



PRIMER DOCUMENT





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Project Partners

Action Lab

The Action Lab is a social enterprise of Skills Society. Skills' vision is a community where all individuals are valued citizens, deserving respect, dignity and rights. Through services and innovative projects, Skills works to help people with disabilities experience meaningful lives as valued citizens. The Action Lab is internationally recognized for their approach to stewarding social innovation labs around complex challenges.

Capital Region Housing

the largest provider of social and near market housing in the Edmonton area, they currently manage over 4500 social housing rental units and over 600 near market housing units, and offer both townhouses and apartments throughout the city. CRH's vision is to build quality homes and inclusive communities with engaged people.

Homeward Trust

A not-for-profit organization committed to ending homelessness in our city. Homeward Trust is dedicated to making a difference. Their efforts are driven by community needs and priorities as outlined in A Place to call Home: Edmonton's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Homeward Trust works with agencies, neighbourhoods, mainstream systems, community members, and all orders of government in pursuit of their goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton.

Inclusion Alberta

a family-based non-profit federation that advocates on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Inclusion Alberta, together with families share a dream of meaningful family life and community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. As an advocate, Inclusion Alberta supports families and individuals in their desire to be fully included in community life.

This project titled Future of Home Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs, however, the views expressed are the personal views of the author and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) accepts no responsibility for them.



WHAT IS THE HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB?

Skills Society, Capital Region Housing, Homeward Trust, and Inclusion Alberta have partnered to explore affordable and inclusive housing for people with developmental disabilities¹. The creation of housing and support models that are affordable, accessible, and also support the social inclusion of people with developmental disabilities is complex work that requires the coordination and cooperation of multiple stakeholders and deeper insight into the perspectives and experiences of people with disabilities. This lab seeks to address the current gaps in housing for people with disabilities using a social innovation lab approach.

WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?

In essence, social innovation is about uncovering promising solutions to complex problems. Once solutions have been thoroughly tested, a solution becomes a true social innovation when it spreads and scales to a systemic level. Complex problems—also known as wicked problems—are characterized by a low level of agreement on what the problem is and what might be the best way to address it. Complex challenges are messy, conflicting, changing, and not easily definable and full of uncertainty. Social innovation approaches strive to tackle problems at their root, don't chase novelty, pay attention to what might already be working, and are open to experimenting with new pathways and possibilities. As Canadian social innovator Al Etmanski says, "innovation is a mixture of the old and the new with a dash of surprise."²

WHAT ARE SOCIAL INNOVATION LABS?

Social Innovation Labs are designed to be generative, drawing on the strengths, empathy, creativity, and wisdom of a collective to explore new ways of making progress on a complex challenge. Social Innovation Labs are not designed to provide immediate fixes to challenges. They tend to focus on systemic challenges and aim to generate longer term solutions.

¹Person first language (people with disabilities) was used in this primer. Inconsistencies of disability language in this document represent quotes from the literature or interviews.

² Shift Lab, 2.0 Primer Document

EVOLVING LAB METHODS*



Often smaller teams

Focus on improving systems by addressing practical issues through research, co-design, prototyping.

Finding out what might work for people by really chacking with people.

Bottom up approaches.

CAN BE SHORT SIGHTED IF ONLY APPLYING DESIGN THINKING.



Focus on assisting lab participants to better understand and work with the dynamics at play in complex problem domains.

Often a mix of Systems Thinking and Design Thinking.

Bias towards Action and prototyping solutions.

MIGHT LEAN A LITTLE MORE TOWARDS DESIGN APPROACHES.



Often bigger groups

Focus on the role of people in shaping systems, with intensive personal transformation as the major pathway to change.

A lot of group dynamics. Questions lead to more questions.

CAN BE TRICKY TO MOVE TO ACTION IF GROUPS GET STUCK IN EXISTENTIAL SYSTEMS THINKING FUNK.



*Model and graphic courtesy of Think Jar Collective Social Innovation Lab Field Guide <https://thinkjarcollective.com/tools/social-innovation-lab-field-guide/>

WHY A LAB ON ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES?

We are concerned about the tendency to create, ‘specialized’, congregated, institutionalized living arrangements for people with developmental disabilities that often perpetuate their exclusion and marginalization. There is currently a lack of housing options that are affordable, accessible, and meaningfully support the social inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. Additionally, people with developmental disabilities and their supports are frequently left out of conversations surrounding housing. Now, more than ever, there is a need for housing and support models that are co-created with people with developmental disabilities and their supports.

The creation of housing and support models that are affordable, accessible, and also support the social inclusion of people with developmental disabilities is complex work. A social innovation approach is right for this project because of its emphasis on (1) bringing diverse stakeholders together, (2) going deep to understand root causes, (3) creating solutions with, not for people, (4) finding out what works using small scale tests, and (5) scaling only the ideas that show promise after testing with community.



CHALLENGE SCOPE FOR THE HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB

PROJECT SCOPE

This lab will generate promising prototypes of two proposed housing and support models, created with and tested by multiple people—community members, people with lived experience, service providers, and context experts.

GUIDING QUESTION

What might an affordable, accessible housing and support model that also supports the social inclusion and belonging of people with developmental disabilities look like?

SCOPED CHALLENGE AREAS

SHARED COMMUNITY MODEL PROBLEM STATEMENT

How might we create a shared community housing model for people with and without disabilities that (1) incorporates both shared and private living spaces, (2) is affordable to someone living on AISH, (3) is accessible, and (4) supports social inclusion and belonging?

Shared community models where people with disabilities live together with other people without disabilities have shown promise in creating living spaces that are affordable, accessible, and inclusive. These models can take many forms but usually incorporate some combination of shared and private living spaces. We wonder if a series of tiny homes might be built together in a way that offers spaces where people can have their own privacy but also gather as a community and build relationships? There also may be possibilities for laneway/garage suite homes to be explored.

VERSION OF SCATTERED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

How might we create a housing and support model inspired by scattered site supportive housing that supports the interests and needs of people with developmental disabilities labelled with complex service needs?

The model should (1) incorporate both shared and private living spaces, (2) be affordable to someone living on AISH, (3) be accessible to the segment of people the prototype is designed with, and (4) support social inclusion and belonging.

Scattered site supportive housing models where people with disabilities live together with other people without disabilities in apartment style living and receive support, flexibly, when they need it (rather than having it scheduled in) have shown promise in creating living spaces that are affordable, accessible, and inclusive. These models can take many forms but usually incorporate some combination of private apartment style living spaces with shared common areas. We wonder if an apartment style complex might be built in a way that offers spaces where people can have their own privacy but also gather as a community and build relationships? Promising aspects of the Melcor Model supported by Skills Society and the YMCA Welcome village might be explored and incorporated.

Learn more about the Melcor Welcome Village here:



VISION

There are two parallel parts to design with this challenge:

1. The physical space(s)
2. The supports that will be offered in this setting including both natural, neighbourly support and paid support through PDD

Each team will create a 'roadmap' that outlines the:

- ▶ Physical structure/features of the individual units
- ▶ Physical structure/features of the shared spaces
- ▶ Support model in place to ensure people with developmental disabilities living there are safe and can lead rich, full, inclusive lives
- ▶ The support model has built in a mix of paid and flexible support (PDD funded) and natural supports from people who live in the community and may not have disabilities

BIG HOPE TO CONSIDER WHEN PROTOTYPING

The big hope is that the prototypes could show a way to provide meaningful, inclusive home life for less than it would cost to support someone in a congregate care, less inclusive model. If that can be done, it will be more likely to be implemented by funders.

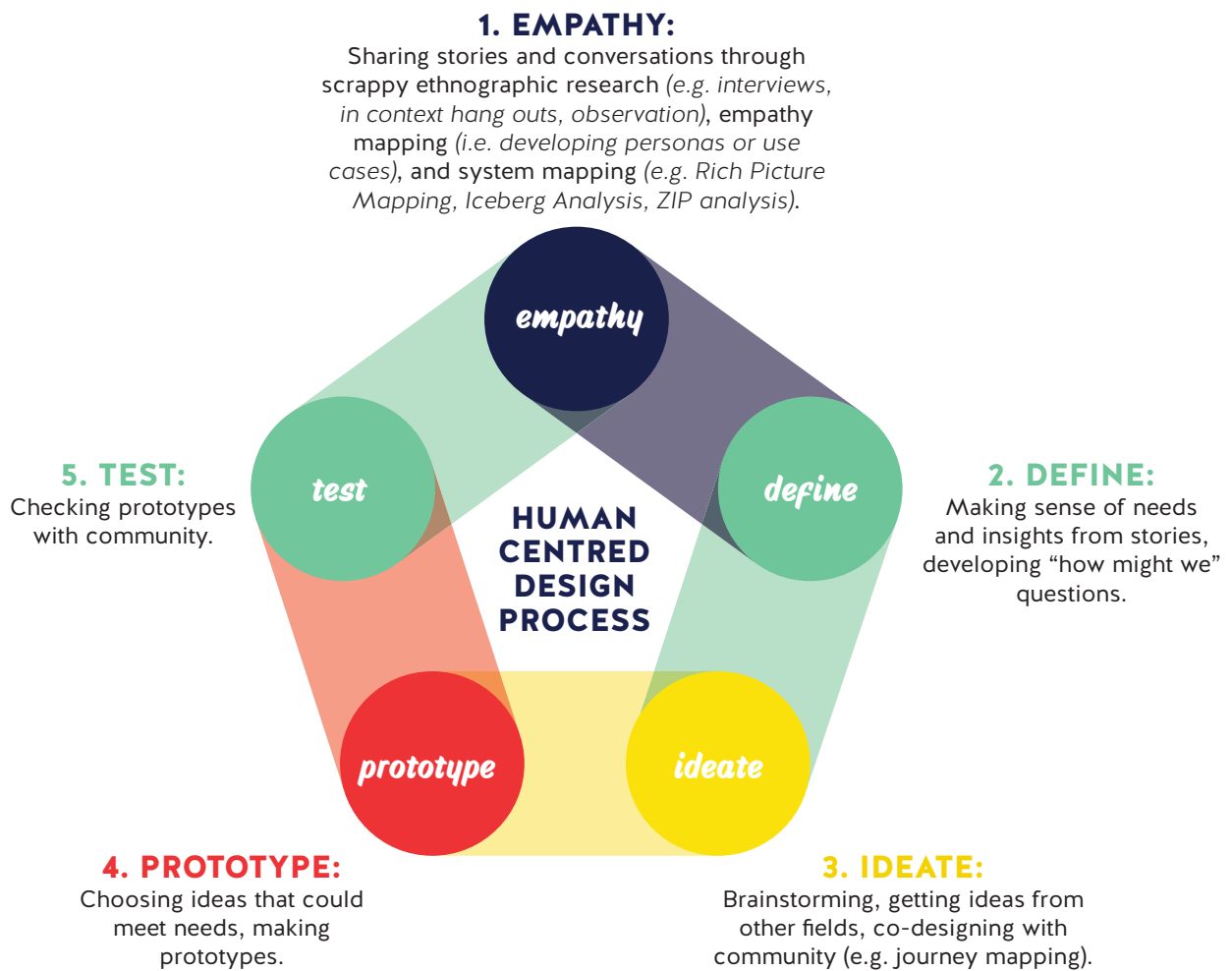
APPROACH

WHAT IS HUMAN CENTRED DESIGN?

