations, there are 300 funded by United Way Greater Toronto alone[6] and the City of Toronto reports working with 400 Community Based Organizations through its Community Coordination Plan[7]. The potential reach of such a group of like minded organizations is staggering to contemplate. In 2024, YSM provided services to 6,297 people. Simple math points to the likelihood that these poverty-focused agencies and organizations have the capacity to reach well over the 363,955 people we know are living in poverty in this city.

In fact, poverty has become a multi-sector concern. No longer are nonprofit organizations and governments the only ones working tirelessly to address it. Over the past decades we have seen significant contributions from academia as well as the corporate sector, recognizing that all of us have a role to play in creating the suite of services, policies, networks, and physical assets that serve everyone. From research partnerships grounded in the real challenges people face every day, to tackling the housing crisis, to informing policy change with lived experience, this multi-sectoral approach has the potential to break long-term poverty once and for all if we can figure out how to work together.

As Angie Peters suggests in her new book, "The hard reality is that in our society we're getting outcomes that are not aligned with our values."[8] From the research she has conducted with sector leads including large and small employers, government, philanthropists and foundations, social service agencies, policy makers, developers, finance, media and more, it is abundantly clear that we all value and desire a society where all people are able to pursue their goals and thrive. And yet, somehow 10% of the population is still living in poverty, with child poverty even more prevalent, at a rate of 15.6%[9]. It's clear we have to face the reality that we are not moving the needle on poverty in any significant way.

> **"The hard reality is that in our society we're getting outcomes that are not aligned with our values."**
>
> - Angie Peters, *Just Act*
>
> WE ARE THE SOLUTION TO POVERTY
> **JUST ACT**
> ANGIE PETERS

Those of us working in the area of poverty reduction can likely list multiple policies that seem to be be counterproductive, actually trapping people in poverty: from income clawbacks, to policies that keep social assistance recipients living separately even if they'd prefer to live together (also perpetuating the housing crisis), to the simple fact that Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates continue to fall further and further below the poverty line itself (Figure 2).

In the 1980s and '90s, a household receiving social assistance could afford modest but sufficient housing as well as food to put on the table for three meals a day. On that modest but stable platform, individuals and families had the capacity to make choices about going back to school or taking employment training which would support their journey out of poverty. However, social assistance rates now provide an income hovering 40-60% below the Low Income Measure in Ontario (Figure 2). This traps people in a cycle of survival living, making difficult decisions about what bills they will pay and which meals they will skip rather than decisions that will empower movement out of poverty.

The Gap between Social Assistance Rates and the LIM Poverty Line
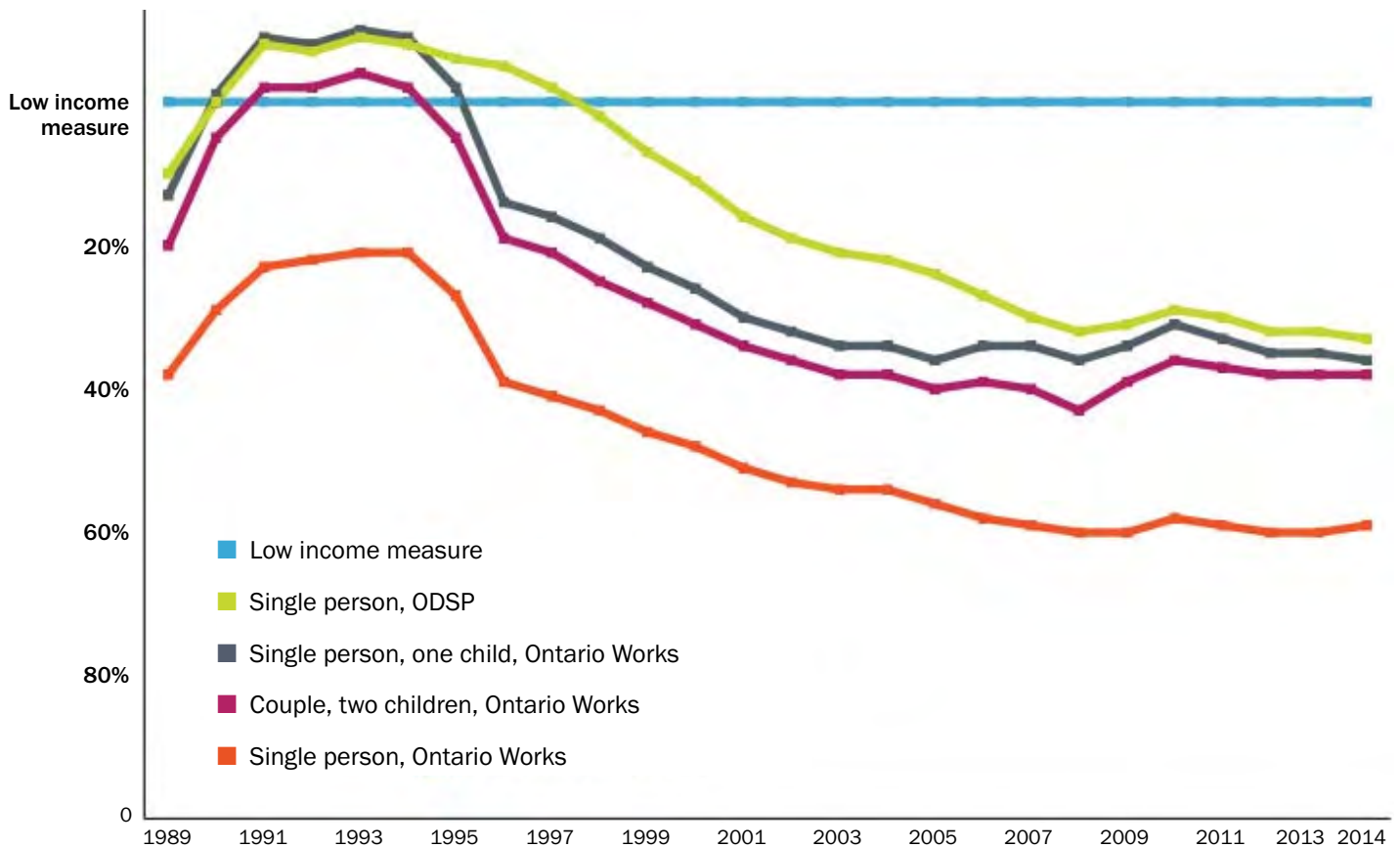
Figure 2. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Ontario Office) (2016). *Ontario's Social Assistance Poverty Gap*, p 6.*
https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/ontario-s-social-assistance-poverty-gap/

