

ELEMENT
BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP ALLIANCE
INNOVATION CENTRE

THE ELEMENT CENTRE: LEVERAGING INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Feasibility Study

The Element Centre: Leveraging Innovation Infrastructure for Community Resilience

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March 2024

Prepared for the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA)

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assess the feasibility and outline a strategy for establishing the Element Centre (“the hub”), a mixed-use innovation hub situated in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood and/or northwest Toronto community. The vision is centered around the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA) as the pivotal coordinating entity, leveraging its connections and proficiency for community-driven decision-making.

In response to the uneven distribution of economic benefits in Toronto, the Element Centre is a transformative project, aiming to address the challenges faced by marginalized communities seeking entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in emerging sectors. Providing innovation infrastructure is a crucial element of place-based economic development strategies, nurturing business growth by supporting idea commercialization and facilitating industry interaction through investment opportunities. As highlighted in various City of Toronto reports, there is a noticeable concentration of innovation infrastructure in the downtown core, leaving the northwestern suburbs, including Jane-Finch, underserved. The rising cost of living, coupled with precarious employment, transit-induced gentrification and a development boom due to the Finch West LRT, contribute to significant commercial displacement and increased poverty rates and health inequities, further emphasizing the urgency for change. The neighbourhood’s wealth of talent and assets, network of engaged community organizations, and location at the heart of the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor, present an opportunity to close the gap between the broader innovation ecosystem and the innovative ideas existing in the community. Such collaboration can boost both local and regional economic growth and help achieve the economic vitality goals of the city and the region.

Objective of the Hub

The BEA, recognizing the need for innovation infrastructure that is B3 (Black-focused, Black-led, and Black-serving) but that also caters to the unique challenges and opportunities present across various marginalized communities, aims to build an innovation hub that bridges locational and diversity gaps, advances economic resilience, and supports underrepresented entrepreneurs, business owners, and emerging professionals. It adopts the broader vision of a convergence centre, designed to build capacity for creativity and innovation; generate social and economic value; house a diverse array of ecosystem and community actors under one roof; and create a pipeline of talent for local and broader industries. This inclusive approach speaks to the convergence of institutions, tenants, and talent, all collectively working towards a common goal of local economic and community resilience.

The Element Centre serves as an intermediary between local and broader economic development, seeking to bridge the gap between local economies and the resource-rich

innovation ecosystem abundant in knowledge, networks, and investment. This aligns with the notion that, despite being part of the larger Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor, the economic benefits are not reaching underserved communities at the local level who stand to gain the most from these investments.

In tandem with Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, the hub seeks to catalyze inclusive economies and community development, attract investments, and make innovation accessible to everyone. The proposed centre, informed by the *Jane Finch Initiative*, insights from stakeholder engagement, and the BEA's work with emerging professionals and founders, aims to provide tangible support to local businesses, contribute to workforce development, incubate innovation and talent, and empower individuals with skills for future success. It will stand as a catalyst for sustainable growth, fostering an inclusive innovation ecosystem and partnering with local organizations and institutions to help guide the Humber River-Black Creek area towards a future characterized by equitable development, economic empowerment, and positive change.

Methodology

The guiding research question for the study is: How can the BEA and key partners build a state-of-the-art innovation hub that fosters a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation and education that equips underrepresented groups within marginalized communities with the tools to successfully navigate the entrepreneurial and workforce ecosystem? This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining a literature review, document/policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement through semi-structured interviews and a survey. It investigates governance models, programming, case studies, and opportunities in finance, partnerships, and regulations. While this report covers key topics, further details on talent development models, funding, and affordable housing opportunities will be explored in upcoming documents. Additionally, a separate pre-design study conducted by AKA/FLDWRK was also completed outlining preliminary architectural considerations for the Element Centre.

Findings

Programming: 10 personas inspired by Jane-Finch's community and the innovation ecosystem, guide the hub's programming ranging from experiential learning to professional development, co-ops, and volunteer opportunities. Aimed at fostering innovation, inclusive entrepreneurship, and employment, these initiatives benefit youth and individuals in four identified categories: Future Innovator, Underrepresented Founder, Underrepresented Professional, and Catalyst.

Case Studies: 6 case studies of innovation spaces from the USA, Canada, and Europe are explored to gather insights for the built form, governance, and other programming opportunities. These insights underscore the importance of developing programs focused on fostering both individual and community capability through funding, civic engagement, and workforce initiatives, promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, implementing community-wealth building strategies, and leveraging mixed-use development.

Stakeholder Engagement: Interviews with 23 stakeholders underscored the importance of community partnerships, building trust, and high-quality programming in the success of an innovation hub. The overarching insights recommend a commitment to inclusivity, community-driven approaches, and strategic planning (around funding, alumni engagement, workforce development programming, and more) for sustainable outcomes.

Survey Findings: Survey findings, based on 190 participants located both within Jane-Finch, northwestern Toronto, and beyond, indicate general support and insights into desired resources, amenities, and early intervention programming. Focused on engaging the community, the survey primarily highlights amenities and programming crucial for an inclusive hub and skills essential for entrepreneurial and workforce success.

Recommendations

The recommendations advocate for the **strategic development** of the Element Centre as a **community-driven** and **sustainable entity**. The overarching goal is to create a dynamic, interconnected entrepreneurial ecosystem that aligns with the Jane-Finch community's aspirations and priorities and broader northwestern Toronto ecosystem needs. Key risks and steps are outlined, including **transforming** the BEA into an **independent organization**, establishing it as a **strategic bridging organization (SBO)**, and **strengthening organizational capacity** before commencing development.

Running a pilot project is also advised to deepen community ties and validate the hub's feasibility. Further **community engagement**, **niche selection**, and collaboration with the **city**, **community**, and **ecosystem partners** are emphasized. Prioritizing **local** and **inclusive procurement**, and crafting a **capital campaign strategy** are identified as crucial for the BEA/hub's financial stability and long-term community economic impact.

The BEA and its key partners are recommended to explore **long-term revenue generation strategies**, **anti-displacement measures**, and to **create a development strategy** to ensure the Element Centre's sustainability while contributing to community growth and success throughout the development process.

Conclusion

Toronto's uneven geography of innovation in Toronto not only disadvantages marginalized communities but also hinders the region's overall innovation ecosystem. As the study shows, Jane-Finch and northwestern Toronto's residents are rich in talent, expertise, and ambition. However, residents face challenges such as a lack of quality resources, funding, employment, and opportunities that limit their upward economic mobility and the resilience of the local economy. This study envisions the Element Centre as a multifaceted catalyst, transcending conventional notions of innovation spaces. It aspires to be a community anchor, supporting local talent and initiatives, fostering regional economic growth, and contributing significantly to equitable development. In collaboration with local and broader ecosystem

partners, the proposed hub is poised to create a paradigm shift, transforming Northwest Toronto into a hotspot for innovation, economic strength, and shared community well-being.

1. Introduction

Innovation and entrepreneurship serve as vital pillars of socioeconomic development, transforming communities and creating opportunities for sustainable growth. Recognizing the potential of entrepreneurial initiatives to generate positive social change, the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA) has commissioned a feasibility study for the development of the Element Centre, an innovation hub that would service the Jane-Finch neighbourhood and broader northwestern area of Toronto. This study examines the potential viability, impact, and methods of implementing such a hub within this community. With a primary focus on helping marginalized communities (such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC)), encouraging them to participate in, and ultimately contribute to, the world of entrepreneurship and innovation.

The innovation hub aims to be a dynamic, mixed-use, and inclusive space uniting diverse stakeholders— Youth, Entrepreneurs, Work Professionals and more—to cultivate entrepreneurial and professional skills. Activities such as bootcamps, hackathons, pitch competitions, and workshops aim to foster inclusive entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment opportunities, contributing to capacity building for individuals from various backgrounds and age groups. Leadership and professional development exercises through experiential learning opportunities will be introduced to prepare the participants to become influential figures in their communities and excel in their careers. Through strategic industry and community partnerships, the hub will act as a convergence centre, incubating ideas and local talent, servicing the needs of the local residents, businesses, and organizations, and generating business growth and employment opportunities that align with local community development efforts and regional economic trends.

This feasibility study examines the governance models, programming structures, and (financial, partnership, and regulatory) opportunities that the hub can leverage for equitable business and workforce incubation. The study evaluates local community needs and the potential impact of the initiative on Jane-Finch and beyond. This study also provides insights into the potential built-form and co-location opportunities that have informed an architectural pre-design study prepared by AKA/FLDWRK. Together, these documents aim to provide the BEA and key partners with comprehensive insights and recommendations, contributing to their informed decision-making about the realization of the innovation hub.

The rest of the report includes the following sections: background information on the hub's purpose and its role in the Toronto innovation ecosystem, followed by site details that provide policy and local context of the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, northwestern Toronto development, and southern Ontario business ecosystem, highlighting opportunities and challenges relative to the hub. This is followed by a literature review covering the theories supporting innovation infrastructure, community economic development, and workforce equity.

The report then outlines the methods used in the study, presents case studies of innovation hubs and programming, and shares findings from stakeholder engagement and a community survey that the hub leadership can leverage. Finally, the report concludes with next steps, risks, and recommendations to guide the successful establishment and operation of the hub.

Note: The information provided is a refined version of a more extensive internal report.

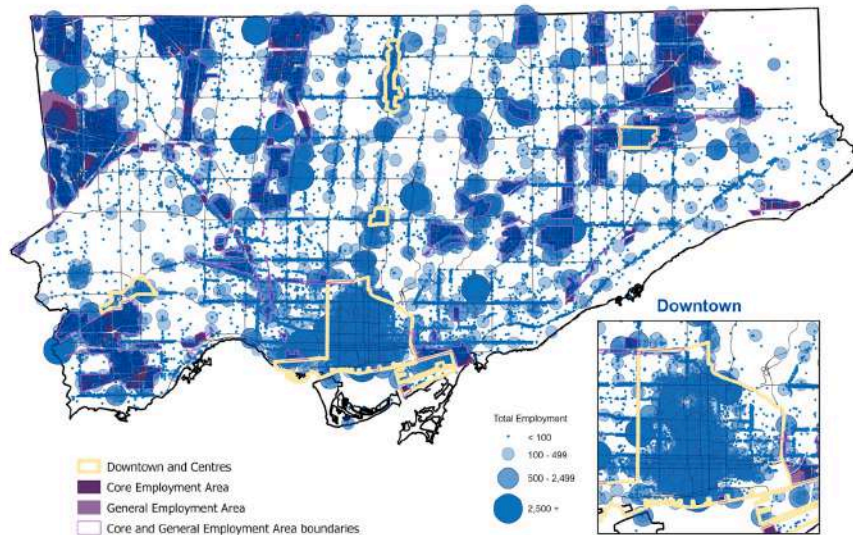
2. Background Information

2.1. Toronto's Uneven Geography of Innovation

Toronto lies at the center of Canada's Innovation Corridor and Ontario's regional innovation system, which is recognized as the country's "largest and most diverse urban economic zone" (Toronto Region Board of Trade, n.d., par.1; Wolfe et al., 2022). This corridor encompasses five census metropolitan areas (CMAs)—Hamilton, Halton, Peel, York, and Durham—and attracts over 3 million jobs. Toronto serves as a magnet for individuals and businesses from the surrounding areas (and beyond), drawn by the wealth of opportunities it offers for talent, research, and partnership opportunities (Wolfe et al., 2022).

While the City of Toronto is an economic engine of the province and the nation, particularly excelling in the fintech sector, the benefits of this prosperity, such as income, job opportunities, resources, and infrastructure accessibility, are not equally distributed throughout the city (*refer to Figure 1*) (Invest Ontario, n.d.; Thomas, 2023). Consequently, many Canadians, both at the beginning and end of their career journeys, are increasingly disillusioned and turning towards entrepreneurship for financial stability. However, they face challenges in finding adequate support and resources to kickstart their entrepreneurial ventures (Queiser et al., 2020; RBC, 2023).

Map 1: 2022 Employment Concentration



Toronto City Planning, Planning Research and Analytics - February 2023

Figure 1. Toronto Employment Concentration, 2022. (City of Toronto, 2017g).

As stated in the City of Toronto reports *From Concept to Commercialization: Toronto's Startup Ecosystem Strategy* (2015) and the *City of Entrepreneurs: Building a Supply Chain of Innovation* (2021), there is an uneven geography of innovation in Toronto, where incubation programming and the physical presence of innovation infrastructure is concentrated in the downtown core. The density of support provided by these hubs drastically decreases in the inner suburbs, specifically in the northwestern and northeastern corners of Toronto, which, it should be noted, are among the city's most economically depressed and demographically diverse. The BEA represents the only city-recognized B3 (Black-focused, Black-led, and Black-serving) incubator in northwest Toronto, playing an important role in countering racism and inequities for the Black community (see *Figure 2*). Its unique standing, reflects a broader deficiency in Black-led social infrastructure in Toronto, and a missed opportunity for the city to fulfill the actions outlined in the *Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism* (2017) particularly around increasing job, mentorship, and training opportunities for Black youth and individuals (Infrastructure Institute & SCCR, 2022).

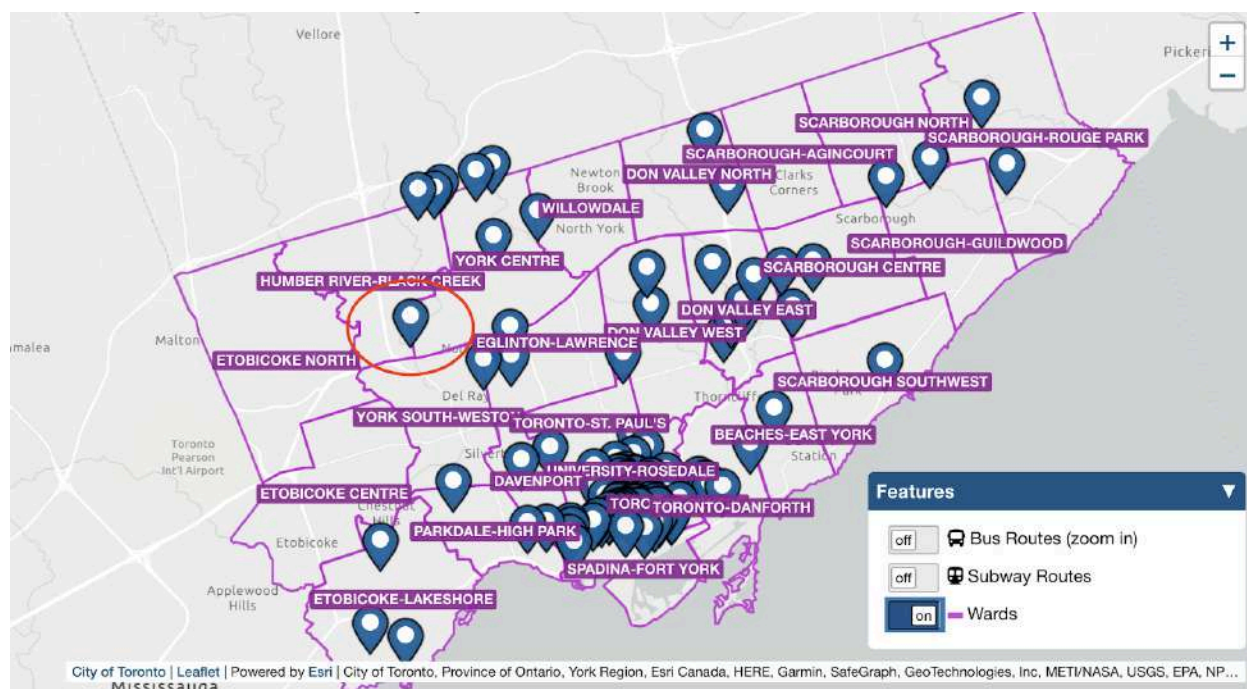


Figure 2. Accelerators, Incubators & Coworking Spaces (BEA Circled in Red). (City of Toronto, 2023a).

These systemic inequities are also felt city-wide, whereby the rising cost of living in Toronto is not matched by an improvement in job quality and wages (Social Planning Toronto, n.d.c.). This disparity has led to alarming statistics, with a quarter of Toronto's children and one-fifth of adults living in poverty (City of Toronto, 2017f). Furthermore, one in four college graduates find themselves in low-wage jobs (City of Toronto, 2017f). The city's economy is marred by precarious work, unequal access to community spaces, and oversubscribed public and non-profit services, primarily affecting marginalized individuals (Social Planning Toronto, n.d.b.). This includes racialized communities, women, and those concentrated in specific geographic areas such as the Humber River-Black Creek ward (where Jane-Finch is located) where 20.7% of families experience poverty (Social Planning Toronto, n.d.c.). Moreover, people living with disabilities, Indigenous populations, and newcomers are disproportionately represented among the city's poor (Social Planning Toronto, n.d.c.). This chronic disparity has lasting effects on the city's economy, further emphasizing the urgent need for change. 2016 estimates indicate that the cost of poverty in Toronto ranges from \$4.4 to \$5.5 billion annually, \$32 to \$38 billion annually in Ontario, and \$72 to \$85 billion annually nation-wide (Briggs et al., 2016).

As indicated by the City of Toronto's *ProsperityTO* (n.d.) report, supporting low-income neighbourhoods' economic growth is an important pillar to Toronto's overall success. Toronto's poverty reduction strategy seeks to attract investments to low-income areas to create quality jobs with livable incomes and pathways to prosperity, as a means of tackling the stark income

inequality that impacts racialized communities and migrants in Toronto (City of Toronto, n.d.). At a time when municipal revenues are at an all-time low and demand for public services is at an all-time high, investing in low-income communities for long-term prosperity requires leveraging regional ecosystems, tapping into local networks, and nurturing the talent required to both fuel existing industries and spark new ones (Social Planning Toronto, n.d.a).

As identified in Toronto's *Startup Ecosystem Strategy* (2015), the city is continually seeking out community infrastructure opportunities (ex. adaptive reuse of industrial/commercial buildings) to encourage business incubation programming at the neighbourhood level across Toronto. The city has long relied on a network of convergence centres to incubate the ideas, talent, and businesses for each of its key industries (creative technology, design, education, events, fashion/apparel, film, financial services, food and beverage, green economy, life sciences, music, technology, and tourism) that have earned it its title as the business and financial capital of Canada (City of Toronto, 2017e). Furthermore, Toronto's dedication to supporting creative economies in particular has made it the UNESCO-designated Creative City of Media Arts (UNESCO, n.d.). However, not enough has been done to ensure that these accolades turn into benefits that are equitably re-invested in local economies, infrastructure, and most importantly communities.

Innovation infrastructure such as innovation hubs provide a powerful economic development tool that communities and municipalities can use for generating both social and economic impacts. Through their programming, partnerships, and spaces, they can advance business formation, create and retain jobs, commercialize products, and support community development strategies and goals.

2.2. Provincial Economic Outlook

In 2022, Ontario's employment was primarily driven by the Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sectors, comprising 37.3% of the workforce (IBIS World, n.d.). This mirrors the nation's core industry niches in: Agribusiness, Advanced Manufacturing, Cleantech, EV (Electric Vehicle) Supply Chain, Life Sciences, Natural Resources, and Technology (Invest Canada, n.d.). The province grappled with labour shortages across 62% of its sectors in 2022, particularly impacting small businesses led by women, individuals living with disabilities, and those in arts, entertainment, and agriculture. Two major concerns identified by businesses in the region are workforce development and digital infrastructure, with a growing demand for technically skilled workers as the need for technological adoption increases (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2022).

According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, there have been growing economic disparities within the economy that jeopardize the overall prosperity of the province (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2022). Despite the Toronto region's generation of 50% of Ontario's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it represents one of the regions with the slowest post-pandemic

recovery and the highest unemployment increases in 2020 (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2022; Toronto Global, 2023).

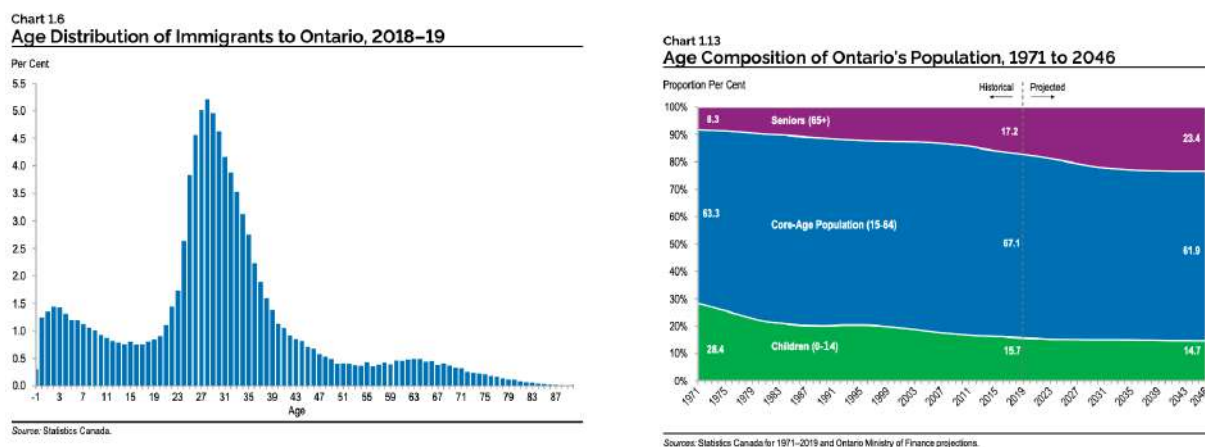


Figure 3. Distribution of Immigrants (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2022)

Ultimately, workforce development is increasingly vital as Ontario's workforce undergoes demographic shifts, including a growing youth and immigrant population (see *Figure 3*). However, as the population ages, there will be added strain on public services beyond what the GDP growth can support. This makes it a critical time to invest in training the next generation to enter the workforce. Ontario's current priorities involve workforce development in trades, addressing electric vehicle battery shortages, fostering innovation, and advancing the green economy through clean energy initiatives (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2022, p. 49; Office of the Premier, 2020; Province of Ontario, n.d.). Targeted investments in innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development initiatives like an innovation hub can help bridge this gap, and with Toronto being at the heart of the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor, the hub can tap into the local and regional networks necessary to create a pipeline of talent that can fill labour or job shortages.

2.3. An Overview of Jane-Finch and Northwest Toronto

The northwestern corner of Toronto is defined as a cluster of communities between Dufferin St. and Highway 27 to the west, running south from Steeles Ave. to Eglinton Ave. The area has the majority of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) (17/31) and is home to two of the largest Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Employment Zones in Canada, Duke Heights BIA (comprised of 2,500 businesses) and Emery Village BIA (comprised of 3,200

businesses) (DUKE Heights, n.d.; Emery Village, n.d.). Ultimately, the northwest corner of Toronto stands as a vivid microcosm of the broader disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (City of Toronto, 2022g). Shaped by a history of socioeconomic challenges and disinvestment, and policy neglect, this region has consistently borne the brunt of health inequities, from chronic diseases to economic disadvantages (City of Toronto, 2022g). The COVID-19 impact data released by Toronto Public Health for this area strikingly mirrors earlier depictions of vulnerability (City of Toronto, 2022g). This recurrent pattern highlights a disconcerting truth: systemic issues have long entrenched themselves in this region. Therefore, there is an urgent need for holistic and comprehensive interventions that address these root causes, and forge a path towards more equitable development and resilient communities.

