At Home in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong

Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab

PHASES 1-3 REPORT

Prepared by L'Arche Canada

At Home in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong

L'ARCHE® canada

Table of Contents

L'Arche Canada

This Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab is convened by L'Arche Canada. L'Arche Canada is the Canadian arm of L'Arche, an international network of communities centered on the gifts and needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in France in 1964, L'Arche came to Canada in 1969 and has grown to 153 communities in 38 countries.

L'Arche Canada now includes 30 communities in nine provinces from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. L'Arche Canada is a truly national organization with the capacity to share knowledge across provincial and cultural boundaries and with multiple sectors.

For this Solutions Lab, L'Arche Canada wanted to focus the work in New Brunswick. New Brunswick is home to two of L'Arche Canada's most vibrant communities- L'Arche Fredericton and L'Arche Saint John. Together as L'Arche New Brunswick, they are joining with partners across New Brunswick to develop a roadmap for inclusive housing solutions. Additionally, we will collaborate with a diverse group of National Partners from the affordable housing, disability supports, and community development sectors to co-create new solutions.

Key lessons from the Lab will be shared broadly with interested groups across Canada. Infographics, stories, reports, social media posts and videos will be shared in English and in French to inspire and mobilize audiences. Academic and research partners will be invited to review the learnings and prototype solutions.

Most significantly, **belonging and inclusion**, understood as different concepts, are central to this project, and at the heart of the New Brunswick Lab will be persons with disabilities, families, and neighbours.

L'Arche Canada is proud to collaborate with a diverse group of New Brunswick and National Partners!

Our Lab

Does your housing help you feel like you are part of a community, neighborhood, or group?

Can housing create a sense of belonging?

How can we create "inclusive" housing that creates a sense of belonging?

Welcome to, "At Home in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong," L'Arche Canada's Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab that looks within and outside the bricks and mortar of a building to explore what home means to us all!

We are focused on the development of inclusive housing that supports and nurtures belonging for everyone – including people with intellectual disabilities in the communities of Fredericton and Saint John, New Brunswick. We know that many of the approximately 750,000 people with intellectual disabilities in Canada are disproportionately homeless, living in poverty or in substandard housing; Inclusion Canada estimates that between 100,000 - 120,000 persons with intellectual disabilities are experiencing housing and support gaps in Canada. From a Housing First perspective, this lack of housing security underpins other gaps in peoples' lives including access to supports, services and social connection.

The Lab Challenge

How can we work together to ensure that everyone - including persons with intellectual disabilities, has an affordable accessible home that supports a sense of belonging and connection to the community?

Our Partner Organizations

Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab

Convened by   Facilitated by

With funding from

New Brunswick Stewardship Partners Team:

National Community of Practice:

Common Terms in This Report

Affordable Housing:

"In Canada, housing is considered "affordable" if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income. Many people think the term "affordable housing" refers only to rental housing that is subsidized by the government. In reality, it's a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing."

About Affordable Housing in Canada, www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

Belonging:

Close or intimate relationship (a sense of belonging) *to belong*: to be attached or bound by birth, allegiance, or dependency (ex. they belong to their homeland) / to be a member of a club, organization, or set (ex. she belongs to a country club)

(www.merriam-webster.com)

Inclusion:

The act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability). See *"social inclusion" below*.
include: to take in or comprise as a part of a whole or group

(www.merriam-webster.com)

Inclusive Housing:

When building new housing that promotes social inclusion the United Nations states "housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, access to transit, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas."

(NHS Glossary of Common Terms, www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

This Lab emphasizes Neighbourly Connections and Mutual Support, and Resident Diversity and Sociable Design as key factors for inclusive housing. "Neighbourly Connections" is a key factor for belonging

Social Inclusion:

Social inclusion is 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 groups.

(NHS Glossary of Common Terms, www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)
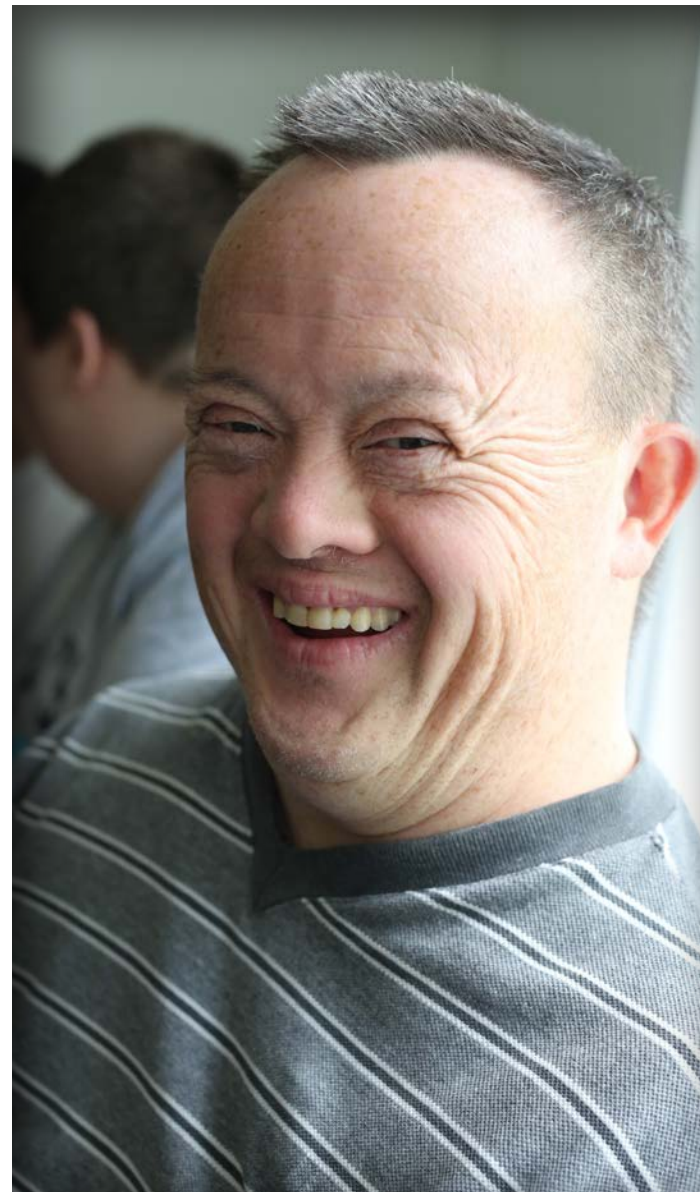
What IS Social Innovation?