Human Centred Design (HCD) is a well established approach to collaborative problem solving. The key to HCD is that it helps teams co-design solutions with deep stakeholder insights. With deeper system and user insights, teams can develop solutions that better meet community needs. Being better at meeting needs of

stakeholders and systems can lead to efficiencies, and increased value of solutions.

The lab process will incorporate the following 5 phases anchored in Human Centred Design process principles:



Design thinking tools that will be used in this lab include:

- ▶ Mixed qualitative and quantitative research to understand people in context
- ▶ Co-design—designing with people rather than simply for people
- ▶ Participation and co-creation of new opportunities with the people involved
- ▶ Rapid Prototyping to make ideas real and test small bets before big bets
- ▶ Visual communication, to clarify and create shared understanding

WHAT DESIGN THINKING LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

DESIGN THINKERS:

- ▶ take “deep dives” into what motivates people to use a service
- ▶ use Ethnography or field studies of people using the product or service
- ▶ brainstorm ideas that may be unconventional, unorthodox and radical
- ▶ make sense from personal and sometimes emotional insights
- ▶ react quickly and use a rapid iteration process to develop prototypes rather than get bogged down in details

QUESTIONS DESIGN THINKERS ASK

- ▶ How does this idea make people feel and think?
- ▶ What is deeply needed and why?
- ▶ Is there an analogous situation that we can learn from?
- ▶ How would this work if we changed a key assumption about the people who might use it?
- ▶ How will this impact users on the margins of this service?
- ▶ Are people reacting differently to this solution than what they are telling us?
- ▶ What if we work backwards from the solution to the problem?

WHAT IS SYSTEMS THINKING?

“It is looking at the relationship between each part, looking at the way individual parts influence each other, and thinking about how the pieces of a puzzle form the whole picture.”

WHAT SYSTEMS THINKING LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

SYSTEM THINKERS:

- ▶ are keenly aware of their biases and assumptions
- ▶ seek to acknowledge that an improvement in one area of a system can adversely affect another area of the system
- ▶ look at what root causes might be contributing to a problem
- ▶ ask questions and wonder why something happens
- ▶ see the interconnections within the physical environment: of the land, water, beings, values

QUESTIONS SYSTEMS THINKERS ASK

- ▶ Has the problem occurred in the past?
- ▶ What structures may be causing this problem?
- ▶ What change is needed?
- ▶ Why is this change needed?
- ▶ How will this change affect other parts of the system?
- ▶ How do we increase people’s understanding of the issue in a way that integrates the richness of diverse perspectives with the simplicity required to act?

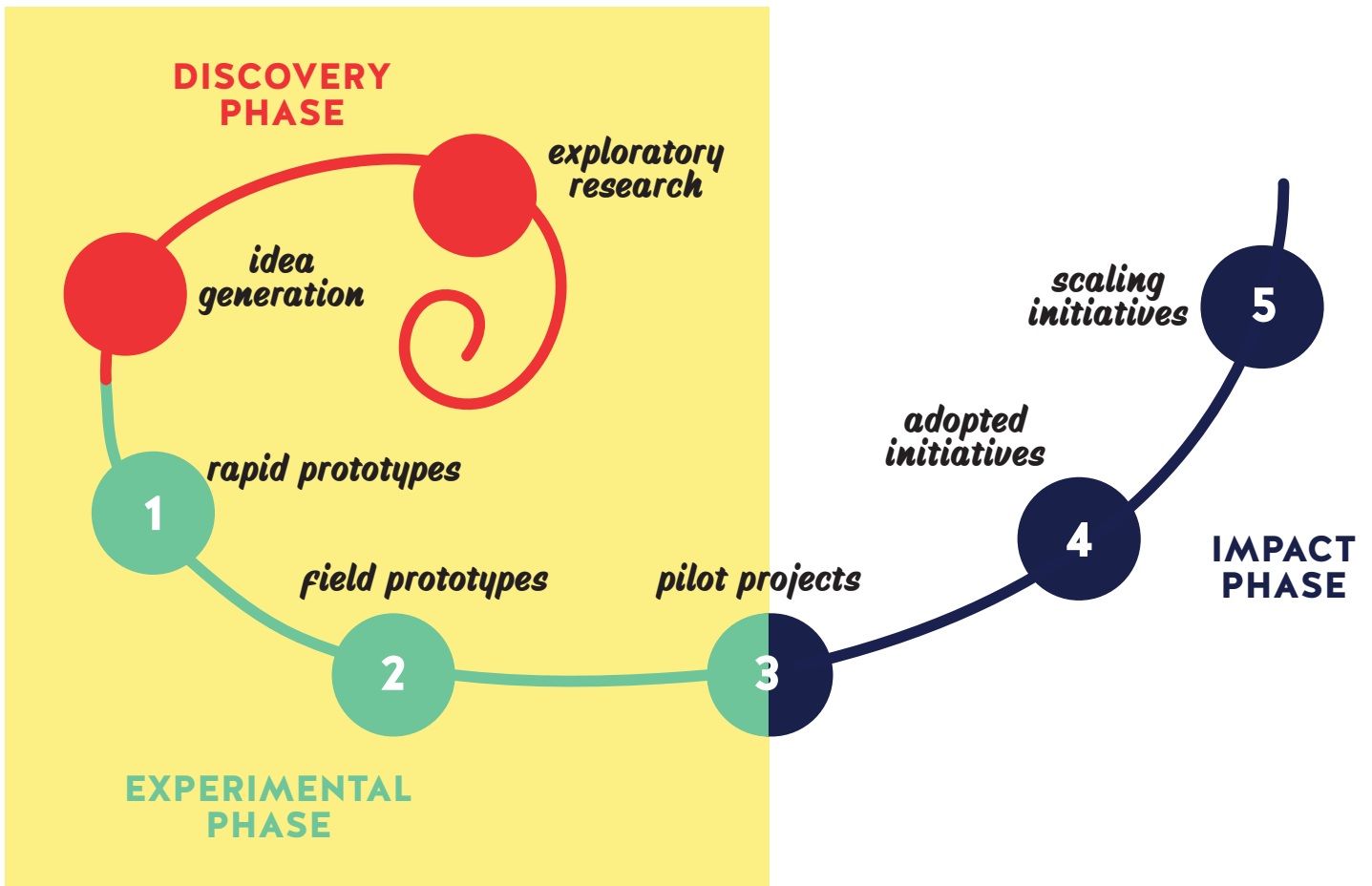
Drawn from Social Innovation Lab Field Guide by Ben Weinlick and Aleeya Velji, adapted from Systems thinking for social change by David Peter Stroh.

THEORY OF CHANGE

INNOVATION CONTINUUM⁴

Real impact requires work across multiple scales of the system, one being supporting social innovation. With the right support (financial and otherwise), and creative partnerships at the conclusion of the lab, the prototypes developed and tested through this lab could become pilots and eventually sustainable housing and support options.

Although discussions and exploration in the lab will touch on multiple areas of the innovation continuum, the above boundary box shows the core areas this lab will be working in.



⁴ Mark Cabaj, Here to There Consulting (2020)

FORESEEABLE DESIGN TENSIONS & SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE

Labs are full of tensions that defy black and white thinking and answers. These are some of the things that will be tricky as we navigate the lab journey together.

Foreseeable Tension

Feeling Rushed

Social innovation labs move quickly and sometimes things can feel rushed. It can be a tricky balance of making sure the project moves ahead and we meet timelines outlined by the funder, and ensuring everyone feels heard and has had ample time to explore their ideas.

Striving To Ensure Everyone Feels Heard

We are a diverse group of people with different backgrounds, life experiences, and perspectives. In a lab it can be challenging to ensure there is space for everyone's perspective to be shared.

Managing Expectations

Labs are exciting and often get our creative juices flowing. This can sometimes lead us to forget what we originally set out to do or to think that the lab can 'solve' complex challenges. It is important to always remind ourselves of our core question and deliverables so our expectations stay in check.

Keeping Everyone Up to Date on What's Going On

Labs move fast, are emergent, and include a lot of different people. This can make it tough to ensure everyone is on the same page and to fill people in if they miss something.

Wondering if the lab is more for the core team or for the core team to go out and co-create with community

Sometimes it gets fuzzy in a lab whether it is about the core team's transformation and learning, or about the core team being really good scrappy researchers who can create prototypes based on what they heard from stakeholders. In truth, it's a bit of both, but this lab will lean a bit more towards core teams being able to listen, research, and prototype based on learning from community.

Safeguards and Responsibilities

- Adjusting timelines as needed/where appropriate
- Being clear that at times it will feel rushed
- Recognizing there will always be a feeling that more could be uncovered, but in a lab there is a bias towards proposing an idea to test, rather than staying only with questions

- Action lab agreement used by teams at each workshop
- Equitable honorariums for folks with lived experience we learn with

- This primer outlines the scope of this lab and can be used as a reminder
- Teams are made aware of what a lab process can and cannot do

- Coaches and Coordinators will help stakeholders stay on track and field questions from core teams
- Core teams responsible for filling in their own members on important details when someone is away

- Teams remembering this tension will arise at times
- Remembering the purpose and roles of a core team
- Remembering that core team insights matter, stakeholder insights matter and the literature and pre-lab research insights matter as well. Triangulating all three is always a tension and won't be perfect and that's ok.

MINDSET OF GOOD COMPLEXITY NAVIGATORS THAT HELPS IN TENSIONS

Don't jump to conclusions too quickly

Be curious and comfortable with not knowing an answer right away

Build on the ideas of others more than shoot ideas down

Bring humility in facing complexity

Embrace shifting between reflection and action

Value perspectives different from what we're used to

A mindset where one is willing to be wrong, make mistakes and learn

Recognizing fear is the creativity killer. It's ok to be bold and it's everyone's responsibility to create a safe atmosphere where ideas can emerge.

TRIANGULATING INSIGHTS

A KEY ASPECT OF INNOVATION LABS ARE THE INSIGHTS THAT ARE UNCOVERED ALONG THE JOURNEY.

These insights are a vital piece to inform the development of prototypes. Insights are typically generated from literature review research, field research with users, lab sense making processes and prototype testing.

Good lab processes help teams to find insights in both unlikely and likely places and should help teams make informed decisions around what to do with the data/insights that emerge.

