

SCALE YOUR IMPACT

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS CHANGE CERTIFICATE
3 YEARS OF LEARNINGS

2019-2022



vancouver
foundation

CNH acknowledges that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the x̣m̄əθk̄əȳəm (Musqueam), S̄kw̄x̄w̄ú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

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Collingwood Neighbourhood

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scale Your Impact: Systems Change Certificate was a 3-year project that developed and ran three cohorts of a 9-month systems change certificate for people living, working or connected to the Renfrew-Collingwood (RC) neighbourhood in Vancouver. This report summarizes key learnings from 3 years of delivering the program. Funded by the Vancouver Foundation, Scale Your Impact offered a truly unique place-based approach to fostering grassroots community leadership through building residents' capacity to engage in creating systems change. The report provides a program overview, highlights key learnings and recommendations for moving forward, based on a program evaluation conducted by SHIFT Collaborative.

Four Key Learnings:

Based on a program evaluation conducted by SHIFT Collaborative, 4 key learnings are identified which highlight the early impacts and lessons from Scale Your Impact:

LEARNING #1:

The program effectively **built participant confidence, systems thinking, and capacity** to take on collaborative leadership roles in their community.

LEARNING #2:

Scale Your Impact **offers a unique, accessible approach** to systems change that supports diverse participation.

LEARNING #3:

There is value to **place-based, peer learning** that builds social connections.

LEARNING #4:

Participants are **continuing to apply their learning** and stay connected.

Future Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION #1:

Build a **robust and sustainable funding model** to support the work of the Systems Change team within Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

Continue to **build systems change capacity** in the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood through diverse community-based educational offerings

RECOMMENDATION #3:

Build in **systems approaches to anti-racism efforts** in Renfrew Collingwood.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

Grow a **community of practice** to support ongoing collaboration, learning and implementation of systems competencies.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

Track the impact of the systems learning initiatives and approaches through a **strong monitoring and evaluation lens**.

For a summary of evaluation activities and methods that informed this report, please see Appendix A.



PART 1: ABOUT THE PROGRAM

WHAT DID WE DO?

Program Overview

Scale Your Impact: Systems Change Certificate was a 3-year project that developed and ran three cohorts of a 9-month systems change certificate for people living, working or connected to the Renfrew-Collingwood (RC) neighbourhood in Vancouver. Run by the Systems Change Team at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH), the focus of the curriculum was to provide tools, frameworks and ways of seeing that would support participants to get at the root issues of the problems they were working on, while also increasing their leadership and facilitation capacities. The focus was also on building a community of practice with other leaders in the community to shift how change happens at a neighbourhood level.

Program Background

Why this program was developed

The Systems Change Certificate grew out of a recognition of the importance of building capacity for systems thinking and complex approaches in the neighbourhood. The intention was to support neighbourhood actors to move beyond siloed programmatic responses and instead take into account how local issues are part of a whole neighbourhood system. Recognizing that organizations and their programs were often stuck in responding to the limitations of current models, the need to build relationships and capacity, creativity, innovation and responsiveness within and among community partner organizations and residents became apparent.

CNH had been working for many years from an asset-based lens to build connections and leadership in the community. As part of this, they had been working collaboratively for many years with Posabilities, Collingwood Community Policing Centre and Vancouver Coastal Health to engage in asset mapping and the work of identifying and

Program Learning Objectives:

The learning objectives for Scale your Impact supported program participants to:

- Understand the **big systems** in the neighbourhood and where the leverage points for change are.
- Get at the **root causes** of big issues such as systemic racism, homelessness, climate change and more.
- Use **human-centred design tools** and other innovative methods to increase creativity and idea generation.
- Understand why **self-awareness** is a necessary part of effective social innovation
- Engage **creative and adaptive leadership** to leverage change in the issues you care about.
- Increase the capacity to **communicate and collaborate**, in particular across difference
- Build bridges and **create safe spaces across diverse people**, communities, cultures, sectors and silos.

mobilizing gifts among neighbours in order to reduce social isolation and disconnection. Building on this, CNH partnered with the City of Vancouver to convene the Renfrew Collingwood Connections and Resilience Lab. Bringing together community partners, City of Vancouver staff, and RC community members to seek breakthrough, transformative solutions to the question of ‘how might we increase resilience, connectedness and belonging in a neighbourhood with growing diversity and increasing densification?’

Stakeholders in the Connections & Resilience Lab prototyped and tested this question using systems change methods, but realized there was a gap to embedding practices, roles and policies internally

within community partners’ organizations in order to respond more effectively to emerging needs in an ongoing way. They wondered how they might build the capacity for creative, innovative, and truly systemic responses outside and beyond the life of the Lab. Out of this, the Scale Your Impact certificate was born with the intention of building the capacity of individuals and organizations to embed systems approaches to the problems they were working on both within their own organizations and in collaborative spaces within the neighbourhood.

Systems Change Capacities:

The program curriculum was built around building five core capacities for cultivating systems change.

For the detailed Scale Your Impact Capacity Framework, please see [Appendix B](#).



1. SYSTEMS THINKING

Systems thinking is an approach that looks at the entire structure of a system as a whole to understand how it functions, and to understand what the relationships between different parts of

the system might be. Systems thinking allows us to understand how one part of a system has an impact on another so we can know better how to make change and get at the roots of the problems.