"Social innovation has many definitions, but at its core it supports people and organizations to co-create, learn, adapt, and scale more effective solutions to entrenched social problems—making our human and natural systems more adaptive and resilient.

Social innovation in community organizations can take on many forms. It can mean:

> Identifying a new approach to address an existing problem
> Scaling a local solution so it impacts a broader range of people
> Working across systems to address a problem on multiple levels
...and many other new and creative ways of addressing the complex challenges our communities face."
(Innoweave.ca)

Why a Social Innovation Lab?

There are many examples and descriptions of solutions labs with this model developing in the mid-twentieth century. The University of Waterloo has an Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR), and Simon Fraser University has a social innovation hub called "RADIUS". The following is adapted from their descriptions of a Lab:

"We define Labs in the social sector, as opposed to those associated with science, as a highly designed and expert facilitated process clearly intended to support multi-stakeholder groups in addressing a complex social problem".

Why use a Social Innovation Lab Process?

Problems are increasingly complex.
Social innovation is about "fundamental system change."

Traditional approaches are not working.
"If we were to find a solution to the broad problems confronting us, we needed to respond as a system, or in other words, 'get the whole system into the room'".

Which means institutions, groups, and people need to work together.
"By engaging a cross-functional, cross-hierarchical sample of individuals and organizations interested in a particular 'mega-mess', a representation of the whole system was brought into the room. In a process designed to take advantage of the understanding of group dynamics, the people involved in a future search re-create the past, analyze the present and together imagine a better future. Differences are "parked" in favour of working on the "common ground." Action plans allow subgroups to move forward, past the workshop into action.

(Social Innovation Lab Guide by WISIR, www.radiusssfu.com)

The Five Phases of This Lab

New Brunswick

The communities of Fredericton and Saint John in New Brunswick are the focus for this Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab. Here are a few notes about the province:

Population: **776,827**

Almost **50/50** urban – rural

Canada's **only** officially bilingual province

New Brunswick has a higher percentage than the national average of persons with disabilities:

Canada **22.3%**

NB **26.7%**

Of persons with disabilities, the percentage living with intellectual disabilities is about the same nationally and provincially:

Canada **5.1%**

NB **5%**

PHASE 1: Definition

The work for this first phase of the lab was about confirming our partners, developing our teams, and working as a group to define the lab challenge. This phase took place from January – March 2021.

Our Teams

To guide the work of this Solutions Lab, a New **Brunswick Lab Coordination Team** was formed and met weekly.

The Coordination Team helped to develop list of individuals and groups to join the Lab Stewardship Partners Team. The group conducted a Gender Based Analysis+ to direct this work, and intentionally included persons with intellectual disabilities as Stewardship Team members.

Once the **New Brunswick Stewardship Partners Team** formed, they participated in three virtual meetings in February and March 2021, to learn about the Lab process, develop guidelines for how the Lab would function, and to identify barriers and opportunities to developing inclusive housing. Two of the Stewardship team members are persons with intellectual disabilities (who do not live in a L'Arche community/house.) Their participation and contributions have led to learnings around adaptive technologies ensuring their full participation in the Lab process.

Finally, the **National Community of Practice** (CoP) was created to represent various sectors at the national and provincial levels.

«Being part of the stewardship team is very empowering. It makes me feel like I am doing something to benefit the rest of the disability community.»
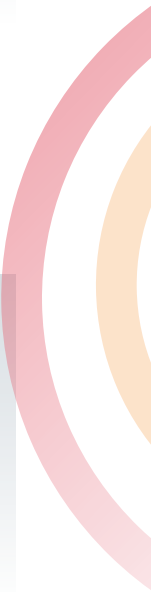 – Shawna Morgan, Stewardship Team member from Saint John, NB

«It's a very important project. I like sharing experiences and learning from other people as well.»
 – Stacey Howe, Stewardship Team member from Saint John, NB