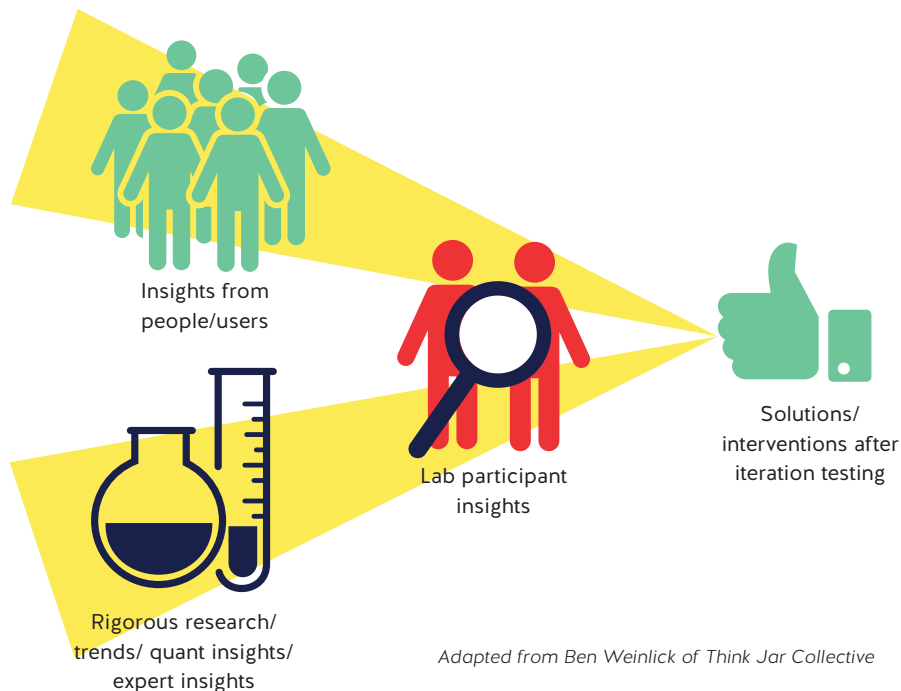
Design thinking and systems thinking have slightly different processes for uncovering insights. Design thinking focuses on ethnographic research with people who are struggling with a challenge in order to find out how to design interventions that will meet users' needs. Systems thinking methods often involve a group of stakeholders collectively identifying and mapping a systemic problem in order to both uncover leverage points for creating interventions and to reveal the mental models and biases of the group.

You'll generally have insights coming in from 3 main perspectives.

1. Insights from users (people affected by the issue)
2. Insights from core lab participants as they make sense of the issue and learn from the research findings
3. Insights from literature and rigorous research (like the primer document)

The tricky thing is the sense making to bring all points together into criteria that will inform where to begin with ideating and prototyping. Don't aim for perfection, check your gut, check your biases, check if you're really hearing what is deeply needed by those affected around an issue.

Weinlick, B., & Velji, A. Social Innovation Lab Field Guide.



Adapted from Ben Weinlick of Think Jar Collective

PRINCIPLES FOR CORE TEAMS TO KEEP IN MIND

<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Principle</i>
People with developmental disabilities are frequently left out of conversations surrounding housing. Everyone has a right to have a say in the things that affect their lives. The insights of people with lived experience are critical.	Seek out opportunities to partner, work and engage with people with lived experience throughout all phases of the exploration and testing of promising housing and support models.
We will learn with and from people with lived experience. People's time, experiences, and insights are valued.	We will equitably compensate people with lived experience for their time, expertise, and the rich contributions they make.
We will have rich and diverse insights from people with lived experience, community, and stakeholders about what works and what doesn't.	We will actively listen to feedback offered by individuals, teams, and the community, and work to adapt our process based on these insights.
Keeping power and privilege in check. We each bring our own privileges, perspectives, biases and limitations to our work.	We will engage in processes that actively seek to respect and understand how these present and affect this work.

THE KEY ATTRIBUTES THAT GUIDE THIS WORK

The sections that follow provide information regarding the key attributes of this lab and their implications for the lab purpose and process. These sections are informed by research, interviews with stakeholders, and promising examples of current housing and support models.

The core elements are:



Affordable

Context and individual dependent but often means rent or mortgage that someone relying on AISH could afford.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ How much do AISH recipients receive each month?
- ▶ What proportion of income is reasonable to expect people to spend on rent/mortgage each month?
- ▶ What are some strong examples of what affordability looks like in real life?

More on affordability starting on page 27.

Inclusive

Having meaningful things to do and places to go; feeling valued and respected by others; having choice, autonomy, and freedom; and having rich and varied relationships.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ What do social inclusion and belonging mean and how are they best facilitated?
- ▶ If belonging is a subjective experience, what does it mean to different people?
- ▶ What do inclusion and belonging mean to you?
- ▶ Where are there strong examples of what inclusion and belonging look like in real life?

More on inclusion and belonging starting on page 36.

Accessible

Incorporating principles of universal design, considering proximity to neighborhood amenities and access to human services, attention to durability and stability.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ Have you explored the different types of accessibility (i.e. physical, location, and social)?
- ▶ What are some of the barriers to accessibility people with disabilities face?
- ▶ What are some strong examples of what accessibility looks like in real life?

More on accessibility starting on page 23.

Supported by Stakeholders

Functional, usable, and delightful to people, organizations, and groups who have a stake in the challenge.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ What are the needs, wants, desires, and barriers each stakeholder faces?
- ▶ What broader systems are the stakeholders a part of?
- ▶ How do the different systems stakeholders are a part of interact? For example how does PDD interact with housing funding systems?

More on stakeholders on pages 20 and 21.

Viable and Sustainable

Equitable and sustainable business model, competitive and compatible current PDD budgets and funding models, good fit with zoning and bylaws.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ▶ What do viability and sustainability mean in the housing context?
- ▶ Who else is doing similar work in Edmonton?
- ▶ What makes some of the existing promising housing models viable and sustainable? What has contributed to their success?
- ▶ What City zoning and bylaws exist related to housing builds?

More on the housing landscape in Edmonton starting on page 50.

HOUSING AND PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

KEY PLAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

WHO IS INVOLVED? KEY PLAYERS AND STAKEHOLDER DESCRIPTIONS

People with Developmental Disabilities

“Historically there has been a pattern of making decisions about things that affect people with disabilities without their input or presence. People with disabilities have been strong advocates and have come forward to say they need to have a say in the things that affect their lives.”⁶

Family Members & Allies

Highly interested in the housing needs of people with developmental disabilities. Directly affected socially, emotionally, and/or financially by the supports and solutions available for their friends and loved ones with developmental disabilities.

Advocates: Inclusion Alberta

Interest in supporting the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of life.

Persons with Developmental Disabilities Program

The Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program works to support people with developmental disabilities to live their lives as independently as possible and promote inclusion in community life.⁷

Neighbours & Community Members

Interested in overall community wellbeing and function. May have some say over what types of developments are allowed to be built. Productive engagement with this group can help foster community integration and inclusion.

Service Providers: Skills Society

Provides community supports for the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. Engages in social innovation, research, and development to further inclusion.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Makes recommendations to the City of Edmonton in support of accessibility and inclusion in facilities and programming, maintains a municipal dialogue around matters of concern to individuals with disabilities, and assists council in developing strategies to attract and retain employees with disabilities.⁵

Natural Support Allies

People, maybe without disabilities, that want to co-share and live together with people with disabilities.

⁵ Reeves, P. (2019).

⁶ Alberta Human Services, (2015).

⁷ City of Edmonton, (n.d.) Accessibility Advisory Committee

Homeward Trust

Works to end homelessness in Edmonton through Housing First initiatives. Administration of government funding to contracted support organizations. High level of interest in affordable housing and while programming is not necessarily specific to developmental disability, does act in partnership with PDD.

Realtors

General interest in building and client specifics. Certainly, some individual realtors are advocates themselves, and have influence on finding and tailoring housing for accessibility and affordability.

Capital Region Housing

Largest provider of social housing and near market homes in the Edmonton area and administration of rent subsidies on behalf of the province. While there are no specific programs or provisions for folks with developmental disabilities, CRHC is consistently engaged in housing research and has a high level of interest and influence.

Champions of Similar Housing Models

People that have paved the way by developing innovative housing models like the ones outlined in this document. Often these projects have found creative ways to overcome policy and community barriers to create affordable and accessible housing.

Builders & Developers

Interested in site-specific development and largely driven by profitability. Could potentially have specific interest in advocacy, accessibility, and affordability, but some may not. High level of influence in site specific projects.

CMHC

Broad scale interest in affordable and accessible housing for all Canadians and facilitating housing attainability. Large scale organization with high level of influence.

Architects

General interest in building specifics and accessibility requirements. Certainly, some individual architects are advocates themselves, are interested in ways to design for accessibility and affordability and have influence to develop alternative housing typologies.

MAPPING INFLUENCE AND INTEREST

Consider:

- ▶ How can we better listen and engage with the folks we design for?
- ▶ How can we form partnerships so that high-interest stakeholders who have less power (*i.e. systematically disadvantaged, vulnerable*) can be supported by and collaborate with influential stakeholders?

*Partner and amplify voices to raise influence

Some individuals and their families are able to advocate with stronger influence, however historically people with developmental disabilities, along with their families and allies, have been excluded from conversations around their own housing, and yet are the most affected by decisions and outcomes. Our goal is to foster inclusion in the development of housing itself and shift their placement on the influence/interest matrix to high influence.

What do we mean by ‘influence’?

For the purposes of this lab, influence can be seen as power to make change. People and organizations that have political and financial power are influencers.

What do we mean by ‘interest’?

For the purposes of this lab, parties who are directly affected by decisions and outcomes (financially, politically, socially etc.) are interested.

The Interest/Influence Matrix is a generalization of these groups. We recognize that there is a spectrum of involvement among individuals within several groups. For example, there are architects and real estate agents who are instrumental advocates in their field and their work intersects with key influencers in accessibility, affordability, and disability advocacy.



ACCESSIBILITY

Inaccessibility is a common challenge faced by people with developmental disabilities, and there are many ways that inaccessibility can make finding housing especially challenging. The Government of Canada states that accessibility “is about creating communities, workplaces and services that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers”⁸ where a barrier would be “anything that prevents or limits persons with disabilities from being fully included, or able to do the same activities as persons without disabilities... This would include barriers that are physical, such as an inaccessible washroom, and barriers that are not, such as a hiring practice that intentionally or unintentionally limits access to employment.”⁹

The following sections outline different types of accessibility and why they can be particularly challenging for people with developmental disabilities.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Physical barriers are what often come to mind first when thinking of accessibility. Physical accessibility is being able to freely move, navigate space, and physically participate in the same daily activities as anyone else.

What might physical barriers look like?

Barriers to physical accessibility could include stairs and unevenly paved surfaces, spaces and entryways that are too small to accommodate wheelchair access, lack of tactile signage for wayfinding with a visual impairment, etc.

When looking to overcome physical barriers, universal design presents a solution. Universal design is the practice of designing for use by “all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design”¹⁰. In housing, universal design creates accessible housing that can work for everyone and allows people to stay in their homes as their needs and circumstances change.¹¹

⁸ Government of Canada (2020).

⁹ Burke, J. (2013).

¹⁰ Government of Canada (2018).

¹¹ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2019). Universal Design for New Housing Units

LOCATION ACCESSIBILITY

“The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with a developmental disability to engage in and be safe in their communities.”¹²

Location matters for everyone. Things like walkability and living in a desirable neighbourhood become considerations for any individual seeking housing, but the importance of location and amenity access plays a larger role in accessibility.

What might location access barriers look like?

Barriers to location accessibility could include living in an isolated or suburban area that is far from services and amenities, lack of public transportation, lack of community gathering spaces, lack of walkability within the community, etc.