While everyone might agree policies like these need to change, it's challenging to suggest what could work better. In the absence of sufficient data pointing to effective solutions, we feel stuck doing the same things we've always done and expecting different results.

Furthermore, if we were to make changes, how will we know progress when we see it? What are the markers that will tell us if long-term poverty is on its way out? Will we all be looking for the same markers? How will we know what got us there - which services, which policy changes, which shared initiatives made the biggest dent? It's going to be a long road and feedback loops will be critical to make the continuous improvements that will help us break this cycle once and for all. We will need data: shared data using a shared framework that truly informs peoples' progress out of poverty. We need to collaborate not only on our initiatives but also on how we measure impact to avoid finding ourselves in a sea of siloed data that cannot possibly answer the question of how to solve long term poverty.

---

* Although Figure 2 stops at 2014, Maytree's data on Welfare in Ontario indicates that the welfare income of a single person receiving Ontario Works has dropped to 36% of the Official Poverty Line (MBM) in 2023. https://maytree.com/changing-systems/data-measuring/welfare-in-canada/ontario/

THE DATA AVAILABLE DOESN'T TELL US IF WE'RE MOVING THE NEEDLE

There is no shortage of studies and statistics on poverty in our city, province, and country. Census data tells us how many individuals and/or households are living below various low income measures[*], and these statistics can be compared across geographical regions and census tracts. The data can be disaggregated by multiple demographic factors which provides valuable insights into who in this country, province, and city is struggling with poverty. From time to time pivotal reports are published that provide deeper insights and suggest calls to action. Recent such reports include Food Banks Canada's *Poverty in Canada Through a Deprivation Lens*[10], Campaign 2000's *Envisioning a Poverty-Free Ontario*[11], and Toronto Foundation's *Vital Signs*[12]. For a more interactive experience, helpful data hubs such as Statistics Canada's Dimensions of Poverty Hub[13], Toronto's Dashboard[14] and Wellbeing Toronto[15] provide the most current data on poverty rates and related statistics at one's fingertips. Planning for and tracking poverty reduction is being taken seriously by multiple levels of government as well. Canada, Ontario, and Toronto now all have comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategies, each with regular published reports.

However, relying on income alone (or the income required to purchase basic items) as the measure of poverty misses two important realities: 1. Other factors can significantly affect a household's standard of living, such as whether they own or rent their living accommodations, whether they have a family member with significant health costs, and how much savings they have been able to accumulate. 2. 'Non-financial assets' such as a supportive network of family and friends, personal agency, confidence and health can contribute much to a person's or household's ability to become stable and progress towards a healthy standard of living. Food Bank Canada's recent publication *Poverty in Canada Through a Deprivation Lens* conducted a study to determine whether the Material Deprivation Index (MDI) could be a more nuanced substitute for an income measure such as the Market Basket Measure. While the MDI would address the first reality above, it would do little to address the second, and given its complexity it would be best instituted by a body such as Statistics Canada.

The City of Toronto has made great strides in understanding the nuances of poverty across the city through its 20-year Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)[16]. In it, and particularly through its 4-year Action Plans, the city lays out target indicators within 17 recommendations to be achieved by 2035. The strategy focuses on housing stability, access to services, transit equity, food access, the quality of jobs and incomes, systemic change, and more. Indicators include things like the number of individuals receiving various subsidies, access to City programming, and the number of low income housing units available, etc. These are important numbers, but they don't tell us about the impact these services have on the lives and well-being of *people*. For example, what impact does a transit subsidy have on the life of a single parent household on their journey out of poverty? What enables this person to learn about the subsidy and use it to engage in more active job searching? What difference does a supportive network of family, friends, and neighbours make in helping to stabilize someone's life? If we can't answer questions like this, we will never truly know how to inform policies and a system that actually accomplishes its goal of moving people out of poverty.

Academia, too, is working harder than ever to generate relevant data that can help us understand the drivers of long term poverty. Much research is being done by Toronto's key academic institutions and multidisciplinary hubs such as the University of Toronto's School of Cities, which facilitates an active space for urban research, education and engagement by "creating new and just ways for cities and their residents to thrive"[17]. As nonprofits and others working towards poverty alleviation invest in strengthening our approaches to impact measurement, it is exciting to imagine the fruit of meaningful academic partnerships that can tackle real problems faced in our city. However, if we are not intentional about collaboration and working towards shared goals, the result will continue to be siloed data and research that lacks potential to make the impact we all want to see.

---

* While Canada selected the Market Basket Measure as its official poverty line in 2019, Ontario and the city of Toronto continue to apply multiple measures, including MBM, LIM-AT/BT and LICO. See https://maytree.com/wp-content/uploads/How_do_we_measure_poverty_May2017.pdf to learn about the pros and cons of each measure.

