

# THE END OF LONG-TERM POVERTY

## YSM'S STRATEGIC PLAN

**PART 3: EXPANDING IMPACT  
2025-2030**

**YSM**  
YONGE STREET MISSION



# OUR 20-YEAR PLAN

## FOR A CITY WHERE PEOPLE, NOT POVERTY, THRIVE

**We believe poverty is highly intersectional 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.**

That's why our 20-year plan (2015-2035) to end long-term\* poverty in Toronto prioritizes a shared data-driven, people-centred approach to understanding the barriers to poverty alleviation, and broad partnership to expand our impact. We envision a city where everyone works collaboratively to end poverty, where we learn and change together.

### Part 1: Lay the Foundation (2015-2020)

We built a plan and laid the foundation necessary to prepare us for the significant work required to realize such a life-transforming goal. We created our theory of change, applied our RISE Model of Care, and built TIMES™, our measurement and evaluation system, which is now being applied to prove the efficacy of our programming to change lives, build stronger communities, and transform Toronto.

| YSM's 20-year Strategic Plan  |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Lay the Foundation  | Modelling and Early Expansion   | Expanding Impact   | Realize the Vision  |
| 2015-2020   | 2020-2025   | 2025-2030  | 2030-2035   |
| Develop a plan for determining and increasing impact, and align our approaches and systems. | Create and test tools and frameworks, and develop early partnerships. | Apply learnings and amplify impact through multi-sectoral partnership initiatives. | Influence system change through diverse partnerships by addressing key barriers to poverty elimination. |

### Part 2: Modelling and Early Expansion (2020-2025)

The pandemic brought unforeseen challenges that changed the landscape in ways we could not have anticipated. Despite these challenges, we remained committed to our mission. Even as we faced a significant increase in community needs due to the pandemic, we began to implement data-informed improvements to our programming and forge early partnerships towards shared solutions to poverty.

### Part 3: Expanding Impact (2025-2030)

As difficult as it was, the pandemic forced us outside the box towards new and better approaches, and brought all of us together in ways we could not have foreseen. In the coming five years we see an open door of opportunity for heightened collaboration for those working to create a Toronto where everyone thrives. YSM is ready to expand the impact we want to see by continuing to apply our learnings and engage in solution-focused multi-sectoral partnerships.

**It's time, Toronto. Will you join us?**



Angie Peters  
President and CEO



David McFadden  
Chair, YSM Board of Directors

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

# YSM HAS A 20-YEAR PLAN

## TOWARD THE END OF LONG-TERM POVERTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS

**In a country with one of the highest standards of living in the world, it is difficult to accept the fact that we still haven't cracked the code on poverty.**

Census data shows that the percentage of Canadians living below the poverty line dipped in 2020 but then rose to 10.2% in 2023, essentially at par with its state of 10.3% in 2019<sup>1</sup>. Equally concerning is the widening poverty gap, indicating that those who are experiencing poverty in Canada today are further below the poverty line than before<sup>2</sup>. Toronto continues to realize a higher rate of poverty than is observed across Ontario as well as the country, with 13.2% of its population living below the poverty line<sup>3</sup>.

**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.**

1. Statistics Canada. *Dimensions of Poverty Hub* (2025)

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

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



photo: Pascal Savarino

**YSM's Strategic Plan aligns with these United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**



## VISION

**A city where people, not poverty, thrive**

## MISSION

**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.**

## IDENTITY

**YSM is a Christian organization working to alleviate and eradicate poverty as an expression of God's love for all people.**



photo: Pascal Savarino

# THEORY OF CHANGE

YSM believes that a multi-tiered approach is necessary to make a lasting impact. We work simultaneously to **Change Lives**, **Build Communities** and **Transform Systems** in order to achieve our vision of a city where people, not poverty, thrive.

## TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

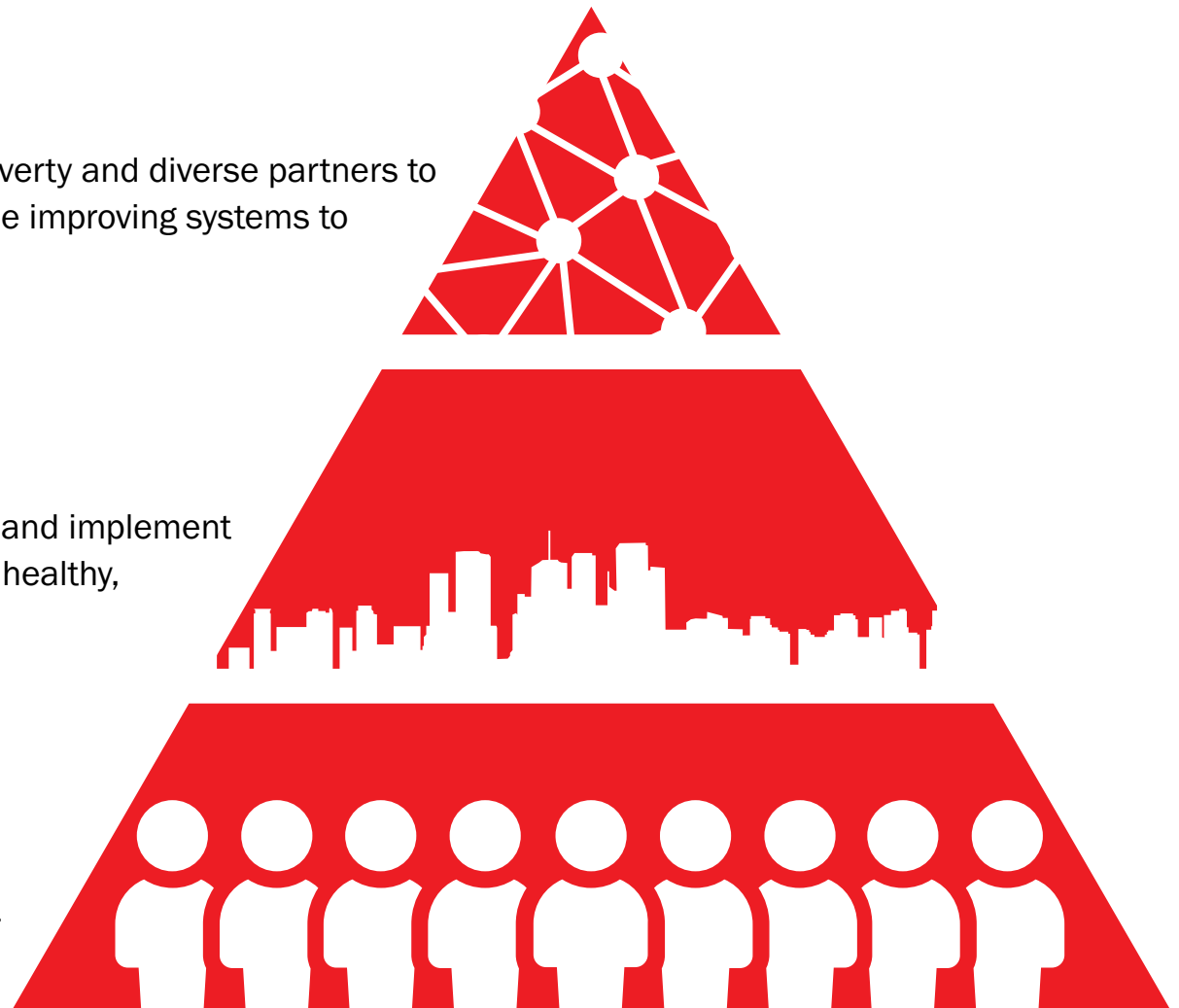
We collaborate with people experiencing poverty and diverse partners to better understand and remove barriers while improving systems to enhance participation in society.

## BUILDING COMMUNITIES

We collaborate with communities to design and implement their own sustainable solutions for building healthy, supportive neighbourhoods.

## CHANGING LIVES

We invite people experiencing poverty into programs designed to support them in their identified goals.