LAB TEAMS	PURPOSE / ROLES
New Brunswick Lab Coordinating Team L'Arche Saint John Community Leader, L'Arche Fredericton Community Coordinator, L'Arche Canada Vice National Executive Director – Innovation and Impact, L'Arche Canada Atlantic Regional Director, and L'Arche Canada Lab Coordinator.	> Support organization and logistics of New Brunswick lab events/ activities, including Stewardship Partners Team > Develop and maintain NB Lab partnerships, outreach, and engagement > Support development of communications materials and communication for New Brunswick Lab activities f (i.e. updating partners on lab activities, social media and web updates, etc.) > Provides input into process design re: local context, actors, opportunities, etc. > Meets ~ monthly
New Brunswick Stewardship Partners Team L'Arche Fredericton Board President, NB Association for Community Living Director of Programs, City of Fredericton Head of Planning, L'Arche Fredericton Community Coordinator, Stone Church Reverend, L'Arche Saint John Community Leader, Housing Alternatives Executive Director, Greater Fredericton Social Innovation Executive Director, L'Arche Saint John Board member, Tamarack Institute Manager of Cities, L'Arche Canada Vice National Executive Director – Innovation and Impact, L'Arche Canada Atlantic Regional Director, L'Arche Canada Lab Coordinator, and two persons with intellectual disabilities living in Saint John.	**Core group of partners that provide high level strategic support and long-term stewardship for the Lab in NB, including:** > Define high-level Lab direction > Identify synergies with other projects > Identify stakeholders and partners to be engaged and support development of an engagement / recruitment plan > Ensure the lab is rooted in sound principles > Steward results and ideas coming out of the Solutions Lab > Meets ~ once/lab phase
National Community of Practice Trinity Centres Foundation, Tamarack Institute, Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network, Groupe Conseil en Développement de l'Habitation, Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Catalyst Community Developments Society, Independent Living Canada, and L'Arche Canada.	**This is a collective of leading organizations who are engaged across Canada in building inclusive, affordable housing and innovative supports that promote inclusion. The CoP is a space for shared learning which will:** > Facilitate a two-way flow of learning between the Prototype Community and others engaged in the field > Facilitate collaborative opportunities, where appropriate, especially opportunities to take innovations to scale > mobilize learnings about promising practices and innovations > The Community of Practice will meet once per Lab Phase

Guiding Principles for the Lab:

PRINCIPLE	IN PRACTICE
Include persons with intellectual disabilities and those who support them as co-learners and co-creators	> The voices of persons with intellectual disabilities and those who support them - their experience and expertise, their dreams, concerns, needs, and strengths - inform all that we do. > Persons with disabilities and those who support them participate in every stage of the lab including knowledge sharing, sense-making, planning, delivery, and evaluation. > The Lab process is designed to be accessible for all including the ways information is communicated, people share their expertise, and decisions are made. > The Lab process is flexible enough to accommodate different ways of participating and contributing recognizing the unique needs and strengths that each person brings.
Respect diversity and work for equity for persons who are marginalized	> Recognize that the disabilities community is diverse. Its members have many different identities, backgrounds, aspirations, strengths and needs. > The Lab process applies GBA+ and intersectional approaches to engage with the experiences of persons who experience higher levels of discrimination based on overlapping, marginalized identities to increase opportunities for their inclusion.
Focus on home & belonging	> Recognize that there are many factors that make a house a home including personal preference, feeling safe and secure, and having a strong social network > Ensure that solutions give people choice about where they live > Ensure that supports strengthen meaningful belonging in the person's neighbourhood
Take a wholistic approach to accessibility	> Recognize that accessible housing must address the physical environment, and also: - Affordability - Supports that adapt to changing needs over a lifetime - Access to transportation, employment, services, shops and amenities, etc.
Remember that it takes a community to create inclusive housing	> Build collaboration across diverse sectors including housing, community, government, and the private sector > Include neighbours and other community members as co-learners and co-creators > Include families in a central role recognizing that not every family has the same capacity or level of involvement > Recognize that effective housing solutions are placed-based. They must reflect local culture, address local challenges, and build on and build up community assets and social capital

> What is/could be the role of persons with intellectual disabilities in advocating, educating, being champions of change?
> Which organizations and programs are currently providing housing advocacy and supported living services?
> How do Fredericton and Saint John understand and view persons with intellectual disabilities and how they contribute to community life?
> How is funding available for housing and affordable housing?
  - Where/what are the barriers to accessing this funding?
  - How can this be made more available/ accessible?

Reflecting on the work done in Phase 1 by the Stewardship Team, two ideas that arose were that solutions to creating inclusive housing and belonging are likely tied up in funding and policy changes and that those changes will likely affect a variety of populations, not just persons with intellectual disabilities. At the National Community of Practice level, the concept of policy change impacting many groups generated a lot of excitement.

Defining the Lab Challenge

The New Brunswick Lab Stewardship Partners Team identified the themes below as an initial focus for the next phase of the Lab. These themes represent factors that are both barriers and potential opportunities related to inclusive housing and belonging for persons with intellectual disabilities:

> Income and affordability of housing
> Housing and neighbourhood design and development
> Supports, inclusion, equity and belonging
> Organizational roles, capacity, and collaboration
> The needs and wishes of persons with intellectual disabilities
> Community culture and mindsets about persons with intellectual disabilities

Linked to these themes are questions about policy, programs, resources and relationships, and "mental models" that are either contributing to or may be leveraged to address the challenge. Below are a selection of the questions identified for the Discovery Phase:

> To what extent is affordable, accessible housing available for persons with intellectual disabilities and what are the barriers and opportunities to accessing affordable, appropriate housing?
> What are the current barriers and opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities to generate income?
  - How does Employment Standards support or prevent this?
  - Where are persons with intellectual disabilities currently employed?
> What do persons with intellectual disabilities want in their housing and communities?
> What does "belonging" mean and look like for persons with intellectual disabilities?

Developmental Evaluation

As we work our way through this Lab, it is important to note that we are using a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach. The work has been, and will be, integrated throughout the Lab process. DE serves a different purpose than traditional forms of evaluation and is best suited to initiatives that are still under development or testing new models, approaches, or interventions where we don't yet know what is going to work.

"DE originated because of the mismatch that those working towards social change were experiencing with linear planning and evaluation. Innovators and change makers are in a state of exploration, with destinations as notions rather than concrete goals, and an uncertain path forward. New things are learned, the framing of the issue shifts, and participants, partners and context change, all of which shape novel ideas and approaches, as well as how the problem is even conceptualized."