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY AS A HUMAN PHENOMENON WILL INFORM HOW WE MEASURE IT

We need a shared approach to tackling poverty, and at the core of this is a shared approach to measurement. With poverty statistics piling up and increasing efforts towards a data-driven approach, we will soon find ourselves with a mountain of poverty focused data. How will we make sense of it? If we only measure outputs, e.g. increase in housing stock, transit affordability, food access, how will we know if we are actually making a dent in poverty? As long as we view poverty as a massive, faceless, nameless entity, we will never be able to tackle it. Poverty is intersectional: it looks different newcomers, racialized communities, single parents, youth, people with disabilities, and other groups. In addition, poverty is not purely an economic phenomenon. It is a *human* phenomenon and needs to be understood, measured and addressed as such. A framework that measures and shows progress along core human well-being indicators is what's needed. And we need to *measure* together: with aggregated data along the same measures, we will learn whether people are moving out of poverty - poverty as a nuanced phenomenon - and what services and supports it takes to help them on this journey. We will also learn where people become 'stuck' in a position where services and supports cannot help them. This is where policy can be questioned and alternative solutions considered.

> **Poverty is not purely an economic phenomenon. It is a *human* phenomenon and needs to be understood, measured and addressed as such.**

YSM'S IMPACT MEASUREMENT JOURNEY

Since 1896 YSM has been working closely with individuals, families, children, youth, and communities living with long-term poverty. Over the years we have seen noticeable progress in people's lives, but the transformation that we hope to see is inherently hard to measure. For many years, we focused on the outputs of our programs as our measure of success. We still have records dating back to the 1930s tracking daily distribution of 5,600 beef sandwiches, 80 gallons of tea, and 26 gallons of milk. While our programs have become more sophisticated, it remains easy to count the number of counseling sessions or job placements. While these metrics can be important, they measure the things we do, *not the impact on people's lives*.

In 2016, YSM embarked on an ambitious 20-year mission to contribute to the end of long-term poverty in Toronto through partnership with others. This has changed the way we work, pushing us to focus on helping people *exit* poverty, not just endure it. To realize our vision we needed a way to assess our work that was both outcome-focused and systematic. It needed to comprehensively address the multiple dimensions of poverty: economic and psychological, individual and systemic. We started by listening to those with lived experience and frontline staff who have spent years walking alongside them. We explored the core dimensions of well-being and traced the journeys that people had taken out of poverty. It took several years of focused work, and the end product was a measurement framework which we called Transformation Integrated Measurement and Evaluation System (TIMES™).

TIMES™ is a robust transformation framework that informs the ways in which we support individuals and communities by measuring progression across seven domains of well-being: Connection, Economic, Education, Environment, Equality, Wellness, and Worldview (Figure 3). Each of these domains includes indicators which show progress along a five point scale (see Figure 4 as an example). Our case workers use the framework not only to measure progress out of poverty, but to collaboratively set goals with the people we serve. By correlating progress on the TIMES™ framework to service provision, we are beginning to better understand which services, or combinations of services, have the best results for moving specific indicators. Through real-time progress reports, we are able to address immediate concerns, create action plans and introduce the right package of services and supports to move from one stage to the next.*
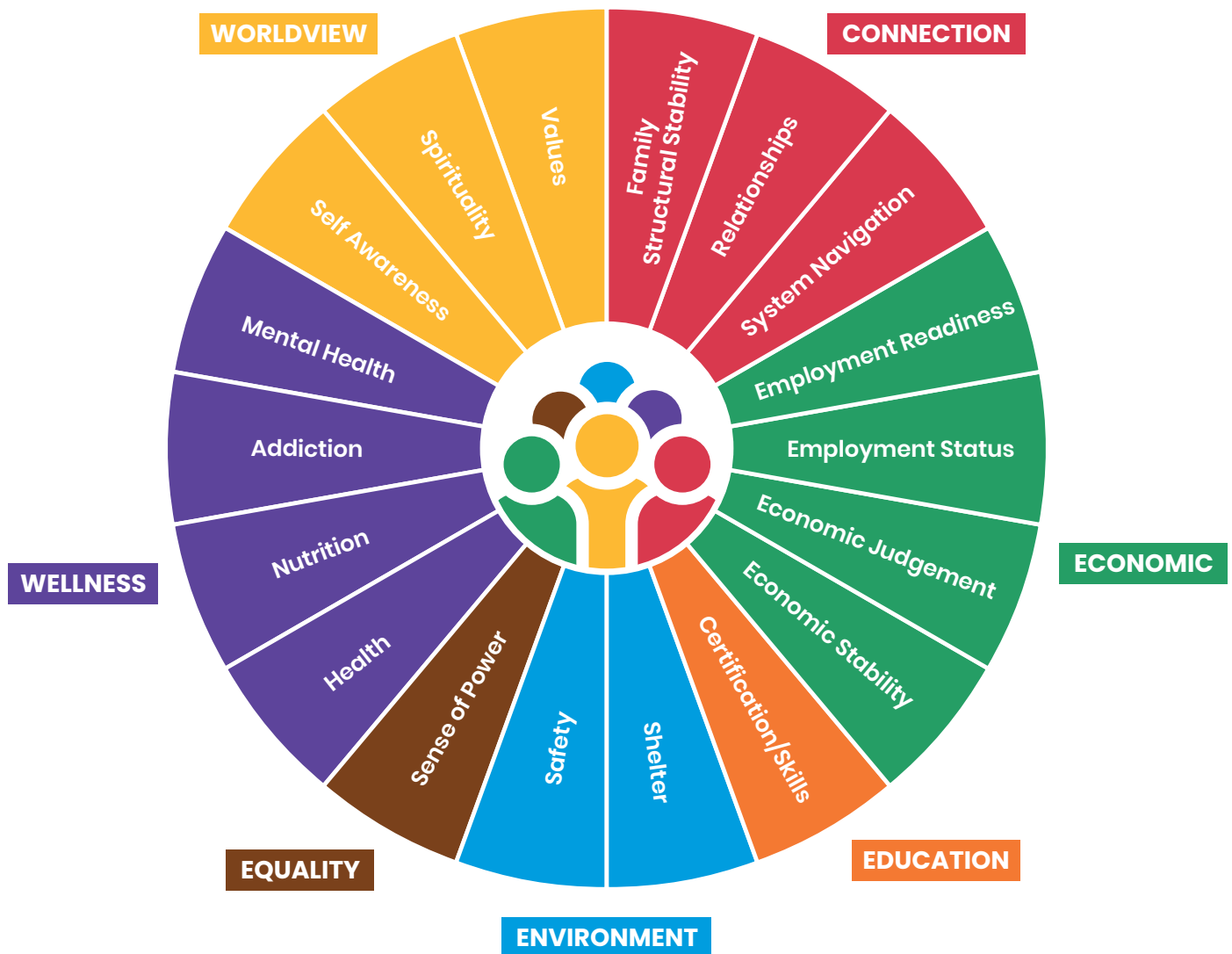
Figure 3. Domains and Indicators within YSM's Transformation Integrated Measurement and Evaluation System (TIMES™)