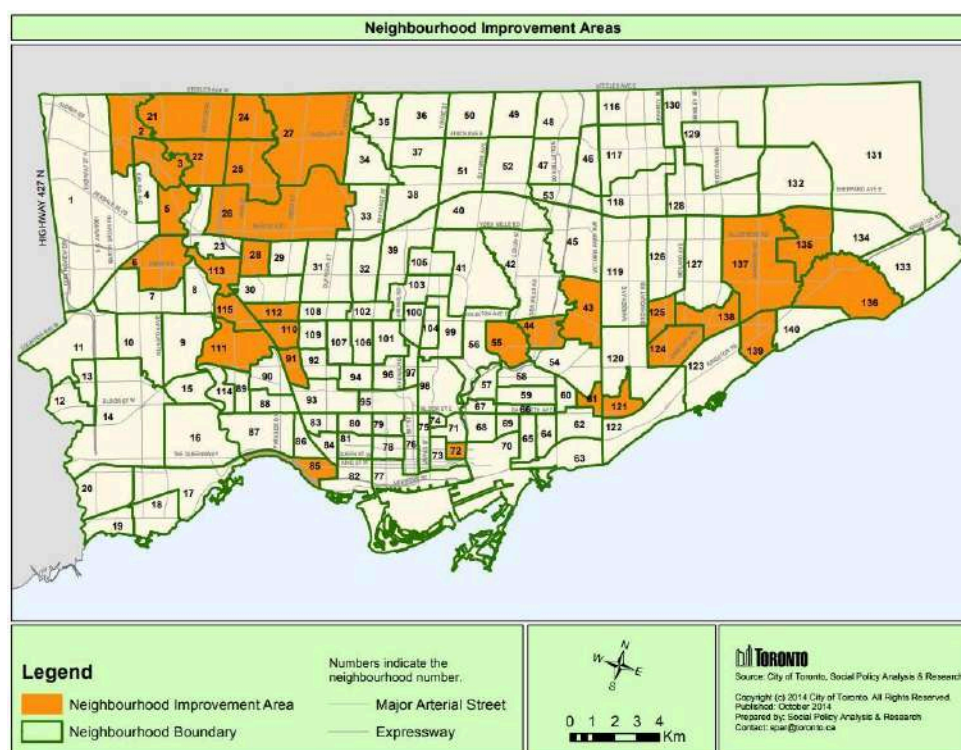


Figure 4. Maps of City of Toronto Neighbourhood Improvement Area (City of Toronto, 2014a)

Within northwest Toronto, Jane-Finch lies in the Humber River-Black Creek Ward and overlaps with two NIAs (Neighbourhood 24) Black Creek and (Neighbourhood 25) Glenfield-Jane Heights (see Figure 4). The neighbourhood is characterized by a predominantly visible minority population, with the three largest groups being Black, Southeast Asian, and Latin American (refer to Table 1). The neighbourhood lies on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabek, Métis, Mississaugas of the Scugog, Mississaugas of the Credit River, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha, Haudenosaunee, Huron and the Wendat Indigenous people (Black Creek-Jane and Finch Neighborhood, 2019). The Black-Creek and Glenfield-Jane Heights neighborhoods have a younger population compared to the Toronto average, offering an

opportune moment to introduce the next generation of residents to innovation and entrepreneurship (see *Table 1*).

The neighbourhood also faces a higher unemployment rate and lower median income compared to the rest of the city (see *Table 1*). Of the jobs currently in the area many are low wage, precarious or of temporary nature (Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, 2019). Food insecurity, poverty, temporary employment, restrictions on migrant work visas, as well as higher rates of unemployment and underemployment among Black residents with post-secondary education, were identified as racial disparities that disproportionately impact people of colour in the Jane-Finch community (Antwi, 2020). Other local challenges include digital exclusion due to a lack of resources, infrastructure, and education to help close the digital divide (Dirie & Coulter, 2021). Of the available digital infrastructure, the quality is inadequate. In the Jane-Finch area, 59% of residents have slower internet speeds compared to the rest of the city, and less than 96% of homes have internet access (Andrey et al, 2021). These inequities are a result of a legacy of municipal underinvestment and persistent neglect that has been ongoing since the 1970s (City of Toronto, 2022e; Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force, 2015).

Table 1. Key Neighbourhood Profile Data Based on 2016 Census

Categories	Black Creek (24)	Glenfield-Jane Heights (25)	City of Toronto
Population	21,700	30,500	2.7 million
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	9.2%	8.7%	44.1%
Unemployment Rate	12.7%	11.5%	8.2%
Unsuitable Housing	26.6%	23.1%	12.1%
Unaffordable Housing	36.9%	33.1%	36.6%
Inadequate Housing	13.7%	10.8%	7.1%
Median Household Income	\$47K	\$52K	\$66K
Mother Tongue Not English	51.6%	53.1%	47.0%
Visible Minority Population	81%	76.6%	51%

Immigrants	59%	58.9%	51%
Youth (Age 15-24)	15.0%	15.0%	12.5%

Source: (City of Toronto, 2017b)

However, Jane-Finch and the broader northwestern area of Toronto are slated for several major transit, residential, and commercial developments—such as the Jane Finch Mall Redevelopment, Firgrove-Grassways Revitalization, York University - Keele Campus Redevelopment, Jane and Finch Community Hub and Centre for the Arts, the Yorkgate Mall Redevelopment, Woodbine Racetrack Development, ID8 Downsview, and more—that will introduce new residents and economic opportunities to a previously underserved area. Thus, Jane-Finch sits at the nexus of incoming socio-economic and infrastructural change, which creates an optimal environment to explore the feasibility of establishing innovation infrastructure to both support Toronto's existing and future place-based economic goals, and ensure that local residents are equipped with the skills, resources, and networks to benefit from the influx of investments underway.

While all of this development presents great opportunities for the community, it has also brought rising concerns about commercial and residential gentrification, and the displacement of local organizations in the area (Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force 2015, City of Toronto, 2022i; Khan, 2022; N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited, 2017). However, as part of the consultation process for these projects (most notably the *Jane Finch Initiative*), there is also a wealth of ideas to ensure that the future of Jane-Finch remains community-led and becomes increasingly community-owned (Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force 2015). The community envisions two paths to foster inclusive entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, shaping the proposed plan that align with the innovation hub (City of Toronto, 2022c, par.1; City of Toronto, 2022d, par. 1):

1. “Jane and Finch residents have access to stable and well-paid job opportunities, including with local employers, and are supported to further develop qualifications and access to job openings.”
2. “Jane and Finch residents are supported to start and grow businesses within and beyond the community and have access to appropriate and affordable space.”

2.3.1. The Jane Finch Initiative Study

The *Jane Finch Initiative* is a planning and policy study by various City of Toronto divisions to address the anticipated growth and transformation in the Jane-Finch area. With the upcoming construction of an 11-kilometer LRT along Finch Avenue West, the initiative seeks to leverage this significant transit investment to benefit local communities and mitigate the disparities and displacement new developments will exacerbate (see *Figure 5*). The project aims to create a secondary plan that fosters an inclusive and vibrant community while addressing social and economic needs. Therefore, the study includes the creation of a

community development plan and land use framework, working in tandem to advance equity, economic inclusion, and manage future growth (see *Figure 6*) (City of Toronto, 2020).



Figure 5. Jane Finch Initiative Draft Secondary Plan Area (City of Toronto, 2022m).

This initiative, expected to be completed by early 2024, involves three key components:

1. **Community Engagement and Visioning:** The city is consulting with residents, stakeholders, businesses, Indigenous communities, and African, Caribbean, and Black communities in the area to identify local assets, needs, priorities, and overall vision. Throughout the engagement process, a series of community-informed reports have been produced, covering topics such as arts and culture, small business development, climate action, economic inclusion, entrepreneurship opportunities, housing, and mobility. These reports align community aspirations with ongoing and forthcoming planning endeavours.
2. **Creation of a Community Development Plan:** This new plan will provide a framework to guide positive changes and growth in the community. It focuses on enhancing social cohesion, community safety, inclusive economic opportunities, and neighbourhood resilience.
3. **Land Use Planning Framework Update:** The initiative will introduce new Official Plan policies and zoning to inform future development and identify community facilities and

infrastructure needed to accommodate projected growth and address long-standing community challenges (City of Toronto, 2020).

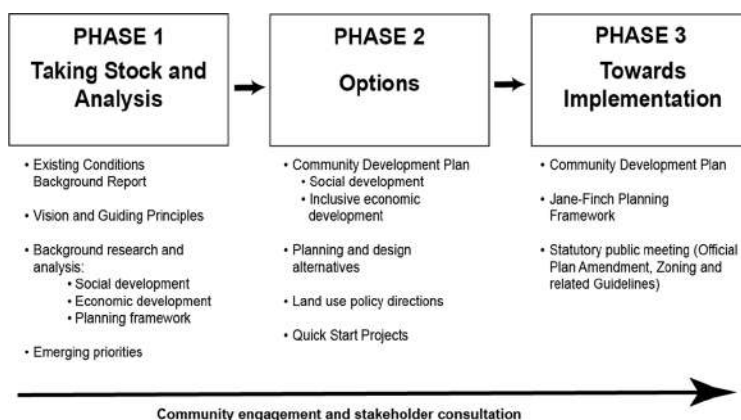


Figure 6. Phases of the *Jane Finch Initiative Study* (City of Toronto, 2022m).

2.4. How an Innovation Hub Aligns with the Jane Finch Initiative's Community Development Goals

Jane-Finch is a community with a wealth of untapped talent and expertise, a rich cultural heritage, a robust sense of local pride, and a strong desire for positive systemic change, yet lacks the necessary resources to help these ideas and talents flourish (Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force, 2015). The community boasts a rich history of activism and multiculturalism, supported by an expansive network of grassroots and non-profit organizations and institutions across various sectors (City of Toronto, 2022f; Community Action Planning Group, 2019) (See *Figure 7*).

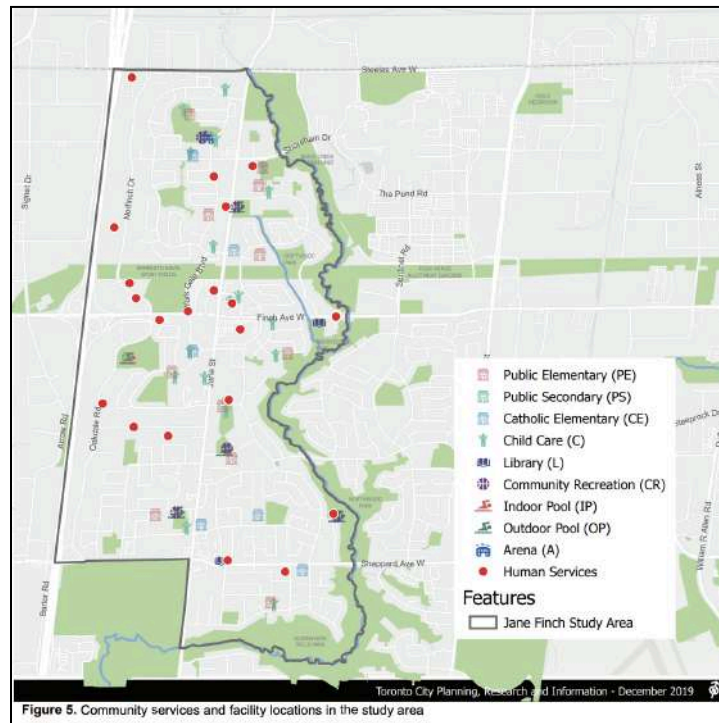


Figure 7. Community services and facilities in the Jane Finch area (City of Toronto, 2021b)

While some organizations in the community address education, skills, and employment, none offer the comprehensive suite of supports, networks, *and* infrastructure proposed by the hub. This gap underscores the community's call for more coordinated and equitable resources and development in their *Jane Finch Initiative* study (City of Toronto, 2022g; Jane-Finch TSNS Task Force 2015). According to the study, the community seeks opportunities that:

- **Provide** employment, small business, and workforce development services that produce quality jobs and career pathways;
- **Bridge** education and employment opportunities that boost the graduation rate and accreditation for youth, adults, and newcomers alike;
 - **Expose** those from equity-deserving groups and youth to diverse career opportunities and training in high growth and emerging sectors such as information communications technology (ICT), green tech, and creative industries;
 - **Invest** in employment and workforce development, (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) STEAM, and skilled trades training and certification programs for residents, particularly from equity-deserving groups;
- **Create** community benefits and targets gentrification and displacement caused by development (through tools like Community Land Trusts (CLTs), social enterprises, co-operatives, social/local procurement, and Community Benefits Frameworks (CBF));
- **Ensure** that the city's BIA/business supports and development translate into local employment opportunities within the community and;

- **Enhance** the efforts of the network of organizations currently available in the neighbourhood.

3. Vision for the Element Centre

3.1. About the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA)

The Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA) is a B3 (Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving) business incubator with a mandate to amplify and advance Black entrepreneurs and professionals. Birthed out of a collaborative initiative led by Black Creek Community Health Centre and supported by York University partners (YSpace, TD Community Engagement Centre (TD CEC), and Schulich ExecEd), in response to the inefficient access to capital, support and lack of dedicated innovation infrastructure within underserved Canadian communities. The BEA operates at two scales, hyper-local—supporting the Jane-Finch community (and broader northwest Toronto, focusing on underserved communities)—and regional – servicing Black founders across southern Ontario. The BEA provides Black entrepreneurs and professionals access to incubator and accelerator programs in the areas of agri-food, technology, business leadership and acumen development training. Since its start in 2021, BEA has had a positive trajectory and built a growing ecosystem of talent and ventures. Its impact includes:

- 238 ventures supported
- \$3.9 million in revenue generated by ventures
- \$1 million in funds raised by ventures
- 138 jobs created by ventures
- 76 microcredentials awarded

What sets the BEA apart is its holistic approach to business incubation that is centered on putting the founder/people first. Therefore, the BEA is fortifying programmatic pillars related to workforce and small business development and expanding its offerings to a wider range of personas.

Strategic Priorities

- **Becoming an Independent Organization:** Currently operating and incubated under BCCHC, the BEA's goal is to gain sufficient organizational capacity to become an independent entity.
- **Workforce Development:** Recognizing that not everyone has the capacity to undertake entrepreneurship, the BEA focuses on both cultivating the transferable, professional skill

set required to succeed in both the entrepreneurship and employment sectors. By focusing on workforce development, the BEA hopes to build a talent pipeline to connect to its founders and other ecosystem partners' initiatives. For example, the BEA is creating opportunities for Black students and early-career professionals to work for BEA startups, participate in student co-ops, and engage in volunteer programs.

- **Small Business Incubation:** The BEA's long-term goals include supporting digital transformation, scaling, export and procurement opportunities for nano, micro and traditional small businesses.
- **Developing Well-Rounded Entrepreneurs and Professionals:** The BEA applies a founder-first approach to its programming. It is exploring opportunities to cultivate founders' well-being by addressing housing, food, transportation, and mental health-related challenges that might inhibit their participation or growth.
- **Network-Building:** The BEA aims to expand robust industry-community ties between emerging start-ups and talent through its key partners, a digital learning community, and a growing alumni network. This initiative aims to bolster and fortify the overall business ecosystem.

Hub Alignment

Recognizing the lack of B3 and innovation infrastructure to support their growing community, the BEA, with support from key partners including the BCCHC, North York Community House (NYCH), Black North Initiative (BNI), York University's TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC), and YSpace, is undertaking a feasibility study to explore how an innovation hub can address the community's needs for inclusive entrepreneurship, employment support, and dedicated physical space in the northwestern Toronto. The proposed hub aims to.

- **Address** locational and diversity gaps within Toronto's business incubation landscape;
- **Build** community economic resiliency, prosperity and advancing inclusive economies at a neighbourhood level;
- **Support** underrepresented founders and professionals (i.e. BIPOC, women, LGBTQ2+, people living with disabilities and neurodiversity);
- **Normalize** the culture of innovation; and
- **Make** innovation accessible to everyone.

3.2. Project Rationale

With the BEA and its key partners well positioned at the nexus of the business and talent ecosystem, the Element Centre is envisioned to be a transformative force, intertwining seamlessly with existing local organizations and programming, while creating pathways for local talent and business to scale. Recognizing the challenges faced by this community, the hub

emerges as a bridge connecting local talent to regional networks that support residents' overarching goal of creating a prosperous community through inclusive entrepreneurship and employment, and a vibrant built environment as outlined by the *Jane Finch Initiative* reports (see *Section 2.3.1*).

Leveraging the BEA and key partner's expertise the innovation hub's scope extends beyond a mere experiential learning centre. It adopts the broader vision of a convergence centre, designed to build capacity for creativity and innovation; generate social and economic value; house a diverse array of ecosystem and community actors under one roof; and create a pipeline of talent to local industries (Jones et al, 2009). This inclusive approach speaks to the convergence of institutions, tenants, and talent, all collectively working towards a common goal. Moreover, the proximity to the future Finch West LRT system not only enhances accessibility but also positions the hub as a central player in the economic development of the area.

Pillars of Work:

- **Brick-and-Mortar Business Support:** The innovation hub will provide tangible support to local businesses, offering resources, mentorship, and physical space for growth and development.
- **Workforce Development and Poverty Reduction:** By offering skill-based education and training, the hub will contribute to the creation of a future-ready workforce, addressing emerging labour needs and workforce inclusion goals and supporting broader poverty reduction strategies (*See Section 5 for more details*).
- **Innovation Hub and Startup Incubator:** This initiative will be a vibrant hub for innovation, nurturing startups, social ventures, and founders, with a strong emphasis on underrepresented groups. Serving as a launchpad for entrepreneurial ventures, it focuses on accelerating enterprises led by marginalized communities
- **Incubation to Commercialization:** The hub will guide startups through every stage of their journey, from ideation and incubation to full-fledged commercialization.

Primary Goals:

- **Early Intervention and Experiential Learning:** The hub will act as an early entry point to innovation for youth, women, and racialized groups, breaking down barriers to entry.
- **Access and Inclusion:** It will be a key access point for underrepresented groups, including women, youth, and BIPOC individuals, ensuring their active participation in entrepreneurship, innovation, and talent development.
- **Economic Empowerment and Skill Development:** The hub is dedicated to economically empowering individuals with the skills and knowledge required to excel in the workforce and entrepreneurial endeavours.
- **Integrated Economic Anchor:** It seeks to serve as an anchor institution for local economic development but also formalizes and supports structured pathways for both

workforce development and entrepreneurial endeavours, thereby fostering an inclusive innovation ecosystem

- **Exporting Local Innovation:** By directly connecting the local community with academia and the broader innovation network, the hub will facilitate the export of local innovation (i.e. goods, services, and/or talent), amplifying its impact and providing high-calibre talent to fill workforce needs, and incubating new businesses to fill gaps in quality employment opportunities.

The proposed Element Centre is not only a response to the existing challenges but also a catalyst for sustainable growth, embodying the vision of a thriving, inclusive, and prosperous Humber River-Black Creek area. In partnership with local organizations and institutions the hub will help guide the community towards a future characterized by equitable development, economic empowerment, and positive change (*See Figure 8 for the BEA's theory of change*).

THEORY OF CHANGE

VISION:

Making innovation Accessible to All

MISSION:

The innovation hub will facilitate the early intervention diversity pipeline to the workforce and entrepreneurial sector.

INPUTS

- **Local Residents:** youth, women, and racialized groups within Jane & Finch
- **Physical infrastructure:** Dedicated space equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, tools, and technology to facilitate innovation and collaboration.
- **Human Capital:** A diverse community of innovators, entrepreneurs, experts, and mentors with varied skills and experiences.
- **Curriculum and resources:** Relevant training material and resources aligned with industry needs and best practices.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborative relationships with community/nonprofit, academia, government, and industry to leverage expertise, networks and resources.

INTERVENTION:

Early Intervention Diversity Pipeline housed in Innovation Hub.

STRATEGIES

- State-of-the-art innovation hub designed to support diverse individuals in their workforce development and entrepreneurial journeys
- Age-appropriate innovation programming activities to ensure an early introduction to innovation and skill development
- Facilitate community and mentorship activities to connect the local community to career and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Establish investment networks and funding opportunities that invest in underrepresented founders

OUTPUTS

- Increased innovation capacity (Early adoption of innovation and new technologies)
- Developed ideas and prototypes
- Enhanced skills and knowledge
- Collaboration and partnerships w/ Ecosystem
- Players
- Secured funding and investments
- Influenced policies

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Greater representation of underrepresented groups in the workforce and entrepreneurship sectors, driven by the opportunities provided by the innovation hub
- Increased diversity of ideas, perspectives, and innovations in the workforce and entrepreneurship ecosystem (Attraction and Investment)
- Strengthened local economy, economic resilience, and prosperity
- Greater representation of local residents employed in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector
- Enhance existing and future community-based assets via ecosystem collaboration.
- Change in policies that create barriers for lower-income entrepreneurs

MID-TERM OUTCOMES

- Increased technical skills and business acumen of underrepresented individuals within the innovation hub
- Expanded networks and collaborations leading to increased career opportunities and partnerships for underrepresented individuals
- Successful launch and growth of diverse ventures and startups within the innovation hub
- Increased local student post-secondary applications to STEAM fields
- Industry buy-in to support diversity initiatives within the hub

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

- Availability of a fully equipped, state-of-the-art innovation hub
- Increased participation of underrepresented individuals in workforce and entrepreneurship programs
- Tailored incubation programming for career and business advancement
- Facilitate connection b/w, underrepresented individuals and industry professionals
- Increased access to capital and funding options for underrepresented entrepreneurs within the innovation hub

IMPACT

A diverse and inclusive workforce and entrepreneurship ecosystem driven by innovation, economic growth, and social equity.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Innovation Hub model is compatible with the Jane-Finch neighbourhood
- An innovation hub provides a conducive environment for fostering creativity, collaboration, and access to resources
- Innovation Hub serves as a central platform for knowledge sharing, skill development, and entrepreneurial support.
- Early exposure to an innovation ecosystem can inspire and cultivate interest in innovation, entrepreneurship, and emerging technologies.
- Mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals in an innovation hub can accelerate learning and skills development.
- Access to networks and partnerships is crucial for career advancement and entrepreneurial success.
- Entrepreneurial education and incubation programs within an innovation hub are instrumental in developing successful entrepreneurs.
- Access to capital and funding options within an innovation hub can mitigate financial barriers for underrepresented entrepreneurs.