(A Developmental Evaluation Primer, p. 11)

Some of the key DE roles within this Lab include:

> Framing the challenge, desired outcomes and interventions being tested

> Generating and making sense of real-time feedback for ongoing learning, development, and adaptations along the way

> Documenting the overall evolution of the lab (including key developments & forks in the road)

> Surfacing tough issues (tensions, issues related to power, being stuck, or different interpretations), and supporting adaptive action

The Developmental Evaluation Framework for At Home in an Neighbourhood Where I Belong can be **read here**.

PHASE 2:
Discovery

The purpose of the Discovery Phase was to gain insight, and to understand and learn about the current state of housing and belonging in New Brunswick through **dialogue, secondary research and people's** lived experience using a range of participatory research methods. The work of this phase took place from April – August 2021. View the full **Discovery Stage Strategy** document.

We used a diverse strategy to answer these questions and collect our information.

The Strategy: Engage, Listen, and Learn

Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab:
At Home in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong
Discovery Phase Milestones & Timeline
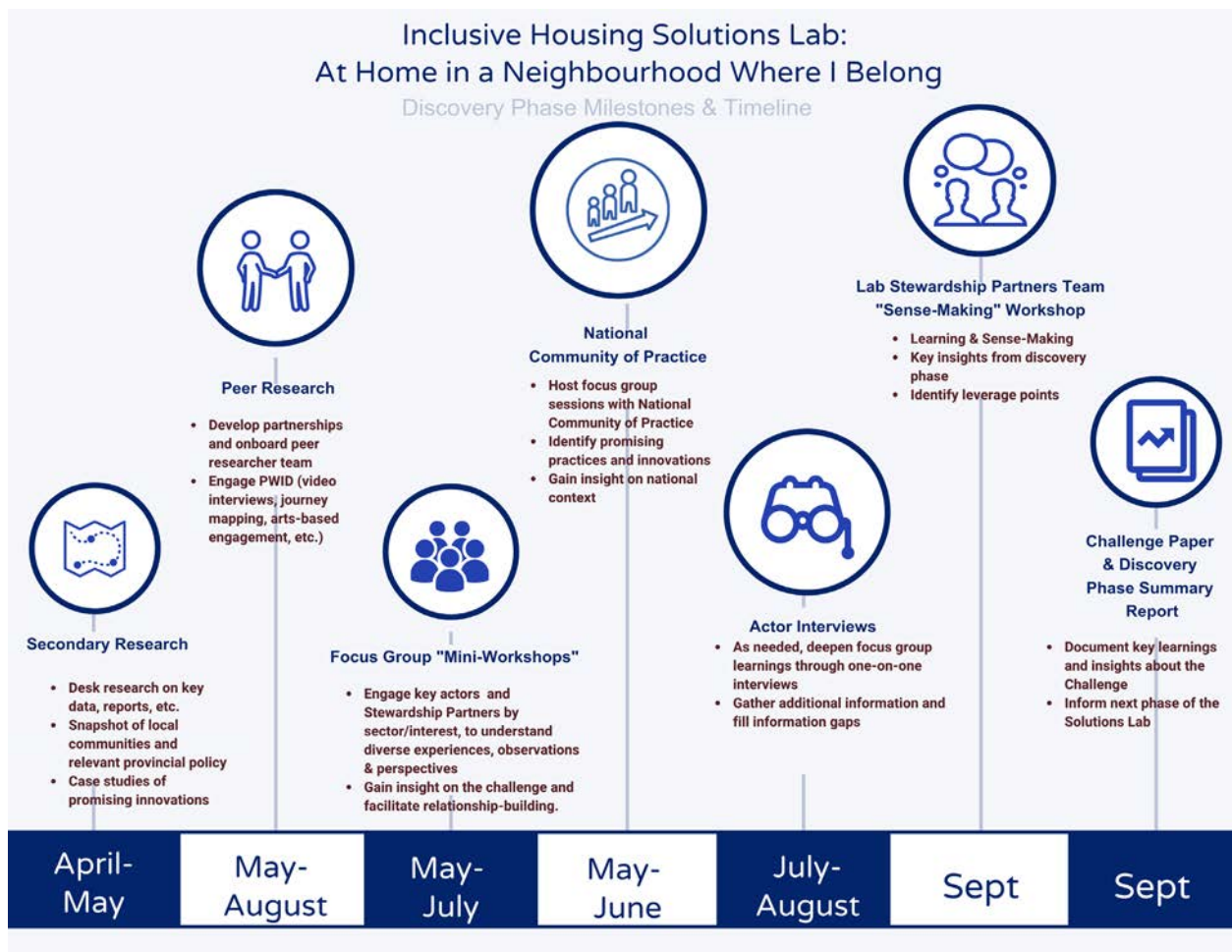
Focus Groups and Interviews:

With help from the Stewardship Team, key stakeholders were identified and invited to the Focus Groups. As part of the discussions groups were polled to identify their top three barriers to creating inclusive housing which revealed the following issues:

Community Organizations:
> Stigma / prejudice, and lack of awareness about disabilities
> Models of housing that reinforce segregation or isolation
> Lack of affordable appropriate housing

National Community of Practice:
> Stigma / prejudice, and lack of awareness about disabilities
> Policy
> Lack of financing for policy development

Government:
> Lack of affordable appropriate housing
> Models of housing that reinforce segregation or isolation
> Stigma / prejudice, and lack of awareness about disabilities

Family and Friends:
> Lack of affordable appropriate housing.
> Lack of appropriate person-centred supports
> Stigma / prejudice, and lack of awareness about disabilities

Housing:
> Drive for profit
> Difficulty working with the provincial funding programs
> Models of housing that reinforce segregation or isolation

Persons with Intellectual Disabilities:
> Fixed incomes and policies related to government assistance are significant issues that impact the well-being and choices of persons with disabilities in New Brunswick.