* We've also developed a Community Development version of TIMES™ (CD-TIMES™), which measures the health of a whole community, including the collective work of resident leaders, network tables and other collaborative groups. CD-TIMES™ is multi-faceted in that it can be used for measurement as well as strategic planning, and is bolstered by a Community Development toolkit to help community members themselves create the kinds of neighbourhoods they want to live in.
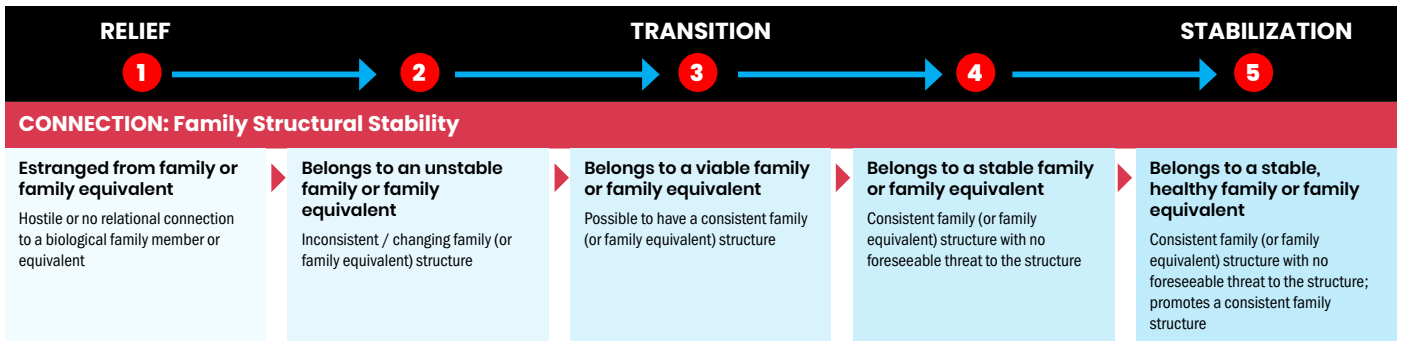
Figure 4. Sample from TIMES™ 5-point progression scale

Finding ourselves, for the first time, with usable data on what services make a difference for people experiencing poverty, we needed a system to capture that data and allow us to analyze it. Microsoft Excel quickly proved insufficient for the task so we moved on to another database management system, which also was ultimately unable to do what we asked. We were looking for a case management system that could seamlessly integrate TIMES™ data for each of our participants. Finally, we turned to Salesforce, the world's leading cloud based CRM platform, to build us a system that was able to capture activities and TIMES™ data, and convert these into actionable insights and reports. We knew from the start, however, that if we were to see progress on our goal to work towards the end of long-term poverty in Toronto, we could not do it alone. We were able to engage the federal government to provide the funding required to ensure the new Salesforce platform would be scalable, with the potential for multiple agencies to use the TIMES™ measurement tool, moving us closer to shared measurement and collaboration.

This system has proven to be a great fit. Salesforce allows us to seamlessly collect and share TIMES™ data within our organization as well as with funders, government, agency- and community-partners. With the advanced analytics functionality built into the program, we can move confidently from data collection to data analysis, using dashboards to ask questions of our data and our impact. Becoming a data-driven organization did not happen overnight. It required significant change management internally and externally, as we worked with staff and funders alike to showcase the power of data in helping inform transformational change.

Having gone through this journey, we are ready to help other like-minded organizations who want to make the shift. Our vision for this is *partnership*: the use of TIMES™ by multiple agencies will teach us much about which services and approaches work best when it comes to ending poverty. Finally, we will be able to leverage the data-driven answers towards transformative systems and policy change with increased impact and influence.

> **Our vision for this is *partnership*: the use of TIMES™ by multiple agencies will teach us much about which services and approaches work best when it comes to ending poverty.**

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR FROM TIMES™

Having now approximately five years of TIMES™ data captured in our Salesforce system, we have uncovered some insights into which services, or combination of services, are most effective in helping someone progress out of poverty, providing us with the intel needed to adjust our programming for better results:

1. System navigation is a powerful early intervention

Helping people understand which services and supports are available to them (which we call systems navigation) can be powerful as an *early intervention*, creating a domino effect for progress in multiple areas of their life. We first learned this by closely analyzing the TIMES™ data for one of our participants who saw significant success while working with us.*