Subject to change based on research findings.



4. Hub Personas

In alignment with the mission and goals of the hub, 10 key personas were identified that represent different segments of the Jane-Finch community and broader innovation ecosystem, each with unique needs, experiences, and aspirations (see *Table 2*). These personas stand to greatly benefit from the hub's programming and resources, categorized into four main groups: Future Innovators, Underrepresented Founders, Underrepresented Professionals, and Catalyst Personas:

- **Future Innovators** are youth interested in innovation and entrepreneurship, and engaging in tailored early-intervention and experiential learning opportunities to cultivate the skills necessary for success in professional, scientific and technical services
- **Underrepresented Founders** are entrepreneurs and business people looking to establish, grow, or scale their ventures through the hub's programming, networks, and resources. This category is comprised of three personas:
 - Early-Stage Entrepreneur
 - Newcomer Innovator
 - The Mom & Pops
- **Underrepresented Professionals** are individuals looking to (re)enter the workforce or pivot their careers towards high-paying, STEAM employment, and/or advance towards C-Suite/leadership positions in their industry. This category is comprised of three personas:
 - Diverse Intrapreneur
 - The Inbetweeners
 - Second Starter (Justice-Involved)
- **Catalysts** serve as connectors to the broader industry and resources, aiding in building the capacity of others and supporting the growth of other personas through resources, mentorship, employment, funding, or networks. This category is comprised of three personas:
 - Founder First Investor
 - The Conscious Banker
 - Inclusion Innovator

Detailed profiles have been created for each persona, taking into account their unique needs and potential barriers, to ensure that the hub's programming is relevant, accessible, and beneficial to them (See *Appendix A* for the full details).

Table 2. Overview of Hub Personas

Category	Goals and Motivations	Challenges	Suitable Programming - Services
 <p>FUTURE INNOVATOR Future Innovator</p> <p>Age 14-17</p> <p>Background Middle/Highschool Student</p>	<p>GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand knowledge and skills in technology and innovation Connect with mentors and professionals Collaborate on projects Access specialized resources Prepare for STEAM/Entrepreneurship careers 	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing school and extracurriculars Identifying hands-on opportunities Transition to higher education/workforce Financial constraints Building a network 	<p>SUITABLE PROGRAMMING - SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial + Digital Literacy Workshops Entrepreneurship Workshops Startup Simulation Games Business Plan Competitions Hackathons + Innovation Challenges Internships/Placements Maker Spaces and Labs Field Trips Camps Mentorship Digital Storytelling Startup Incubation Programs
 <p>UNDERREPRESENTED FOUNDER PERSONAS Early-Stage Entrepreneur</p> <p>Age 21</p> <p>Background University Student</p>	<p>GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster diversity and inclusion Develop innovative solutions Access incubation support Connect with diverse network Acquire entrepreneurial skills 	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming systemic barriers Finding inclusive innovation hub Balancing academics and innovation hub Securing funding Building credibility 	<p>SUITABLE PROGRAMMING - SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incubator + Accelerator Programs Entrepreneurship Courses/Workshops Industry-Specific Programs Corporate Partnerships Venture Capital/Angel Investors Pitch Competitions Alumni Mentorship Networking Events/Conferences Co-working/Study Spaces E-commerce Enablement Digital Marketing Support Financial Literacy Programs Government Compliance



UNDERREPRESENTED FOUNDER PERSONAS
Newcomer Innovator

Age 28

Background Recent Immigrant

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

- Connect with like-minded individuals
- Access resources and mentorship
- Learn local business landscape
- Gain exposure to funding
- Contribute to local innovation

CHALLENGES

- Navigating new environment
- Adapting to regulations
- Language and communication barriers
- Building network
- Accessing tailored funding

SUITABLE PROGRAMMING + SERVICES

- Incubators for Newcomers
- Entrepreneurship Courses/Workshops
- Legal and Regulatory Assistance
- Access to Funding and Grants
- Language and Cultural Integration
- Networking Events and Diversity Forums
- Cross-Cultural Events/Exchanges
- Co-working Spaces
- Cross-Cultural Mentorship
- Innovation Challenges/Competitions



UNDERREPRESENTED FOUNDER PERSONAS
The Mom & Pops

Age 48

Background Small Business Owner

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

- Explore innovative technologies
- Connect with experts and mentors
- Access resources and training
- Collaborate with peers
- Identify new market opportunities

CHALLENGES

- Balancing family and business
- Identifying and implementing technologies
- Overcoming financial constraints
- Adapting to market changes
- Managing time effectively

SUITABLE PROGRAMMING + SERVICES

- Small Business Workshops
- Tech Adoption Training
- E-commerce Enablement
- Digital Marketing Assistance
- Financial Literacy Programs
- Govt. Compliance Support
- Succession Planning
- Online Webinars/Digital Resources



UNDERREPRESENTED PROFESSIONAL PERSONAS
Diverse Intrapreneur

Age 25

Background Business Professional

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

- Engage in meaningful work
- Access professional development. Connect with mentors
- Build professional network
- Champion diversity and inclusion

CHALLENGES

- Navigating early career
- Building self-confidence
- Balancing work and hub engagement
- Accessing resources
- Promoting diversity and inclusion

SUITABLE PROGRAMMING + SERVICES

- Professional Development Workshops
- Tech/Digital Literacy Training
- Upskilling/Reskilling Programs
- Continuing Ed Programs
- Career Coaching/Counseling
- Leadership Development
- Networking/Industry Events
- Mentoring/Shadowing Programs



Age 32

Background Unemployed (In-between jobs)

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

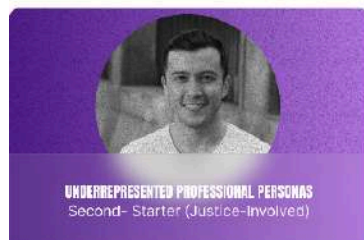
- Enhance employability
- Network with professionals
- Explore entrepreneurship
- Access job resources
- Stay updated with job trends

CHALLENGES

- Gaps in skills and experience
- Finding job opportunities
- Building professional network
- Addressing financial constraints
- Maintaining motivation

SUITABLE PROGRAMMING + SERVICES

- Skill Development Workshops
- Career Counseling/Coaching
- Job Placement Assistance
- Networking Events
- Internship/Job Shadowing
- Entrepreneurship Support
- Mental Health Support
- Upskilling/Reskilling Programs
- Certificate/Credentialing Programs
- Virtual Job Fairs
- Job Retraining Programs



Age 32

Background Precarious Employment

GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

- Enhance employability
- Connect with mentors
- Develop innovative solutions
- Network for social justice
- Empower others through advocacy

CHALLENGES

- Stigma and bias
- Navigating reentry
- Accessing resources
- Rebuilding trust
- Balancing personal growth

SUITABLE PROGRAMMING + SERVICES

- Job Readiness Training
- Skill Development Programs
- Certificate/Credentialing Programs
- Case Management/Support Services
- Expungement/Record-Sealing Assistance
- Mock Interviews/Role-Playing
- Transitional Employment Programs
- Entrepreneurship/Self-Employment Support
- Job Placement Services
- Job Coaching/Mentoring
- Employer Education/Sensitization
- Post-Employment Support



Age 42

Background The Catalyst

Goals and Motivations

- Lead Tech Investments, DEI
- Empower Diverse Innovators
- ROI with Impact

Challenges

- Spotting Diverse Startups
- Diverse Portfolio Balance
- Efficient Opportunity Management

Suitable Programming + Services

- Private Capital Investment Management
- Portfolio Structuring
- Future-Proofing Investments
- Angel Investing
- Investor-Entrepreneur Knowledge Sharing
- Networking
- Knowledge Sharing
- Pitching
- Investor Connections



CATALYST PERSONAS
The Conscious Banker

Age 45

Background Banker

Goals and Motivations

- Diverse Startup Support
- Inspire Entrepreneurship
- Financial Literacy Boost

Challenges

- Balance Diversity and Finance
- Stay Current, Evolve
- Tackle Diverse Finances

Suitable Programming - Services

- Financial Literacy
- Business Development
- Community Engagement
- Access to Capital
- Business Growth
- Networking, Pitching
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Financial Management



CATALYST PERSONAS
Inclusion Innovator (Employer)

Age 38

Background Employer/ Head of Talent
Acquisition and Diversity
Initiatives

Goals and Motivations

- Diversify the workforce with targeted initiatives.
- Foster growth through inclusive mentorship and training programs.
- Enhance the company's reputation as an inclusive employer.

Challenges

- Address biases in hiring.
- Ensure genuine inclusivity in policies and environment.
- Adapt to tech industry changes and evolving talent needs.

Suitable Programming - Services

- Business Advisory Services
- Financial Literacy Business Growth Diversity and Inclusion
- Advocacy

5. Literature Review

5.1. About Innovation Hubs, Innovation Ecosystems, and Inclusive Local Economies

Innovation hubs are “defined as a physical space that brings together researchers, creators and innovators to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services” (United Nations Development Programme, 2023, p.1). Innovation places such as hubs and districts act as catalysts in the market, by not only generating talent, jobs, and research but also attracting them to cities. This makes them a valuable tool in urban planning and regional development, particularly for revitalizing urban economies, surpassing other strategies for urban revitalization (Barista, 2015; Chowdhury et al., 2023). Innovation districts, in particular, help cities “move up the value chain of global competitiveness by growing the firms, networks, and traded sectors that drive broad-based prosperity” (Katz & Wagner, 2014, p.1). Innovation hubs act as microcosms of districts, whereby by fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, risk-taking, and open innovation, they simultaneously fuel innovation ecosystems that benefit institutions, enterprises, and communities alike, and help budding and established founders tap into the resources and opportunities that the ecosystem has to offer (Katz & Wagner, 2014). This is achieved through offering a mixture of networking, mentorship, and ideation opportunities, as well as training and funding that support founders to scale throughout the innovation pipeline (Davis et al., 2023; Jiménez & Zheng, 2021).

"An innovation ecosystem is a synergistic relationship between people, firms, and place" that creates knowledge spillovers that benefit the communities and cities that host them (Katz & Wagner, 2014, p. 2; Youtie & Shapira, 2008). However, the benefits of innovation and ‘smart city’ strategies have not always been equitably shared (European Network of Living Labs (ENOLL), 2017). In fact, innovation districts, particularly in the US context, tend to be built near low-income neighbourhoods spurring gentrification and subsequent displacement, which has earned them public and political criticism (Katz & Wagner, 2014; Storing & Walker, 2016; Wagner et al., 2019; Zukin, 2020). The key to avoiding this is to take a people-centred approach to innovation. The new geography of innovation sees communities as co-producers. As a result, some innovation places combine several programming and governance strategies to reduce displacement pressures; create opportunities for community ownership; and workforce development opportunities that strengthen local economies and community wealth-building efforts (Wagner et al., 2019; ENOLL, 2017). Doing this helps to facilitate the convergence of people, ideas, and opportunities to foster innovation communities (Wagner et al., 2019).

In an innovation ecosystem, hubs play an essential role as strategic bridging organizations (SBO) that facilitate collaboration and connect institutional and industry knowledge to communities (and vice versa) (McMullen & Adobor, 2012; Schmitt & Muyoya, 2020; Youtie & Shapira, 2008). Thus, they can play an increasingly important role in sustaining and growing an inclusive innovation economy. Achieving this requires a harmony of physical (both public and private infrastructure), networking (i.e. the relationships between people and organizations, also known as social capital), and economic assets (i.e. research organizations, businesses, and talent) (Katz & Wagner, 2014; Wagner et al, 2019). Reinforcing networking and economic assets requires providing programming and resources that build connections and incubate talent. However, to avoid displacement and tensions between host communities and the new site, it is also important to strategically invest in infrastructure to strengthen physical assets and create a sense of place.

5.1.1. Turning Innovation Hubs into Innovation Communities

For this to happen, innovation places need to pay special attention to designing programs *and* a strong quality of place that nurtures connections between their *target* talent and the *potential* talent located in the neighbourhoods surrounding them (Storring, 2019). Due to proximity, local residents are likely to become the first patrons and provide support for an innovation hub's new start-ups and initiatives (Storring & Walker, 2016). Additionally, by offering training opportunities, community members can contribute as a talent pool for programming, events, and other activities. The built form and uses of an innovation hub should prioritize the needs and preferences of the end-users *and* community members (Storring & Walker, 2016). Similarly, the programming and governance of an innovation hub should focus on creating intentional connections grounded in reciprocity.

Ultimately, placemaking and innovation go hand-in-hand. Placemaking helps create innovation infrastructure that encourages new encounters, breaks down siloes, disrupts perceived barriers; and strengthens partnerships (Katz & Wagner, 2014; Storring, 2019). This is particularly important for hubs located in underserved neighbourhoods (Storring & Walker, 2016). Failure to adapt, integrate, and enhance the current neighbourhood landscape and local context can lead to the decline of innovation spaces, resulting in disconnected and underutilized areas (Wagner, 2019). Leading to a phenomenon referred to as the 'Divide Dilemma' (Wagner, 2019; Storring, 2019). Consequently, the new *spatial* geography of innovation is denser, collaborative, and walkable in its built form and use (Katz and Wagner, 2019). There is more of a reliance on mixed-use developments and placemaking to create a welcoming environment, which helps to link the innovation infrastructure to the surrounding neighbourhoods both physically and most importantly, socially (*see Box 2*).

Box 2. How La Marina de València Leverages Public Space to Boost Innovation

Guided by its manifesto, “Innovation in Public Space”, La Marina de València is an internationally renowned innovation district due to its conversion of a historic harbour in the heart of València, Spain, into 1 million square metres of public space open to innovation and nautical activity (La Marina de València, 2019). As a Living Lab, it is also recognized for its emphasis on strategies promoting economic, ecological, and social sustainability, as well as its commitment to fostering public-private collaboration and citizen engagement.



Figure 1. València Living Lab (You Valencia Press, 2018)

La Marina de València's efforts are also motivated by its holistic definition of innovation as "an open, place-based process that generates new ideas, products and services that are relevant to their social, economic and cultural context. Innovation starts with freedom of thinking, creating, experimenting and questioning. It means being open to failure and learning from your missteps. It is human-oriented, allowing every citizen to become an expert, tester, and evaluator" (La Marina de València, 2019, p. 39). This comprehensive perspective on innovation serves as a valuable guide for developing and operating innovation centers. This definition and the organization's unique, integrated method of spurring innovation have made the district stand out for its inclusive approach to governance, management, design, and planning (La Marina de València, 2019; Storrington, 2019).

When designing innovation places, it is essential to create an environment that attracts, retains, and grows talent. Innovation spaces need to have the necessary infrastructure (such as housing and amenities), as well as advanced technology to support the development of a thriving innovation community (Katz & Wagner, 2014). In the Toronto context, in particular, there is concern about the potential loss of talent to other regions that offer better resources and more affordable living conditions (Toronto Region Board of Trade, n.d.). Therefore, specifically for

larger innovation districts, it is crucial to invest in public spaces, transportation, affordable housing, local businesses, and mixed-use developments that enrich the public realm, connect innovation spaces to the broader city network, and create more livable (and affordable) environments (Wagner et al., 2019; Zukin, 2020).

5.2. From Innovation Hubs to Living Labs: Placing Community at the Heart of Innovation

Central to the establishment of an innovation ecosystem is the development of a collaborative leadership network. This network consists of external partners who can advocate for, guide, and cooperate with innovation hubs and their stakeholders. Together they can help identify a hub's competitive advantage, evaluate how to best leverage existing infrastructure/assets, determine how to allocate resources and ensure programming alignment with regional Smart Specialization Strategies (S3s) (Chowdhury et al., 2023; Katz & Wagner, 2014; Rissola & Sörvik, 2018). While there are several ways innovation places have achieved this, Katz and Wagner (2014) emphasize the significance of the Triple Helix governance model as it creates connections across the private sector, academia, and government (Youtie & Shapira, 2008). However, missing from this equation are the insights of communities. By expanding the Triple Helix model to include citizens, the Quadruple Helix framework recognizes the critical role that communities play in driving innovation (Cai & Lattu, 2022; European Network of Living Labs (ENOLL), 2017; Malik et al., 2021). By embracing this model, innovation ecosystems can harness the collective knowledge, resources, and creativity of communities to foster inclusive growth in what are known as Living Labs (Cai & Lattu, 2022; ENOLL, 2017). These are also referred to as Public-Private-People Partnerships (4Ps) (Leminen, 2013).

Box 3. How CityStudio Vancouver Brings City Staff and Youth Together to Solve Urban Challenges

CityStudio Vancouver is an innovation hub that creates experiential learning opportunities and fosters civic leadership for local post-secondary students and campus-city collaboration. Through its programming, it serves as a platform for showcasing the creativity and potential of students and offering capacity-building opportunities for youth to co-create solutions to complex local challenges. CityStudio operates on a collaborative model involving four key stakeholder groups: municipal staff, post-secondary students, faculty, and the broader community. Additionally, it hosts Hubhub, an annual showcase of student recommendations and insights, celebrating student achievements with the broader community (CityStudio Vancouver, n.d.). The model has been adopted by the City of Hamilton via their Hamilton CityLAB (See Box 1).

5.2.1. (Urban) Living Labs and Collaborative Governance

Models: Fostering People-Centered Innovation

Living Labs, as recognized by the European Network of Living Labs (ENOLL), are collaborative ecosystems that bring together stakeholders from various sectors to co-create, test, and validate innovative solutions in a real-life context and to scale up businesses (n.d.; 2017; Steen & van Bueren, 2017). By actively involving end-users *and* stakeholders in the innovation process, Living Labs promote user-centric innovation, encourage active citizenship, and enable the integration of research and development activities with the needs and aspirations of the local and/or target community (ENOLL, 2017; Leminen, 2013). This participatory approach helps to democratize knowledge and leads to the development of sustainable and socially responsible solutions that address complex societal challenges. Living Labs can be found all around the world and range in size from singular community hubs to sprawling districts. They employ an approach to innovation that is not only entrepreneurial-driven but community-led (Chowdhury et al., 2023).

Therefore, innovation places need to be focused on creating social as well as economic innovation. Successful innovation infrastructure nurtures an ecosystem that promotes not just inclusive innovation but innovative inclusion. "While inclusive innovation increases access to the benefits of the innovation economy, innovative inclusion empowers whole communities to solve problems in a different way." (Wagner et al., 2019, p.31). When properly harnessed, innovation places can support neighbourhood revitalization, close health disparities, promote civic engagement, strengthen minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), fill procurement pipelines, and workforce shortages through upskilling programs (Wagner et al., 2019).

5.3. Gaps in STEM for Underrepresented Founders:

Producing not just smart cities, but smart citizens

To achieve inclusive growth and poverty reduction, innovation programming should be focused on equipping local residents (particularly in under-resourced communities) with the skills required to participate in the innovation economy. For a few centres, that has meant early intervention programs to increase the labour market participation of marginalized groups and fill any workforce gaps that help maintain a region's competitive advantage (Katz & Wagner, 2014; Toronto Region Board of Trade, n.d). "In mature science and research parks, the conventional wisdom is that 40 percent of the jobs require high school diplomas or associate degrees, 40 percent require bachelor degrees, and only 20 percent require masters and Phds." (Katz & Wagner, 2014, p. 19-20). This is referred to as the 'Hidden STEM Economy' and is a missed opportunity to funnel resources towards upskilling youth (which has prompted a broadening of

not only what is considered as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) work but also the definition of talent) (Bramwell et al., 2019; Rothwell, 2013; Snyder, 2023). Bramwell et al. (2019) highlight the importance of polytechnics and colleges in education, training, and workforce development, rather than solely relying on universities as the pathway to success. According to a 2015 report, Toronto's innovation landscape in particular has a lack of pre-incubation infrastructure notably in social innovation, and business incubation and acceleration in trades and traditional small businesses (City of Toronto, 2015). Therefore, there is an opportunity for innovation hubs to provide the workforce development and skills-building training and opportunities required to fill the demand for STEAM talent (see *Box 4*).

Box 4. Ion Innovation District & Aggie Square: Leveraging Equitable Development Strategies for Community Wealth-Building and Anti-Displacement

Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) (or Community Benefits Frameworks (CBF)) are a powerful tool used by innovation districts for mitigating displacement. “A CBA is an agreement between a project developer and a coalition of community groups that outlines certain benefits the developer will give the community in exchange for community support for that project.” (Fraser, 2022, par. 2). Benefits can include local/social procurement, employment, and workforce development targets, affordable housing provisioning, funding for community improvements or funds, and much more.

Ion District, Houston, Texas, USA



Figure 1. Ion District Rendering (Ion District, n.d.).

The Ion District is an upcoming innovation district at Rice University, in Houston, Texas. Together with the City of Houston and the Rice Management Corporation (RMC), the development arm of Rice University, they consulted civic leaders and community members to develop a CBA. It includes \$15.3 million in direct community investments in homelessness initiatives, inclusive tech workforce training, entrepreneurship development, affordable housing, and more (Rice University, n.d.). It also includes social/local procurement contracts and supplier diversity mandates, providing millions in business opportunities for local, women, and other minority-owned business owners (City of Houston, 2021; Rice University, n.d.).

Aggie Square Innovation District, Sacramento, California, USA



Figure 2. Aggie Square Rendering. (Greater Sacramento Economic Council, n.d.).

Another example is Aggie Square, an innovation district located in the University of California, Davis' Sacramento campus. After facing a lawsuit for their lack of gentrification mitigation strategies, the city developed a \$50 million Community Benefits Partnership Agreement (CBPA) between UC Davis, the City of Sacramento, and Aggie Square's developer Wexford Technology & Science, LLC (Aggie Square, n.d.; Hackler, 2021). The CBPA was developed in consultation with the community and aims to provide funding for employment and workforce development training, affordable housing, a local neighbourhood improvement fund, youth education, and improved transit and mobility infrastructure throughout the neighbourhood (Aggie Square, n.d.).

5.4. Workforce Inclusion: Filling the Hidden STE(A)M

Economy

When it comes to business, entrepreneurship, and innovation, diversity provides a competitive advantage (Alang & Paterson, 2021; Bitti, 2022; Pisano, 2017; Zhuang, 2017). Diversity is a driving force behind Toronto, Ontario, and Canada's entrepreneurial success (Diversity Institute, 2017; Wolfe et al., 2022; Zhuang, 2017). But, unfortunately, there is a lack of resources and infrastructure, particularly outside of Toronto's downtown core, that cater to those underrepresented in the STEAM fields, such as women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), as well as those living with disabilities and neurodivergence (Adams, 2021; Alang & Paterson, 2021; Bramwell et al., 2017; City of Toronto, 2015; Wolfe et al., 2022).