Key Capacities:

- Identify the **root causes** of community issues, and target efforts to focus on these.
- Recognize the **interconnections and relationships** between different communities and how these are influenced by wider systems, structures, societal beliefs and norms.
- Identify and work potential **leverage points** for change on community issues.
- Work skillfully with **complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty**.

2. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Collaboration happens when individuals or organizations work together to address problems and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working alone. Because systems are made up of people and the route to changing systems is through our relationships with diverse people, the capacity to build relationships, communicate effectively, work through conflict and build coalitions towards change are critical.

Key Capacities:

- Develop and maintain trusting relationships and collaborations with diverse stakeholders..
- Invite and work with diverse perspectives that are different than one’s own.
- Practice effective communication with others including giving and receiving feedback, working with conflict, deep listening and practicing empathy.
- Support groups to develop shared vision, goals, and understanding of roles and responsibilities within collaborations.
- Share power, resources, and leadership with others.

PART 1: ABOUT THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

WHAT DID WE DO?

3. EQUITY IN ACTION

Equity in Action facilitates the fair distribution of opportunities, power, and resources to meet the needs of all community members. When people's needs are met, the neighbourhood shifts from a place of deficit to a place of strength. The culture of the neighbourhood changes by unlearning patterns of dominant culture. As a result, our community work becomes transformative and underrepresented voices lead the change.

Key Capacities:

- Understand one's own social location and identities in terms of power and privilege, and recognize the role this plays in relationships and groups
- Actively support voices & perspectives that are missing or marginalized in community work to be present and welcomed,
- Build bridges and create safe spaces across diverse people, communities, cultures, sectors and silos.
- Understand power dynamics, leverage power effectively, and share power with others.
- Understand how history has impacted people differently, and how historical inequities are embedded and perpetuated in today's systems.

4. CREATIVE & ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the process of mobilizing a group to develop the capacities that allows them to make progress on the challenges they face. The art of leadership is about responding to what is right before us, adapting our interventions when they don't work, thinking outside the box and helping others to change their values, beliefs and behaviours.

Key Capacities:

- Practice openness to experimentation, willingness to take risks, "fail" and try things out.

- Actively encourage and support new or innovative ideas and approaches to creating change in the community.
- Help people and groups recognize, take advantage of, and self-organize to respond to emerging opportunities.
- Practice and support ongoing learning and reflection, and adapt actions based on learning and insights.
- Support people and groups to bring their strengths and best selves to the challenges at hand.

5. INNER WORK

Inner work is the process of bringing awareness to your behaviours, beliefs, ideas, values and more, and understanding how they impact you, other people and the world around you. Because how we think and act has an impact on our outer worlds, inner work can't be seen as separate from changing systems and can provide the tools and frameworks to catalyze the fullness of our selves as instruments of change.

Key Capacities:

- Understand how community change is affected by personal change and our ability to embody the change we want to see in the world.
- Engage in reflective or self-awareness practices that support personal learning and development.
- Understand how personal values, attitudes and behaviours impact the groups we are part of.
- Adapt personal style and approaches to different contexts and situations, as appropriate.
- Let go of limiting ideas, beliefs and emotions that can act as obstacles to having a positive impact in the world.

Program Structure

The program was unique in that it was offered over the three years in both in-person and online variations. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic began in the middle of the first cohort, the facilitators had to learn to be adaptive as to how to offer the program, moving it from in-person to online at various phases over the three years of the program.

Cohort 1

September 2019 - June 2020

****19 participants****

Started in person, transitioned to online

8 half-day workshops

The first 5 of these workshops were in person. When COVID hit, the workshops moved online and the final 3 workshops were held via Zoom. The curriculum was adapted to meet the needs of the participants who were navigating the start of the pandemic.

Peer coaching partners

Participants were partnered with one other person in the cohort to support each other in the application of the learning and leadership.

1-1 coaching sessions

Optional 1-1 coaching sessions were offered to each participant.

Weekly community of practice

When COVID started, the group who had already connected with each other over several months expressed interest in connecting regularly to support each other in navigating the pandemic, and in applying the concepts they had been learning to rapidly changing context. We hosted weekly 1-hour sessions each Thursday from mid-March to the end of June 2020.

For a list of examples of applied learning projects, please see Appendix C.

Cohort 2

September 2020-June 2021

****22 participants****

Fully online

8 half-day workshops

During the second year, the entire program was hosted online via Zoom. While the intention was to hold the workshops in person, in September 2021, the COVID numbers began increasing again, and we needed to move the program online. This cohort met exclusively online and never met in person for the length of the certificate.

Peer learning groups

In the second cohort, we moved from peer coaching partners to peer learning groups of 4-5 people as for some people, the partners were not a good fit, or were not able to meet.

1-1 coaching sessions

Optional 1-1 coaching sessions were offered to each participant to support their application and learning.

Systems Change Small Grants

Participants had the option of applying for a \$300 Systems Change Small Grant to support the application of the learning in a prototype or small project.

Cohort 3

September 2021-June 2022

****20 participants****

Started and ended in person, with online sessions in between

8 half-day workshops

The third cohort started in person. We held the first three workshops in person and when the Omicron variant increased COVID numbers significantly, we moved the next two workshops online. The final three sessions were held back in person.

Peer learning groups

Participants met in peer learning groups of 4-5 people. Some of these groups continued to meet regularly while others never got a rhythm.

1-1 coaching sessions

Optional 1-1 coaching sessions were offered to each participant to support their application and learning.