Steve's Story

When Steve first came to YSM he was skeptical, overwhelmed, and hopeless but also ready to make changes. Steve was struggling with mild illiteracy, mounting debt, social anxiety, and a developing disability, all of which were causing him to fall behind on bills, taxes, health, and keeping up with his roofing business. His relationships with his adult daughters were becoming strained and he began trying to escape with alcohol and hoarding. We spent hours with Steve researching opportunities for him, accompanying him to appointments, and connecting him to services. In the early days, nearly half of the services YSM provided to Steve were focused on helping him understand what financial and other supports were available to him through government and community programs. In less than two years, Steve was able to begin focusing on his health by getting a family doctor as well as starting physio and mental health counseling. He accepted that due to his increasingly debilitating arthritis, he could not continue to run a construction company and we helped him file for bankruptcy and access other sources of income through the government supports available to him. His alcohol abuse stopped altogether and he worked on his hoarding by decluttering his home massively. YSM helped him catch up on years of taxes.
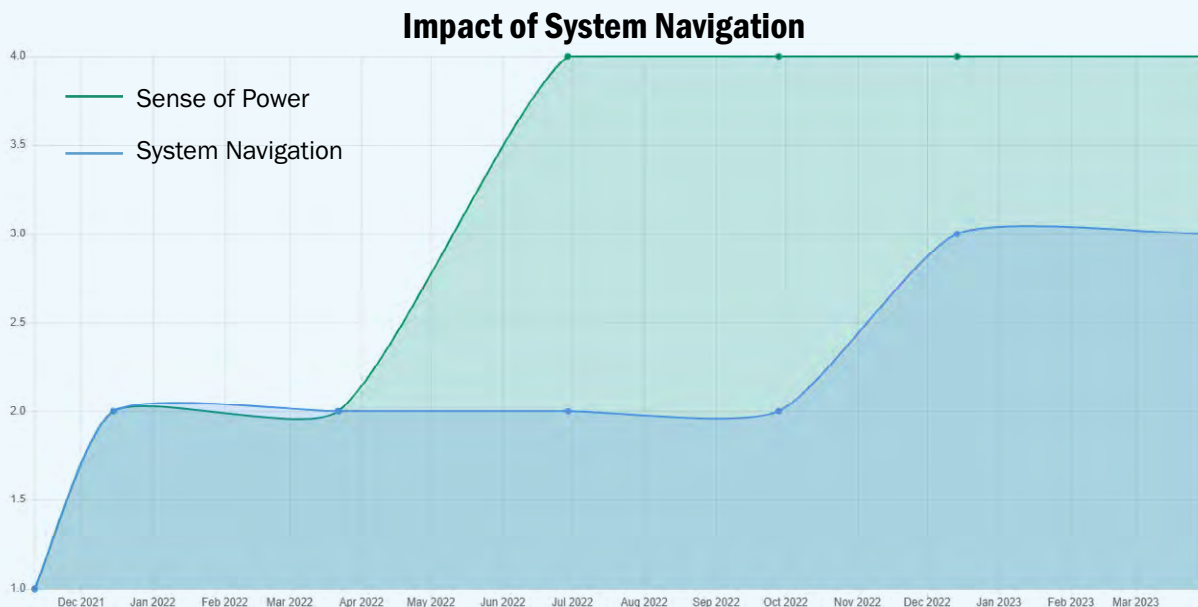

Impact of System Navigation

Figure 5. Steve's *Sense of Power* TIMES™ score increases following system navigation support

---

* We highlighted his story in our webinar series Pathways to Meaningful Income. https://www.ysm.ca/tag/webinars/

We can see this story played out in Figure 5, which shows not only how Steve's ability to access system supports increased (System Navigation indicator), but within a few months of providing deep system navigation support, so did his Sense of Power. Once someone feels like they have gained control over their life again, that's when they're ready to start thinking about the future.

After diving deep into Steve's story and TIMES™ data, we were curious about whether system navigation support drove improvements for our participants across the board. We ran a regression analysis and noticed that some TIMES™ indicators - specifically employment status, employment readiness, health, mental health, and values - increase significantly with each hour spent supporting someone in system navigation and advocacy (Figure 6). As TIMES™ indicators progress along a scale of 1-5, an increase of 1 represents an entire level in the scale, which is significant progress. The average increase we see in Employment Readiness is worth noting here, as it may be considered counterintuitive to some. It shows that spending time stabilizing someone's life with the income supports and other services available to them can actually help prepare them for suitable employment. Through qualitative, anecdotal evidence from our staff, we have learned that system navigation support helps people feel 'ready' to take the next step. In some cases, income supplements have allowed them the time and income needed for building skills or retraining. In others, they simply provide the stability needed to take hold of their future and begin planning.

From these insights YSM has begun investing more deeply in our ability to help people know what supports and services are available to them. We hosted a session provided by the City of Toronto's Human Services Integration department for our own staff as well as those from other agencies interested in updating and deepening their understanding of supports available from all levels of government. We have held brainstorming workshops with individuals from multiple sectors on what can be done to break down barriers to accessing supports. We're also supporting a group working on a community-based model to equip local residents interested in helping their neighbours to access supports available to them.
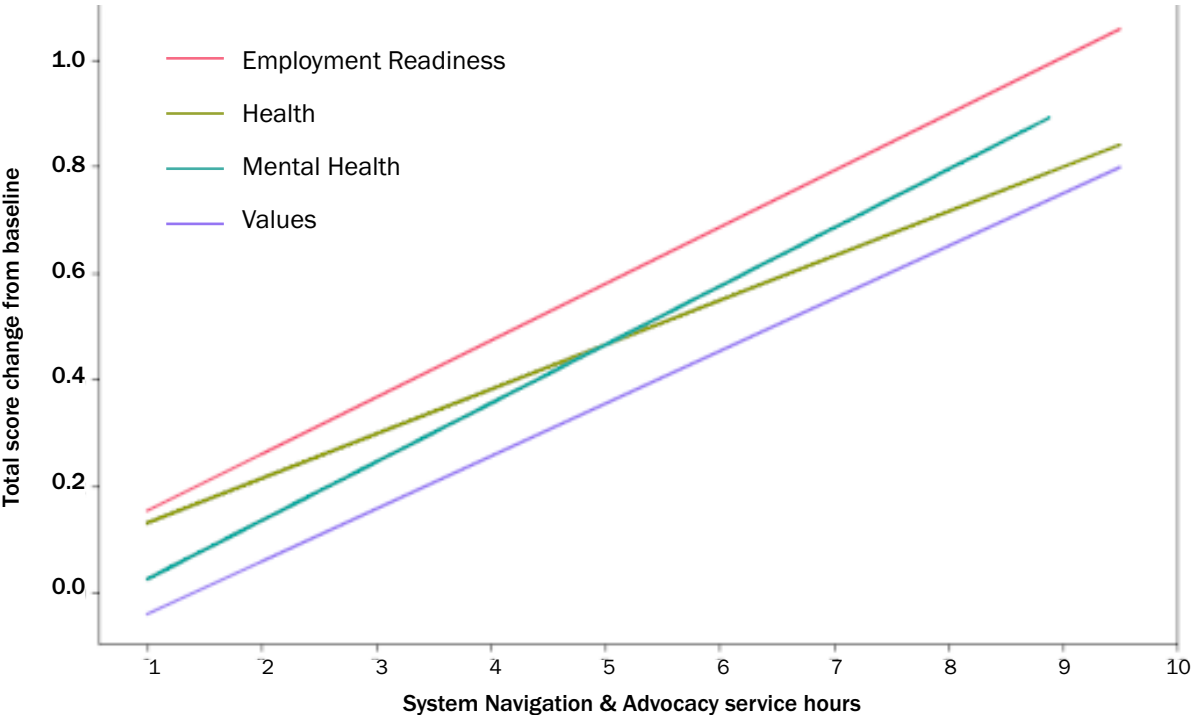
Impact of System Navigation & Advocacy