This presents a missed opportunity because research by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) found that regardless of sex, disability status, or ethnicity, individuals in STEM jobs earned more than their non-STEM counterparts (NCSES, 2023). Nonetheless, a wage gap persists, resulting in marginalized workers in STEM fields earning lower overall incomes compared to non-marginalized workers (NCSES, 2023). This trend reflects a larger pattern of income inequality, whereby racialized Canadians often face lower earnings or complete exclusion from the labour market, which in turn contributes to widening wealth gaps (Block et al., 2019). However, the divide is not merely along racial lines, but across gender and abilities as well. In the US, 74% of people with disabilities are unemployed (Brannigan, 2022). The result is a gap in our workforce that not only negatively impacts these communities, but the country's overall GDP and innovation ecosystem. Research shows that the discrepancy in gender equality alone is costing Canada's economy \$150 billion (Evans, 2017).

Consequently, marginalized individuals (particularly those with disabilities) turn to entrepreneurship as a method to achieve social and economic inclusion (Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016; Klangboonkrong & Baines, 2022). In fact, in the face of repeated discrimination, some consider it to be their only viable option (Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016). In some instances, through entrepreneurship those from equity-deserving groups can earn higher wages, are less likely to face unemployment, and can work in a more flexible manner that suits their lifestyles and particular needs (Auchenbach, 2022; Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016). Thus, entrepreneurship is a powerful workforce development tool and poverty reduction strategy (Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016; Klangboonkrong & Baines, 2022).

5.4.1. The Links Between Workforce Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

However, despite the benefits that entrepreneurship brings, there are barriers for equity-deserving individuals to not just succeed in entrepreneurship, but getting started in general (Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016). Barriers to self-employment include a lack of access to capital, networks, training and more. Therefore, business incubation, innovation hubs,

and other social innovation-oriented businesses, such as Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) can play an important role in providing the skills development, entrepreneurship programming and oftentimes robust wrap-around supports necessary to reinforce workforce development efforts and create high-skilled, employment pipelines in under resourced communities that they serve (Canadian Community Economic Development Network, 2022; Harper-Anderson & Gooden, 2016).

As the province continues to welcome immigrants and Toronto's workforce demographics grow more and more diverse, maintaining the regional competitive advantage through creating employment opportunities for underrepresented groups and skilled newcomers becomes increasingly important (City of Toronto, 2012; Drummond et al., 2009; Singer, 2022). The city is actively exploring funding innovation as part of its workforce development strategy, particularly through their Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation, and Technology Grant (IMIT) (City of Toronto, 2012). Toronto is seeking to go beyond focusing solely on traditional demand and supply-side workforce development services and adopt integrated approaches that bridge them together to produce workforce innovation (City of Toronto, 2012; OECD, 2020). The strategy encourages cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships, support for underrepresented groups, promotes entrepreneurship, and aligns workforce initiatives with emerging industry needs (City of Toronto, 2012).

5.5. The Hub's Role: Bridging Workforce and Entrepreneurship and Community to Industry

Entrepreneurship and workforce development are two key pillars of a thriving economy. A strong entrepreneurial ecosystem requires a skilled and talented workforce in order to execute business ideas and strategies, whereas a growing workforce requires an abundance of quality entrepreneurial opportunities for the sake of employment and professional advancement. Thus, providing a hub where both groups can be cultivated and collaborate creates a positive feedback loop. Over time, the talented individuals (comprised of local residents and other underrepresented talent) trained through the Element Centre's programming will be equipped with the necessary skills to work at one of the many startups that the BEA incubates. On the other hand, BEA-supported ventures can easily select from a freshly trained, highly skilled STEAM workforce all located inside or within close proximity of the hub. Therein lies the core mission of the proposed Element Centre. As the size of the BEA-trained workforce, the number of incubated ventures, and quality of complementary amenities increases, the hub will be able to attract further investment, talent, and/or employment to support the growth of both groups and the community overall. Ultimately, creating a diversity pipeline from Jane-Finch to the broader innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem, with the aim of making innovation accessible for all (See Figure 9).

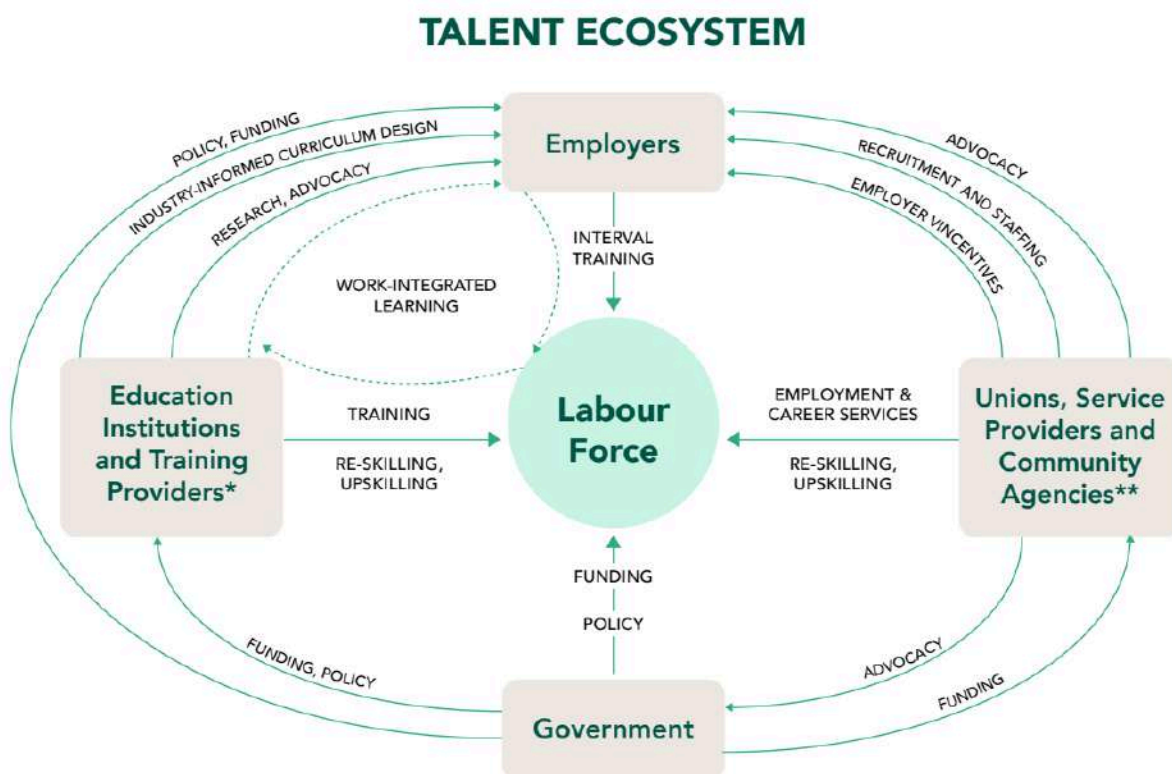


Figure 9. Toronto Region Board of Trade Talent Ecosystem Map (Toronto Region Board of Trade, 2022).

6. Methods/Approach

The guiding research question for the study is: How can the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA) and key partners build a state-of-the-art hub that fosters a culture of innovation and education that equips underrepresented groups within marginalized communities with the tools to successfully navigate the entrepreneurial and talent ecosystem?

The research examines the governance models, programming structures, built-form requirements, and (financial, partnership, and regulatory) opportunities that the hub can leverage for equitable and accessible business, talent, and workforce incubation. This is informed by the following sub-research questions:

- **Governance:** How will the innovation hub be run by lead organizations/partners to ensure its activities remain inclusive and accessible in its mission/vision?
- **Programming:** What programming and early intervention strategies can be employed to promote talent development and workforce development for youth, particularly those from underrepresented communities?

- **Built-form:** What strategies can be employed to develop an innovation hub that promotes inclusive entrepreneurship, attracts resources, and avoids displacement of existing community members? Furthermore, what are the effective co-location uses that can support these goals for the innovation hub?
- **Opportunities:** What are the regulatory tools, financial resources, and partners that can be leveraged to support the hub's activities?

The study employs a mixed-methods approach that includes a literature review, case studies, document/policy scan, and stakeholder engagement via semi-structured interviews, and a survey.

7. Case Studies

10 case studies were examined to provide insight into the structure of innovation districts/hubs, co-location, governance, funding streams, programming, and other place-based innovation models best suited in urbanized and diverse communities. What follows are six innovation places highlighted for this report:

1. Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), *Toronto, Canada*
2. IDEA Square One Innovation Hub, *Mississauga, Canada*
3. Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC)'s Bristol Living Lab, *Bristol, UK*
4. Platform Calgary Innovation Centre, *Calgary, Canada*
5. Roxbury Innovation Centre (RIC), *Boston, USA*
6. TechNexus Venture Collaborative, *Chicago, USA*

To read the cases in full detail, please see *Appendix C*.

8. Findings

8.1 Stakeholder Engagement Findings

Between June 16 and November 29, a series of 22 semi-structured interviews were carried out, involving 23 individuals. These interviews encompassed a diverse group of participants, including community members, BIPOC entrepreneurs, and professionals with expertise in various fields such as venture capital, innovation hub establishment, workforce development, municipal policy, economic growth, entrepreneurship support services, non-profit administration, community enhancement, finance, and youth development. The primary aim of these interviews was to gather insights that would contribute to the understanding of four key research areas: governance, program development, physical infrastructure, and potential

opportunities. Additionally, these interviews delved into the exploration of strategies for fostering an inclusive, innovation-oriented culture, and mitigating displacement. See *Table 3 for the details*.

Table 3. Overview of Insights from Stakeholder Interviews

Theme	Insights
General Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage community partnerships and do not reinvent the wheel • Narrow down the industry niche to avoid scope creep • Programming is key to making the hub engaged • Building trust and fostering a strong sense of community, belonging, and support for the hub (particularly with local residents and partners) is critical for the hub's long-term success • Take an incremental approach to the hub's development, considering a pilot to build organizational, programming, partnership, and financial capacity for long-term project development and operations • Create social impact opportunities • Provide funding opportunities as it is a major barrier for emerging professionals and entrepreneurs
Programming	<p>Key programming themes explored during interviews centered around legal and financial literacy, mentorship, hackathons, residencies, experiential learning, business fundamentals, and technological literacy and skills development (relevant to the niche of the hub).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sector-specific and persona-specific supports and accelerators • Provide a balance between large, one-off events, with smaller, recurring events for breadth and depth of networking-building for hub users • Act as a strategic bridging organization (SBO) • Provide persona-specific supports and programming • Tailor the hub's programming to the current entrepreneurial and workforce status of local residents • Have a robust communications strategy to keep the ecosystem and community informed and engaged • Prioritize quality over quantity when evaluating impact • Cultivate soft and hard skills as both are critical to success in entrepreneurship or the workforce • Representation of guests, participants, and decision-makers is key
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow the vision first to avoid mission drift • Actively listen to the needs of prospective hub users • Take a collaborative approach to governance • Hire and celebrate local talent • Apply a culturally relevant governance model

Cultivating a Culture of Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a community of practice for collaboration, ideation, and continuous learning • Understand the importance of learned behaviour • Demystify tech and promote accessibility • Have an alumni engagement strategy • Consider diverse modes of service delivery (ex. hybrid)
Co-Location	<p>Core complementary uses and/or services highlighted by interviewees were: Co-working spaces, Event spaces, Financial institutions, Legal and accounting services, Marketing support, and Makerspaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to complementary services • Design flexible and welcoming spaces • Have a mix of mature and emerging companies to encourage collaboration and learning
Anti-Displacement Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate potential anti-displacement strategies from the onset • Strengthen existing community leaders and initiatives • Exercise caution in storytelling and hub marketing to not exacerbate stereotypes • Offer wrap around supports that target systemic barriers faced by entrepreneurs from racialized communities • Teach wealth-building strategies
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with local businesses, industry experts, and educational institutions to avoid redundancies and ensure relevant programming • Act as a one-stop resource hub for both employees and future employers • Raise awareness of diverse career pathways and challenge stigmas about certain employment sectors • Guide individuals in balancing industry demands with personal interests to better align passions with employable skills • Focus on workforce inclusion by supporting individuals at various career stages and age ranges (i.e. target youth as well as seniors, or second-starters)

8.2. Survey Findings

“I believe this will provide access to underserved communities to be able to break the gap that exists for marginalized folks and also tap into the wealth of resources and knowledge that is available in these communities. Canada as a whole is a hub for diversity globally, so by setting up such a space, we push Canada at the forefront to capitalize on these resources and propel the Country into a very competitive position in the world.”

~ Survey Respondent

A survey involving 190 participants was carried out both online and in-person between June 14 and September 1, 2023. The selection of respondents was based on convenience sampling. Data from postal codes indicates that while the survey received contributions from as far as the USA, survey respondents are primarily situated in Toronto, with 46 (24%) located in northwestern Toronto and 12 (6.3%) in the Jane-Finch area (see *Appendix B*). The objective of this survey was to engage with the community and broader ecosystem of prospective partners and users to gauge general support for the hub; identify resources, amenities, and general and early-intervention programming; and highlight skills that should be cultivated for entrepreneurial and workforce success. The findings are described below.

8.2.1. Demographic Insights

In terms of the respondents' demographic breakdown, over half (54.1%) of the respondents identified as women, while 45.3% identified as men. Regarding age distribution, the largest group was those aged 25-34, making up 33.2% of respondents, followed by the 35-44 age group at 20%, and the 13-17 age group at 15.8% (See *Figure 10*).

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents (71%) identified as Black, while 11% identified as Asian, 1.1% as Indigenous/First Nations, 3.1% as Hispanic/Latinx, 2.6% as Middle Eastern, 6.3% as White/Caucasian, 6.3% as belonging to multiple ethnicities, and 2% as "Other."

Age

190 responses

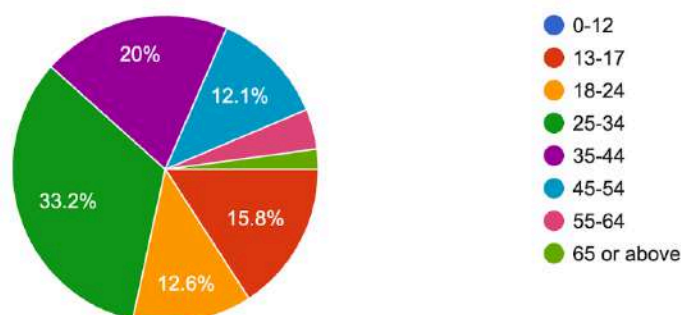


Figure 10. Age of Survey Respondents

Furthermore, 4.7% of respondents identified as having a disability, 6.3% as neurodivergent, and 7.4% as having a mental illness. Occupation-wise, the top three categories consisted of 61.1% who identified as employed, 27.9% as self-employed, and 27.4% as students. The remaining percentages represented those who identified as unemployed (3.7%), retired (2.6%), or on disability (0.5%).

8.2.2. Gauging Interest

How would you rate the importance of having an innovation hub in the local community?

190 responses

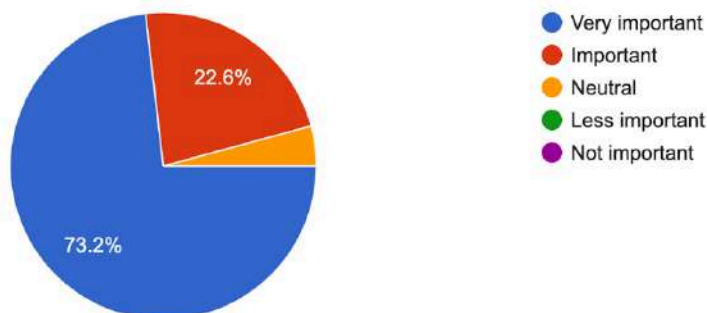


Figure 11. Importance of the Innovation Hub

95.8% of respondents believe that having an innovation hub in the local community is a valuable resource (see *Figure 11*) and almost half (49.5%) were likely or very likely to travel to northwestern Toronto and access an innovation hub that aims to address these locational and diversity gaps (see *Figure 12*). Furthermore, 49.7% were unsure if they were willing to pay for certain services or access exclusive offerings provided by the innovation hub, such as membership fees or premium services (see *Figure 13*).

How likely are you to travel to Northwestern Toronto and address these locational and diversity gaps?

190 responses

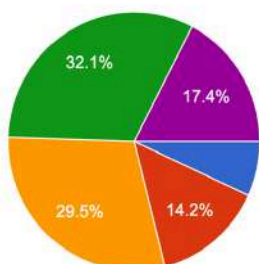


Figure 12. Likelihood of Travel to an Innovation Hub in Northwestern Toronto

Would you be willing to pay for certain services or access exclusive offerings provided by the innovation hub, such as membership fees or premium services?

189 responses

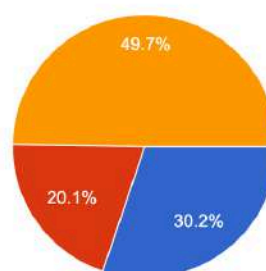


Figure 13. Willingness to Pay for Services

8.2.3. Fostering Inclusive Innovation

Respondents were asked, how can the innovation hub best support the local community and promote inclusivity and diversity. General insights from respondents suggest that achieving this requires a multi-pronged approach involving inclusive policies, programming, talent, and spaces (both digital and physical). This diversity needs to be reflective in every stage of the hub's operations and governance from the local talent hired and highlighted to the visual materials used to promote hub activity.

It is important to note that respondents expressed a dual need for the hub to accommodate the diversity of backgrounds within the neighbourhood but that also caters to the distinct needs of the Black entrepreneurship experience.

“It is essential for the Black community, which is undeserved, to have their own innovation hub so they can feel a sense of belonging and have a culturally appropriate place to socialize, share ideas, tap into resources, build relationships, cultivate businesses, develop skills and network.”

“Include all cultures and colours. Focus on BEA but remember business happens in all colours. Success and failure is not black or white (it’s green).”

As a result, the hub will need to find a balance between serving the core demographic of the BEA, addressing the distinctive requirements of the diverse local communities, and meeting the changing needs of the neighbourhood's residents. This will require continuously adapting to feedback for improvement and to maintain relevance from an industry, cultural, and local perspective. Table 4 outlines key strategies from the survey findings to achieve this.

Table 4. Key Strategies for How the Innovation Hub Can Best Support the Local Community and Promote Inclusivity and Diversity

Strategy	Insights
Enhance Access to Resources and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to technology resources like laptops and 3D printing. • Offering training and workshops on various skills, such as technology, finance, and planning. • Fostering an environment where technology is approachable and not intimidating. • Offering prototype spaces for interdisciplinary product development.

Strengthen Community Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with existing local organizations to avoid duplicating services. • Sharing ideas, resources, and learning from each other. • Supporting local non-profits and charity events.
Ensure Accessibility and Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring services are affordable and tailored to the community's needs. • Providing flexible payment options for membership fees (and/or scholarships for subsidized memberships for underrepresented users). • Offering free educational courses that can be applied immediately • Ensuring amenities are transit accessible or providing other alternatives to subsidize transit. • Providing drop-in sessions. • Providing assistive technologies.
Promote Mentorship and Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing mentorship programs with empathetic and compassionate mentors. • Showcasing a variety of people with diverse backgrounds and businesses. • Promoting diversity in leadership and staff.
Engage with Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering youth-specific programs, hackathons, and workshops. • Reaching out to local high schools and universities for student engagement.
Foster Networking and Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting networking events, speaking panels, and meet-the-CEO nights. • Creating a safe space for people to connect and collaborate. • Celebrating diversity and success stories within the community. • Provide assistance in gaining access to influential individuals and capital resources.

Provide Customized Support and Culturally Responsive Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring programs and services to meet the specific needs of underrepresented groups. • Providing resources like labs, workspaces, 3D printing, and mentors. • Providing wrap-around services (such as for mental health and wellbeing and/or childcare and family needs) and amenities (such as multi-faith spaces) • Infuse the local culture, style, and energy into campus and business programs.
Expand Outreach and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engaging with the community through outreach initiatives. • Participating in and hosting local festivals and community events. • Providing educational course packages and food support.
Encourage Innovation and Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship within the community. • Creating a market for local products and services. • Supporting local economic development and economic empowerment. • Offering grant-writing services and funding opportunities (and/or knowledge of where to access funding) for startups.
Champion Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing inclusive policies and spaces that facilitate outreach and engagement with underrepresented and hard-to-reach groups (e.g. newcomers). • Celebrating diversity through programming, gatherings, and events (particularly with food) will create a welcoming and respectful environment for all community members.

Support Local Businesses and Champion Local Procurement Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate a diverse profile among startups, mentors, volunteers, guests, and internal staff to mirror the local population. • Emphasize the importance of hiring professionals who reflect the local community while ensuring their credibility. • Facilitate connections among community members and offer opportunities to showcase their work. • Develop neighbourhood or community based hiring practices which will give jobs to locals. • Highlight community talents. • Organize in-house hiring events for jobs and internships. • Encourage businesses to explore innovation opportunities within their operations. • Facilitate the testing of innovation projects with local businesses. • Host forum meetings with invitations extended to local businesses for their active participation.
Provide Hybrid Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a virtual platform for access to resources, webinars, and collaboration even for those who can't physically be present. • Centralize resources, service providers, buyers, funders, and opportunities through a platform. • Develop an app to challenge systemic racism and stigmatization through counterbalancing narratives. • Provide accessible physical and digital spaces, with a feedback mechanism to improve initiatives. • Provide a website that can connect individuals to the hub and the resources and events.

8.2.4. Fostering a Culture of Innovation and Supporting Entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs

Respondents were asked what kind of resources they would like to see in a local hub to support both entrepreneurs and professionals to thrive and foster a culture of innovation. According to *Figure 14*, the top three resources participants would like to see provided in the hub are as follows:

1. Events and startup competitions that foster networking and knowledge sharing
2. Incubators and accelerators offering resources and support for startups

3. Communications resources and social networks that facilitate connections and information exchange

This reinforces the innovation hub's role as an SBO, where the community can come for collaborative opportunities, practical guidance and assistance, and build relationships and stay informed on upcoming and current trends in their related industries. Additional resources suggested by the participants are summarized in Table 5.