# EXPANDING IMPACT

2025-2030

At this third stage of our 20-year Strategic Plan, we commit to **Expanding Impact** by being proactive learners and ready partners toward making a difference in the city of Toronto and beyond.



We will work toward **Transforming the Systems** that aim to serve and support our neighbours in need by using our shared learning to inform policy, and testing out early initiatives through multi-sector partnerships.



We will continue to **Build Communities** by applying our tools and approaches in our own neighbourhood, and sharing these resources to support those working to build healthy neighbourhoods across the city.



We will continue to apply a data-driven approach, making improvements to our programming as we learn what works best toward **Changing Lives**. We will emphasize strong internal collaboration and expand external partnerships to ensure participants are supported to thrive in every area of their lives.

## STRATEGIC GOALS 2025-2030

# CHANGING LIVES

### Immediate Needs:

Expand the impact of relief services for our participants by securing external partnerships, strengthening internal collaboration, and providing facilitated pathways to wraparound care leading to a 80% success rate of referrals.

### By 2030:

- 10% increase in active external partnerships
- 80% success rate of internal referrals from relief programs to goal setting programs

### Growth and Development:

Improve the well-being of our participants through participant- and data-informed programs, providing holistic, seamlessly integrated services that leads to a 15% increase in TIMES™ wellbeing.

### By 2030:

- 15% increase in TIMES™ well-being for our participants
- 20% increase in positive completions for all programs
- 85% participant satisfaction collected through an established regular pattern of gathering and integrating program-wide participant feedback



Because people tend to face multiple challenges, we provide a multi-service wrap-around approach that helps them make progress across different areas of their lives at the same time. These include services we provide directly, such as mental health, family counselling, employment services, meals and healthcare, as well as services provided through our referral partners. Through our RISE model of care we support people not only to thrive, but to look for ways to engage in building their own healthy communities.