Peer Research

Eight interviews (four in each community) were conducted by a person with an intellectual disability in each community along with a support person. The two Peer Researchers were given role descriptions, hired, and trained to conduct the interviews about home and belonging.

Interviewees were asked the following questions:

1. What makes a place feel like home?
2. What do you like or not like about your home?
3. Do you have friends outside of your home?
4. Are you part of other groups? What groups do you belong to?
5. What are you good at?
6. Where do you get to show-off your skills?

Summary of Our Research Activities

Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab: At Home In a Neighbourhood Where I Belong

PEER RESEARCH

- Stories, experiences and wishes of the lived experience of diverse PWID
- Needs around accessing /navigating wrap-around supports
- Input and ideas for supports and solutions

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- Data summarizing context and needs
- Summary of Housing Plans, Strategies, Needs
- Assessments and Policies related to housing and PWID
- Identify inspirational promising examples of inclusive housing models / stories

Mini Workshops / Focus Groups

4-6 mini 'seeing the system' workshops will be held with with a number of representatives from different departments or organizations representing similar sectors (e.g. provincial government) for group discussions about the influences, challenges and opportunities related to this challenge. Potential focus groups include:

- National Community of Practice
- Provinicial Government
- Families of PWID
- Housing Sector
- Disability Support Organizations
- Community/Neighbourhood Organizations
- Developers & landlords
- Funders

INTERVIEWS

- As needed, a select group of up to people that represent diverse sectors that influence the challenge and also can provide unique insights and observations from their vantage point in the system

Discovery Phase Methods (April-September 2021)

New Brunswick by The Numbers

Affordable housing programs are funded and overseen by the provincial government. Until recently, there were no affordable housing programs run by municipal governments. The City of Moncton has a priority to "Explore and develop a business case for a city owned entity to deliver affordable housing in partnership with community based agencies and private sector stakeholders." (www.moncton.ca)

Social assistance amounts in New Brunswick are one total amount (unlike many other provinces there are not two portions - housing and personal needs are combined.)

Monthly Social Assistance rate for a single adult:
$537

Monthly Social Assistance rate for a single adult with a disability:
$697

Specific to our Housing Lab communities:

FREDERICTON: POP 58, 220 (2016)	SAINT JOHN: POP 70, 785 (2017)
Average rent, 1 bedroom: **$815**	Average rent, 1 bedroom: **$701**
Median income: 15-54 years: **$45,100** 55-64 years: **$54,090**	Median income: 15-54 years: **$43,500** 55-64 years: **$51,220**
Child Poverty Rate: **25.2%**	Child Poverty Rate: **32.1%**
Fredericton has **50%** per capita the number of affordable housing units that SJ has.	In SJ there is a new low vacancy rate so older stock (that was rented at affordable rates) is being renovated for luxury markets - people are being renovated out of their homes.)
Total affordable housing units: **2218**	Total affordable housing units: **3830**

View the full **Discovery Learnings** here.

PHASE 3:
Co-Development

Bolstered by the data, varied perspectives and inputs, research, and interviews from Phase 2, we could host a workshop to explore new ideas and co-develop potential solutions with diverse Lab participants. This phase took place during September and October 2021. .

For the Workshop

It was time for a Lab Workshop! Invitations were sent to representatives from the three levels of government, community organizations, housing groups (private and not-for-profit), faith-based groups, engaged citizens, persons with disabilities, and family and friends in both Fredericton and Saint John.

Workshop attendees were provided background and context for the work of this Lab:

1. The Vision

Based on the feedback collected throughout the Lab phases, a review of innovations, and tracking the factors that came up over and over as keys to their success, our Lab created the model inclusive housing below.
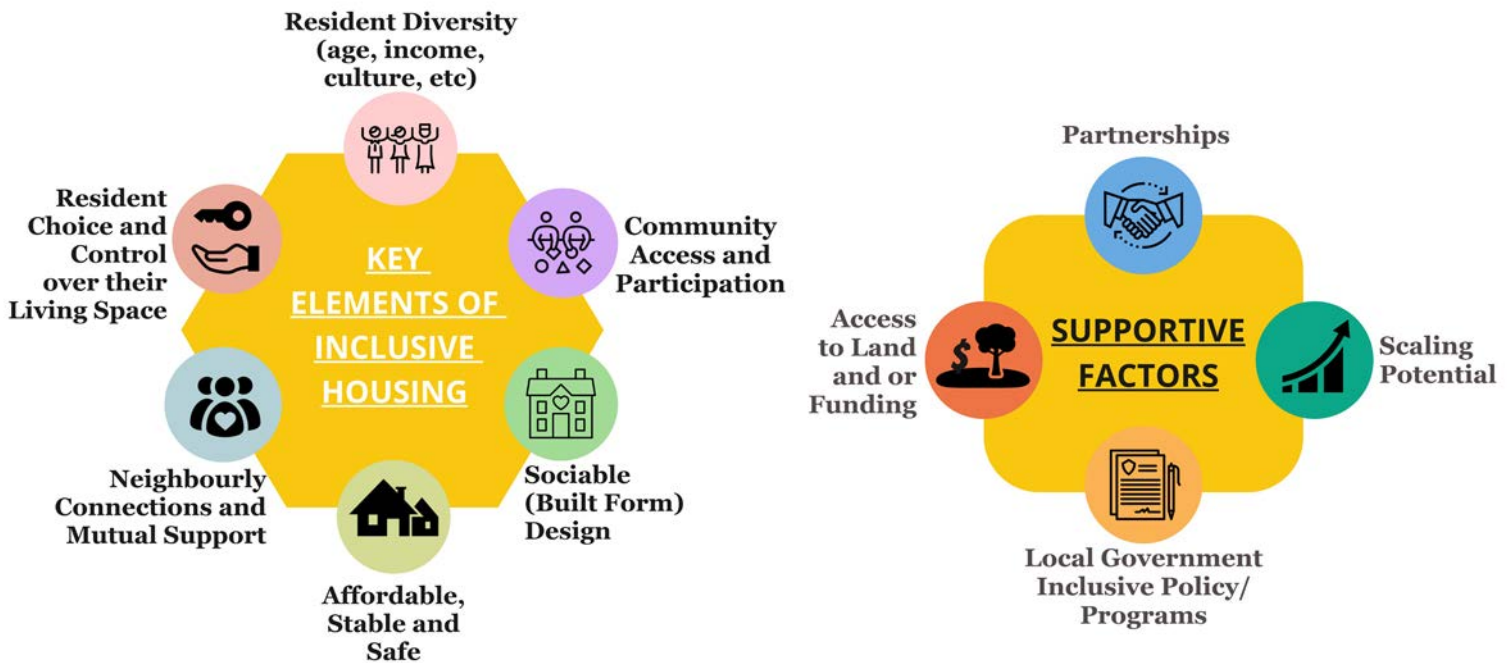
This model is an innovation from this Lab that we can work with and test as we move to prototyping.

2. The Challenges

The challenges for this Lab to potentially address were uncovered through the Discovery Phase activities. Below is an overview of what we found out:

> 27% of all adults over age 15 in NB are living with a disability.
> 5%, or 8,140, of those people are living with an intellectual disability.
> Many people with an intellectual disability live on Extended Benefits which averages $820/month .
> Rent for a 1 bedroom apartment in SJ is $701 and in Fredericton it is $815/month .
> Only 2% of all housing builds in NB last year were designated "affordable".
> The average wait time to access the Rent Supplement Program (subsidy) is 2+ years.
> Group homes continue to be offered as a choice for people who qualify for a subsidy notwithstanding that they are not appropriate for many people.

> On one hand, affordable housing has historically been congregate and on lower cost land (often not close to amenities), and on the other hand persons with intellectual disabilities describe the importance of reasonable access to amenities and services as a key factor in their ability to participate and contribute to community life.

The full "challenge" picture was outlined in the design of an Iceberg Systems Map (seen below). At the workshop participants were shown what was discovered about inclusive housing and belonging in New Brunswick by travelling through the layers. **See the full Iceberg here**.

Above the surface, we are seeing various trends related to housing and belonging that seem to be separate issues.

On the housing front, we know that there is

limited affordable housing availability

lack of affordable housing

The average wait time for the **Rent Supplement Program** is

2+ years

"I have the Rent Supplement Program so I only pay $150/ month for rent, but after paying my electric, heat, phone and cable, I am still not able to buy food at the end of the month."

Many people with intellectual disabilities live on **Extended Benefits** which average to

$820/ Month

However, rent for a 1 bedroom apartment costs $701/ month in St.John and $815 in Fredricton.

But affordability, while very important, is just one piece of a larger puzzle...

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ≠ **INCLUSIVE HOUSING**

We know that there are other important factors to consider, such as the

lack of appropriate housing

that meets people's needs for support, connection and belonging

"We waited over a year and when we got the Rent Supplement Program the only available housing was a group home which was not appropriate for my son."

"My daughter lived out of town but there was no bus service so she got quite lonely and eventually moved home."

For people with disabilities and others, there are **significant gaps in the housing continuum**, with limited inclusive options that don't meet many people's needs.

and on top of that, there are also

System Navigation Challenges

There are **limited navigation supports...**

- to access different forms of support from the **provincial government**
- to plan for and transition to independent living and to access the subsequent support services

"We have one person we talk to for housing, several others for supports and a different place for employment programs. None of these people talk to each other or seem to know much about each other's services."

THIS IS WHAT WE ARE SEEING

We know that in general, we are facing an

Aging Population

Many seniors who are getting older **will need inclusive housing to keep living independently** if they choose

Aging Generation of Family Caregivers

Adults with intellectual disabilities are over

2x

as likely to continue **living at home** with parents, increasingly in situations where senior **parents remain their primary support**

Many people with and without disabilities will require different levels of supports to remain and participate in the community.

Current Lack of appropriate, personalized supports

to carry out daily activities or to enable people to live in a home of their choice.

Many adults with intellectual disabilities are placed in nursing homes or other congregate facilities because they cannot access support in the community.

In addition to paid supports, informal social networks are critical for a sense of belonging. However, our society at large is facing a loneliness epidemic and many of us are experiencing

social isolation and a lack of community belonging

which has been exacerbated and highlighted by the COVID pandemic.

29%

of people living in NB have a weak or very weak sense of belonging to their community

Lack of connection with and between neighbours

Lack of unpaid social networks and supports

An emerging trend, as a result, is the growing focus on strengthening relationships and connections between neighbours as a key factor in community resilience

On the housing front, as the New Brunswick real estate market booms and housing prices soar, this creates

Affordable Housing Pressures and Competition for Housing

Demand for affordable housing grows but affordable housing supply is limited, creating a sense that different populations are **competing to be prioritized for available non-market housing**

THESE ARE THE PATTERNS THAT ARE CREATING THE EVENTS

Many of these problems related to housing and social connectedness stem from underlying structures and systems, such as...