Figure 6. System navigation support increases TIMES™ scores for participants across YSM

2. Flexible financial support provides a boost to job seekers

Another learning we have seen from the data is that people who face significant barriers to entering or re-entering the job market tend to benefit greatly from financial support geared towards meeting their immediate needs. WRAP was a 12 week municipal program (plus two months post program support) for people receiving Ontario Works that had the flexibility built in to allow agencies to create their own programming that they felt would work well for the people they serve. Through WRAP, YSM developed a program that provided financial supports for items participants deemed critical in order to take the next step in achieving their employment goals. These included such things as training-related expenses, technology, rent catchup, and transportation funds, all alongside one-on-one case management support. Our staff felt intuitively that WRAP was one of the most impactful programs YSM was able to offer in a short time frame, so we conducted an analysis of the TIMES™ data to see if it confirmed this intuition. To what extent did participants in this program, so simple in its design, succeed compared to other Ontario Works recipients who were not in the program?

The analysis showed that WRAP participants saw greater overall improvements in their TIMES™ scores (9.2% compared to 3.6% - see Figure 7), mainly due to increases in mental health, economic stability, certification/skills, and employment readiness. We learned that accessing flexible financial support provides a solid foundation which allows a job seeker to focus on gaining skills and prepare for the employment search rather than be burdened by unmet needs. Unfortunately the WRAP program ended in December 2024, with no expectation of its renewal. Funders and policy makers need to know of its effectiveness, and data like this helps us tell the story. In reaching out to other agencies administering the program in Toronto, we have learned that these agencies, too, feel the flexible nature of this funding allowed for tailored support to meet the unique needs of people who want to enter or re-enter the workforce but face significant barriers. Combining our quantitative data with anecdotal evidence, together we have begun to advocate towards sustaining the program into the future so that many others can benefit.

WRAP Impact on TIMES™ Score
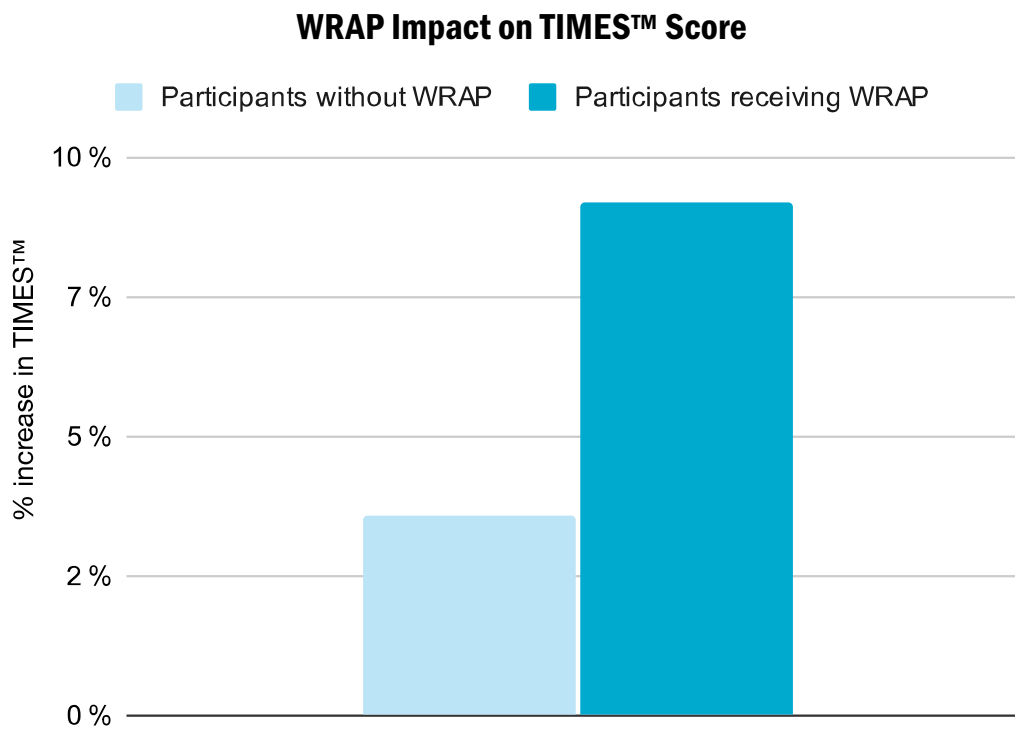
Figure 7. Increases in TIMES™ scores for WRAP compared to non-WRAP participants

3. Mental health services improve employment readiness for high-barriered job seekers

Pillar one of the Government of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy[18] is "Encouraging job creation and connecting people to employment". YSM offers a number of programs that aim to help people gain the skills and confidence they need and to find a job that works for them. Concurrently, we encourage participants to engage in some of the other services we offer alongside their journey towards employment. Given that many of the people we work with face multiple challenges in their lives, our observation has been that a multi-service wrap-around approach can help boost their overall progress towards their goals, including employment goals. Specifically, our qualitative data (impact stories) showed that spending time addressing mental health seemed to have a significant positive effect in other areas of our participants' lives. Our theory was that as a person's health improves, their capacity to work towards getting and keeping a job also improves.