Monthly Online Integration sessions

Integration sessions were hosted monthly for participants to integrate the concepts, learnings and explorations from the workshops. These ranged from open discussion to teaching frameworks to exploring applications to focusing on connection with other cohort members.

Systems Change Small Grants

Participants had the option of applying for a \$300 Systems Change Small Grant to support the application of the learning in a prototype or small project. Participants shared their learning and experience of these small grants in the final workshop in June.

PART 1: ABOUT THE PROGRAM

WHAT DID WE DO?

Curriculum Topics

Scale Your Impact Curriculum Topics

- Complexity and systems thinking
- Systems thinking tools and application
- Creativity and design thinking
- Perspective taking
- Communication styles
- Active listening techniques
- Spectrum of collaboration
- Common elements of the innovation process
- Adaptive leadership
- Self in the System
- Self awareness and mindfulness practices
- Conflict styles
- Understanding the nervous system
- Diversity, equity and power in systems
- Ethical strategies to work with power in the systems
- Resilience, anti-fragility and care of the self
- Scaling up, out and deep
- Types of evaluation, including summative, formative, developmental and principles-based evaluation
- Systems curator role

After the second cohort, a series of three Community of Practice gatherings was hosted with a small turnout from alumni of cohorts 1 and 2. While people expressed interest in participating in the Community of Practice, their schedules limited their capacity to participate. The CoP gatherings after the second cohort evolved into a small group of alumni brainstorming how to continue to bring a systems approach to anti-racism to the neighbourhood. This led to the Equity Panel as part of Collingwood Days, held on July 21, 2022 at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (see below for more information).

Systems Change Webinar Series

In response to community requests to have shorter structures for sharing the content of the certificate, a webinar series of three 1.5 hour workshops was hosted. To support the ongoing mentoring and leadership of the first cohort, invited alumni were invited to participate in the development and delivery of the webinar series. Three alumni were involved in designing, hosting and facilitating the series. The three webinar topics were:

- *Intro to Systems Change (February 23 & 24, 2021)*
- *Self in the System (May 11, 2021)*
- *Resilience & Antifragility (June 10, 2021)*

RC Anti-Racism Committee

After the first cohort was complete, the participants were committed to the application of their learning. In the aftermath of George Floyd’s death in May 2020 and the realization of the growing anti-Asian racism in the community through the COVID pandemic, participants expressed a strong commitment to actively working towards anti-racism in a collaborative way. This led to the development of the Renfrew Collingwood Anti-racism Committee which was connected to alumni of the Scale Your Impact Certificate as well as the Renfrew Collingwood Area Services Team.

Alumni connections

Community of Practice

After the completion of the first cohort, participants expressed interest in staying connected and working together in an ongoing way. One of the easy ways they wanted to stay connected was through a Community of Practice to share best practices, bring forward challenges in applying their learning, and create new knowledge together.

After the first cohort, a series of three Community of Practice sessions were held. These evolved into a small number of alumni supporting the development and delivery of a Systems Change Webinar series.

PART 2: OUR LEARNINGS

SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?

LEARNING #1: The program effectively built participant confidence, systems thinking, and capacity to take on collaborative leadership roles in their community.

Overall, participants’ evaluations of all 3 years of the program were extremely positive and they reported significant learning and capacities they had built or strengthened through the program. The table below summarizes the top capacities where Scale Your Impact had increased or deepened their knowledge, understanding or perspectives.

Top Capacities Built: Agree or Strongly Agree that participating in Scale Your Impact increased or deepened their knowledge, understanding or perspectives

Core Capacity	% Who Increased Their Learning
What systems thinking is and how to use it in community change work.	97%
The role of collaboration in creating community change	97%
How to practice equity in my work.	95%
Identifying the root causes of the community issues I am engaged with, and targeting my efforts to focus on these.	95%
Adapting my personal style and approaches to different contexts and situations as appropriate.	95%
Supporting collaboration to achieve common goals in the community.	94%
Sharing power, resources, and leadership with others.	94%
Building bridges and creating safe spaces across diverse people communities, cultures, sectors and silos.	93%
How personal change is connected to community change	92%
Understanding power dynamics among stakeholders in the systems I am working in and how to leverage power effectively.	92%
How to engage creativity, innovation and idea generation.	92%
Supporting group learning and reflection within the groups I am part of.	92%
Working with my own discomfort and challenging myself and my own assumptions.	92%

PART 2: OUR LEARNINGS

SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Participants were invited through surveys and focus groups to share their most significant learnings or insights as well as the most significant changes they have made in their community as a result of their participation in the program. Overall, learning across the 5 capacity areas was relatively balanced (Systems Thinking, Collaboration and Communication, Inner Work, Equity in Practice, Creative and Adaptive Leadership) with participants reporting high levels of learning in all 5 areas. While specific learnings and insights were highly personal and varied across the cohorts, some key themes included:

Participant Learnings & Insights:

- Deeper understanding of systems and how to focus on “root causes”
- Greater confidence and sense of agency to contribute to community change
- A deepened focus on “inner work”, personal practice, mindfulness and self-care
- New understandings of leadership, reframing traditional notions of “positional” authority and leadership and understanding the importance of adaptive and collaborative leadership
- An appreciation of different stakeholders, perspectives, as well as interconnections and linkages within community.

“It has challenged me to step up as a leader even when I’m not “in charge” – and when I am in charge, I look for others with leadership qualities and values and find opportunities to delegate/empower them to use those skills. This adaptive leadership is made wherever we are, whatever the circumstances - it is an invitation, an opportunity.”