Lack of innovation

Restrictive policies and lack of alignment between government policies/ programs

Lack of inclusive neighbourhood, community and housing design

Need for Inclusive Physical and Social Infrastructure

Limited Partnership across sectors

THESE ARE THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS

Many of these structures are rooted in deeper mindsets and ways of thinking that have become imbedded with time, culture, and societal norms

such as...

Stigma

Views on housing..

Housing as a commodity vs. **Housing as Human Right**

Housing as shelter vs. **Housing as Home**

Views on care and mutual support..

Professionalization of Care

Culture of Individualism

Culture of "privacy"

Currently, we are used to **Siloed Thinking and Working**

However, together we can take a more integrated and holistic approach by viewing...

Housing as a means for community belonging and well-being

Housing and Community Belonging as an interconnected and interdependent system

People with disabilities as community contributing members with gifts to share

Joining efforts to create greater collective impact

THESE ARE SOME OF THE BELIEFS, VALUES AND MINDSETS THAT UNDERPIN THE SYSTEM

Workshop participants were also introduced to three fictional personas based on experiences shared in the focus groups during the Discovery Phase work

This is Carol and her son Matthew

"I worry about where he can live if he leaves home. The only places he could afford are in crappy buildings where he wouldn't be safe. And he can't do stairs. And he wouldn't be able to get to good programs or places to work as he can't use the bus and getting into handicapped transit is a big hairy deal."

Carol wants to support Matthew in his desire to live independently, and COVID made her realize just how much her son lacks social networks and how dependent he is on family. This worries her because she is getting older knows she won't be able to take care of him forever.

Matthew graduated from high school three years ago and has become more and more isolated since. He loves sporting events, going to the gym, and gaming, and would love to work at a gaming or computer store. He loves the idea of having his own place but also knows that if he doesn't have anything else to do, he'll end up staying home all day.

They were offered a group home, but it wasn't what she or Matthew wants.

Carol has resources for him to rent something else, but she doesn't want him to be alone in an empty house, with only paid professional supports as his only relationships.

Meet Edna

"I wish I had a friend or neighbour close by who could help me out with a few small things around the apartment now that I'm not as spry as I once was, but I don't really know anyone around here... At the same time, I would really hate to be a bother to anyone."

Edna was just getting used to living alone after her husband passed away and she lost a good friend to cancer. They did everything together including weekly visits to the Community Centre for crafts. Her son is worried about her but he has his own life in Toronto.

Edna is comfortable in her apartment but she hasn't met anyone there yet. She doesn't drive and is not totally comfortable on all the stairs at the entrance to the building. She thinks she might try the bus but the schedule is not convenient and she worries about getting their alone.

She feels sad about all her craft supplies not being used but she just doesn't feel like working on them by herself. She is starting to feel trapped and lonely.

Meet Cindy
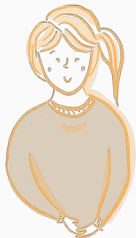
I waited two whole years for rent supplement, but even though I only pay $102 a month for this new place, it's pretty common that I won't have any money left for food by the end of the month...

Cindy's income is Extended Benefits of $820/month. Cindy likes having her own place but what she really wants is to share a place with her girlfriend. Her worker has advised her that she will lose her benefits if she moves in with someone else.

Cindy would like to take the bus to meet her girlfriend at the Community Centre Craft program they do together but she worries about being unsteady on the stairs leading down from the front door. If she lived with her girlfriend she would have help.

She misses doing her crafts and her girlfriend, but she has lots of idea for decorating the apartment building for Christmas. Cindy doesn't know who to talk to or how to do this on her own.

3. The Opportunities

The good news is that along with the challenges we uncovered, there were also opportunities. Examples of homesharing programs, co-housing models, community/neighbourhood connectors, purpose-built inclusive affordable housing, and sociable building and neighbourhood design resonated for our Lab. Read about **innovative examples here**.

In the Workshop

A total of 42 attendees joined our virtual Workshop over two afternoons to discuss:

Day 1. Pressure Points & Leverage Points

The purpose was to engage organizations and representatives from across diverse sectors and people with lived experience in identifying 'leverage points' (see diagram below) for change — places where small interventions can result in significant change to address our challenges related to inclusive housing.