With TIMES™ data now in hand, we were ready to test that observation with quantitative results. We analyzed TIMES™ scores for two different groups: employment program participants who engaged in the mental health supports we offer and those who did not. Figure 9 shows that not only did the group who received mental health services thrive in health-related indicators, including addictions, health and nutrition, but also in other critical areas like shelter and safety. The personal agency indicators relationships, values, and system navigation also saw better progress compared to the group that did not receive mental health support. What we found most interesting, however, was the significant progress made in employment readiness. Here, the quantitative data confirmed our observations: mental health services helped to boost job-seekers towards their employment goals by strengthening their foundation from which to successfully step into the job market. From here, further studies could be done to unpack the data: Was this group also more successful at keeping their jobs? Are there notable differences in the starting point of their journey with YSM for those who chose to engage in mental health programs compared to those who didn't? What more might we learn as we layer in demographics data? Over time, we look forward to answering these questions through our data, and also from the data collected by other agencies delivering or providing employment programs.

Indicator Improvement for Participants that have received Mental Health Supports & Workforce Development (WFD) vs. only WFD Programs
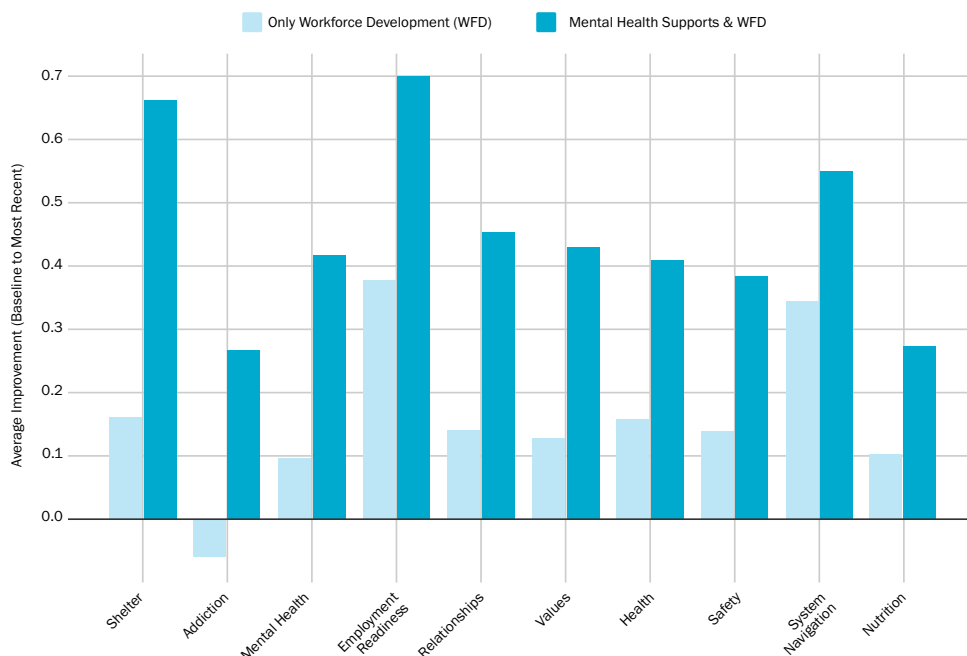
Figure 9. TIMES™ indicators that showed significantly higher scores when combined with mental health programs

WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER

Developing TIMES™ was our first step towards YSM's goal of ending long-term poverty. However, we knew from the start that no agency, government, corporation, or institution could do it alone. With over 400 community based organizations working across the city, in partnership with governments, academic institutions, socially-minded corporations, think tanks, and caring community members, we can work smarter as we seek out the solutions that will lead us toward the end of long-term poverty - a goal we all have in common. But achieving that goal will require us to work differently: instead of pursuing siloed attempts at measuring impact, we need a shared approach. That is why YSM has created a new partnership platform called the ReVISION Partnership: a collective of diverse collaborators with the shared vision of a city where everyone has an opportunity to thrive and prosper. Supported by YSM, ReVISION is resourced with tools, technology, and trained professionals to equip citywide collaborative initiatives working towards our common goal. We are already learning much from partnerships with the agencies who are implementing TIMES™ alongside us. By engaging in shared discussion on what the data means, we will not only make strides towards more effective service delivery but also in understanding what those 'sticky' indicators are that may necessitate shared advocacy for changes to policies that create real barriers to progress out of poverty.

We can work smarter as we seek out the solutions that will lead us toward the end of long-term poverty - a goal we all have in common.

We are inviting partners into this discovery process so that we can create collaborative solutions to eliminate long-term poverty in Toronto and beyond, as well as better inform the systems and policies that may be hindering us from making the progress we all desire to see on poverty alleviation. Poverty has become an increasingly complex phenomenon, and it will take all of us to move the needle. For nonprofit organizations already working tirelessly towards this end: let's join forces by rallying around shared goals and shared measurement to know if we're making a difference. For academia: let's form partnerships and create solutions that are grounded in real time data and lived experience. For governments and funders: let's raise our sights and focus on initiatives that are data-driven and accomplishing shared poverty reduction goals, to truly inform policy that helps alleviate poverty. For the private sector: we need your voice at the table to help bring practical solutions as we try to make this economy work for *everyone*.