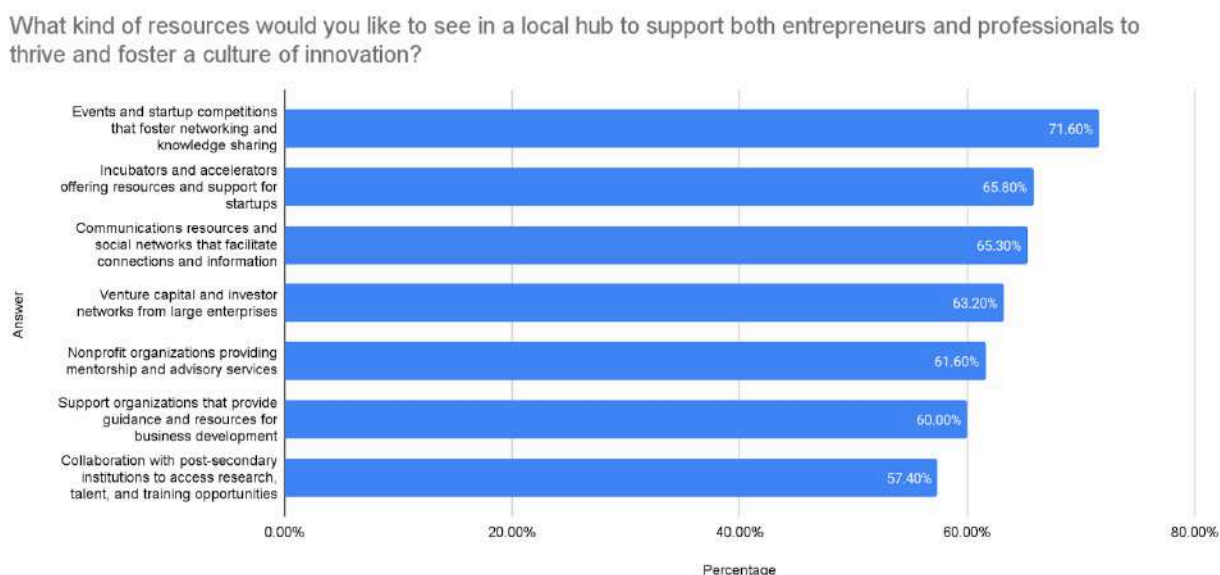


Figure 14. Desired Hub Resources

Table 5. Additional Resources for Fostering a Culture of Innovation

Resources	Insights
Technology and Innovation Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance and training for IT • Web design training • AI workshops • Access to latest tech (ex. 3D printer, AI, VR sets, tablets, computers, software, audio and video equipment)
Capacity-Building Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban planning capacity development and skills training • Workshops on corporate innovation • Professional development seminars • Employment opportunities • Mentorship programs

Financial and Entrepreneurial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant and investment funding • Business fundamentals (i.e. operations, taxes, etc.) and assistance programs
Networking & Relationship-Building Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for the community to build relationships with successful innovators • Opportunities to connect “with people with similar ideas”
Facilities and Workspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable meeting spaces • Content creation spaces • Learning labs (ex. For computers, sciences, mechanics, and play)
Community Well-Being Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health supports • Resources to low-income, local families (ex. Food banks, camps, and jobs) • Supports for single mothers • Food security initiatives (ex. Grocery supports) • Resources to address gun violence • Programs and resources to keep youth engaged and “out of trouble”

8.2.5. Building Local Workforce and Entrepreneurial Capacities

Respondents were asked what key skills and competencies they believed are required for success in today's entrepreneurial and workforce landscape that they would like to see cultivated through innovation hub programming. A recurring theme in the responses highlighted the importance of not only cultivating hard skills but also equipping users of the innovation hub with essential interpersonal skills. These skills include building the right networks and connections, effectively pitching ideas, and, most importantly, developing the mindset necessary to successfully navigate the workforce and entrepreneurship system. One survey participant aptly expressed this sentiment by stating:

“At this point of my journey I truly believed having a strong network is vital to a growing business. Having the right connections with the aim of providing a better service; then funnelling that to the right people who need it most is what I believe is the bloodline of every business. Being clear and direct not just as a brand but as a culture. You need Integrity because things will feel uncomfortable. Confidence and pride not just what you do but the product that you serve. It needs to feel authentic, no matter what it is you're selling. These are a few things I believe are necessary for success when growing a business.”

An overview of the key skills and competencies the hub should emphasize in its programming can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Key Skills and Competencies the Innovation Hub Should Emphasize

Skills	Insights
Entrepreneurial Mindset, “Grit”, and Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability and resilience to navigate challenges and uncertainty of entrepreneurship and the workforce. • Foster grit and determination to persist through failures and setbacks. • Encourage risk-taking and a willingness to explore new opportunities.
Communication and Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective oral and written communication skills. • Storytelling abilities for marketing, sales, and pitching. • Presentation skills for conveying ideas and concepts.
Networking and Relationship Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking skills to establish connections, create opportunities, and build relationships. • The importance of valuable introductions and follow-through. • The value of mentorship, especially in hands-on situations like Joint-Venture partnerships facilitated through Entrepreneurs-in-Residence programs
Financial Literacy and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial literacy for understanding budgets, finances, and investments. • Cultivate money management and capital utilization skills. • Develop business planning and financial planning expertise. • Tools for navigating the capital raising process (i.e. grant writing).
Digital Literacy and Technical Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital literacy and proficiency in using technology tools. • Technical skills such as coding, data analysis, and AI. • Leveraging technology for business growth and competitiveness.
Teamwork and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture interpersonal skills for effective teamwork, collaboration, and team-building. • Educate cross-functional collaboration for holistic business development.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate emotional intelligence, including self-awareness and empathy. • Leadership skills for effective team management. • Teach conflict resolution and self-regulation.
Continuous Learning, Growth Mindset, and Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning and staying updated with industry trends. • Adaptation to new technologies and market changes. • Encourage an openness to learning new skills and approaches.
Cultural Competence and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural competence for working with diverse groups. • Inclusivity and creating a non-judgmental space. • Understanding and addressing the needs of diverse communities.
Access to Resources and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to resources and mentorship. • Guidance on grants and financing opportunities. • Support for securing capital and making smart financial decisions.
Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate creative thinking for innovative solutions. • Strengthen analytical skills for complex decision-making.
Marketing and Sales Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing skills for product promotion and customer engagement. • Sales strategies and customer communication.
Community Building and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and maintaining a strong professional network. • Support from a community of like-minded individuals. • Tools for maintaining mental health.
Leadership Development and Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership development and management programs. • Provide access to experienced mentors and advisors. • Coaching for mental health and business growth.

8.2.6. Built-Form and Amenities

When asked about the amenities respondents would like to see in the innovation hub, the top three desired amenities were selected as follows (*See Figure 15 for the full ranking*):

1. Community meeting rooms and event spaces
2. High-speed internet and technology infrastructure

3. Business support services (e.g., legal, accounting, marketing)

Which of the following amenities would you like to see in the innovation hub?

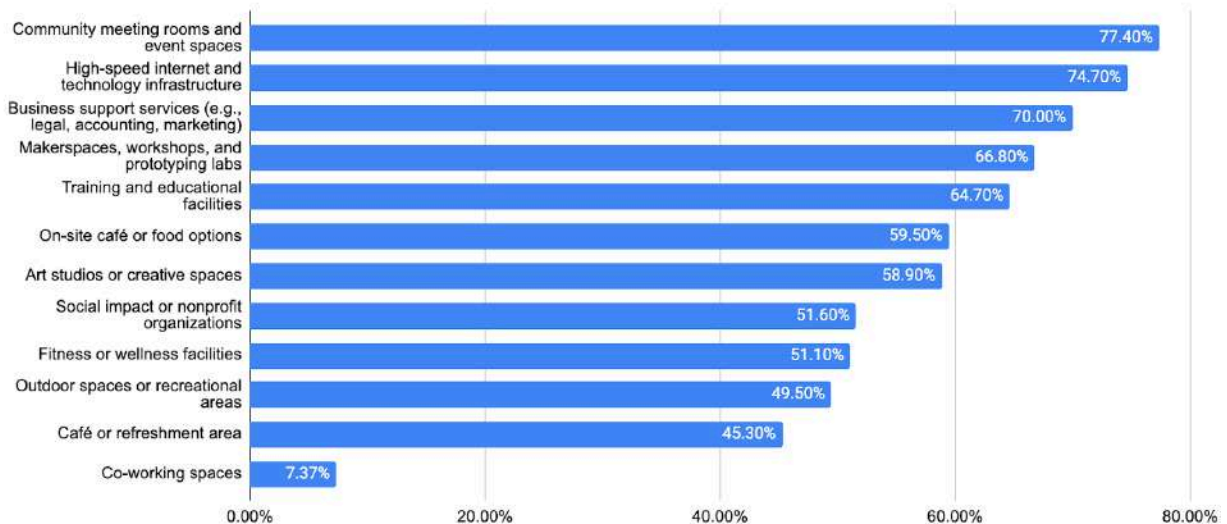


Figure 15. Desired Amenities

Respondents were asked for additional insights about amenities and built-form of the hub, beyond provided criteria of spaces. Table 7 provides key themes to inform desired supports in the hub. Both the insights derived from Figure 15 and Table 7, speak to the strong need for the hub to provide spaces to gather, collaborate, and host various community activities and events; having access to a robust digital environment is essential to accessibility and inclusion of the hub, but also basic necessity for founder operations; and access to the professional assistance necessary for entrepreneurship and business development and growth to compliment the programming provided.

Table 7. Amenities Details

Theme	Insights
Physical Workspace and Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-working spaces with flexible arrangements. Private meeting rooms and phone booths.
Studios and Makerspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maker spaces with tools and prototyping facilities. Access to specialized labs and studios for various industries (ex. Kitchens for food entrepreneurs, beauty studios for beauty-based entrepreneurs). Creative spaces for testing disruptive ideas.

Technology and Digital Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to computers and technology tools. • Directory for local businesses to advertise. • Remote and hybrid options for events and programming. • Platform and associated virtual infrastructure (ex. newsletters) where users can access resources, other founders/investors, funding, and other information.
Flexibility and Convenience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 access for entrepreneurs. • Transportation supports (ex. travel subsidies for remote team members, free parking, transit accessible)
Wellness and Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness programs and facilities. • Safe spaces for reflection and meditation. • Support for managing stress and mental health. • Green spaces and biophilic design incorporated on the interior and exterior of the building. • Family-friendly spaces and childcare services to support parents. • Prayer rooms and quiet reflection spaces.

8.2.7. General Programming

When asked about what types of programs or activities would respondents like to see in the innovation hub, the top three desired programs were listed (*see Figure 16*):

1. Entrepreneurship training and workshops
2. Networking events
3. Mentorship opportunities and advisory services with industry experts (tied)
4. Skill development and training programs (tied)

What types of programs or activities would you like to see in the innovation hub?

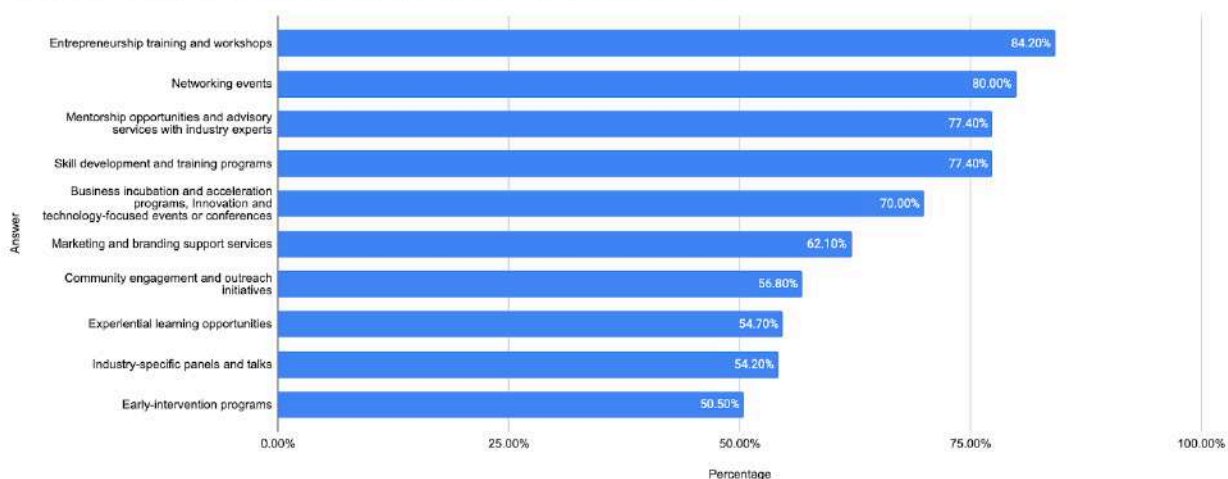


Figure 16. Desired Programs and Activities

When pressed further, Table 8 suggests that participants place a strong emphasis on building connections and relationships within their community and the broader business and innovation ecosystem. It also emphasizes the importance of guidance and skill-building to support innovation and entrepreneurship, showcasing a practical approach to personal and professional growth within the hub. Moreover, participants expressed a desire for programs that facilitate the commercialization of arts and sports, the realization of environmental and food initiatives, the exploration of real estate opportunities, and the establishment of global connections, linking local resources and international networks:

“Programs that help creatives (artists, photographers, fashion designers, etc.) break into tech and mixed media work. Helping creatives build out business plans to make their creative work a lucrative way of expressing themselves and create things for our community so they can make a living.”

Table 8. Overview of Desired Programs

Theme	Insights
Support Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incubation and acceleration programs for startups. • Mentorship programs and mentor hours. • Workshops and training on entrepreneurship skills. • Access to legal services and financial counselling. • Industry-specific programs and training.
Networking and Pitching Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hackathons, competitions, and pitch events. • Investor matchmaking and access to funding resources. • Speaker series featuring industry experts.
International Connections and Exchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs for fostering international collaborations. • Partnerships with global innovation hubs. • Support for startups looking to expand internationally. • Connecting with other hubs and innovation communities. • Language classes.
Community Engagement and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social impact initiatives focusing on community challenges. • Youth entrepreneurship programs. • Cultural sharing spaces and sacred areas for faith practices. • Newcomer programs and welcoming activities. • Community garden, food security initiatives, and skills training for food-based enterprises. • Climate change mitigation initiatives.

Collaboration and Industry Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative research and development initiatives. • Specialized programs for real estate investments. • Sports and entertainment industry courses and certificates. • Programming for creatives to commercialize their work.
Business and Workforce Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory coding programs for all age groups. • Financial literacy and administration programs. • Workforce development services. • Access to learning platforms and resources.
Marketing and Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs to promote local businesses. • Advertising and financial aid. • Fundraising initiatives and grants.

8.2.8. Early-Intervention Programming

How important do you believe early intervention programming is for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship?
190 responses

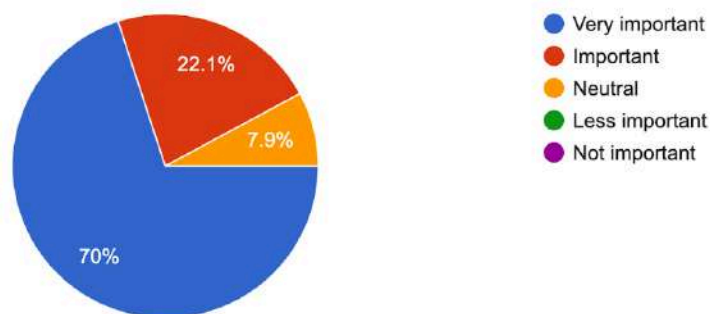


Figure 17. The Importance of Early-Intervention Programming

While according Figure 16, over half of respondent expressed interest in early-intervention programming (50.5%) in Figure 36, 70% of respondents believed that early intervention programming is very important for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. 34.7% of participants voted that this type of programming should start in middle school (aged 13-15) (see Figure 18).

In your opinion, at what age should early intervention programming for innovation and entrepreneurship begin?

190 responses

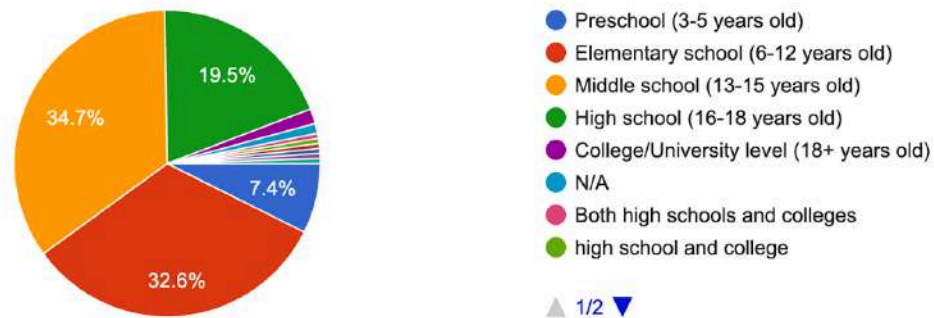


Figure 18. Ages at Which Early-Intervention Programming Should Start

When asked about the types of early-intervention programming respondents would like to see in the hub, the following top three were selected (see Figure 19):

1. Creative problem-solving and critical-thinking skills
2. Financial literacy and budgeting skills
3. Leadership and teamwork development

What specific areas of early-intervention programming for innovation and entrepreneurship would you like to see offered in the innovation hub?

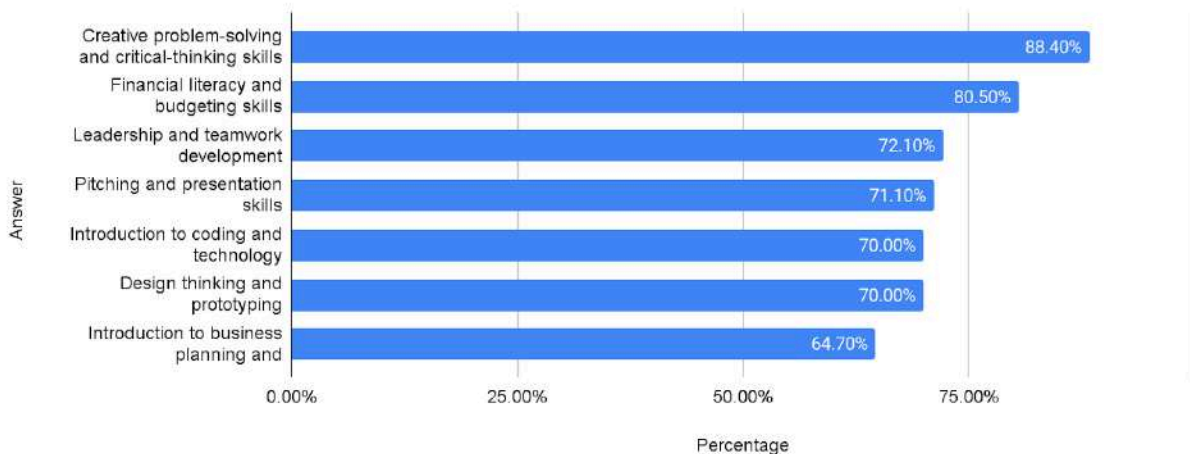


Figure 19. Types of Early-Intervention Programming

When asked about the specific area of early-intervention programming respondents would like to see in the hub, the following top three were selected (see Figure 20):

1. Field trips to innovative companies or startups
2. Design thinking workshops (tied)
3. Entrepreneurial bootcamps (tied)
4. Internship or apprenticeship programs.

Which types of experiential learning activities would you be interested in participating in at the innovation hub?

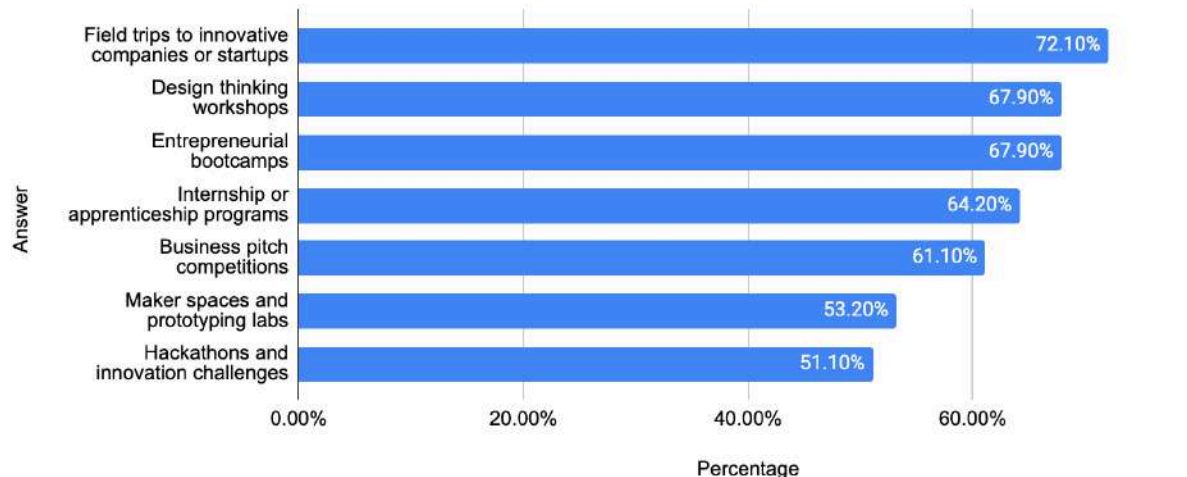


Figure 20. Types of Early-Intervention Programming Desired

8.2.9. Experiential Learning

According to Figure 16 over half of the respondents are interested in experiential programming (54.7%). When asked about the specific skills or knowledge areas that experiential learning activities should prioritize to support innovation and entrepreneurship, participants highlighted six key categories:

1. Creative and Design Thinking
2. Business Fundamentals
3. Soft Skills
4. Strategic Thinking
5. Civic Engagement and Community-Building
6. Technical Skills

See *Table 9* for the full details.

Table 9. Key Skills Experiential Learning Programming Should Provide

Skills	Insights
Creative and Design Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea Generation and Creativity • Prototyping and Product Development
Business Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Research and Validation • Marketing and Sales Skills • Business Planning and Strategy
Soft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and Relationship Building • Adaptability and Agility • Mindfulness and Well-being
Strategic Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment and Management • Problem-Solving and Resilience • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Civic Engagement and Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and Management • Ethical and Social Responsibility • Community Engagement and Social Impact • Mentorship and Support
Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and Digital Skills • Digital Literacy and Emerging Technologies and Trends • Financial Literacy and Funding

Overall, a recurring theme in the responses was an innovation hub that generated social impact and community connection through its programming (whether it be early-intervention, experiential, or otherwise). This is reflected in over half of respondents (51.1%) wanting to have social impact and nonprofit organizations located in the hub (*see Figure 15*) but also in the survey participants desire for community engagement and outreach initiatives (54.6%) (*see Figure 16*). This presents an opportunity to create unique learning experiences that follow the Living Lab approach, addressing local challenges and fostering innovation and skill development for individuals across various age groups and life stages.