– Year One Participant

Most Significant Changes:

- Implementing greater awareness and taking **action to address inequities**, supporting anti-racism work within the community, and lifting up the voices of more marginalized community members
- **Practicing “inner work”** and mindfulness with self and others in life and community change work
- **Taking action** to collaborate with more diverse partners/people in the community
- Practicing **adaptive leadership** including patience, flexibility and deepening comfort with complexity
- **Becoming more actively engaged** in neighbourhood and community initiatives.

In particular, many participants highlighted how much they valued the focus on equity, anti-fragility and anti-racism was built into the program, noting that historically this has not always been common within innovation programs.

Many also referenced the value of tools such as stakeholder mapping which supported them in developing partnerships more broadly and beyond just their own sector in which they work. This was further evidenced by several participants who indicated changes they have since made in their practice to focus on collaborating with other sectors in their community work.



Somehow over the years trauma has dampened my voice into silence and I’ve found it difficult to speak up when I usually would. This course has helped shake some of that loose and was foundational to learnings received in other personal leadership courses I’ve taken since starting Scale Your Impact. I feel more confidence and desire to articulate and feel pride in what I am passionate about.

– Year Two participant

Program Content:

The components of the program content that participants found most useful and relevant varied across participants depending on their own interests and previous experiences. Across both cohorts, the following topics were the rated the highest:

- **Systems thinking and practice**
- **Building relationships with other changemakers, groups and organizations**
- **Anti-fragility and resilience**
- **How to get at the root causes of community issues**
- **Understanding the self as an instrument of change**



Cohort 2 engaged in Scale Your Impact session



Community members listening to the 2022 Equity Panel

“When I gather together with stakeholders now, we may have different solutions to a problem and ideas, but I always try now to bring the conversation back to what shared goals we have, especially if there is disagreement.”

– Year 2 Participant

PART 2: OUR LEARNINGS

SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?

LEARNING #2: Scale Your Impact offers a unique, accessible approach to systems change that supports diverse participation.

The Scale Your Impact program is unique for many reasons. First, it used a “place-based approach” which was embedded at a neighbourhood level with the goal of building the capacity of a particular neighbourhood. This geographical and local focus meant that participants in the program primarily worked in or were affiliated with the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood and surrounding area. The program was designed to be widely accessible with no cost associated and a simple application process. Outreach to leaders and organizers in the community allowed CNH to target individuals who have the potential for a big impact in their focus area of systemic change.

The program was also designed to meet people where they are at and the content was curated to be deeply applicable. It required no previous understanding of systems change, but ensured that everyone had a place to apply the learning. In many other systems learning spaces, people are required to have background education or academic qualifications to participate. This program was truly grassroots, focused on building systems competencies for individuals who don’t have access to other systems education spaces because of finances, educational background, and other factors that make more formal academic environments inaccessible. The program brought together a diverse group of individuals and organizations committed to learning about different ways to create impact and a commitment to creating change in the communities they live and work in.

For a full list of organizations and participant affiliations that highlight this diversity, please see Appendix B.

Program Structure:

Participants generally appreciated the program structure and many commented on how the program was adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic. They noted how important and beneficial it was to have the support of the group and the program during this time to put adaptive leadership into practice during a time of great uncertainty.

The program team and participants had to be nimble to adapt the program delivery as needed throughout the pandemic, and continued to refine the program structure based on their emerging learnings. While participants clearly prefer in-person delivery, the program was also effective when delivered online.

Key Themes in Accessibility:

- Neighbourhood “place-based”
- Widely accessible, no previous experience necessary
- No cost
- Applied “real-life” learning
- Grassroots
- Online and in person learning patience, flexibility and deepening comfort with complexity
- Becoming more actively engaged in neighbourhood and community initiatives.

LEARNING #3: The value of place-based peer learning that builds social connections.

Participants consistently shared that in addition to the program content, the peer learning and connections with other members of their cohort greatly enhanced their learning and the lasting impact of the program. In follow up focus groups, several past participants identified that had maintained connections with other members of their cohort beyond the duration of the program.

The place-based neighbourhood focus of the program has also facilitated ongoing collaborations and connections between some past participants. It has contributed to increasing a “critical mass” of connected people who share a common language and skill set around engaging in local systems change work.



91%

Developed meaningful connections with other cohort members



88%

Benefitted from peer support being part of a cohort community



84%

Were supported in their systems change practice by the cohort community



2022 Equity Panel - Jaz Whitford (Left), Leila Trickey (Right)

“The group sharing was so integral in making this whole learning process stick. My classmates came with so much experience and wisdom and it was through the sharing that I was able to integrate the theories that we were learning.”

– Year 3 Participant

PART 2: OUR LEARNINGS

SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?

LEARNING #4: Participants are continuing to apply their learning and stay connected.

Post-program follow up with Scale Your Impact participants has demonstrated that many are continuing to apply their learning and that it has shifted their practice and approaches within their organizations and community change work. Several participants have become more directly engaged in leadership of neighbourhood initiatives, and many reported shifts and changes they have implemented within their work. Some have become more deeply engaged in anti-racism and restorative justice work within the neighbourhood, while others are integrating this lens into their engagements or work. Others have joined local groups or committees they were not previously involved with. As a result of participating in SYI, some participants have made career shifts and are pursuing further education that focuses on community development.