Now is the time to step up and work systematically together.

Let's break the cycle of poverty once and for all.
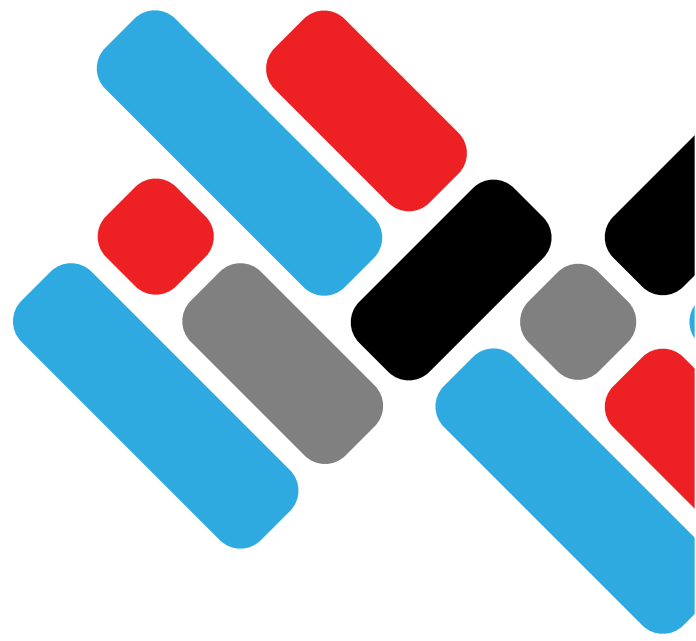
ENDNOTES

1   Peters, A. *Just Act: We Are the Solution to Poverty.* (Castle Quay Books, 2024), 21

2   Government of Canada. *Blueprint for Transformation: The 2023 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty* (Chapter 4), 2023.

3   Government of Canada, *Blueprint for Transformation*, 2023.

4   Campaign 2000. *Envisioning a Poverty-Free Ontario: 2023 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Ontario* (2024)

5   City of Toronto. *Backgrounder on 2021 Census: Families, Households, Marital Status and Income* (2022)

6   A United Way. *United Way Greater Toronto*, 2025.

7   City of Toronto. *Community Coordination Plan*, 2024

8   Peters, *Just Act*, 22.

9   Campaign 2000, *Envisioning a Poverty-Free Ontario*, 2024.

10 Food Banks Canada. *Measuring Poverty with a Material Deprivation Index (MDI): An Updated Index for Canada* (2024)

11 Campaign 2000, *Envisioning a Poverty-Free Ontario*, 2024.

12 Toronto Foundation.*Toronto's Vital Signs*, 2024.

13 Statistics Canada. *Dimensions of Poverty Hub*, 2025.

14 City of Toronto. *Toronto's Dashboard*, 2025.

15 City of Toronto. *Wellbeing Toronto*, 2023.

16 City of Toronto. *Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy*, 2024.

17 School of Cities. *About Us*, 2025.

18 Government of Ontario. *Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020-2025)*, 2020.

JOIN US!

Everyone can play a role in this important work! We welcome your time, your ideas, your professional skills or your financial resources to help us design data-driven shared solutions towards a better future for people experiencing poverty in our city.

- **Become a TIMES™ partner:** apply TIMES™ to your organization's work and join our learning community

- **Become a ReVISION partner** by collaborating on shared solutions towards the goal of ending poverty
  ◦ Reach out to the ReVISION Backbone team at info@ysm.ca for more information

Contact us and become part of the solution to ending long-term poverty in Toronto in this generation.

ReVISION is a collective of diverse collaborators with the shared vision of a city where everyone has an opportunity to thrive and prosper. Supported by YSM, ReVISION is resourced with tools, technology, and trained professionals to equip initiatives working towards our common goal.

ReVISION PARTNERSHIP
Supported by YSM
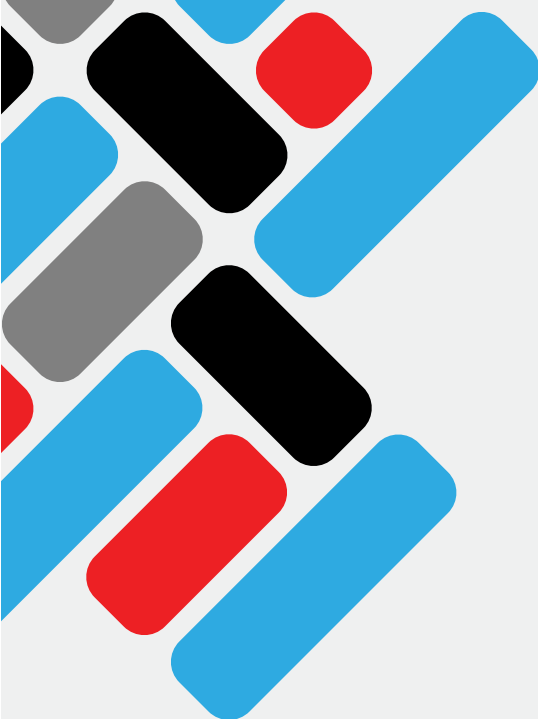
YSM is on a mission to end long-term poverty in Toronto by working in partnership to support life change, develop healthy communities and remove systemic barriers.

Our vision is a city where people, not poverty, thrive.

YSM recognizes the significant contributions made by Future Skills Canada and Avonlea Trust towards the development of the TIMES™ framework, its implementation at YSM, and the development of a TIMES™ partnership platform.

Future Skills Centre

Avonlea Trust

YSM
YONGE STREET MISSION

306 Gerrard Street East
Toronto ON M5A 2G7
(416) 929-9614 or 1 800 416-5111
ysm.ca

f @YongeStreetMission
𝕏 @YSM_TO
⊙ @YongeStreetMission