Access to parks and open space contributes to overall wellbeing. Access to social gathering spaces and amenities like community gardens allow for meaningful interactions with others.¹³ Most importantly, however, may be access to primary public transit. “Public transport brings wider social benefits through providing better access to services and opportunities to disadvantaged groups and thereby promoting social equity.”¹⁴

Housing scale also affects how residents access their community. Smaller residences promote connection to neighbours, while larger congregate living tends to separate residents from the outside community. Ashley Salvador, co-founder and president of YEGarden Suites, states:

“When we are considering smaller dwellings, it often puts the focus more on the neighbourhood as opposed to your home. I think that does interesting things for the sense of place as well. Your home is where you sleep and cook and eat, but you live in your community; you live in your neighbourhood.”¹⁵

¹² Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives

¹³ Government of Canada, (2018).

¹⁴ International Transport Forum, (2019).

¹⁵ Ashley Salvador in conversation with Martina MacFarlane

Results from a UK-based study of housing outcomes across different countries confirm the importance of both housing scale and location accessibility for the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in their communities:

People in small scale community-based residences or in semi-independent or supported living arrangements have a better objective quality of life than do people in large, congregate settings. Particularly, they have more choice-making opportunities; larger social networks and more friends; access more mainstream facilities, and participate more in community life; have more chances to acquire new skills and develop or maintain existing skills; and are more satisfied with their living arrangements.¹⁶

SOCIAL ACCESSIBILITY, OTHERNESS, AND UNDERSTANDING

What might social barriers look like?

Barriers to social accessibility could include policies that directly or indirectly affect access to services, housing, or employment; lack of choice in available housing options; lack of societal awareness or understanding of needs, etc.



In *Geographies of Disability*, Brendan Gleeson suggests that people with disabilities may not only be affected by physical barriers but also experience socio-spatial exclusion in many areas of their lives including employment and housing. In the housing sector, this experience is characterized by “barriers to choice in their preferred living environment”. He goes on to say that “the combined effect of poverty, inaccessibility, and inappropriate accommodation is to reduce the ability of disabled people to participate in the mainstreams of urban social life.”¹⁷

A less tangible, but almost always present, element that affects accessibility is a willingness to shift societal perspectives from othering to understanding. Trish Bowman of Inclusion Alberta states that the norm for people with developmental disabilities is to be fit in the ‘special’ box because that is what society has traditionally done.¹⁸ She elaborates that the information often given to families is that their loved ones with developmental disabilities somehow don’t belong where neurotypical or able people belong and that making the shift away from this problematic view is key to creating accessibility. In this way, accessibility is not just about creating or altering space to accommodate folks with developmental disabilities, but intentionally creating space with understanding and openness to learn from disabled voices.

¹⁶ Kozma, A., Mansell, B., and Beadle-Brown, J., (2009)

¹⁷ Gleeson, B., (1998).

¹⁸ Trish Bowman in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

This understanding of disability can be further explained by the idea of access intimacy, a term discussed by disability advocate, Mia Mingus. “Access intimacy is that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else ‘gets’ your access needs.” It is knowledge or at least understanding of the “lived experience of the many different ways ableism manifests in our lives,”¹⁹ and it “moves the work of access out of the realm of only logistics and into the realm of relationships and understanding disabled people as humans, not burdens”. Access intimacy views access as a tool to challenge and transform (change) the broader conditions (circumstances and environments) that create inaccessibility.²⁰

SO WHAT?

By shifting focus from othering to understanding, it can be easier to think about differing needs outside the box and start to creatively address gaps in housing solutions.

- ▶ Knowing that having choice is fundamental to accessibility, how can we create choice in the housing sector?
- ▶ How can we centre the stories and experiences of folks with developmental disabilities to drive non-prescriptive housing solutions?
- ▶ How can we take a more holistic approach to housing, considering the different types of accessibility that affect people with developmental disabilities?
- ▶ How can housing scale and location affect inclusion?

“we need to think of access with an understanding of disability justice, moving away from an equality-based model of sameness and “we are just like you” to a model of disability that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered “normal” on every front. We don’t want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them.”

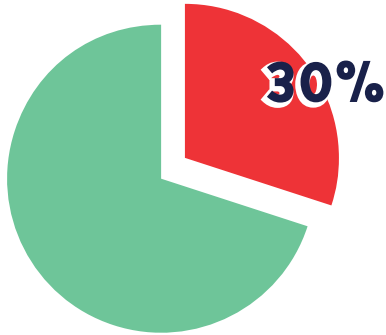
- Mia Mingus

¹⁹ Mingus, M., (2011)

²⁰ Mingus, M., (2017)

AFFORDABILITY

Affordability is a complex issue. A helpful threshold for understanding housing affordability:



Housing costs equal or less than 30% of before-tax household income are considered affordable.²¹ This is a relative scale. A household with a large income may be able to spend higher than 30% of their income on shelter and still easily cover other expenses. A household with low income or experiencing poverty may need to spend a higher percentage of income to find adequate housing or may not be able to cover other expenses after housing is paid for.

People with developmental disabilities experience increased vulnerability to poverty as a direct result of the barriers to social accessibility described above. “The employment rate for working-age adults with an intellectual disability is only 25%, which is half that of people with other disabilities (50%) and one-third of the rate of people without a disability.”²²

Because of high unemployment rates among folks with developmental disabilities, many access financial support through Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) bringing them close to or below the poverty line. Therefore, the need for affordable housing options available to people with developmental disabilities is great.

AISH (ASSURED INCOME FOR THE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED)

AISH is income support (Currently \$1685/month for eligible persons). AISH does not cover daily support service needs of people.

The City of Edmonton defines affordable housing as “rental or ownership housing that requires upfront and/or ongoing direct government subsidies”²³ and breaks it down into the following four categories:

- ▶ Permanent Supportive Housing
- ▶ Social Housing (also known as Community Housing)
- ▶ Near-Market Affordable Housing (Rental)
- ▶ Near-Market Affordable Home Ownership

WAYS OF SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN DAILY LIFE

Support can come in many forms. For our purposes, we understand ‘natural support’ to mean support provided by unpaid family members, friends, neighbours or acquaintances. We understand ‘formal support’ to mean paid staff, home care, or public guardians, as well as other supports such as specialized providers.²⁴

In Alberta, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program works to support people with developmental disabilities to live their lives as independently as possible. The program works with individuals, their families, advocates and service providers to provide individualized supports that help promote inclusion in community life.²⁵

Some types of supports provided through PDD include:

- ▶ Employment Supports
- ▶ Community Access Supports
- ▶ Home Living Supports
- ▶ Specialized Community Supports

Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families may choose to access supports through Family Managed Services or through a Community Service Provider.

²¹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, (2019).

²² Canadian Association for Community Living, (2013).

²³ City of Edmonton, (n.d) Glossary of Housing Terms

²⁴ Alberta Council of Disability Services, (2019).

²⁵ Alberta Human Services, (2015).

FAMILY MANAGED SERVICES

The individual, a person close to them, or a member of their family ensures that there is an Individual Support Plan in place and then manages the support services delivered. Supports are not managed by a service provider.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDER

PDD provides support for the individual by contracting directly with Community Service Providers. The Community Service Provider then works with the individual and their family to create an Individual Support Plan.

Supportive living situations can take many forms. Currently, the most common models are independent supportive living, residential supports, and supportive roommate situations.

Independent Supportive Living

- ▶ Individuals live in their own space where outreach staff can be available
- ▶ Support is available when needed, the individual has a choice in when to access it

Residential Supports

- ▶ 24 hour support provided by paid support worker(s)

Supportive Roommate

- ▶ The individual receives support from their roommate(s)
- ▶ The supportive roommate may be an individual, family etc, depending on best fit

NOTES FROM THE SCRAPPY RESEARCH

Conversations with advocates and family members consistently showed a desire for formal supports to look and feel more like natural supports. (See Trish's example in Unintended Learnings from the Covid 19 Pandemic.) Similarly, anecdotes echoed measurable successes when folks have choice in when and how they access support.²⁶

²⁶ Trish Bowman, Kim Fox, and Bev Hills in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

CONSIDER:

How might support and housing models be combined to make paid support feel more natural?

SOME PRESENT REFLECTIONS ON WHOM WE ARE DESIGNING WITH AND FOR

The need to promote **variety and choice** in housing and support models for individuals with developmental disabilities was echoed by stakeholders during pre-lab interviews.

Everyone has unique needs and aspirations. There is a long time practice in disability support to be skeptical of universal or 'one size fits all' approaches to support and home life. While specific, basic attributes do exist, and are in place as foundations of accessibility, inclusion, etc., people with developmental disabilities are not a homogenous group; each individual brings their own unique perspectives, experiences, talents, gifts, and needs. On the other hand there are some patterns that show some common barriers, and needs as was demonstrated through the research in previous sections (*i.e., accessibility, affordability*).

Given lab constraints, such as time, resources and scope, tensions emerge with attempting to design for all experiences as this may result in some people's desired outcomes and needs being missed. Therefore, this lab will begin by designing for some common themes and experiences with a narrow scope for each challenge area. **An important cautionary note is that this is a starting place and we will remain open to new complexities and experiences as they emerge throughout the lab.**

1. SCATTERED SITE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

This prototype will be designed with insight from people identified as having complex service needs* and who access community service provider supports. The reason why the lab will focus on support of complex needs is because there is a big gap currently around how to best support people with these needs.

***Definition of Complex Service Needs**

PDD Policy defines individuals with complex needs as those who are eligible for PDD supports that may require specialized services and exhibit challenging behaviour. They may have a mental health disorder, behavioural issues, require psychiatric care, and/or suffer from chronic substance abuse/dependency problems. Often individuals with complex needs have had contact with the justice system and may have been cut off from services or have challenges in housing due to behavioural issues.²⁷

2. SHARED COMMUNITY MODEL

This prototype will be designed with and for people who have access to natural supports and family managed services.

PERSONAS

Personas are fictitious stories that highlight real themes of needs, barriers, and wishes that emerge from hanging out and listening to people affected by an issue. Stories and personas can help us empathize and see needs and barriers in different ways than simply a report. It is important to recognize that no persona can capture all the nuance and experiences of people. They are not meant to capture all of human experience. Be careful of using the personas as an oversimplification of needs and barriers. However, the persona stories below highlight where some of the gaps and opportunities lie within two diverse housing and inclusion journeys.

Below are two personas which shed a bit of light on understanding some of the common experiences, strengths, and needs of the segment of folks we are designing with/for. The two personas and their journeys are built upon research and conversations with family members of people with developmental disabilities, service providers, housing experts, and advocates. They represent common archetypes of who we will be designing with and for, but we acknowledge that there may be new scenarios, needs, and journeys discovered through the Housing Solutions Lab. We would also like you to notice tensions between system perspectives and individual's hopes, wishes and inclusion and belonging needs. Often these aren't aligned as well as everyone might hope.

For example, support workers in a system might have their support laid out in a transactional way because they have 9-5 jobs and need to see people in chunks of time during a day. A person they support might not need support from 2-3pm with employment support, what they might more deeply need is a person they can rely on, trust and call anytime to talk about an important issue, problem solve something and make some healthy choices.