The applied learning component of the program, as well as the small Systems Change grants which were introduced in Cohorts 2 and 3 gave participants an opportunity to apply their learning to their projects and gain experience.

“My community is me and I am my community. The ways that I better myself are also ways my community becomes better through modeling an inspiration. I owe my community to be heard better and have more resources and this is my promise to my community.”

– Year 3 Participant

There are several notable “ripples” from the SYI program, including the development of a neighbourhood Anti-racism Committee by members of the first cohort who were interested in creating change. The Systems Change webinar series has provided a platform for past participants to engage and reach a broader neighbourhood audience around topics of interest. Because the vast majority of participants had some ties to the Renfrew Collingwood, this has laid the foundation for larger neighbourhood shifts in culture and approaches to change making.

Across all 3 cohorts, participants have consistently indicated a desire to stay connected to “alumni” activities which can support them to continue to learn and collaborate together. Some specific suggestions included the creation of an alumni group and platforms to support this (e.g. Facebook groups, regular newsletters, other virtual platforms.) They are also interested in continuing to connect through semi-regular(e.g. quarterly gatherings or check-ins.

“I am now pursuing masters in community development and have been getting more involved in my community and neighbourhood”

– Year 2 Participant

“ (The systems change grant)... gave me an opportunity to apply the concepts and learnings directly to my problem space I used a multi-stakeholder perspective. I gave voice to those who don’t get a chance to speak.”

– Year 3 Participant

PART 2: OUR LEARNINGS

SO WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Challenges**Engagement**

- Maintaining participant engagement over the course of 9 months
- Adapting program delivery based on public health guidelines from in-person to virtual program delivery

Staying Connected

- Supporting participants to stay connected and build an ongoing supportive network
- Resourcing an alumni network

Team Capacity

- Supporting additional components as the network grow such as alumni engagement, anti-racism work and the webinar series.
- reliance of grant funding to continue to the program.

Integrated Approach

- Developing an integrated, systems change approach to anti-racism work and defining the unique role and contribution of the Systems Change team in this work
- Defining how systems change and anti-racism work within CNH and the broader community.
- Identifying opportunities to embed systems change and anti-racism into CNH



PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

NOW WHAT?

The three-year Scale Your Impact Certificate project has recently completed. While the certificate demonstrated important impacts in shifting how work is done in the neighbourhood, there is currently no funding to continue offering the certificate at this point.

With the need and desire still present in the community, the Systems Change team is committed to continuing the work of building capacity for systems thinking, innovation, collaboration, anti-racism and self awareness.

As CNH looks ahead, the following recommendations are important to consider:

Recommendations:

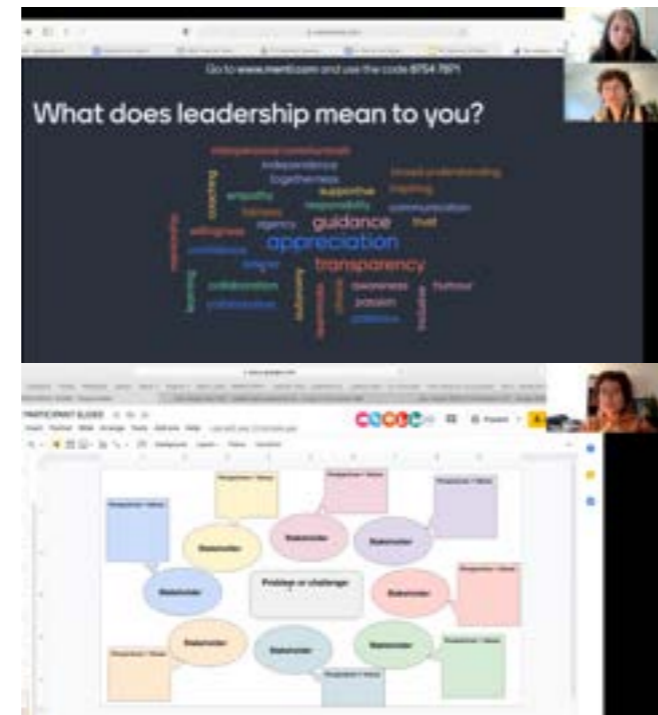
- 1. Build a robust and sustainable funding model to support the work of the Systems Change team within Collingwood Neighbourhood House.**
- 2. Continue to build systems change capacity in the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood through diverse community-based educational offerings, including:**
 - cohort-based long-term (6 month) in-person systems learning journeys that covers a range of core systems skills with the opportunity for application of skills.
 - virtual introductory webinars around core systems learning topics, such as complexity thinking, self awareness/inner work of systems change and systems communication skills.
 - bespoke systems learning experiences designed in collaboration with organizations to meet the specific needs and context of a team or group of people who would benefit from a systems and complexity framework.

3. Build in systems approaches to anti-racism efforts in Renfrew Collingwood that focus on three areas:

- mindsets and behaviours of community members;
- policies and practices of organizations; and
- collaborative anti-racism efforts at the neighbourhood-level.

4. Grow a community of practice for people and organizations who have participated in Scale Your Impact or other systems learning programs to support ongoing collaboration, learning and implementation of systems competencies.