9. Governance

Successful innovation places are premised on three core actions: defining a collaborative vision, establishing a governance structure, and developing a sustainable financial model (Wagner, 2023). The Global Institute on Innovation Districts (GIID) provides seven key pillars of innovation district and hub governance (*see Table 10 for an overview*):

1. Co-design and co-invest for effective governance
2. Identify the right degree of independence
3. Allow diversity of voice and view
4. Strategically involve government based on local conditions
5. Tie governance to land
6. Design a financially sustainable model
7. Ensure flexibility—a governance model that can adapt over time (Wagner, 2023)

Table 10. Overview of GIID's Pillars of Governance

#	Pillar	Description
1	<i>Co-design and co-invest for effective governance</i>	Pool expertise and resources (i.e. land, staff, startup capital, etc.) from key partners and leadership to inform governance and project development.
2	<i>Identify the right degree of independence</i>	Determine how involved the government can/should be in the governance of the innovation district (See Figure 40 for examples of different ownership models used by innovation places)
3	<i>Allow diversity of voice and view</i>	Ensure that there is diversity both in the backgrounds of individuals (i.e. BIPOC, women, etc.) and in sectors (ex. Business, institutions, etc.) represented in the district's governance.
4	<i>Strategically involve government based on local conditions</i>	Find a balance between being connected with the government (for key financial and regulatory supports), but also maintaining some distance so that not caught up in changes in political agendas with each new election cycle.
5	<i>Tie governance to land</i>	As the governance of innovation districts inherently place-based, it is important to leverage district development to create both a strong sense of place and financing mechanisms that can support long term sustainability.
6	<i>Design a financially sustainable model</i>	A mixture of diversified funding portfolios and the creation of independent revenue streams are key to financing innovation hub activities.

7	<i>Ensure flexibility—a governance model that can adapt over time</i>	As the needs of a community/ecosystem shift, the governance of the hub should also be adaptable in order to maintain relevancy and capitalize on opportunities for partnerships, revenue, and further local development.
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Figure 6: Ownership models of 100 innovation places in the UK

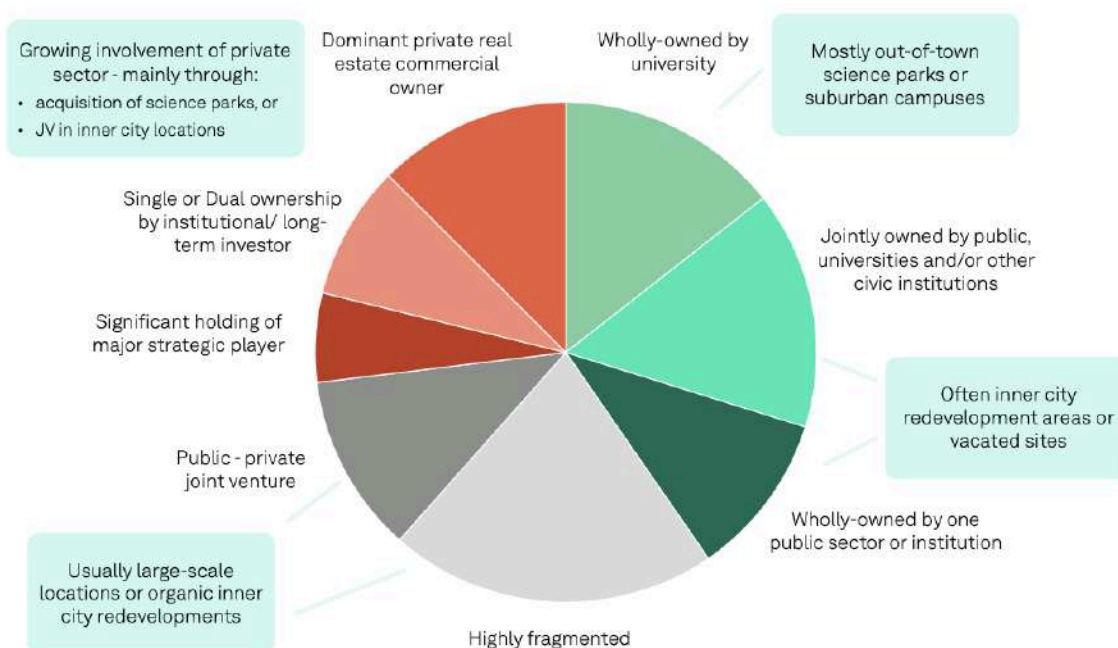


Figure 21. Ownership Models of Diverse Innovation Places in the UK (Connected Places Catapult, 2021b)

Pillar 7, is particularly important as an innovation place’s governance structure must remain flexible and responsive to change to take advantage of emerging opportunities. For example, innovation districts have found new ways to finance their programs by addressing societal challenges notably through workforce development (Wagner, 2023). Maintaining flexibility might require accommodating new functions, creating new legal entities, and/or shifting the governance models used.

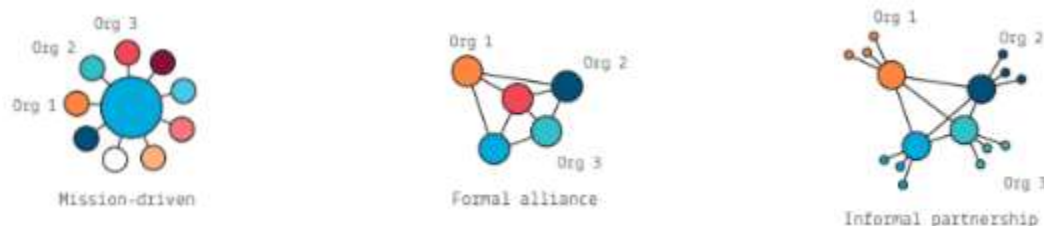


Figure 22. Types of Governance Models Emerging in Innovation Districts (Wagner, 2023)

Wagner’s (2023) research shows that innovation districts’ governance fluctuates between three models over time (see *Figure 22*):

1. **Mission-Driven Formal Entities:** These entities, often legally separate like non-profits, government-related development firms, or public-private partnerships, focused on fostering district growth. They fill gaps in the ecosystem and lead program and infrastructure development. To accomplish their mission-driven work, they need to secure, spend, and generate capital effectively.
2. **Formal Alliances:** Formal alliances can be government-led, like partnerships between different city branches or institutions, governments, and non-profits. They involve an agreement defining roles, duties, and terms. These alliances, whether within governments or across them, are strategically designed and have dedicated resources (Wagner, 2023). Similar to the Triple Helix Model leveraged by most innovation hubs and the Quadruple Helix Model used by ENOLL’s Living Labs *explored in the Literature Review* (Katz & Wagner, 2014).
3. **Informal Partnerships and ‘Organized Teams’:** This is a series of informal partners working towards a shared vision. This is typically where innovation places use at the beginning of their journey. The model operates similarly to the *Constellation Model of Governance* pioneered by CSI and used by organizations like the Canadian Partnership for Children’s Health and Environment, Ontario Literacy Coalition, and the Frontline Partners with Youth Network (Centre for Social Innovation, n.d.c) (See Box 5).

The strengths and weaknesses of each model can be found in Table 11.

Box 5. CSI’s Constellation Model of Governance

The Constellation Model of Governance is a framework designed for multi-organizational collaboration without creating a new organization. It serves partnerships, coalitions, networks, and movements, particularly in the context of social change. This model enables joint fundraising, coordinated projects, shared advocacy, campaigns, policy alignment, and other coordinated activities while allowing organizations to maintain autonomy. It involves a stewardship group responsible for vision, strategy, and management of core agreements.

The model is composed of four main components (see *Figure 1*):

1. **Magnetic Attractor:** The Magnetic Attractor is the central vision or goal that brings organizations and individuals together within the collaboration.
2. **Action Team:** Action Teams are smaller groups or sub-organizations formed within the collaboration focusing on specific projects, goals, or tasks related to the Magnetic Attractor. These teams operate in a self-governing manner, allowing for flexibility and adaptability. Action Teams dissolve once they have achieved their objectives.
3. **Stewardship Group:** The Stewardship Group plays a critical role in guiding and overseeing the collaboration. It consists of representatives from each partnering organization.
4. **Secretariat:** The Secretariat provides administrative support and coordination for the collaboration. It helps connect the members of the network and facilitates communication and community engagement.

Within the Constellation, one organization takes a leadership role in fiscal and legal matters. This model's core systems include third-party catalysts (i.e. an intermediary that supports coordination), collaborative leadership, no legal incorporation, and managing money and power flow. Core funding can be challenging to obtain (as it is mainly project-based), so a portion of administrative fees from projects are between organizations pooled and can be allocated to the collaboration. It emphasizes resource allocation for the Secretariat and community development. Network communication and development are facilitated by the Secretariat and can expand to include community management as the network grows. (StepUp BC, n.d.; Surman, 2006).

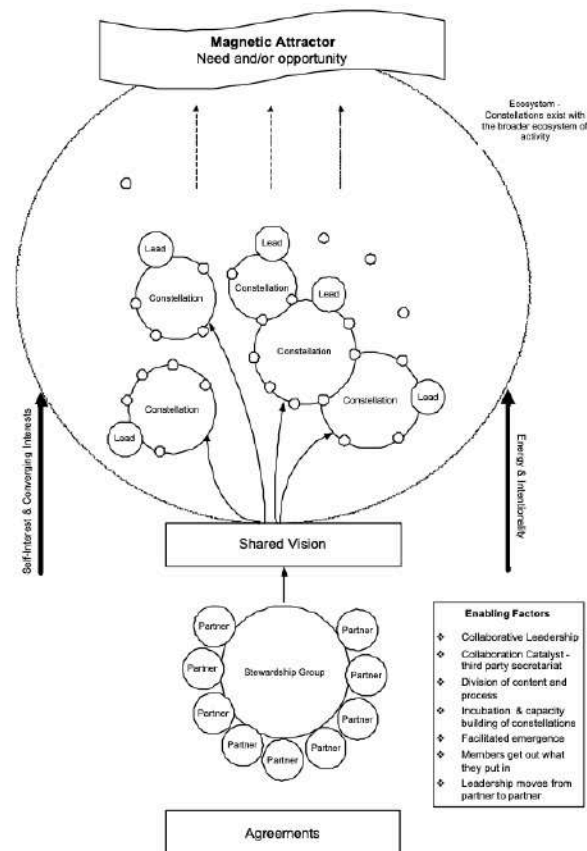


Figure 1. Diagram of the Constellation Model of Governance (Surman, 2006)

Table 11. SWOT Analysis of Different Governance Models

Model	Strength	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Mission-Driven Formal Entities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous execution • Clear mission • Capital generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource dependency • Limited collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic alliances • Financial sustainability via diversified funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource competition • Economic downturns • Mission drift (i.e. in pursuit of capital generation)
<i>Formal Alliances (i.e. Triple-Helix/Quadruple Helix Model)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure collaboration • Resource pooling • Institutional support • Dynamic innovation ecosystem • Adaptable to challenges • Support open innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex coordination • Bureaucratic hurdles (especially for government-led alliances) • Equal resource distribution among partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced influence (thanks to anchor institutions) • Collective impact on complex societal challenges • Knowledge sharing and innovation acceleration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of commitment • Internal disputes (mission misalignment) • Power imbalances • Shifting political conditions • Funding uncertainty (especially if government-led)
<i>Informal Partnerships (i.e. Constellation Model of Governance)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility and adaptability • Organizational autonomy • Clear purpose • Effective for partnerships • Dynamic ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal legal structure • Resource challenges (funding is primarily project-based) • Equal resource distribution among partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource pooling • Scalability and connection with broader ecosystem • Engagement with funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource dependence • Internal disputes (mission misalignment) • Limited financial and organizational capacity

Source: Parveen et al., 2015; StepUp BC, n.d.; Surman, 2006; Wagner, 2023

9.1. Legal Frameworks

Critical to determining the governance of the hub is understanding the legal frameworks applicable. Social innovation hubs in Canada typically fall under one of six legal frameworks (See Table 12 for a SWOT):

1. **For-Profit Model:** For-Profit corporations operate under acts like the OBCA (Ontario Business Corporations Act) or CBCA (Canada Business Corporations Act; Federal), with share capital, offering flexibility for profit generation and investment attraction. They can provide returns for investors, enabling business scalability (Fralin et al., 2013).
2. **Non-Profit Model:** Non-Profits can partake in revenue-generating activities and accumulate excess revenue provided that it is used for sustaining its social goals, focusing on social welfare, civic improvements, or recreation. They cannot issue tax receipts making it difficult to attract investment from donors or typical investors, as they could also risk losing their tax-exempt status should they accumulate too much profit as deemed by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) (Fralin et al., 2013).
3. **B (Benefit) Corporation Model:** B (Benefit) Corporations are not a legal structure but a certification, emphasizing a for-profit corporation's dedication to social and environmental responsibility, public transparency, and legal accountability (BDC, n.d.a.).
4. **Registered Charity Model:** Charities are the most common social enterprise structure in Ontario. They can issue tax receipts and are eligible for government grants.
5. **Hybrid Model:** A hybrid model combines for-profit and non-profit components while keeping them administratively separate, allowing funding of non-profit activities through for-profit earnings (Fralin et al., 2013).
6. **Co-Operative Corporations:** Co-operatives such as credit unions, are community-owned organizations incorporated under acts the Co-operative Corporations Act (Ontario) or Canada Co-operatives Act (federal). They prioritize member governance, community benefit, and member-financed services. Governance is member-led and surplus profits are either donated to the community, distributed among members, and/or reserved for future improvement of membership services (Fralin et al., 2013).

Table 12. Legal Frameworks for Social Innovation Hubs

Source: (Fralin et al., 2013; MaRS Discovery District, n.d.a)

Model	Strength	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
<i>For-Profit</i>	Flexibility in profit generation, investor appeal, and scalability.	Limited access to tax-deductible donations and government funding as the board must focus on shareholder returns.	Generating profits for social causes, and leveraging investments.	Balancing profit goals with social missions.
<i>Non-Profit</i>	Accumulating excess revenue, tax-exempt status, and ability to borrow money.	Cannot issue tax receipts for donations, and limited investment attraction.	Social and civic impact, and revenue generation.	Risk of losing tax-exempt status, and income distribution limitations.
<i>B Corporation</i>	Certification for social and environmental responsibility, consideration of stakeholder interests, and brand amplification.	Not a unique legal structure and the application process is required.	Defining and promoting social responsibility, and brand building.	Certification criteria compliance
<i>Registered Charity</i>	Tax receipt issuance, eligibility for government grants, and tax-exempt status.	Limited business activities, employment restrictions, and income distribution constraints.	Attracting donations, and securing government funding.	Balancing charitable objectives with business activities, and income distribution limitations.
<i>Hybrid Model</i>	Combining profit generation with social goals and flexibility	Risk of losing non-profit status administrative complexities	Diverse revenue streams, social and environmental impact.	Ensuring legal separation, and compliance with non-profit regulations.
<i>Co-Operatives</i>	Community ownership, democratic governance, community welfare focus, long track record in Canada (with lots of support services) and twice the survival rate of other business structures.	May lose legal status if conducting business with non-members, limited tax receipt issuance, and longer decision-making timelines.	Exercising control over community activities, and community empowerment.	Risk of losing legal status, and reduced access to tax receipts.

A Hybrid Model provides an opportunity for the hub to balance profit generation opportunities required for long-term sustainability while accessing the diversity of grants and social impact in its work. In the Hybrid Model, a for-profit subsidiary (such as a social enterprise or co-operative) is either embedded, integrated, or external to the non-profit arm (or vice versa) and applies a variety of business models (see *Table 13*) (MaRS Discovery District, n.d.c). It is how several other hubs and other community economic development (CED) corporations are structured. Examples include the KWMC (registered charity and social enterprise), Evergreen (registered national charity and social enterprise via the Evergreen Brickworks) and Community Opportunity & Innovation Network Incorporated (COIN) (a non-profit, CED corporation, and social enterprise), and Venture13 (non-profit and CED corporation, and it hosts a co-op) (Fralin et al., 2013) (see *Box 6 for examples*).

Developing several streams of income is essential for the sustainability of an organization using a hybrid model. Research shows that

“contrary to common perception, 45.6% of the core nonprofit sector’s revenue comes from sales of goods and services, and an additional 15.9% comes from membership fees. Government transfers from the three levels of government comprise only 19.7% of revenue, with charitable donations at 14% and 4% other. In Ontario, [...] 88% of social enterprises are operated by charities and nonprofits, 3% by cooperatives and 9% as for-profit corporations (4% of these are for-profit companies operated for a charity, and 5% as independent for-profit companies).” (Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2014, p.7).

Table 13. MaRS Overview of Social Enterprise Business Models

Business model	How it works	Examples	Key success factors
<i>Entrepreneur support</i>	Sells business support to its target population.	Microfinance organizations, consulting, or tech support	Appropriate training for the entrepreneur
<i>Market intermediary</i>	Provide services to clients to help them access markets.	Supply cooperatives like fair trade, agriculture, and handicraft organizations	Low start-up costs, allows clients to stay and work in their community
<i>Employment</i>	Provide employment opportunity and job training to clients and then sells its products or services on the open market.	Disabilities or youth organizations providing work opportunities in landscape, cafes, printing, or other business	Job training appropriateness and commercial viability

Free-for-service	Selling social services directly to clients or a third-party payer.	Membership organizations, museums, and clinics	Establishing the appropriate fee structure vis a vis the benefits
Low-income client	Similar to fee-for-service in terms of offering services to clients but focuses on providing access to those who couldn't otherwise afford it.	Healthcare (prescriptions, eyeglasses), utility programs	Creative distribution systems, lower production and marketing costs, high operating efficiencies
Co-operative	Provides members with benefits through collective services.	Bulk purchasing, collective bargaining (union), agricultural coops, credit unions	Members have common interests/needs, are key stakeholders, and investors
Market linkage	Facilitates trade relationships between clients and the external market.	Import-export, market research, and broker services	Does not sell clients' products but connects clients to markets
Service subsidization	Sells products or services to an external market to help fund other social programs. This model is integrated with the non-profit organization; the business activities and social programs overlap.	Consulting, counselling, employment training, leasing, printing services, and so forth	Can leverage tangible assets (buildings, land, employees) or intangible (expertise, methodologies, or relationships)
Organizational support	Similar to service subsidization, but applying the external model; business activities are separate from social programs	Similar to service subsidization—implement any type of business that leverages its assets	Similar to service subsidization.

Table sourced from MaRS Discovery District, n.d.c.

It is worth noting that Canada does not have a distinct legal framework for Hybrid Model businesses unlike the USA (Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C)) and the UK (Community Investment Company (CIC)). The Province of British Columbia has developed a Community Contribution Company (C3) framework, a sub-type of the for-profit legal framework

modelled after CICs, but so far is the only province with a hybrid legal structure (Carlson, 2014). However, Ontario has “made changes to its existing Non-Profit Corporations Act to encourage social enterprise-like behaviour (e.g. revenue generation)” (Carlson, 2014, p.8).

Box 6. Example Structures of Non-Profits with For-Profit Components

Figure 1-3 showcase examples of traditional versus hybrid non-profit organizational structures that provide a helpful guiding framework (Hurwit & Associates, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c).

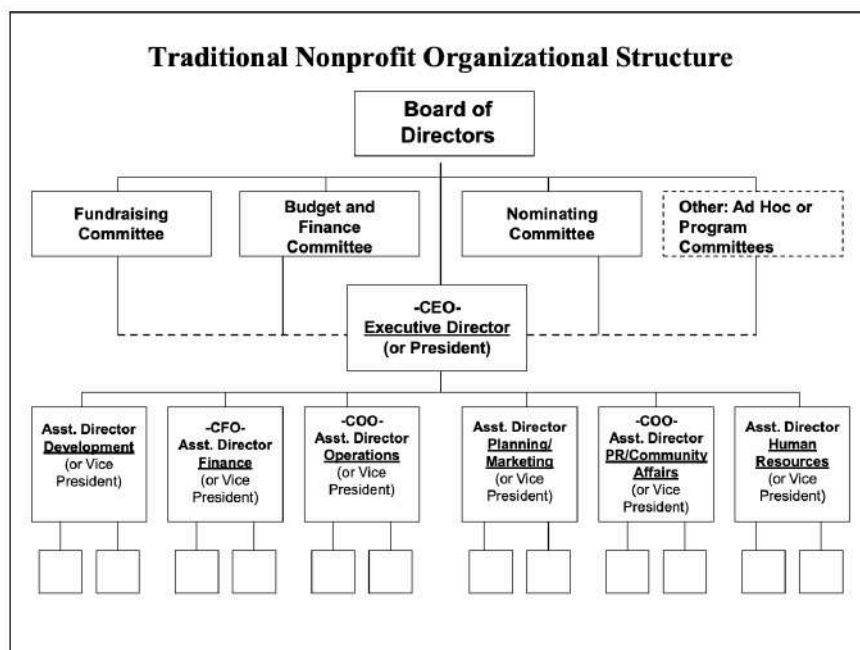


Figure 1. Traditional Organizational Structure

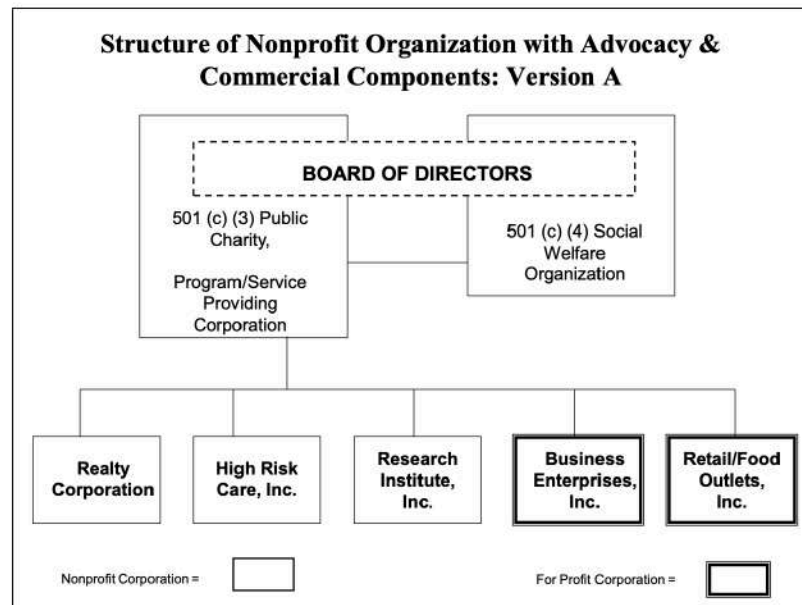


Figure 2. Hybrid Model Version 1

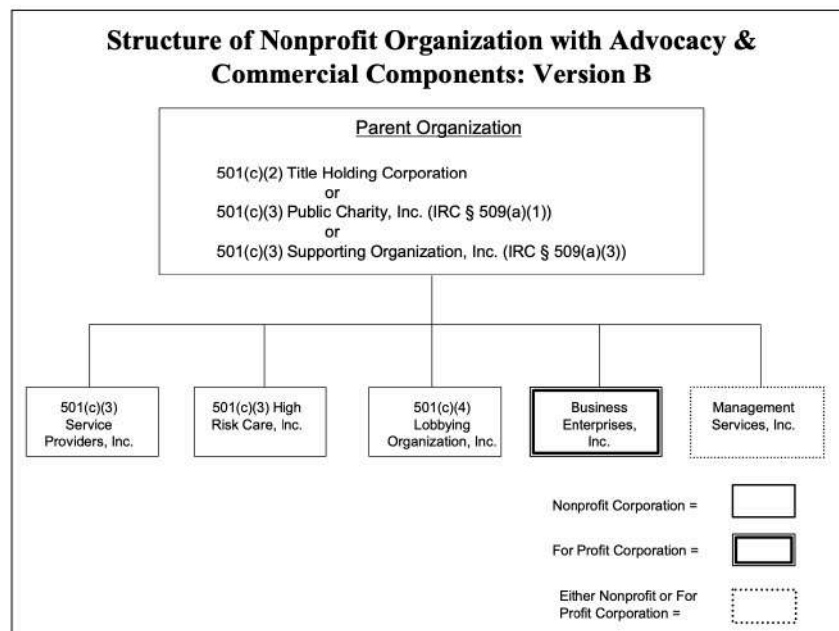


Figure 3. Hybrid Model Version 2

9.2. Recommended Governance Model

The Quadruple Helix Model of governance is the model best suited to creating a hub oriented toward open innovation that draws on the talents, resources, expertise, and ideas from the BEA's academic, governmental, industry, and community partners. This model can take on various forms, as shown in *Figure 23*. Still, it invariably involves the community, academia, industry (ecosystem), and a lead entity at the helm, which in this case could be led by the BEA (and its key partners).