Always be looking and asking yourself, what is deeply needed, what biases do I have that might get in the way of seeing what is really needed by people.



BACKGROUND

Taryn is a cheerful and caring young woman in her late 20s. She loves animals and music. Taryn has two sons who are 2 and 5 years old that currently live with her parents. She loves spending time with her children and values close relationships. Taryn would like to live close to family and friends, and have access to a green space as she hopes to get a dog.

Over the last year, Taryn has experienced homelessness after a string of evictions from apartment living arrangements due to missed rent payments. Taryn seeks and values close relationships, however sometimes illegal activities by guests to her home have also contributed to evictions. The need for relationships is a strong human need and often trumps safety. After accessing PDD services, Taryn was connected with a community service provider and has found housing in a scattered site supportive model. In this model, she lives in her own apartment in a community apartment building and can access support from a paid support worker when she needs it. The community apartment building is open to a variety of different community members (i.e. not just for people with disabilities). There is an office on the main floor where 24/7 people can drop by, connect and ask for any support that’s needed. Paid support workers are also available by phone 24/7 and

regularly check in with Taryn in person and over the phone. Taryn would like to see her children more often, however due to the location of her new home, she faces transportation barriers and is far from neighbourhood amenities for a young family.

SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Support Currently Looks Like

AISH recipient (\$1685/month)
Designated as having complex service needs and receives daily support through PDD funding
PDD contracted support from a service provider
PDD approved for 25 hours/week.

***Taryn is able access 24/7 support as a result of having her funded hours combined with the hours of other PDD funded tenants in the building.*

Housing Status

Newly housed in a scattered site supportive housing model.

Work Status

Unemployed, faces barriers to employment but wants to work

Health Status

Struggles with managing and understanding substance use issues

TARYN'S PERSPECTIVE

Hope and Desires

- ▶ Finding and accessing stable housing
- ▶ Having choice and freedom in housing
- ▶ Living in one place for a while
- ▶ Find stable employment
- ▶ Develop trusting relationships with support and neighbours
- ▶ Strong connections with her community, culture and family

Physical & Support Needs

- ▶ Control over when and where she receives support
- ▶ Help with time management (scheduling and short- and long-term planning), budgeting (paying bills and for essential goods and services), meal planning, healthy interpersonal relationships, personal hygiene and managing and understanding substance use issues
- ▶ Support with problem solving challenges that emerge on a daily or weekly basis

Inclusion/Belonging Needs

- ▶ Choice in her housing journey and freedom in her own space to reflect her identity and values
- ▶ Home close to playgrounds and other child-friendly spaces to spend time with her children and meet other families
- ▶ Opportunities to participate in cultural and community activities
- ▶ Having people in her corner as allies and supports to help her thrive
- ▶ Opportunities of being able to contribute her gifts in her community and recognized for those contributions
- ▶ Some support to not just be “in” community, but has support to help her be “of” community-with relationships and connections
- ▶ Reconnecting with her culture and healing traditions

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ How do we create choice in affordable and supportive housing?
- ▶ What if there was a model that allowed for choice in when and how people access supports?
- ▶ How do we build connection and interdependence between housing, natural and paid support models?
- ▶ How can we help her have a deeper sense of belonging and relationships?



PERSONA #2

Karim

BACKGROUND

Karim is a very active young man who loves to swim and be in nature and works a couple hours a week at the local movie theatre. He has mainly lived with his parents and dreams of owning his own home. His family is able to contribute financially to a down payment, but Karim would have to be able to afford the mortgage on his own. Currently, owning a home doesn't seem possible on Karim's budget.

Karim accesses AISH and Family Managed Services funding through PDD and was recently able to develop a creative roommate situation. Karim's mom manages staffing, funds and the relationships with PDD for receiving FMS funding. She spends about 30 hours a week (unpaid by PDD) managing staff issues, payroll and coordinating shifts so that Karim can have his own place and support. Karim's parents are 66, about to retire and concerned about who will look out for Karim when they are not around. Kareem now lives in a privately rented house with a supportive roommate without a disability. Karim's roommate receives free rent and Karim's family pays out of their own pocket an additional \$500 stipend per month in exchange for being available at night to support Karim and help Karim stay connected. Karim's PDD funding

pays for a support worker 20 hours/week to assist him with his various activities. In order to find an affordable solution, Karim had to move further away from family, services, and amenities. His housing situation works well, but apart from his roommate, he feels isolated, disconnected from family, and experiences barriers to inclusion in his community.

SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Support Currently Looks Like

AISH recipient
Family Managed Services funding through PDD
PDD approved for 20 hours/week at approximately \$21/hour.
Supportive roommate

Housing Status

Newly housed with a supportive roommate

Work Status

Employed part time

Health Status

Healthy, Active, Autism

KARIM'S PERSPECTIVE

Hope and Desires

- ▶ Home ownership
- ▶ To continue working at the local movie theatre
- ▶ Proximity to parks and greenspaces to meet other nature enthusiasts
- ▶ More opportunities to meet, connect, and build meaningful relationships with peers

Physical & Support Needs

- ▶ Receives Family Managed Services support funding through PDD
- ▶ Support with preparing meals, taking care of his home (e.g., staying on top of chores), and interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Access to services and amenities within his community
- ▶ Independence and control over his own space

Inclusion Needs

- ▶ Remain close to friends and family
- ▶ Community activities and spaces to connect with others and build new relationships
- ▶ Freedom in his own space to reflect his interests, identity, and values
- ▶ Opportunities to contribute his gifts and passions in his community and be recognized for those contributions
- ▶ Opportunities for continuous exploration, learning, growth, and new experiences to foster identity throughout his life

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ What is finding a house vs. finding a home?
- ▶ What if there was a housing model that allowed for individual space and communal living?

INCLUSION AND PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

HISTORY OF INCLUSION: Exclusion/Segregation, Integration vs. Social Inclusion

EXCLUSION/SEGREGATION LIFE AWAY FROM OTHERS

Exclusion and segregation are rooted in a political history which included systemic institutionalization and eugenics in Canada. People with disabilities were separated from community not by choice.

INTEGRATION SAME SPACES, SEPARATE OR SAME ACTIVITIES

When people are integrated they are in the same spaces as fellow community members but may not be doing the same things, are given 'special' tasks or roles, are assumed to not have much to offer, or remain socially disconnected from others. In addition, although people may also be participating in community life, they might feel pressure to conform or be more like others. Gaining access to, or being physically present within a space does not necessarily lead to a sense of belonging.

SOCIAL INCLUSION & BELONGING SAME SPACES, SAME ACTIVITIES, COMFORTABLE TO BE OURSELVES

People live, work, and play together in the same spaces, are seen as friends, colleagues, neighbors, citizens and feel comfortable to be themselves. People's authentic selves are celebrated and welcomed.

From the the Skills Society 2019 Annual Report²⁸

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion has been defined in many ways²⁹. What fosters and supports meaningful social inclusion is continuously being explored and evolving—meaning it cannot be reduced to a single strategy or 'one size fits all' approach³⁰. Most importantly, what defines or contributes to meaningful social inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities can only be understood by consulting them to learn from their subjective experiences and wishes, as these are different for each person.

There are however certain patterns and principles that tend to lead towards social inclusion³¹. Adults with disabilities have identified acceptance, having personal relationships, involvement in social activities, appropriate living accommodations, employment, and support systems as key elements contributing to social inclusion. The freedom to choose and participate in accordance with one's wishes is important³², meaning that social inclusion comes in many forms.

²⁸ Reeves, P. (2019).

²⁹ Simplican, S. C., Leader, G., Kosciulek, J., & Leahy, M. (2015).

³⁰ Hausstatter, R. S. (2014).

³¹ Hall, S. A. (2009).

³² Hammel, J., Magasi, S., Heinemann, A., Whiteneck, G., Bogner, J., & Rodriguez, E. (2008).

THE GOOD LIFE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The following insights were gathered from interviews with people with developmental disabilities to learn what's important for a good life. This research was conducted by Paige Reeves and is a cross section of the people supported by Skills Society.

Key ingredients to a good life include:

-
1. People that care about us including: friends, loved ones, parents, extended family, and boyfriends and girlfriends

 2. Places to socialize and meet people like: the Nina Haggerty Centre, ACT, SAGE

 3. Routine: things to do, people to meet, places to go

 4. Work and Volunteer Roles: "I need my job to live", "I'm happy with my job but need more hours"

 5. Support and Resources: AISH, Food Bank, Mustard Seed

 6. Money for things we need and things we want

 7. A Place to Call Home: "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else"
-

Spaces people identify feeling a sense of belonging:

- ▶ "Where I work, at the arena"
- ▶ "I feel at home where I live"
- ▶ "I feel belonging at the food bank [where I volunteer], seeing different people all the time"
- ▶ "Being a part of Skills"

** not everyone was able to name a space where they felt a sense of belonging*

Key ingredients to feeling a sense of belonging:

- ▶ When someone recognizes me when I come in
- ▶ When someone compliments me
- ▶ When someone recognizes me for my work
- ▶ When I have the skills to know what to do

Meaningful days are filled with:

-
1. Recreation and Fun Stuff:
 - a. Being able to pursue interests and hobbies and go places in the community (e.g. doing puzzles, going to the gym, going to the library, hanging out with friends, going to art classes, making music)

 2. Volunteering and Working:
 - a. Having productivity roles where you contribute to something greater than yourself

 3. Taking Care of your Home:
 - a. taking pride in your home means doing chores (e.g. laundry, cooking, cleaning) and taking care of your pets
-

HOUSING PERSPECTIVE

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation describes social inclusion as

the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. It is a situation in which individuals have the resources and opportunities to be involved in society to an extent that is satisfactory to them.

Working towards social inclusion means finding and using measures to reduce barriers that restrict the resources and opportunities of disadvantaged groups³³.

Additionally, the National Housing Strategy lists the following criteria for their social inclusion proximity score:

1. Child care centre
2. Community centre
3. Grocery store
4. Health care services
5. Hospital
6. Library
7. Neighborhood park
8. Pharmacy
9. Publicly funded school
10. Public transit station or stop

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Drawing from civil rights and feminist movements, the rights model of disability focuses on human and citizenship rights. People with disabilities are valued citizens deserving of respect, dignity, and the same rights as everyone else. This means they have equal access to (1) opportunities, choice, and freedom, and (2) meaningful opportunities to participate in community life, (3) have an array of rich and valued relationships, and (4) feel a sense of value, respect and belonging in community³⁴.

THE FAMILY MOVEMENT PERSPECTIVE

The Family Movement has been a key catalyst in the advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities' membership, belonging and

participation in all aspects of community life since the 1950's. Families and allies continue to advocate for greater inclusion and equal opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.

BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social acceptance within community remains a barrier to social inclusion, and is related to the attitudes and awareness of others³⁵. Design approaches are underpinned by social and political assumptions (things that are accepted as true, without proof)³⁶. Built environments therefore have the potential to shape attitudes and assumptions “with respect to who will (and should) inhabit”³⁷ spaces, influencing broader social exclusion.