5. Track the impact of the systems learning initiatives and approaches through a strong monitoring and evaluation lens.



Cohort 3 facilitators leading Cohort 3 Zoom session on leadership. Maria dela Cruz (top), Lisa Gibson (bottom)

CONCLUSION

The first three years of the Scale Your Impact Certificate program provided a meaningful learning experience for program participants that has resulted in deepened capacity for neighbourhood-based systems change work in 5 key capacity areas: system thinking; collaboration and communication; equity in practice, inner work; and creative and adaptive leadership.

While more time is needed to fully evaluate the long term outcomes of the program, it is clear that the program has contributed to changes in mindsets and practices for participants and that this, in turn, is influencing the organizations and communities where they work and engage. Many past participants have taken concrete action to become more engaged in the neighbourhood through various committees, initiatives and other learning opportunities, and several have stepped forward to become mentors or facilitators for others. The relationship-based cohort model and being part of a learning community has been extremely valuable, and many participants have voluntarily remained connected to others in their cohort after the conclusion of the formal program.

There is interest and energy in maintaining an “alumni” group of practitioners which can provide

“No one can define or measure justice, democracy, security, freedom, truth, or love. No one can define or measure any value. But if no one speaks up for them, if systems aren’t designed to produce them, if we don’t speak about them and point toward their presence or absence, they will cease to exist.”

– Meadows. Donella, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*

a vehicle for past participants to become mentors, stay connected and engaged, and further influence systems change opportunities in the neighbourhood and beyond.

Overall, interest in the program has remained consistent, and diversity of the program participants has increased over time. The program has offered an innovative approach to leadership development which holds promise, and can continue to have deepened impact if sustained into the future.

“We are socialized to see what is wrong, missing, off, to tear down the ideas of others and uplift our own. To a certain degree, our entire future may depend on learning to listen, listen without assumptions or defenses.”

– Adrienne Marie Brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*

“(The systems change grant)... gave me an opportunity to apply the concepts and learnings directly to my problem space I used a multi-stakeholder perspective. I gave voice to those who don’t get a chance to speak.”

– Year 3 Participant



APPENDIX A.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW & METHODS

Throughout 2020-22, the Scale Your Impact team engaged Stacy Barter from SHIFT Collaborative to support developmental evaluation of the program which has informed the learnings in this report. Evaluation activities included:

1. Development of Program Capacity Building Framework

(Please see Appendix B)

This framework outlines the key capacities the Scale Your Impact program aims to build in participants so that they can more effectively contribute to systems change efforts through their personal practice, work within their organizations, and collaboration and engagement in the neighbourhood. The framework was used to guide subsequent evaluation activities.

2. Participant Evaluations

3 key methods were used:

Baseline Surveys

- This survey was conducted for Cohorts 2 & 3 and focused on participant motivations, learning interests and baseline knowledge and capacity.

Post-program Participant Surveys

- This survey was conducted for Cohort 1,2 & 3 and focused on self-reported participant impacts and learnings.

Focus Groups

- 2 focus groups were held that were made up of a self-selected group of year one participants, and a combination of years one and two participants. It focused on self-reported participant impacts and learnings through a semi-structured group interview.

3. Systems Change Team Developmental Evaluation

- Beginning in year two, regular Developmental evaluation sessions were facilitated with the Systems Change staff team to document and make -sense of “real-time” learnings and adaptations within the program.
- A final focus group was held with the staff team to document key learnings and insights from across the three years of the program.

APPENDIX B.

SCALE YOUR IMPACT – COMMUNITY SYSTEMS CHANGE CERTIFICATE CAPACITY FRAMEWORK

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Scale Your Impact: Community Systems Change Certificate is a community-based certificate to support the creation of thriving, equitable and resilient individuals, groups, organizations and neighbourhood. Through this 9-month certificate, participants have the opportunity to learn with a cohort about how to get at the root issues of the problems they are working on to create lasting change, while developing their own leadership skills. Drawing on the strengths of the neighbourhood, participants develop a toolbox of innovative methods and collaborate with other inspiring leaders to impact change.

WHY SYSTEMS CHANGE?

This program was created in response to the needs to both take a systems approach but also to support the development of capacities within the neighbourhood and across organizations to imagine and create the neighbourhood that they desire. A Systems Change approach is critical to get at the underlying causes of the complex issues that we are working on, including social isolation, injustice and inequity. By taking a systems approach, we are looking at the neighbourhood as a whole and we are building on the tremendous strengths, creativity and resilience that are already present. By building the resilience of the individual, neighbourhood, organization and municipality as a whole, we are igniting the assets and abilities of the community to engage the work itself.

FIVE CAPACITIES FOR CULTIVATING SYSTEMS CHANGE

Scale Your Impact supports participants to develop capacities in five key areas that support Systems Change:

1. SYSTEMS THINKING
2. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION
3. EQUITY IN PRACTICE
4. CREATIVE & ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP
5. INNER WORK



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SYSTEMS THINKING

What is it?

Systems are made up of interconnected parts and when together those parts create a complex whole. Systems thinking is an approach that looks at the entire structure of a system as a whole to understand how it functions, and to understand what the relationships between different parts of the system might be. Systems thinking allows us to understand how one part of a system has an impact on another so we can know better how to make change. When we are talking about complex social and sustainability issues, such as racism, climate change, food security and poverty, we can't just focus on one part of the system. We need to understand the whole system so we can know where to make change that will be lasting and get at the roots of the problems.