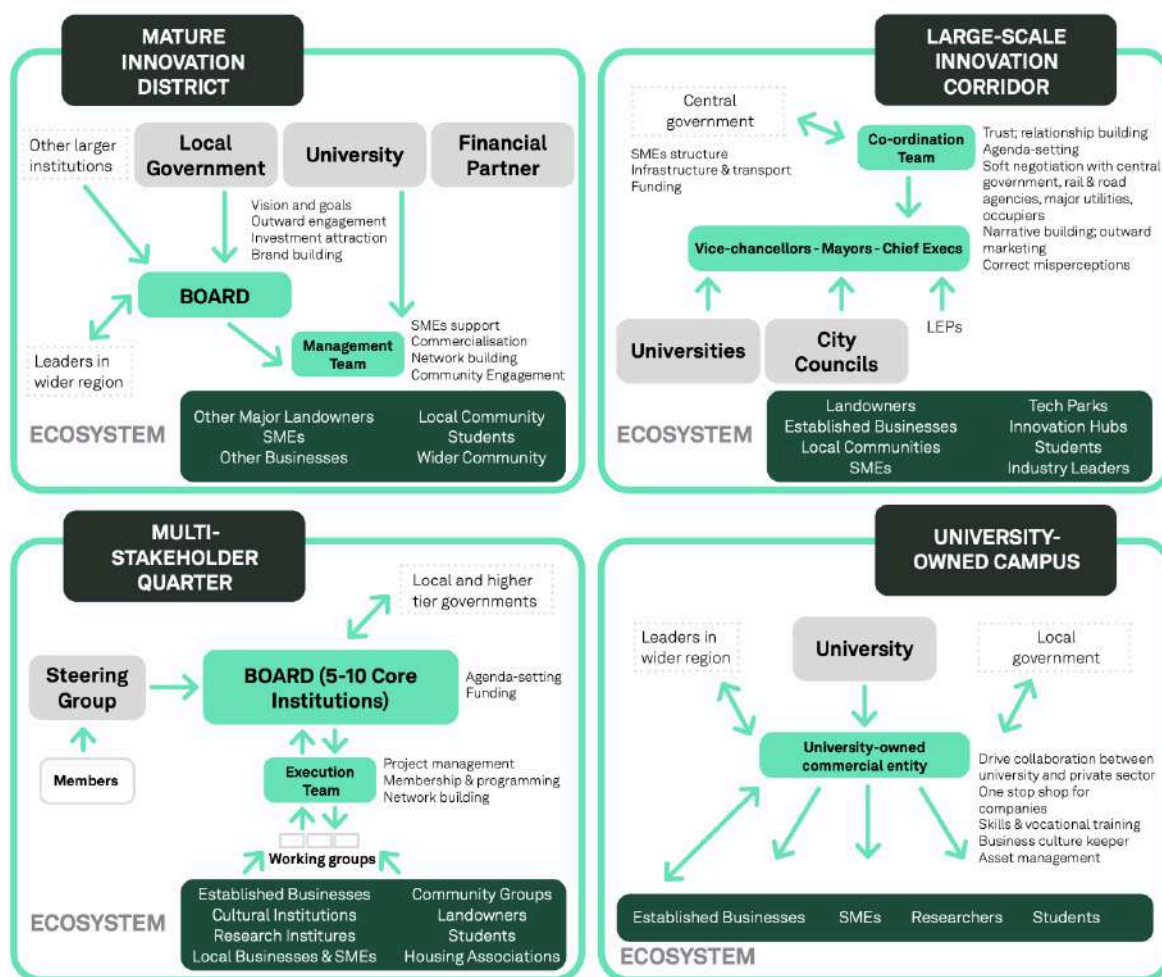


Figure 23. Governance Models Prominent Among Particular Types of Innovation Places in the UK (Source: Connected Places Catapult, 2021)

Ultimately, the path forward depends on discussions between the BEA and its key partners, the legal counsel, and most importantly, the community (MaRS Discovery District, n.d.b.). However, based on stakeholder interviews and case studies, it is evident that having an individual entity governed by a board, supported by executive staff and other team members, can be effective. The board should have several working committees, co-led in collaboration with the community, to ensure program relevance, open feedback loops, and robust evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Most importantly, the board should comprise partners and leaders from all four dimensions of the helix. Suggested board roles from the stakeholder interviews include a fundraiser, alumni and ecosystem liaison (*See Section 8.1 for more details*).

This strategy is in alignment with insights from the ecosystem survey and the goals of the community development plan and *Jane Finch Initiative* reports. Details about each are outlined in the following sections.

9.3. Insights from the Ecosystem Survey

Insights from the survey and stakeholder interviews revealed several governance strategies to consider to stimulate inclusive entrepreneurship and open innovation in the innovation hub via:

Inclusive Leadership and Representation:

1. **Diversity and Inclusion Committee:** Establish a committee within the innovation hub responsible for promoting representation and diversity in leadership positions.
2. **Recruitment Strategy:** Develop a strategy for recruiting diverse talent to leadership roles, including the board of directors and executive team.
3. **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Implement inclusive decision-making processes that consider the perspectives and needs of the local community.
4. **Leadership Training:** Provide diversity and inclusion and anti-oppression training for all leaders to foster an inclusive culture and set of policies.

Research and Impact Assessment:

1. **Needs and Impact Assessment:** The hub should have policies and/or dedicated staff in place to regularly assess the hub's impact on inclusivity and diversity within the local community and to understand and address the evolving needs of the community. By conducting surveys, collecting feedback, and analyzing outcomes to inform data-driven decision-making, this can help ensure hub policies, governance, and programs are relevant, impactful, and anti-oppressive.
2. **Data Collection and Surveys:** Conduct surveys and collect feedback from participants, staff, and the community to measure the hub's impact accurately.
3. **Data-Driven Improvements:** Use data-driven insights to identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions regarding program enhancements.
4. **Community Forums:** Host continuous community forums and focus groups to align the hub's services with sustainable metrics and community needs. For example, in regards

to the construction of the hub specifically, a survey respondent recommended hosting a community town hall after securing funding and land acquisition to gather feedback on layout and design. This indicates the importance of establishing community checkpoints throughout the hub development and operational process.

Community Outreach and Engagement:

1. **Community Outreach Team:** Establish a team responsible for reaching out to underrepresented communities, schools, parents, students, business owners, minority groups, and international students.
2. **Communication Strategy:** Develop a comprehensive communication strategy targeting various community stakeholders to raise awareness of hub services and benefits.
3. **Collaboration with Existing Organizations:** Collaborate with local organizations that serve different demographics to avoid duplicating services and maintain relationships with service users.
4. **Community Support Programs:** Establish programs that offer mentorship, business coaching, diversity, equity, and inclusion courses, and specific outreach initiatives. Volunteers will be encouraged to foster local non-profits and charity events.
5. **Community Ideation:** Create a team focused on breaking away from common innovation stereotypes. They will actively listen to the community and ideate initiatives based on community input, ensuring that hub innovation and services align with the community's unique needs.

Open Innovation and Inclusive Entrepreneurship:

1. **Hardest-to-Reach Strategies:** Actively engage with the community to identify individuals who have faced barriers to accessing resources. Identifying those hard-to-reach individuals will help support the hub to provide specialized programming, mentorship from underrepresented communities, intersectional cultural sharing sessions, and financial support for those with limited resources.
2. **Neighbourhood Improvement Initiatives:** Develop initiatives that support local communities and non-profits/grassroots organizations through events, services, and opportunities, contributing to overall community improvement.
3. **Local Innovation Initiatives:** Stimulate and commercialize innovation for the benefit of the community and consider involving local non-profit organizations familiar with community needs to enhance diversity efforts.
4. **Youth and Education Collaboration:** Connect students with programs that complement their educational journeys, including college/university programs and apprenticeship training.
5. **Volunteer Engagement Department:** Consider ways to provide volunteer opportunities to community members, encourage active involvement in hub activities and community development, and develop core resume and capacity-building skills for folks of all ages.
6. **Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies:** Co-create an inclusive entrepreneurship framework with the community that will ensure that the hub's policies and programming are community-driven, impactful, and welcoming.

7. **Inclusive Hiring Policies:** Develop an inclusive employment framework with the community that prioritizes local hiring and procurement, and that brings local business services and support directly into the community.

9.4. Alignment with Community Development Plan/Jane

Finch Initiative

The *Jane Finch Initiative* report on resources, partnerships, and governance identifies a desire for collaborative decision-making with community values, members, and needs at the centre. The community recommendations include the following actions that align with the proposed governance model:

- Annual learning symposiums between the city, community patterns, and locals
- Collaborative research partnerships between academia, anchor institutions, community groups, and locals
- Shared evaluation strategies, accountability, and metrics for inclusive economic development and community development
- General increased collaboration between private development, community, residents
- Resource-backed actions and plans (City of Toronto, 2022e).

Additionally, insights from the community development plan reveal that the Jane-Finch community is interested in future partnerships and development that include the following actions that are best facilitated through the benefits of a quadruple helix governance model:

- Community initiatives that address the digital divide
- Incubator spaces to support grassroots initiatives and non-profits
- Local hiring and opportunities for job seekers
- Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) for the neighbourhood and broader region
- Employment-focused social enterprises and social entrepreneurs
- Investment in youth leadership and action
- Collaborative partnership structure with the city, residents, local organizations, private development, and anchor institutions. (City of Toronto, 2023b).

9.5. Linking Governance and Financing

Pillar 6 of the GIID's model emphasizes the intrinsic connection between hub financing and its governance structure. To achieve the BEA's desired autonomy, it is vital to utilize both a diversified funding portfolio and create revenue-generating opportunities, especially in the case of a hybrid model of governance.

Contrary to common belief, a significant portion of revenue in the core nonprofit sector is not from donations but from the sales of goods and services (45.6%). Figure 24 provides a breakdown of all non-profit sector revenue sources. Furthermore, in Ontario, 88% of social enterprises are operated by charities and nonprofits (Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2014).

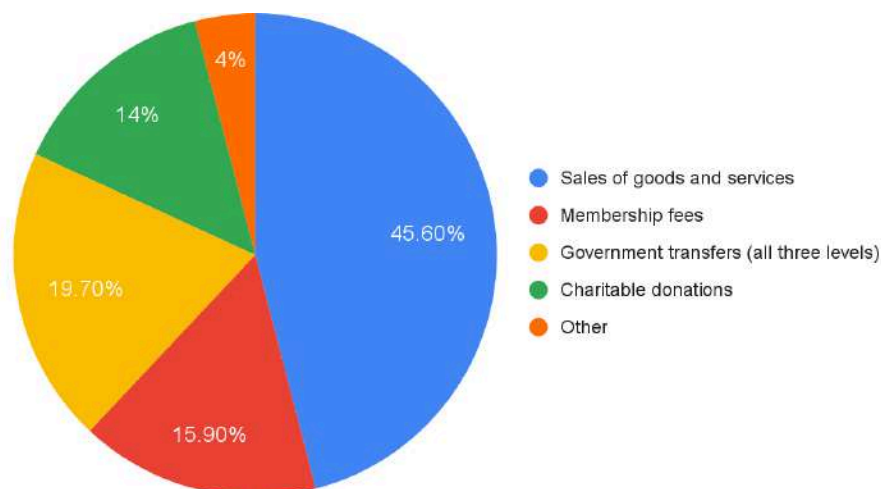


Figure 24. 2014 Ontario Non-Profit Sector Revenue Sources. (Data Source: Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2014).

Table 14 offers an overview of potential funding and revenue-generating opportunities derived from research and insights obtained from stakeholder interviews and surveys. However, the final strategies to be implemented should be decided by BEA leadership and partners, with further research being necessary.

Table 14. Overview of Revenue-Generating Tools

Tool	Description
Equity Staking	The hub can invest capital in startups in exchange for ownership, sharing in their financial success as they grow. This approach not only bridges the startup capital gap but also demonstrates a commitment to their success.
Grants	These can be sought for funding of the construction and operation of the hub, but also to support specific programs and projects.
Donations	Philanthropic individuals and organizations can contribute to support the hub's initiatives via donations.

Space Rental	Commercial ventures, cafeterias, commercial kitchens, meeting rooms, office and event spaces, and hot desks can be rented or leased by local nonprofits, individual founders, community groups, businesses, startups, and more.
Events	The hub can charge ticket fees or event space fees by either hosting or creating events catered to the broader ecosystem and/or within the community.
For-Profit Subsidiary	The hub can establish social enterprises, co-operative, or for-profit ventures that sell goods, products, and/or services that align with the hub's mission.
Membership/Program Fees	These fees can be for the overall hub's access and/or program-specific. However, to make it accessible to the community, the hub should consider offering different membership tiers with associated benefits and/or having no fees or a separate fee range for local residents.
Tenant Fees	If any commercial or residential amenities are constructed rents can be collected from tenants
Parking Lots and Garage Fees	If there is any parking lot or garage space available in the development, then the hub can collect fees from visitors or residents/users of the hub.
Ground Leases	A ground lease is a long-term agreement in which a property owner leases land to another entity, keeping ownership of the land while allowing the lessee to develop a facility on it.
Franchise	Provision of the hub's model or specific programming to other locations.

10. Location Considerations

The following criteria was developed to support the evaluation of potential locations for the innovation hub (Centre for Social Innovation, 2016; Connected Places Catapult, 2021b, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group & C40 Knowledge Hub, 2020, Davis et al., 2023):

1. **Availability of 'grow on' space:** Access to space for expansion is vital for long-term sustainability and growth as the hub's needs evolve. The additional greenspace is also helpful for contributing to hub user's well-being.

2. **Proximity to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs):** Location within or proximity to (i.e. located in the neighbourhood or surrounding wards) an active and supportive business community can provide invaluable resources and networking opportunities.
3. **Accessibility to Customers and Clients:** Accessibility to target demographics is fundamental for establishing and maintaining a support base for the hub.
4. **Accessibility by Transit:** Convenient public transportation options enhance accessibility for hub users.
5. **Availability of Parking:** Adequate parking facilities accommodate both frequent users and visitors, enhancing convenience and accessibility for those coming from outside the catchment area.
6. **Proximity to Educational Institutions:** Proximity to educational institutions (i.e. located in the neighbourhood or surrounding wards) can facilitate collaboration with academia and access to a skilled talent pool.
7. **Connected to the Economy:** The proximity to businesses and potential employment opportunities in various sectors can help the hub to source talent and partnerships, that can help to foster a dynamic business environment that benefits your hub's overall growth and attractiveness.
8. **Proximity to Complimentary Amenities:** Direct access (i.e. within a 10-20 minute walk) to complimentary personal and professional amenities helps to increase access and appeal to skilled professionals and talent.

As the location has not been selected yet, further considerations will be required, especially if the site is repurposed within an existing space or if a new building is to be constructed.

11. Recommendations

The section that follows outlines key risks identified throughout the study and recommended strategies to mitigate them.

11.1. Develop an Independent Entity and Strengthen

Organizational Capacity

Risk: Limited organizational capacity may hinder the effective management and scaling of various aspects of the innovation hub.

Mitigation: A key recommendation is to designate a coordinating organization to take the lead of this project. This organization should act as a strategic bridging organization (SBO) connecting local talent to the broader innovation ecosystem and vice versa. Consider the transformation of the BEA into an independent organization to enhance autonomy and community-driven decision-making. The BEA is well-positioned for this role due to its extensive connections across all four segments of the helix model and its proficiency in business incubation. However, it is important to acknowledge that the BEA is still in its nascent stage and will need to bolster its organizational capacity (i.e. staff, communications, governance, financial sustainability, etc.) in order to scale its impact and efforts. This strengthening is essential to efficiently and sustainably manage various aspects of the innovation hub, including operations, programming, community engagement, fundraising, and construction.

11.2. Begin with a Pilot Project

Risk: Limited experience in overseeing and running a physical space, coupled with limited organizational capacity, poses a risk of scaling too quickly.

Mitigation: As the BEA continues to grow and expand its influence in order to become the community anchor it envisions requires deepening ties within the community, cultivating trust, and garnering support from both local communities and a broader network. These steps are crucial in establishing a sustainable hub. The BEA already achieves this through its role in various community coalitions and its connections to various networks across the four helixes, but in order to amass the necessary talent, connections, and resources required to scale its offerings and impact, running a pilot is advised. This pilot project serves multiple purposes, including validating the concept's feasibility, testing various governance methods, identifying potential revenue sources, fostering community engagement, and laying the foundations for an independent innovation hub.

11.3. Develop Community Engagement Strategy

Risk: Insufficient community engagement may result in a lack of awareness, input, and guidance from residents, impacting the hub's programming, governance, and impact.

Mitigation:

- **Increase community engagement efforts:** While stakeholder engagement has already begun over the course of this study, a community engagement strategy should be developed to raise awareness and outline how to receive input from residents to guide the future of the innovation hub and reaffirm community innovation priorities. These activities should be sustained throughout the development and operations of the final innovation hub to ensure that the hub's programming, governance, and impact are as

community-driven as possible. Therefore, it is recommended that the BEA establish partnerships with community agencies and organizations that already play a vital role in engaging residents and supporting youth in the community. These groups will be critical in socializing the idea of innovation and entrepreneurship to neighbourhood residents, helping to break down any perceived barriers. Suggested groups include the following, but a full list of local organizations can be found in *Appendix D: Success Beyond Limits*, Community Action Planning Group (CAPG), Grow our Grassways, Jane-Finch.com, Jane-Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP), Jane-Finch Concerned Citizens Organization (JFCCO), Jane-Finch Housing Coalition (JFHC), Generation Chosen, as well as members of the local Community Coordination Plan (CCP) (City of Toronto, 2021b).

- **Actively involve Indigenous communities:** Engagement with Indigenous communities is a central component of the *Jane Finch Initiative*, which revolves around three key pillars: Indigenous Reconciliation, Equity for Black and Other Deserving Groups, and Resourceful Partnerships and Engagement. Consequently, fostering meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities throughout the development process is paramount (City of Toronto, 2023b).

11.4. Select a Niche

Risk: Without selecting an industry niche, the hub may face challenges related to scope creep and defining a distinct value proposition compared to other incubators

Mitigation: “Innovation ecosystems are more likely to thrive when local leaders and developers play to a region’s existing skill base and institutional strengths” (Davis et al, 2023, p. 6). Innovation hubs can either specialize in different functions across various sectors (such as AI), work at the intersection of sectors and functions (such as agri-tech); or focus on specific sectors or subsectors (Davis et al, 2023).

As the hub evolves, choosing an industry niche is instrumental in shaping program development, fostering partnerships, identifying funding sources, creating revenue opportunities, and formulating the hub’s value proposition. This strategic selection enables the hub to cultivate expertise and recognition within a specific domain making it a valuable resource for industry employers and talent. As illustrated in the case studies, innovation hubs use diverse approaches to both specialize in an economic niche and remain adaptable to emerging opportunities. Therefore, through their programming, social enterprises, and/or collaborations, innovation hubs can touch on various subsectors. Nevertheless, each hub still excels in a distinct realm of innovation. For example, while KWMC’s industry niche is in the arts, its work also intersects with the tech, climate, and construction industries through its various programs.

From our research, several potential niches have emerged, with a core focus on food, health, environment, arts and culture, small business, and technology (see Table 15).

Table 15. Rationale for Economic Niches

Theme	Toronto Economic Driver	Regional Ecosystem Focus	National Priority Industries	Key Partner Expertise	BEA Focus Area	Jane Finch Initiative Reports/Studies	Survey
Food	X			X	X	X	X
Health	X	X	X	X			
Environment (i.e. green tech)		X	X			X	X
Arts and Culture	X	X		X		X	X
Tech	X	X	X		X	X	X
Small Businesses Incubation	X	X	X		X	X	

11.5. Strengthen Connections with the City

Risk: Lack of partnerships with the city may limit the hub's access to resources, ideas, and talent flow, hindering its role in addressing urban challenges.

Mitigation: Most of the innovation hubs, such as KWMC and TechNexus, have established partnerships with the city in various capacities. These partnerships serve to create a procurement pipeline, facilitating the flow of ideas and talent directly from the hubs to the city's offices. The objective is for the BEA to become a valuable resource for the city in addressing urban challenges, thereby positioning itself as an indispensable asset for the municipality. Furthermore, by leveraging the city's influence the BEA can enhance the capacity and credentials of the hub's startups, businesses, talents, and community members who collaborate on these projects. Lastly, having connections to the municipality helps ensure that the hub stays updated on key regulatory changes that can impact the future programming, funding, and more.

11.6. Prioritize Local Talent, Procurement, and Impact

Risk: Failure to prioritize local talent and inclusive procurement may result in a lack of opportunities for community members to showcase and commercialize their talent.

Mitigation: Through interviews with community members, it has become evident that the Jane-Finch community is rich in talent but often lacks opportunities to showcase or commercialize it. Therefore, the BEA, in alignment with existing efforts from York University's social procurement and local workforce initiatives can serve as a conduit for supporting local talent and fostering economic empowerment initiatives. To achieve this, it is essential to create inclusive procurement pipelines. These pipelines can extend to areas like community art projects, event catering, and other general employment opportunities for local businesses, entrepreneurs, and individuals to offer their products and services, thus keeping the hub's financial resources circulating within the community.

11.7. Craft a Capital Campaign Strategy and Develop

Long-term Revenue Generation Strategy

Risk: Reliance on external funding sources for hub development and operations may jeopardize the project's impact and scope.