Additional barriers to social inclusion include lack of opportunities (e.g., education, employment) and current systems and practices (e.g., housing, healthcare) that push the interests and needs of some to the margins³⁸.

PRINCIPLES & IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ It is important to recognize and honor the work of individuals with disabilities, families/friends, allies and advocates who came before us. Their work offers key learnings and insights as we move forward in addressing the complex issue of social inclusion
- ▶ Efforts towards social inclusion risk becoming a list of policies and strategies, not recognizing the unequal social relations and conditions that result in social exclusion. Systems and human centred design thinking offer valuable approaches to this complex work.
- ▶ Only by working in partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities can deeply-set exclusionary systems and practices of society be dismantled³⁹.
- ▶ While accessibility and affordability contribute to inclusive spaces, these do not necessarily result in social inclusion.

WORKING DEFINITION

We know of a few key ingredients (patterns and principles) that tend to foster social inclusion. Therefore as a starting place for this lab, the following working definition of social inclusion will inform our work:

Social inclusion encompasses participation in community, rich and valued relationships, and a feeling of acceptance, deep belonging and value.

³³ National Housing Strategy (2018).

³⁴ Skills Society Citizenship Model.

³⁵ Hall, S. A. (2009).

³⁶ Burke, J. (2013).

³⁷ Hamraie, A. (2013).

³⁸ Hall, E. (2010).

³⁹ Hall, E. (2010); Meiningner, H. (2013).



EXISTING INNOVATIVE HOUSING & SUPPORT MODELS



TINY HOME COMMUNITIES

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

A tiny home community is a cluster of tiny homes that shares outdoor space and can have communal buildings and facilities. Tiny homes are compact spaces that have all the essentials for everyday life; they are fully equipped homes on a micro scale. The City of Edmonton states that a tiny home usually ‘has a floor area less than 40 square metres’⁴⁰ or about 430 square feet.

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ Anyone interested in community life that emphasizes neighbourly relationships and shared experiences in community gathering spaces
- ▶ Seniors and near seniors looking to maintain independence with access to community facilities and supports
- ▶ People experiencing homelessness that may need transitional space to regain housing stability and/or long-term affordable housing
- ▶ Anyone interested in attainable and affordable home ownership
- ▶ People who benefit from shared support services and social community living while maintaining independence and control over their own space
- ▶ Students

Note: A tiny home community is a good alternative for folks who may not be suited to apartment-style living or other living arrangements with upstairs and downstairs neighbours.

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Community reception is sensitive especially when labeled as ‘affordable housing’ or housing for a certain population—great amount of effort put into community engagement and design to avoid a “shanty town” feel⁴¹.
- ▶ Small spaces may not be suited to every user
- ▶ Regulatory framework may be challenging to navigate as zoning must be adjusted to accommodate this new housing model

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ strong sense of community
- ▶ individuals take pride in their own space and possessions
- ▶ opportunities to share 24/7 support allow individuals to choose when they access support, leading to better understanding, trust, and relationship outcomes⁴²
- ▶ flexibility in form - tiny homes can be detached, attached in a rowhouse format, or layered like stacked townhomes or apartment buildings.
- ▶ extremely cost effective
- ▶ can be built quickly, and 3D printed units can be built in a day*

*EMERGENT IDEAS

Tiny homes can be printed using 3D printing technology. David Howard, president of Homes for Heroes Foundation, suggests that through a future building partnership, they will be able to print tiny homes for veterans’ villages in 24 hours⁴³ making them incredibly efficient and affordable.

⁴⁰ A tiny home as defined by the City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw is “a form of housing with a small footprint that is designed to be self-contained and usually has a floor area less than 40 square metres. Tiny homes can be divided into two types, ‘tiny homes on foundations’ and ‘tiny homes on wheels.’” Under coming Zoning Bylaw amendments, a tiny home on foundation can be built as a Garden Suite or Single Detached Housing. Tiny homes on wheels may fall under the title of ‘mobile home’ and cannot be used as a garden suite. Charter Bylaw19087, Text Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 12800 for Tiny Homes on Foundations.

⁴¹ Concerns as voiced by David Howard, in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

⁴² Positive outcomes of 24-hour support available at individual’s choosing. Bev Hills, in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

⁴³ David Howard, in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL?

1. Homes for Heroes Foundation

908 ATCO Village, Homes for Heroes Foundation, Calgary, Alberta and ATCO Evansdale Village, Homes for Heroes Foundation, Edmonton, Alberta (In development)

- ▶ Elements of these models were adopted from military living to give veterans a familiar sense of community and structure.
- ▶ Individuals are assessed at intake and a custom support plan is developed to ensure their success in the program.
- ▶ Shared support services are available 24/7 to residents.
- ▶ Small spaces are more easily managed by individuals transitioning from homelessness and allow for a personal sense of independence and control over their space.*
- ▶ Some units are barrier free, so even though they are 'tiny', they are accessible to folks with reduced mobility or who use a wheelchair.⁴⁴

**In many discussions with veterans experiencing homelessness, Homes for Heroes Foundation discovered that the pressures of filling newly acquired housing can easily be overwhelming to some who have lived transient lifestyles, leading to hoarding behaviours and other forms of self-isolation⁴⁵.*



2. Community First! Village

- ▶ Located in Austin, Texas
- ▶ Large-scale community of over 500 tiny homes on 51 acres of land
- ▶ Strong sense of community with many opportunities for inclusion
- ▶ Developed through Mobile Loaves and Fishes under a program to house individuals “who have been living on the streets, while also empowering the surrounding community into a lifestyle of service with the homeless”⁴⁶
- ▶ Features mainly traditional-build tiny homes and 3D printed homes
- ▶ Amenity rich community featuring an organic farm, market, cinema, outdoor kitchens, laundry and shower facilities, inn, woodshop, and more.
- ▶ Opportunities for residents and members of surrounding community to volunteer, work, and celebrate together through on-site business initiatives, support, and programming⁴⁷



Top Left: Rendering of future ATCO Evansdale Village, Edmonton. Image - Hunter, Tristan Design, Homes for Heroes Foundation. <https://homesforheroesfoundation.ca/edmonton/>

Bottom Left: 908 ATCO Village, Calgary. Image - Toronto Star, Jeff MacKintosh/Canadian Press <https://www.thestar.com/calgary/2020/02/03/a-roof-over-my-head-tiny-homes-in-calgary-provide-hope-for-homeless-military-veterans.html>

Top Right: Homes at the Community First! Village, Austin, Texas. Image: <https://mlf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Community-First-Village-building-park-homes-Phase-II.jpg>

Bottom Right: ICON's 3D printed tiny homes in the Community First! Village, Austin, Texas. Image: <https://www.iconbuild.com/updates/icon-delivers-series-of-3d-printed-homes-for-homeless>

⁴⁴ Community characteristics as outlined by Homes for Heroes President, David Howard, in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

⁴⁵ David Howard, in discussion with Martina MacFarlane

⁴⁶ Mobile Loaves and Fishes (n.d.).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

3. 3D Printed Community, Tabasco

- ▶ Built through a partnership between New Story, Echale, and ICON located in Nacajuca, Mexico on government-provided land⁴⁸
- ▶ The first entire community of 3D printed tiny homes
- ▶ The community houses 50 families experiencing extreme poverty
- ▶ 3D printed homes are designed to withstand seismic activity and prevent flooding⁴⁹



Top: 3D printed homes in Tabasco, Mexico. New Story, Icon Technologies. Image: Icon. <https://www.iconbuild.com/updates/first-3d-printed-home-community>

Bottom: Tiny home being printed by Icon Vulcan II 3D Printer. Image: Icon. <https://www.iconbuild.com/>

CO-OP COMMUNITIES

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

“A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”⁵⁰

Co-op members do not own their individual units, but instead enter into a shareholder’s agreement, so the entire housing co-op is essentially jointly owned by all members. Members attend annual meetings, elect a board of directors, and collectively approve an annual budget for running the co-op⁵¹. Most co-ops are registered as not-for-profit, keeping investment appreciation minimal and living costs affordable.

The 7 core principles of co-ops⁵² and what they mean⁵³:

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership–**
“Everyone is Welcome”
- 2. Democratic Member Control–**
“Members elect the board of directors”
- 3. Member Economic Participation–**
“Each member owns the business”
- 4. Autonomy and Independence–**
“No corporate control”
- 5. Education, Training and Information–**
“Share, learn and grow”
- 6. Co-operation among Co-operatives–**
“Together we achieve more”
- 7. Concern for Community–**
“Building strong communities”

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ Families interested in multigenerational living
- ▶ People seeking affordable housing and alternative ownership opportunities
- ▶ People who benefit from natural support close by while maintaining independence and control over their own space
- ▶ People interested in being involved in community living

⁴⁸ Mexico News Daily (2019).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ International Co-operative Alliance (2015).

⁵¹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2018).

⁵² International Co-operative Alliance (2015).

⁵³ Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (n.d.)

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Requires a large investment in the beginning (for development)
- ▶ There are some expectations of members that may not be suited to everyone.

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Strong sense of community as members all participate and have a say in how the community is run.
- ▶ Financial model can work for many different building forms (i.e. apartments, a grouping of detached homes, townhouses etc).
- ▶ Living costs are set by members to cover running the co-op making it very affordable.
- ▶ As long as obligations are met, co-ops provide housing security.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL?

2. Artspace, Edmonton

- ▶ Apartment style housing co-operative
- ▶ Artspace has a program available for residents with physical disabilities called SAIL (Support for Artspace Independent Living Inc.) where members have access to 24-hour support⁵⁴
- ▶ SAIL is internally governed with a board of directors where at least half board members are SAIL residents.

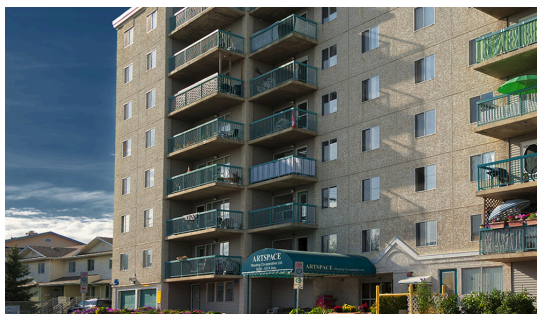


Image: Northern Alberta Co-operative Housing Association, Artspace listing, <https://nacha.ca/listing/artspace/>

2. Sundance Co-op, Edmonton

- ▶ Large, long standing co-operative founded in 1978
- ▶ Has a number of building forms that include townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes, accessible units, and apartments specifically for members over 55.⁵⁵
- ▶ Sundance Place is specifically for low income seniors and allows membership based on a household income threshold.
- ▶ Sundance is undertaking a retrofitting project to streamline energy consumption and reduce carbon footprint⁵⁶.



Image: Sundance Co-op (2020). Sundance Housing Co-operative: Creating a Sustainable Future. <https://sundancecoop.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/south-side-8-9-July-15-2019-768x566-1.jpg>

⁵⁴ Artspace (2020).

⁵⁵ Sundance Co-op (2020). About Sundance.