Key indicators of systems thinking capacities:



Individuals:

- Understand what system thinking is and use it in work and/or community roles.
- Are able to identify the root causes of the community issues they are engaged with, and target efforts to focus on these.
- Can identify the interconnections and relationships between different issues in the community, and how these are connected to and influenced by wider systems, structures, societal beliefs and norms.
- Have the skills and tools to identify leverage points for change in the community.
- Are able to work skillfully with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty.



Groups and Organizations

- Have a shared understanding of the root causes of community issues they are working on.
- Go beyond conventional programming approaches to develop and implement initiatives that target root causes and leverage points within different parts of the system.
- Commit time and resources to forward systems change work.
- Understand and leverage interconnections across neighbourhood issues of concern.



Neighbourhood:

- Measures impact on issues across the neighbourhood as opposed to individual organizations and programs.
- Has structures and practices that foster system-wide, learning and dialogue across sectors. (e.g. networks, communities of practice).
- Works across scales to influence leverage points outside of the neighbourhood.

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COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

What is it?

Collaboration happens when individuals or organizations working together to address problems and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working alone. Because systems are made up of people and the route to changing systems is through our relationships with diverse people, the capacity to build relationships, communicate effectively, work through conflict and build coalitions towards change are critical.

What does it look like?

Some key indicators of Collaboration and Communication capacities include:

Individuals:

- Develop and maintain trusting relationships and collaborations with diverse people, organizations, and/or sectors.
- Are comfortable inviting, understanding and working with diverse perspectives that are different than one's own.
- Practice effective communication with others including giving and receiving feedback, working with conflict, deep listening and practicing empathy.
- Are able to support groups to develop a shared vision, goals, and understanding of roles and responsibilities within collaborations.
- Share power, resources, and leadership with others.
- Are able to let go of personal agendas, holding collective interests as equally important as one's own.

Groups and Organizations

- Look outside of their own group to actively seek out and cultivate collaborations and partnerships towards shared goals.
- Work to move beyond turf and build trust with and amongst other groups and stakeholders.
- Align mutually reinforcing activities to have greater impact on community issues of concern, and have structures and practices to support collaboration and ongoing communication across departments, groups and/or sectors.
- Allocate resources towards collaborative initiatives and invest in building trusting relationships between and with a wide circle of collaborators and stakeholders.
- Articulate a shared vision, goals, and understanding of roles and responsibilities within collaborations
- Believe that no single group or sector can fully address complex community challenges, that diverse perspectives are needed for innovation, and that together we can leverage more for everyone.

Neighbourhood:

- Leverages resources and energy to target issues collectively, strategically aligning resources to create change
- Has a culture of collaboration with high levels of trust and sense of belonging.

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- Has platforms, networks and institutions that support multi-sectoral collaboration.
- Utilizes diverse communication models which allow different people to participate/contribute.

EQUITY IN ACTION

What is it?

Equity in Action facilitating the fair distribution of opportunities, power, and resources to meet the needs of all community members. When people's needs are met, we are shifting the neighbourhood from a place of deficit to a place of strength. The culture of the neighbourhood changes by unlearning unhealthy patterns of dominant culture. As a result, our community work becomes transformative and underrepresented voices lead the change.

What does it look like?

Some key indicators of capacities to support Equity in Action include:

Individuals

- Understand one's own social location and identities in terms of power and privilege, and recognize the role this plays in relationships and groups
- Actively support voices & perspectives that are missing or marginalized in community work to be present and welcomed, adapting initiatives to ensure they are accessible to a wide range of people.
- Build bridges and create safe spaces across diverse people communities, cultures, sectors and silos.
- Understand power dynamics, leverage power effectively, and share power with others.
- Are able to challenge one's own and others' assumptions, hold and work with discomfort.
- Understand how history has impacted people differently, and how historical inequities are embedded in and perpetuated in today's systems.

Groups and Organizations

- Lead community initiatives focused on increasing and cultivating greater equity.
- Update organizational processes, policies, norms and practices that limit equity, actively examining who is included and who is not in programming, leadership and decision-making.
- Incorporate an equity lens throughout the group's work, decision making policies and practices, and share these equity commitments publicly.
- Invest in ongoing learning and capacity building to support equity building.
- Form alliances with equity-seeking groups, and engage groups who are marginalized in activities and decision making.

Neighbourhood:

- Equity seeking groups play a leadership role in systems change within the community.
- All neighbours feel they have equal access to services and supports, and participation in the neighbourhood
- Fosters a culture of ongoing learning and practice with safe space to learn, "mess up" and change practice

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and beliefs.

CREATIVE & ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

What is it?

Leadership is the process of mobilizing a group to develop the capacities that allows them to make progress on the challenges they face. Rather than leadership being determined by personal characteristics or positions of authority, leadership can be seen as a practice that changes depending on the context. The art of leadership is about responding to what is right before us, adapting our interventions when they don't work, thinking outside the box and helping others to change their values, beliefs and behaviours. These skills are critical so that we can respond to the complexity of the social and sustainability issues we face with creativity, spontaneity and innovation.

What does it look like?

Some key indicators of Creative & Adaptive Leadership capacities include:

Individuals

- Are able to be flexible, adaptive, and creative in response to the context and moment, and respond accordingly
- Are open to experimentation, willing to take risks, "fail" and try things out.
- Actively encourage and support new or innovative ideas and approaches to creating change in the community.
- Help people and groups recognize, take advantage of, and self-organize to respond to emerging opportunities.
- Practice and support ongoing learning and reflection in community processes and groups, and adapt actions based on learning and insights
- Support people and groups to bring their strengths and best selves to the challenges at hand.