Key Leverage Points

Housing Design and Retrofitting	Housing design and retrofitting to support connection and belonging **BECAUSE...** • Physical design of housing and amenities can support or prevent connection	**Role of Landlords & Property Managers**	Educate, engage and incentivize landlords and property managers as community builders **BECAUSE...** • Landlords and property managers may have unconscious bias, are often "gatekeepers" to access housing and to fostering connection between residents
Increase Resident Diversity	Increase diversity of residents (age, cultures, abilities, income) in existing and new housing communities **BECAUSE...** • This can raises awareness, strengthens relationships s and support true community	**Social Infrastructure for Community Belonging**	Programs, supports & relationships that intentionally foster connections between people **BECAUSE...** • Social connectedness doesn't just happen through physical design
Policy Change around Co-Habitation	Social Development income policy restricts people from co-habitating with others who do not have a disability. **BECAUSE...** • This will support people to have choice in who they live with. This may also cause positive ripple effects on affordability, housing waitlists and social connection.	**New Funding & Financing Models for Housing**	Innovation (and partnerships) is needed to create accessible, sustainable funding sources. **BECAUSE...** • This will result in increased resources and also engage and educate funders about affordable, inclusive housing.
Create Joined Up Government Programs	Align housing, supports, employment and other services for people with disabilities: one person one file. **BECAUSE...** • One stop services put people first and also improve education and efficiency for both service users and Government.	**Resident-engaged design**	Increase resident involvement in housing and neighbourhood design **BECAUSE...** • More resident involvement and support can leverage resources and reduce bias and stigma to create greater community cohesion.
Transportation and Access to Amenities	Strengthening diversity and accessibility of transportation to connect to community and amenities. **BECAUSE...** • Access to amenities, community, social networks and services is imperative for creating belonging and connection.	**Cross-sector partnerships**	Creating and improving cross-sector partnerships to leverage resources in new ways **BECAUSE...** • there are many existing resources, knowledge and expertise across sectors that can be combined and used in innovate ways to better support and connect community members. This can be between government, community organizations, private sector and more.
Visibility, Voice and Power	Increase voice, visibility and power of persons with disabilities **BECAUSE...** • In order to create more inclusive housing, the voices and perspectives of those affected must be taken into account by decision makers	**Need for data**	Need for data on people's needs for housing and belonging **BECAUSE...** • in order to innovate and work together, we must first be able to have a complete understanding of what the scope of the problem is and what existing solutions are out there.

Day 2. **Ideas to Action**

We used design thinking and creative exercises to generate ideas and actions which will be 'prototyped' in the next phase of the Lab. Twenty-two ideas were generated falling under six of the Key Leverage Points.

LEVERAGE POINT	HOW-MIGHT-WE...
Housing Design and Retrofit	> How might we develop or retrofit housing that connects people and meets diverse needs over time and as interests change (continuum of people's needs over their life versus the continuum of housing types as the focus)? > How might we create innovative models of cohabitation that provide 'win-win' benefits for people with disabilities and others (students, seniors)?
Partnerships & Awareness Raising	> How might we work together to creatively use our existing resources for mutual goals in order to be more efficient, and have greater impact, broader reach and a stronger collective voice around inclusive housing and community belonging?
Role of Landlords and Property Managers	> How might we address the education of landlords and property managers? > How do we create partnerships between non-profits and developers and landlords? > How do we empower and support (smaller) not-for-profit housing developers to do mixed income builds?
Visibility, Voice and Power	> How might we support people with disabilities to be part of the decision-making process and support decision makers to listen? Not just sharing their experiences.
Social Infrastructure for Community Belonging	> How might we ensure that all individuals feel invested in their community and have what they need to experience a network of support around them?
Policy on Co-Habitation	> What if people with disabilities and their families worked with provincial government to refine this policy (and create a model for collaborating on policy change)?

Attendance

Attendees represented the following sectors and organizations or communities:

SECTOR	COMPANY/COMMUNITY	SECTOR	COMPANY/COMMUNITY
Federal Government	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Disabilities	L'Arche Fredericton
Seniors	CIRA (Research on Aging)	Disabilities	L'Arche Saint John
Education	Education	Disabilities, Lived Experience	Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John
Family	Fredericton	Disabilities Organization	NB Association for Community Living
Seniors & Disabilities Lived Experience	Fredericton	Multicultural	Newcomer Connections, YMCA SJ
Community	Greater Fredericton Social Innovation	GNB, Disabilities	Premier's Council on Disabilities
Provincial Government	Housing	Housing	Saint John Non-Profit Housing Inc.
Provincial Government	Department of Social Development	Seniors	Silvermark / iGenNB
Funder, Community	Greater Saint John Community Foundation	Family	Saint John
Food Security	Greener Village	Church, Community	Stone Church
Disabilities, Employment	Key Industries	Community Development	Tamarack Institute
Disabilities Organization	L'Arche Canada	Funder, Community	United Way Central NB

National Community of Practice

The goals for the meeting were to:

RE-CONNECT CoP members and their current work/interests related to Inclusive Housing

UPDATE members on the New Brunswick Lab Discovery Findings and Development Phase Leverage Points for Inclusive Housing

EXPLORE what resonates and the implications for:
- Synergies between CoP members expertise/interests and Lab Prototypes
- Growing a national Inclusive Housing Community of Practice

Members of the National CoP identified areas where they felt they could contribute, and what they would like to see the group lean into. In summary, the following ideas were generated:

> Knowledge sharing through convening national groups.
> Policy knowledge around welfare programs around Canada. To make housing affordable you need to look at welfare.
> Would like more diversity at the table.
> Look at what is working. Analyze what already exists, how to improve it.
> Why not become a developer? If you want to shift how buildings are built, become a developer – gives the freedom to have what we want to have.
> Look at the leverage points and the journey for the different players (what are the roadmaps for the funder, the developer, the neighbour, the person?)
> New type of investment fund.
> Want to see the Lab be very specific about who is involved with each of the levers.

Final Thoughts at the end of Phase 3

A significant realization coming out of our work to date is the idea that many of the challenges and opportunities in the Lab are in fact connected more broadly to people with disabilities in general and to lower income citizens in general, versus specifically persons with intellectual disabilities. This is especially clear at the systems level where we are dealing with bigger factors like the role of developers, community housing planning and design, social infrastructure for connections, etc. It does not negate that there are some more specific challenges that persons with intellectual disabilities face, but it shifts how to work in these communities in a way that was not named at the beginning.

This Inclusive Housing Solutions Lab, "At Home Where in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong", is heading into Phase 4 – Test and Prototype, with new ideas, new connections, and new energy. The New Brunswick Stewardship Partnership Team will meet to identify the prototypes they want to test, and they will invite others from the community to join in the process.

Stay tuned for our results!