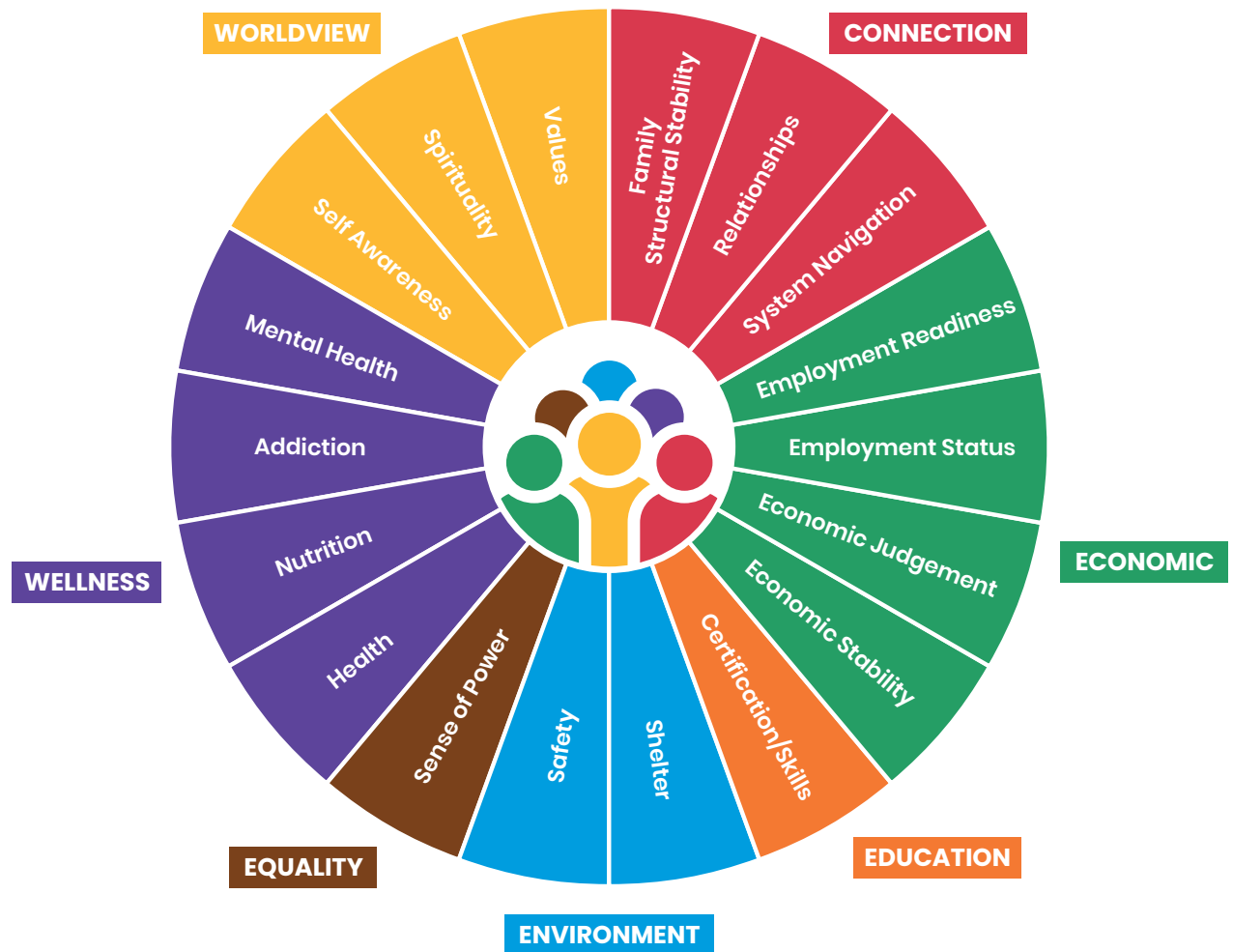
### RISE model of care

| RESPOND           | INVITE            | SUPPORT       | ENGAGE      |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Drop In           | Health            | Life Skills   | Community   |
| Food              | Counselling       | Education     | Development |
| Clothing          | Mentorship        | Housing       | Organizing  |
| Community Support | Spiritual Support | Stabilization | Advocacy    |
|                   |                   |               | Volunteer   |
|                   |                   |               | Engagement  |

As part of the first stage of our Strategic Plan, YSM created a measurement framework for well-being called **Transformation Integrated Measurement and Evaluation System (TIMES™)** 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. We have learned much about what moves the needle on poverty and have begun making changes to our programming. The framework is available for others to use so we can learn together and move the needle on poverty.

To learn more about TIMES™ visit [www.ysm.ca/what-we-do/times](http://www.ysm.ca/what-we-do/times)



## STRATEGIC GOALS 2025-2030

# BUILDING COMMUNITIES

**Build, equip, and mobilize a community development network that supports local leadership, agencies and other actors in applying community development best practice and learning together, resulting in 5 healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods.**

### By 2030:

- Support 5 communities to become healthier, more inclusive and supportive by applying community development best practice
- Two of these communities achieve a Community Health score of 75% or greater
- Support 5 faith-communities to engage their neighbourhoods by building on strengths and helping to meet felt needs
- Share our learnings externally at one event per year



## STRATEGIC GOALS 2025-2030

# TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

Guided by Lived Experience Leadership and data driven insights, implement shared solutions to poverty and engage in advocacy initiatives with like-minded partners, resulting in one significant systems change.

### By 2030:

- Publish 5 shared solutions to alleviating poverty
- Conduct 3 advocacy initiatives on issues identified as critical barriers to poverty reduction
- Lead collaborative partnership-based activities that result in one system change



**Over the first ten years of our Strategic Plan we have learned much about what moves the needle on poverty and have begun making changes to our own programming.**

**BUT WE CAN SEE THAT OUR EFFORTS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH.**

We are inviting partners to join us along this journey 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 initiatives that are data-driven and accomplishing shared poverty reduction goals. Let's 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.
- ➔ **For people just like you:** Come and volunteer at YSM! There are lots of ways to get involved. Visit [ysm.ca/get-involved/volunteer](https://ysm.ca/get-involved/volunteer) to learn more.

**Now is the time to step up and work systematically together. Let's break the cycle of poverty once and for all.**





## CONTACT US

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

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