Groups and organizations

- Have structures and practices in place to support reflection, learning and adaptive learning.
- Foster a culture of experimentation and creativity
- Are pro-active and responsive, recognizing and acting on emerging opportunities and energy.
- Evaluation and learning is embedded and resourced in projects and initiatives.

Neighbourhood:

- Has a culture of creativity, pro-active responsiveness and experimentation in responding to community issues
- Has structures, practices and platforms are in place to support innovation, experimentation and learning

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- Provides leadership to other neighbourhoods and jurisdictions that are grappling with similar issues and processes.

INNER WORK

What is it?

Inner work is the process of bringing awareness to your behaviours, beliefs, ideas, values and more, and understanding how they impact you, other people and the world around you. Our own inner work plays a critical role in supporting our ability to create transformative change. If we take a systems approach to looking at the world, we see that everything is interconnected and our inner worlds are not only a part of the systems around us, they also have an impact on the systems around us. An awareness of our own inner worlds, may support greater capacity for us to be aware of the systems around us so we can sense and feel these systems in a more nuanced way. In fact, if we have not worked with our own self awareness, we run the risk of getting in the way of the change we are trying to make. Inner work provides the tools and frameworks to catalyze the fullness of our selves as instruments of change.

What does it look like?

Some key indicators of Inner Work capacities include:

Individuals

- Engage in reflective or self- awareness practices that support personal learning and development.
- Adapt one's personal style and approaches to different contexts and situations, as appropriate.
- See personal change as interconnected with collective change and understand how community change is affected by our ability to embody the change we want to see in the world.
- Are able to work with one's own discomfort and challenge oneself in support of broader goals for change in the community.
- Can let go of limiting ideas, beliefs and emotions that can act as obstacles to having a positive impact in the world.

Groups and Organizations

- Integrate and facilitate reflective self- awareness practices into community work, supporting and welcoming people to bring their whole selves to the group.
- Tend to healing relationships that need repair.
- Tend to feelings that are part of the complex issues being worked on, holding space for and leading people through grief, fear, or anxiety, and drawing out hope, joy and a sense of possibility.

Neighbourhood:

- Vibrant arts and cultural activities express inner experiences of the neighbourhood.
- Has a strong culture of care and compassion.
- Is activated by local and global concerns.

APPENDIX C.

SYSTEMS CHANGE APPLIED LEARNING PROJECTS EXAMPLES

- Exploring creative ways to build a growing community of Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, through incentives, community building, and more.
- Connecting diverse Filipino Folks to food initiatives in the DTES and increasing their capacity for nutritional wellbeing in a way that is culturally connected
- Connecting LGBTQ2S+ seniors in the West End to one another to foster meaningful friendships
- Making space for genuine, enduring human connection within a neighbourhood context during a pandemic when people are/have been isolated to an unprecedented degree.
- Supporting ageing Community Members in Renfrew Collingwood to feel like they are part of our Community Family
- Education for BIPOC communities on queer culture that is outside the White North American identity through multimedia projects.
- Understanding the key contribution housekeepers in the Better at Home program make to the overall well being of older adults, not just the cleanliness of their physical space, and using this information to build changes in the system.
- Community dialogues for reciprocity, learning, and care among BIPOC youth with the goal of creating healing around relationships and play, rather than individual pathology.
- Creating a more food secure community and enhancing community connection through food in the Filipinx community through sharing and collecting family food histories, perspectives on the importance of food, and creating intergenerational and intercultural experiences with food.
- Exploring ways for Elderhood and perspectives in the way we value aging in society to be shifted.
- Generating meaningful, conscientious relationships through the facilitation of farm to table processes
- Creating a space where caregivers of all cultural backgrounds and their children feel compelled to engage in the Dancing the Parenting practice, a multi generational dance practice for caregivers and their children.
- Build capacity of Filipinx nonprofit societies to acquire resources, funding, skills and organization to shift the model of one-off projects that don't get funded in an ongoing way. Participant Organizations/ Affiliations



Cohort 3 receiving certificates. Front Row: Larkin Xi Chen, Nina Carissa Ortiz, Lisa Gibson, Maria dela Cruz and Fernando Este Back Row: Dovana Singh, Lina Vargas, Dawn McKenna, Angela Gagne and off to the side semi standing, Melissa Milne.

APPENDIX D.

PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONS/ AFFILIATIONS

Over the three cohorts, participants were connected to 35 different organizations or affiliations, including:

- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Renfrew Park Community Centre
- Vancouver Public Library
- BC Centre for Ability Association
- Business Improvement Association
- Constituency Office of Adrian Dix
- MOSAIC
- Windermere Community of Schools
- Community Artists
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House Volunteers
- Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada
- Business Improvement Association
- Shades of Sustainability
- Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice
- Developmental Disabilities Association
- Public Service Alliance of Canada
- Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC
- Environmental Youth Alliance
- Diversity and Inclusion Support Group of BC
- Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House
- BACI (Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion)
- BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education
- SUCCESS
- RISE Community Health Centre
- Still Moon Arts Society
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- Neighbourhood Small Grants
- Mothers Matter Centre
- Bill Reid Gallery
- Kathara Pilipino Indigenous Arts
- UBC Asian Canadian Asian Migration Studies
- Foolish Operations
- Neighbourhood Small Grants
- BC Public Service
- Historic Joy Kogawa House Society

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