⁵⁶ Sundance Co-op (2020). Sundance Retrofit Project: Creating a Sustainable Future

⁵⁷ Canadian Cohousing Network (2020). What is Cohousing?

⁵⁸ Larson, H.G. (2019)

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Canadian Cohousing Network (2020). Community Listing: Abundant Life Autism.

⁶¹ Prairie Sky, Communities. Community Listing: Prairie Sky

⁶² Prairie Sky Cohousing (n.d.)

⁶³ Canadian Cohousing Network (2020). Community Listing: Prairie Sky

COHOUSING

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The idea of cohousing originated in Denmark and is a grouping of self-sufficient houses around communal space and a ‘common house’ that may include a kitchen, dining room, guestrooms, play spaces, laundry, and more⁵⁷. Co-op models function similarly, but with a different tenure or ownership form; cohousing is usually composed of individually owned units and doesn’t operate under a centralized business model. Often cohousing communities are formed before building and community members are part of the development process.

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ Families interested in multigenerational living
- ▶ People who benefit from natural support close by while maintaining independence and control over their own space
- ▶ People interested in being involved in community living

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ In some instances, location affordability could be a challenge as the price of land may push cohousing development to suburban areas, making it harder to access transit and services.
- ▶ Affordability is a potential challenge with cohousing. In a look at the progression of Danish cohousing, H.G. Larson states that “Tenure forms have implications for who can access cohousing” and if long term sustainability of cohousing “is to include dimensions of affordability and social inclusion, then tenure must be central.”⁵⁸ A co-operative model may provide for similar living, but with a more affordable form of ownership.
- ▶ Requires a large investment in the beginning
- ▶ When residents are involved in the development of the community, it can be difficult to coordinate, get the right location, and ensure funding *

**Many examples listed on the Canadian Cohousing Network are still in planning stages.*

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Multigenerational living with rich natural support dynamics built in
- ▶ All residents invested in fostering relationships and sense community
- ▶ Many cohousing communities use environmentally sustainable practices⁵⁹
- ▶ Opportunities for interaction in communal spaces such as kitchens, gardens

What are some examples of this model?

1. Abundant Life Autism, no site confirmed (forming)

- ▶ A Christian faith-based cohousing community specifically designed for autistic residents and their families.
- ▶ Site will include communal spaces to foster interaction such as recreation spaces, common laundry, activity and sensory rooms etc.



Image: Canadian Cohousing Network. Community Listing: Abundant Life Autism.

2. Prairie Sky, Calgary (completed)

Note: while listed as a cohousing community, the ownership model used at Prairie Sky is an incorporated equity co-operative⁶¹

- ▶ 18-unit multigenerational urban community⁶²— often cohousing is located in more suburban and rural areas because of the associated land costs, so Prairie Sky is a good example of cohousing in a central urban area.
- ▶ Apartment style and townhouses with a common house that surround a central courtyard and community gardens.
- ▶ Common house contains a kitchen, dining room, office, studio, etc.⁶³



Image: Prairie Sky Cohousing (n.d.). Gallery
<https://prairieskycohousing.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/prairiesky-2677.jpg?w=2000&h>

3. Urban Green Cohousing, Edmonton (In development)⁶⁴

- ▶ Apartment style multigenerational cohousing in central Edmonton
- ▶ Energy efficient and sustainable—net-zero carbon
- ▶ Barrier free design
- ▶ Common indoor and outdoor spaces⁶⁵



Image: Urban Green Cohousing (n.d.). Design Concept Rendering
<https://urbangreencohousing.ca/>

GARDEN SUITES (Laneway Housing)

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

A garden suite is essentially a secondary suite in someone’s backyard and is known by other names such as Laneway Home, Granny Flat, Carriage Home, Accessory Dwelling Unit, Garage Suite, and many more. A garden suite is a permanent structure that can range in size from a tiny home all the way up to 1400 square feet⁶⁶.

A garden suite is defined in the City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw as an “Accessory building containing a Dwelling, which is located separate from the principal Use which is Single Detached Housing, and which may contain a Parking Area. A Garden Suite has cooking facilities, food preparation, sleeping and sanitary facilities which are separate from those of the principal Dwelling located on the Site.”⁶⁷

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ Families interested in multigenerational living
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Seniors and near seniors looking to maintain independence with access to natural supports
- ▶ People who benefit from natural support close by while maintaining independence and control over their own space
- ▶ Anyone looking at market rentals in established neighbourhoods if the garden suite is built as an income property

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL?

Laneway housing is being reintroduced into many Canadian cities as an easily digestible form of infill densification in established neighbourhoods. In Edmonton, this form of housing is called a garden suite and YEGarden Suites is an organization that facilitates the development of garden suites. Examples of garden suites both for market rental and those built by families to house loved ones who are either aging, have mobility challenges or physical disability, or developmental disabilities can be seen across the city.

Link to the Finleys’ story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz0j2OMZlkc&feature=youtu.be>

⁶⁴ Canadian Cohousing Network (2020). Community Listing: Urban Green Cohousing.

⁶⁵ Urban Green Cohousing (n.d.)

⁶⁶ Ashley Salvador and Travis Fong in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

⁶⁷ City of Edmonton (2019).

⁶⁸ Ashley Salvador and Travis Fong in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

⁶⁹ City of Edmonton (2017).

⁷⁰ Ashley Salvador and Travis Fong in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

⁷¹ Ibid.



Top: Single storey garden suite, Edmonton.
Image: YEGardenSuites.com <https://www.yegardensuites.com/?pgid=jzoxvfpq-e8164c57-2211-4188-83ab-5783d4c3695a>
Bottom: Two storey garden suite, Edmonton.
Image: YEGardenSuites.com <https://www.yegardensuites.com/?pgid=jzoxvfpq-e611dc44-b7ea-4374-90ce-3dc6ee171cc9>



Three examples in one: a garden suite tiny home made of shipping containers.
Built by Honomobo, Edmonton.
Image: YEGardenSuites.com <https://www.yegardensuites.com/gallery?pgid=j3stnjsa-3be-a34ed-d874-4c52-9dc2-9f0501ae2cb9>

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Affordability becomes challenging as building costs are usually similar to that of ‘normal’ single family detached houses and many become market rental income properties
- ▶ Severing ownership from the main house—for example, if parents live in the main house and pass away or need to move to a retirement home, there are currently no options to sever property ownership; therefore, housing security is jeopardized for the garden suite occupant. Currently, if the property must be sold, that includes the garden suite as well.⁶⁸
- ▶ Community opposition—opposition to creating density, opposition to rental units

in general, opposition to the idea of affordable housing

REGULATORY AND ZONING BARRIERS:

- ▶ Under current regulations for a garden suite property, the property owner must reside in the primary dwelling, so it cannot be rented. This means that a family cannot decide to rent the main dwelling to a live-in support worker, or anyone else.
- ▶ Mature Neighbourhood Overlay⁶⁹ was put in place to protect neighbourhood character, but makes it challenging to add affordable density to established neighbourhoods. This directly affects the development of garden suites.

Note: The City of Edmonton’s zoning bylaw is under a comprehensive review and many of these issues are being revisited. It is expected that bylaws will be adjusted to overcome some of these barriers and allow for more affordable densification.⁷⁰

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Flexible use for multigenerational housing, care and support relationships
- ▶ Current homeowner incentives available for garden suites specifically for affordable housing can ease development costs.
- ▶ Maintaining independence while having a more natural feeling support base on the same property
- ▶ Being fully embedded in an established community
- ▶ Shared outdoor space, creating opportunities for connection and intersecting lives with the residents in the primary dwelling

EMERGENT IDEAS

Amendments to zoning bylaws may allow for a clustered garden suites model around a central courtyard. Not only would this model provide for meaningful support relationships between residents of the principal dwelling and residents of the garden suite, but also shared opportunities for support and peer support across the cluster, a greater sense of community, and shared space to foster relationships through meaningful gathering⁷¹. A larger courtyard ‘village’ of garden suites amplifies the opportunities for connection and communal living.

SCATTERED SITE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Housing is scattered in the community or within a larger building where surrounding housing is market, near-market, or follows a different housing model. The goal of this model is to embed supportive housing into a community rather than group people in congregate living. Support systems are delivered to individuals in scattered site supportive housing in such a way that they have choice in when they access it.

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ People requiring consistent access to supports
- ▶ People who struggle with time management and may not be suited to scheduled support services
- ▶ Anyone looking for a sense of community
- ▶ People coming out of homelessness
- ▶ People who want to maintain independence in their own space and choose when to access supports

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Location is key. Because the goal of the model is to foster interaction with the community, if there are other community challenges, they will further affect the vulnerable population in accessing site housing.

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Tailored support that is available to folks when they want it
- ▶ People can maintain independence and pride over their own space

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL?

1. Skills Society Melcor Model at Melcor YMCA Village

Melcor is an “innovative collaboration with the YMCA to support safe and inclusive housing for marginalized persons with complex needs in the inner city of Edmonton”.⁷² The collaboration uses harm reduction techniques and shared services to ensure 24/7 support for residents.



Image: YMCA of Northern Alberta (n.d.). Melcor Village.
<https://northernalberta.ymca.ca/YMCA-Locations/Edmonton/Boyle-Street-Plaza/Melcor-Village>

⁷² Skills Society (2017).

⁷³ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2016).

⁷⁴ Ibid. p.28

⁷⁵ Ester de Vos in conversation with Martina MacFarlane.

⁷⁶ City of Edmonton. (2020).

⁷⁷ West Wales Shared Lives (2017).

Using a Mixed-Income Model for Scattered Site Housing

WHAT IS IT?

A mixed-income model may have units available for both rent and purchase and include housing for a mix of low, medium, and higher incomes.⁷³ The mixed-income model may be used in many different building forms ie. an apartment, townhomes, single detached homes across a community, etc.

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES?

- ▶ Can help the financial viability of affordable housing.
- ▶ If units are all finished in the same way with low income units scattered throughout and unidentifiable from market units, the property can support diversity and inclusion.⁷⁴
- ▶ If people's needs or income change, they can stay in the same unit and community with just rent or mortgage being adjusted—leading to long term, stronger integration into the community.⁷⁵
- ▶ Developing this model be eligible for grant funding through the City of Edmonton for affordable housing.⁷⁶

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

- ▶ May still be dependent on subsidies to help balance costs for low income units.

SHARED LIVES

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The Shared Lives model creates home-based accommodation for folks who “need support and/or care from another person in their day-to-day living”.⁷⁷ This model works with the goal to provide not just housing, but built-in natural feeling supports. Living with a Shared Lives Carer, allows the individual to remain in a home environment, foster relationships, and receive personalized support.

WHO MIGHT THIS MODEL BE FOR?

- ▶ Anyone in need of support and seeking meaningful relationships
- ▶ Someone aging
- ▶ People with physical disabilities
- ▶ People with developmental disabilities
- ▶ Anyone considered vulnerable, experiencing physical or mental health issues, or substance related issues

WHAT ARE TRICKY THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ People must be willing to not only provide living space, but open their homes and provide support
- ▶ Each situation is very individual (physical space, living arrangements, even personalities) and finding the right fit could be challenging*

WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSES AND POSSIBILITIES WITH THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Support provided feels natural
- ▶ Housing is scattered throughout the community and Carers can help with integration and inclusion in the community
- ▶ Can be mutually beneficial for all parties involved—companionship, subsidy, shared experiences, support when needed
- ▶ Can be utilized as short term, emergency housing and care, respite, or long term living arrangements

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS MODEL?

