

Emerging Leaders began in early 2006 as a question – *how do we more meaningfully engage our 22-44 year old population so that they will stay in London?* Over time, it evolved into more of a vision – that London’s next generation of leaders could and should be involved and invested in giving back and shaping the community’s future and that EL could be the vehicle, or bridge, for making this connection. In four community think tanks, attended by several hundred emerging leaders from across sectors, we heard common themes, new ideas, bright visions for London and its future. Economic development, professional development and mentorship, philanthropy and community investment, cultural diversity, pride, environmental development and urban planning, were just a few of the shared passions of our group.



EMERGING  
LEADERS

Before the think tanks were even over, we got to work becoming the bridge. We connected dozens of ELs to board positions and many to mentors. We hosted professional development seminars on everything from career-building and networking to economic development and urban planning, and got together regularly just to network and socialize. Through our activities, we engaged approximately 800 ELs as members and nearly 100 local organizations as partners. All the while we worked on a report to the community on think tank ideas and actions.

With several hundred members, the momentum was strong and support was high...and so were the expectations. Despite many dozen volunteers who dedicated hundreds of hours and their considerable talent and expertise, it became clear that EL was not sustainable via volunteer steam alone. It had truly taken on a life of its own. And so, in 2008 we embarked on a sustainability review of the EL concept.

We engaged a consulting group from the Richard Ivey School of Business and a group of advisors from the community to ask some fundamental questions, including, does EL continue to have value to our demographic and the community? Should it continue, and in what form?

The results (full report online at [emergingleaders.ca](http://emergingleaders.ca)) were based on member surveys, in-depth interviews with community stakeholders, and a review of best practices across North America, and conclusions were clear – Emerging Leaders has an important role to play in the retention and engagement of London’s young leaders and should be formalized and properly resourced with a mandate to support this population and collaborate with the many local organizations and

agencies in economic development, civic leadership and arts and culture, to help ensure the EL voice is heard and engaged in support of our community's future.

And so here we go!

This fall, we will be working with a group of local experts from the demographic to formalize a new way forward for the Emerging Leaders initiative. The new structure will be:

- Innovative – a new model of cross-sectoral civic development and entrepreneurship;
- Inclusive – with members on top and several dozen volunteer positions to fill;
- Focused – on 5 strategic areas – professional development, community development, networking/relationship-building, research (providing market intelligence about our demographic), and funding (for EL itself and special community projects);
- Intensely collaborative – working to break down silos and provide value across sectors, and never to duplicate what another partner has already created.

We are acutely aware of the dangers in creating yet another non-profit that “someone” has to fund. We are committed to a multi-faceted funding model that ensures future viability and ensures we are not interfering with the fund and revenue development of other important community organizations, many of we consider partners and some of whom, at times, struggle to sustain funding to do their valuable work.

We know we've been quiet lately and many are wondering if we ran out of steam...we didn't, but we also haven't been as active and communicative as we might have been. We thank you for your patience and ongoing support while we sorted through this process.

We will look forward to officially unveiling a new model for community collaboration and support of London's young leaders. Until then, we invite you to contact us at [info@emergingleaders.ca](mailto:info@emergingleaders.ca) for more information or to explore our web resources at [www.emergingleaders.ca](http://www.emergingleaders.ca).