- ▶ Shared lives exists across the UK.

CITY OF EDMONTON CONTEXT

A QUICK OVERVIEW

The City of Edmonton aims to create 2,500 affordable housing units across the city by 2022 and provides grants under the Affordable Housing Investment Plan.⁷⁸ Increasing the supply of supportive housing is also one of the key components of the Plan with a proposed 900 units of supportive housing being introduced. The City defines supportive housing broadly, but initiatives centre specifically around folks experiencing homelessness. Through the Building Housing Choices program, the City of Edmonton is able to rezone surplus city-owned land for affordable housing development.⁷⁹

THE CHALLENGE OF ZONING

Challenges arise with outdated and often discriminatory zoning bylaws that make it hard to build alternative housing models and supportive housing that is non-institutional. Several conversations throughout our research revealed frustrations with zoning and **interviewees cited costs associated with rezoning as well as the time and money spent waiting for rezoning and development approvals as a major barrier to the success of accessible and affordable housing projects. Zoning approval may take over a year and associated costs can be close to \$100,000.**⁸⁰

The City of Edmonton is undergoing a comprehensive review of its Zoning Bylaw⁸¹, and several promising changes are already passed or proposed that will make it easier to build alternative housing models, such as garden suites and tiny homes, change the requirements for parking in the city (see Appendix 2), and allow for more creative supportive living situations.

WHAT ARE SOME MUNICIPAL PLANNING TOOLS THAT ENCOURAGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT?

- ▶ Expediting development approvals for affordable housing projects
- ▶ Providing incentives for densification
- ▶ Reducing land cost
- ▶ Allocating and rezoning surplus city-owned land for affordable housing projects

WHAT ARE SOME MUNICIPAL TOOLS THAT FOSTER INCLUSION?

- ▶ Urban design through the lens of Universal Design
- ▶ Prioritizing affordable housing development that is close to amenities and services such as transit, schools, grocery stores, parks and open spaces

⁷⁸ City of Edmonton (2019). Affordable Housing Investment Program

⁷⁹ City of Edmonton (n.d.). Building Housing Choices: Communities

⁸⁰ Black, J. (2012).

⁸¹ City of Edmonton (2020). Zoning Bylaw Renewal

⁸² Robert Lipka in conversation with Martina MacFarlane.

⁸³ Alberta (2019).

⁸⁴ Murray Soroka in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

⁸⁵ Social Enterprise Fund (n.d.).

⁸⁶ Alberta Real Estate Foundation (n.d.).

⁸⁷ Trico Charitable Foundation (2020).

⁸⁸ Government of Ontario (2015).

THE HOUSING FINANCING LANDSCAPE

Through the National Housing Strategy Bilateral Agreement, the Federal and Provincial Governments “will invest \$678 million to protect, renew, and expand social and community housing in Alberta” in the next 10 years.⁸³ However, accessing government funding is increasingly difficult for social and housing initiatives. This is especially true for smaller organizations that may face challenges with funding eligibility requirements with associated costs (i.e. meeting criteria for full accessibility, net-zero building etc).⁸⁴

With a pressing need for affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing, where else might initiatives go for funding?

FUNDING OPTIONS

GOVERNMENT:

Federal/CMHC, Provincial/Bilateral agreement with CMHC, Municipal grants and incentives

ALTERNATIVE AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES:

Edmonton Community Foundation

- ▶ Social Enterprise Fund (Collaboration with the City of Edmonton)
- ▶ Long-term flexible loans for initiatives that present a strong case for public benefit⁸⁵

Alberta Real Estate Foundation

- ▶ Housing grants focused on affordable rental and home ownership “options that foster collaboration and the development of partnerships”⁸⁶

Trico Charitable Foundation

- ▶ Alberta Social Entrepreneurship Support System funding for Alberta based initiatives that socially impact Albertans and address a gap in society.⁸⁷

Social Impact Bonds

- ▶ Innovative social finance tool that “enables government to work collaboratively with service providers and private investors to pilot novel, innovative, prevention-oriented service delivery initiatives to achieve target outcomes”⁸⁸.
- ▶ Performance-based model that requires comprehensive reporting and measures of success—government repays the bond if the initiative successfully achieves its goals.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND MODELS

- ▶ Leveraging existing assets into mortgages
- ▶ Mixed-income models (see section under Scattered Site Supportive Housing)
- ▶ Operational and rental subsidies
- ▶ Alternative tenure models like co-operatives
- ▶ Alternative affordable building types like modular and prefabricated construction, 3D printing etc.

WEIGHING VIABILITY— COSTS AND CONSIDERATIONS



APPENDIX 1:

RESEARCH PATTERNS AND TRENDS

While putting this document together, research interviews were conducted with advocates, family members, funders, service providers, developers, policy planners, and entrepreneurs in housing. Throughout our interviews, there was an overwhelming call to diversify within the affordable housing sector. Insights were echoed across conversations about the need to foster cross-sector partnerships that promote variety and choice for individuals with developmental disabilities. Here are some patterns we saw in discussion:

- ▶ Shifting emphasis to a broad range of housing choices, rather than focusing on a single solution, gives individuals more control over how they want to live their life.
- ▶ Mixed-income properties and properties with a variety of suite sizes allow for economically sustainable solutions as well as opportunities for people to stay in their home and their community even if their income and needs change.
- ▶ Communal gathering spaces that allow for meaningful connection are essential for the wellbeing of folks with developmental disabilities and should be easily accessible.
- ▶ Proximity to primary transit, grocery stores, and other services is essential for inclusion.
- ▶ Integrated housing that allows for access to more natural support systems, be it family, neighbours, etc, contributes to wellbeing and sense of home.
- ▶ Creating cross-sector partnerships will strengthen our approach to housing—we can't do it alone. Putting energy into building a strong team of experts, (not just in the lab, but in practice and action) is essential for creating positive change.

APPENDIX 2:

OPEN OPTION PARKING— WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Edmonton City Council voted to enable Open Option Parking effective July 2, 2020. The change means that there are no longer minimum on-site parking requirements in Edmonton’s Zoning Bylaw. Removing parking minimums allows developers, businesses, and homeowners to decide how much parking to provide on their properties.

The choice to remove parking minimums supports walkable and affordable communities.

Supplying parking is costly, at anywhere between \$7,000 and \$60,000 a stall , and that price is reflected in the property’s rental, mortgage, and goods and services costs. When developers can choose the appropriate amount of parking required for their properties, efficiency and affordability is passed down to the individual user.

Onsite parking accounts for huge areas of wasted space. Edmonton currently has a “greater than 50 percent oversupply of onsite parking city-wide”. With parking minimums removed, communities can be built more compactly, use less space between housing and services, and make it easier to get from one place to the next.

The shift also focuses on a less car-centric lifestyle, favouring public transit, walking, biking, and other localized modes of movement. This helps to foster social interaction as we spend less time in our cars and more time experiencing life in our communities.

Note that City requirements for barrier-free parking will be retained.

⁸⁹ City of Edmonton, (2020). Parking Rules for New Homes and Businesses.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² James Veltkamp in discussion with Martina MacFarlane.

APPENDIX 3:

UNINTENDED LEARNINGS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In an interview with Trish Bowman, CEO of Inclusion Alberta, Trish shared an unintended learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to COVID-19, residential service providers were limiting the number of staff coming in and out of people's homes. Some residential service providers modified 24 hour support models to have staff live in people's homes for consecutive days at a time. As a result, people were happier and the number of critical incidents decreased significantly. **By living together people had opportunities to foster relationships and gained a greater understanding and knowledge of one another.**

"I think there's something really important [to learn from this]. We would always like to see more of those natural supports."

⁹³ Trish Bowman, in conversation with Martina MacFarlane

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AISH - Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped is a provincial financial and health benefits program for people who are unable to earn a living as a result of permanent medical conditions.

Complex Service Needs - PDD Policy defines individuals with complex needs as those who are eligible for PDD supports that may require specialized services and exhibit challenging behaviour. They may have a mental health disorder, behavioural issues, require psychiatric care, and/or suffer from chronic substance abuse/dependency problems. Often individuals with complex needs have had contact with the justice system and may have been cut off from services or have challenges in housing due to behavioural issues.

CSS - The Ministry of Community and Social Services leads income, employment, disabilities and community-based supports, family violence prevention, and family & community support services.

Family Managed Services - Supports and services that are arranged and managed by the FMS Administrator. This is typically a family member of the Individual with a developmental Disability; These

are not supports arranged through a service provider or government operated facility.

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/pdd-online/glossary.aspx>

Housing First - An initiative that focuses on rapid housing and supports for people experiencing chronic homelessness and focuses on stable housing as a primary need before other needs are addressed.

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) - a branch within the Government of Alberta, the OPGT provides services, tools and support for personal and financial matters

PDD - “The Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program helps eligible adults plan, coordinate and access services to live as independently as they can in their community. The program is based on the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Services Act and Regulations.” [cite]<https://www.alberta.ca/persons-with-developmental-disabilities-pdd.aspx>

Zoning Bylaw - The Zoning Bylaw is a municipal legal document that regulates land use, scale of developments, and density of developments.

RESOURCE LIST

LEARN MORE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Behavioral Supports Alberta: <https://www.ualberta.ca/rehabilitation/research/behavioural-supports-alberta/index.html>

FASD in Alberta, statistics and information: <https://www.alberta.ca/fasd-in-alberta.aspx>
Inclusion Alberta

LEARN MORE ABOUT SUPPORTS IN ALBERTA

PDD Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/pdd-resources.aspx>

AISH: <https://www.alberta.ca/aish.aspx>

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOUSING AND SUPPORT MODELS

3 Ways to Structure a Housing Co-operative: <https://cooperativesfirst.com/blog/2017/05/26/20175263-ways-to-structure-a-housing-co-op/>

A Brief History: Canadian Housing Co-ops: <https://nacha.ca/co-op-info/canadian-housing-co-ops/>
Alberta Community and Co-operative Association: <https://www.acca.coop/>

Government of Canada Information Guide on Co-operatives: https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/106.nsf/eng/h_00073.html

Statistics Canada Infographic on Co-operatives*: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019087-eng.htm>

**note: this information is not housing specific but inclusive of all co-operative businesses*

Canadian Cohousing Network: <https://cohousing.ca/>

YEGarden Suites: <https://www.yegardensuites.com/>

Community First! Village in Austin, Texas: <https://mlf.org/community-first/>

Homes for Heroes Foundation: <https://homesforheroesfoundation.ca/>

Icon 3D printed tiny home community: <https://www.iconbuild.com/updates/first-3d-printed-home-community>

KTVU News - San Jose's first tiny home community: <https://www.ktvu.com/news/san-joses-first-tiny-home-community-for-the-homeless-opens>

San Jose Bridge Housing Community: <https://www.homefirstscc.org/bhc>

NOTES



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