Mitigation: The development of the innovation hub will demand a substantial financial investment. To access additional funding sources, investors require an equity investment from

their partners. Consequently, the BEA and its key partners should formulate a capital campaign strategy for fundraising and gain additional support for the hub's creation.

Furthermore, it is essential to think strategically about revenue-generating activities that can benefit the hub, ensure the BEA's sustainability, and potentially create wealth-building opportunities for the community. This approach aims to reduce dependence on external funding and investments, which is critical for creating a stable financial foundation. As the hub's governance model and economic niche solidify, further research will be required to explore how to leverage opportunities that arise.

11.8. Leverage Ecosystem Partners to Guide Program Development

Risk: Lack of collaboration with existing ecosystem partners may lead to irrelevant, redundant, or unsustainable programming.

Mitigation:

- **Lean on local assets and expertise for core programming:** Several interviewees mentioned how by embracing the strengths and resources available locally, the hub can create programming that resonates with the community's unique needs and aspirations. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and inclusivity, ensuring that the initiatives are not only relevant but also sustainable in the long run. For example, drawing from the BEA and its key partners' areas of expertise, the hub is equipped to provide programming that intersects with various themes, including business incubation, youth development, health technology, general technology, newcomer support, social justice, and sustainability. The hub should leverage its expertise and the Jane-Finch community's rich cultural history and artistic and advocacy talents to provide programming, events, and resources that align with residents' desires for STEAM-related pathways (particularly in ICT, green tech, and creative industries).
- **Leverage key and external partners for specialized programming:** The hub should lean on partner organizations to collaborate on programming that caters to secondary hub personas, thereby increasing accessibility while allowing the lead organization to concentrate on their core area of expertise. This is particularly important for the BEA's workforce development goals. By leveraging the expertise and networks of partner organizations, the hub can create opportunities for innovation to reach a wider audience, as exemplified by TechNexus' collaboration with ChiTech.

11.9. Develop a Community Wealth Strategy and Implement Anti-Displacement Measures

Risk: The creation of the hub carries the risk of exacerbating gentrification and displacing local residents and businesses, potentially diminishing the positive impact for these community members and undermining the hub's original goal.

Mitigation: In order to uphold BEA's commitment to inclusive innovation and community development, it is vital to strategically integrate anti-displacement measures. This entails exploring partnerships, activities, and actions that minimize displacement and ensure that the neighbourhood retains the benefits while displacing as few people as possible. The goal is to ensure that local residents can fully enjoy the advantages of a new innovation hub.

Other innovation districts, hubs, and communities have successfully utilized Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and workforce development strategies. They have also created cooperatives, social enterprises, community investment funds, affordable housing, social procurement policies, and/or supported CLTs (Cascante et al., 2023; City of Toronto, 2021e; Dowling et al., 2020; Hackler, 2021; Kothari et al., 2023). The cooperative model and CLTs are particularly of interest to the community, according to the *Jane Finch Initiative* reports (City of Toronto, 2022i). However, further research and engagement are necessary to determine which additional strategies, and what combination thereof, are feasible as the hub's vision becomes clearer.

11.10. Create a Development Strategy

Risk: Inadequate planning for infrastructure development may lead to cost overruns and delays.

Mitigation: Infrastructure development is an iterative process. As the project progresses, the BEA and key partners will need to consult with the appropriate financial, design, legal, and development counsel necessary to receive site and context-specific estimates, approvals, and support. The BEA will need to solidify the governance and continue to build the capacity of the organization itself, conduct engagement and marketing to raise awareness, attract partnerships, inform key partners and stakeholders, build community buy-in, refine the business plan and secure financing for various stages of the development process (Artscape, n.d.; Groundwork USA, n.d.; Infrastructure Institute & SVX, 2021; LISC, 2019).

11.11. Develop Long-term Revenue Generation Strategy

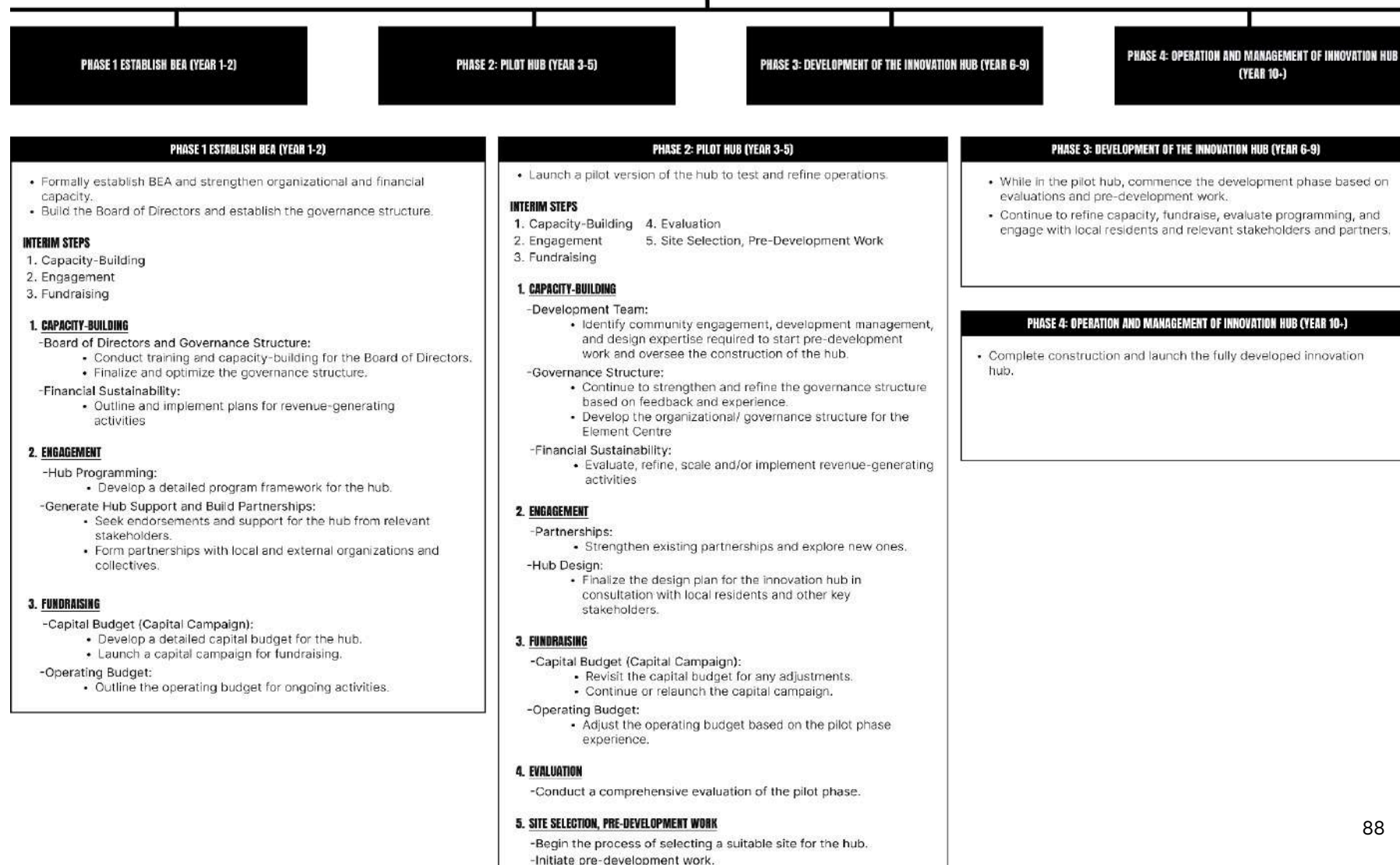
Risk: Reliance on external funding and donations may create financial instability, hindering the hub's long-term sustainability and growth.

Mitigation: It is essential to think strategically about revenue-generating activities that can benefit the hub, ensure the BEA's sustainability, and potentially create wealth-building opportunities for the community. This approach aims to reduce dependence on external funding and donations, which is critical for creating a stable financial foundation. Ultimately, a pivotal consideration for the future innovation hub is to not function solely as a nonprofit. Instead, it should include commercial elements. This is essential to avoid a functional contradiction for a non-profit that lacks a commerce element to aid businesses in achieving their capitalistic success. For example, the BEA innovation hub could explore selling products such as online courses that provide certifications. As the hub's governance model and economic niche solidify, further research will be required to explore how to leverage opportunities that arise.

Furthermore, the BEA's innovation hub should also delve into the possibility of becoming a private/public educational institution or business school, focusing on practical education to the highest degree. This approach ensures that members acquire all the practical skills necessary for success. Thorough consideration and research in this direction will contribute to the BEA and the hub's effectiveness in supporting entrepreneurs.

12. Next Steps

ROADMAP



13. Conclusion

The uneven geography of innovation in Toronto not only disadvantages marginalized communities but also hinders the region's overall innovation ecosystem. As the study shows, Jane-Finch and northwestern Toronto's residents are rich in talent, expertise, and ambition. However, residents face challenges such as a lack of quality resources, funding, employment, and opportunities that limit their upward economic mobility, the growth of their businesses, and the resilience of the local economy. As new residential and commercial developments in the area threaten to displace longstanding (particularly BIPOC) residents, income inequality widens in Toronto overall, and the city welcomes additional newcomers in the midst of a rising housing unaffordability crisis, strengthening the local economy requires an innovative approach to development that is not extractive but inclusive. Doing so requires building infrastructure, designing spaces, and developing strategies centered on communities.

This study shows how building an innovation hub aligns with various City of Toronto, provincial, and federal strategies and community priorities as outlined in the *Jane Finch Initiative* reports, to tackle anti-Black racism, poverty reduction, economic development, and more. The proposed Element Centre seeks to harness the resources of the BEA and key partners, to help ensure that community ideas and benefits stay at the forefront of equitable development, by providing programming, training, networks, employment, and most importantly, a dedicated space for ideation, collaboration, advocacy, gathering, and learning. In partnership with various local groups and anchor institutions, through the Element Centre, the BEA hopes to close the gap between the broader innovation ecosystem and the innovative ideas existing in the community, to boost local as well as regional economic growth. As the case studies demonstrate, innovation hubs are not successful in siloes, but in collaboration and partnership within and across sectors, geographies, cultures, and communities. This report outlines key insights and recommendations for the BEA to consider in pursuit of establishing itself as a leader in this domain, building relationships across sectors and groups in the region, and in the construction of the hub. This study marks the initial phase in the hub's ideation process and signifies the BEA's commencement on a comprehensive journey to not only building a hub, but to cultivating an inclusive, innovative community and economy.

13.1. Future Considerations

Ongoing studies are in progress to fine-tune the BEA's strategy for talent development among entrepreneurs and working professionals, and explore potential revenue-generating initiatives aligned with the BEA's expertise and strategic vision. Additionally, these studies aim to identify opportunities for the BEA to further fulfill its founder-first mandate, potentially through the provision of affordable housing. Future research should explore strategies for refining the BEA's programming (especially around the provisioning of small business incubation supports),

and developing anti-displacement tactics including how to best leverage procurement strategies to strengthen the local economy and existing community initiatives. Finally, continuous engagement should be carried out to gather local perspectives and feedback consistently.

14. Key Terms

Term	Definition
Convergence Centre	Convergence Centres are “multi-dimensional and designed with explicit intent to build capacity for creativity and innovation. Through dedicated and specialized platforms for collaboration, these centres leverage investment at the intersection of place, culture, technology and entrepreneurship to generate multiple dividends of economic and social value. Located strategically to stimulate favourable clustering conditions, convergence centres align sector development opportunities and broader public policy objectives within a sustainable, not-for-profit business model.” (Jones et al., 2009, p.5).
Innovation	“Innovation is a multi-stage process whereby organizations/communities transform ideas into new and/or improved products, services or processes, to successfully advance, compete and differentiate themselves in their marketplace.” (Government of Canada, n.d.)
Innovation District	Innovation districts are “geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail.” (Katz & Wagner, 2014, par. 3).
Innovation Economy	The innovation economy is about creating jobs, attracting global talent and businesses, and coming up with new ideas to make places better. It's driven by technology and skilled workers, and it's changing many industries, like how businesses work, how money is used, what products and services are available, and even how cities are built (Connected Places Catapult, 2021a).

Innovation Hub	Innovation hub is defined as a physical space that brings together researchers, creators and innovators to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services.
Innovation Infrastructure	Innovation infrastructure is the system of resources, organizations, policies, and networks that help innovation happen in a certain place. It includes planned facilities like research institutions, universities, laboratories, business centers, research parks, accelerators, incubators, and hubs, as well as intangible elements like funding, networking platforms, collaborative spaces, laws, and support services that help new ideas turn into reality (Stroiko et al., 2023).
Northwestern area of Toronto	The northwestern corner of Toronto is defined as a cluster of communities between Dufferin St. and Highway 27 to the west, running south from Steeles Ave. to Eglinton Ave.
Place-Based Innovation	<p>Place-based innovation refers to efforts to leverage a region's existing research institutions, universities and industries to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish clusters of innovation, 2. Addressing community needs, 3. Spurs regional economic development. <p>Place-based innovation can address local development needs by harnessing collaboration and engagement across universities, industry, and the workforce.</p>
Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME)	An SME, or Small and Medium-sized Enterprise, is a smaller company with fewer employees, lower earnings, and fewer assets compared to big corporations. The exact criteria for defining an SME varies by country and industry.
Social Innovation	Social innovation means creating and using new solutions to help people and communities while addressing critical social, economic, and environmental issues. To make this happen, supportive policies and cooperation between different sectors (non-profit, private, institutional, public, government, etc.) and disciplines are important.” (OECD, n.d.)

Startups	A startup is a “temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model”, while the small business runs according to the fixed business model. Companies may remain in the start-up stage for as long as three years (BDC, n.d.b; Blank, 2010, par. 2).
Talent	For the purpose of the study, talent is an employee who possesses the potential to drive organizational growth.
Talent Development	The term refers to the talent development efforts that foster learning, employee engagement, talent management, and employee development to drive organizational performance, productivity, and results. (Galagan et al., 2019)
Underrepresented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African, Caribbean, Black Communities • Indigenous • Women • Racialized Minorities • People Living with Disabilities • LGBTQ2+ individuals • Neurodivergent individuals
Workforce Development	Workforce development is the “coordination of public and private-sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context.” (Jacobs & Hawley, p. 12).
Workforce Innovation	Workforce innovation means coming up with better ways to make workers more effective and efficient. It includes finding creative solutions to workforce problems, like improving skills, hiring and managing employees, promoting diversity, and adjusting to changes in the job market. The goal of workforce innovation is to get the most out of people's skills to boost productivity, competition, and economic growth in a company or a larger community.
Workplace Innovation	“Workplace innovation is a type of workforce innovation. It is the testing, sharing and implementation of new approaches to work organization, management practices and job design that leads to better use of workers’ skills and more learning in the workplace.” (OECD, 2020, par.2)

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Note: Some references included are part of an internal document and not featured here.

14. Appendix

Appendix A: 10 Hub Personas

Category 1: Future Innovator

Jabari, 14 - 17

Middle/Highschool Student

Background: Jabari is a curious and ambitious high school student who has a keen interest in digital storytelling, technology, and entrepreneurship. He is known for his passion for problem-solving and creative thinking. Jabari actively engages with multimedia tools, coding competitions, and other extracurricular activities that allow him to explore his innovative ideas. He envisions a future where he can make a positive impact through his inventions and wants to join an innovation hub to further develop his skills and connect with like-minded peers

Goal and Motivations:

1. Expand his knowledge and skills in the fields of technology and innovation.
2. Connect with mentors and industry professionals to gain guidance and insights.
3. Collaborate with other high school students on projects and initiatives.
4. Access specialized resources, such as workshops, labs, and tools, to bring his ideas to life
5. Prepare himself for a future career in STEAM or entrepreneurship

Challenges:

1. Balancing schoolwork and extracurricular activities while actively engaging in the innovation hub.
2. Identifying opportunities for hands-on experience and practical application of his ideas.
3. Navigating the transition from high school to higher education or the workforce.
4. Overcoming financial constraints to pursue innovative projects or attend relevant events.
5. Building a strong network of peers and professionals within the innovation ecosystem.

Suitable Programming + Services:

- **Financial + Digital Literacy Workshops:** Integrate financial and digital literacy lessons into the programming, teaching students about budgeting, finances, and digital skill development for future readiness in the workforce and/or starting a venture.

- **Entrepreneurship Workshops:** Interactive workshops that introduce students to entrepreneurial concepts, such as idea generation, market research, business planning and marketing strategies.
- **Startup Simulation Games:** Fun and educational games that simulate the process of starting and running a business, allowing students to make decisions and learn from the outcomes.
- **Business Plan Competitions:** Organize competitions where students develop business plans for their ideas and present them to a panel of judges. This helps them learn to pitch their ideas and refine their business concepts.
- **Hackathons + Innovation Challenges:** Pose real-world challenges to students and encourage them to come up with innovative solutions, promoting critical thinking and creativity.
- **Internships, Placements, and Co-op Opportunities:** Provide access to real-world experiences
- **Maker Spaces and Innovation Labs:** Provide access to maker spaces and innovation labs equipped with tools and materials for students to build prototypes and bring their ideas to life.
- **Entrepreneurial Field Trips:** Organize visits to local businesses, startups, corporations and innovation centers to expose students to real-world entrepreneurship and sectors in action (locally and abroad).
- **Entrepreneurship + Coding/STEAM Camps:** Hosting entrepreneurship and/or STEAM camps during summer or school breaks, providing an immersive experience where students can learn, collaborate, and develop their skills for their future careers.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Pair students with mentors from the business community who can provide guidance, advice, and encouragement throughout their career and entrepreneurial journey. Additionally, introducing programs that facilitate career exploration through education and awareness.
- **Digital Storytelling, e-commerce and online businesses:** Teach students the basics of digital storytelling, e-commerce, website creation, and online marketing, empowering them to start small online businesses.
- **Startup Incubation Programs:** Establish student-focused incubation programs where individuals or teams can receive mentorship, resources, and support to turn their ideas into viable projects or businesses.

Category 2: Underrepresented Founder Personas

Early-Stage Entrepreneur

Keziah, 21

University Student

Background: Keziah is a vibrant and ambitious young individual who comes from a diverse background. She is passionate about technology, entrepreneurship, and social impact. Keziah has a business idea that addresses an underserved market and needs technical mentorship to validate her idea. Keziah is looking for an innovation hub that embraces diversity, and offers incubation programming and supports.

Goal and Motivations:

1. Foster diversity, inclusion, and representation within the innovation ecosystem.
2. Develop innovative solutions to address social issues and promote positive change.
3. Gain access to incubation programming, services, and early-stage capital support.
4. Connect with a diverse network of peers to collaborate on projects and initiatives.
5. Acquire entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to launch impactful ventures

Challenges:

1. Overcoming systemic barriers and biases that hinder diverse youth from participating in innovation spaces.
2. Finding an innovation hub that prioritizes inclusivity and provides a supportive environment.
3. Balancing academic commitments with involvement in the innovation hub.
4. Securing funding or resources to support innovative projects or ventures.
5. Establishing credibility and recognition within the innovation community.

Suitable Programming + Services:

- **Incubator + Accelerator Programs:** Establish dedicated business incubators and accelerators that offer mentorship, resources, networking opportunities, and funding to support student entrepreneurs/recent alumni and accelerate the growth of early-stage startups.
- **Entrepreneurship Courses, Workshops and Series:** Offer advanced entrepreneurship courses and workshops covering topics like scaling a business, funding strategies, intellectual property, and international expansion.
- **Industry-Specific Programs:** Tailor programs to focus on specific industries, such as technology, health science, advancing manufacturing, and social impact, depending on anchoring institutions, local industries, and broader ecosystem trends.
- **Corporate Partnership Programs:** Establish partnerships with corporations to create opportunities for post-secondary-based entrepreneurs to collaborate, receive mentorship, and potentially access funding or corporate resources.

- **Venture Capital and Angel Investor Networks:** Connect student entrepreneurs with venture capital firms and angel investor networks that are interested in funding startups founded by university students or alumni.
- **Pitch Competitions + Funding Challenges:** Organize pitch competitions and funding challenges where post-secondary-based entrepreneurs can present their business ideas to a panel of judges and secure funding for their startups.
- **Alumni Mentorship Networks:** Create mentorship programs that pair post-secondary-based entrepreneurs with successful alumni who can provide valuable advice, guidance, and industry connections.
- **Networking Events and Conferences:** Organize or identify networking events, seminars, and conferences that bring together post-secondary-based entrepreneurs, professionals, investors, industry leaders, and potential partners.
- **Co-working and Study Spaces:** Provide co-working and study spaces giving entrepreneurs a collaborative and innovative environment to work on their ventures or assignments.

Newcomer Innovator

Sanjay, 28

Recent Immigrant

Background: Sanjay is a recent immigrant who has relocated to a new country seeking better opportunities and a fresh start. He brings with him a wealth of skills, experiences, and innovative ideas from his home country. Sanjay is eager to integrate into the local community and contribute to the innovation ecosystem. He is looking for an innovation hub that can provide him with resources, support, and networking opportunities to help turn his ideas into reality.

Goal and Motivations:

1. Connect with like-minded individuals and establish a professional network.
2. Access resources and mentorship to refine his innovative ideas.
3. Learn about the local business landscape and market dynamics.
4. Gain exposure to funding opportunities for startups or innovative projects.
5. Contribute to the local innovation ecosystem and make a positive impact.

Challenges:

1. Navigating the new cultural and business environment.
2. Adapting to local regulations, legal requirements, and market dynamics.
3. Overcoming language and communication barriers.
4. Building a network and establishing credibility in the new community.
5. Accessing funding and support specifically tailored for newcomers.

Suitable Programming:

- **Incubators for Newcomers:** Establish incubator programs specifically designed to support newcomer entrepreneurs. These programs should offer mentorship, networking opportunities, market access supports and resources to help them overcome cultural and language barriers.
- **Entrepreneurship Courses, Workshops and Series:** Provide training programs and courses tailored to the needs of newcomer innovators, covering essential entrepreneurial skills, business planning, and marketing strategies.
- **Legal and Regulatory Assistance:** Offer guidance on legal and regulatory requirements for starting a business in a new country, helping newcomers navigate the complexities of business registration, permits, and licenses.
- **Access to Funding and Grants:** Facilitate access to funding opportunities and grants that are specifically available for newcomer entrepreneurs, providing financial support to kickstart their ventures.
- **Language and Cultural Integration Workshops:** Provide workshops to help newcomers improve their language skills and understand the local culture and business practices, enhancing their ability to communicate and collaborate effectively.
- **Networking Events and Diversity Forums:** Organize networking events and diversity forums that bring together newcomer innovators with established entrepreneurs and business leaders, creating opportunities for collaboration and mentorship.
- **Cross-Cultural Events and Exchanges:** Facilitate events and exchanges that celebrate the diversity of newcomer cultures and foster understanding between newcomers and the local community.
- **Co-working Spaces and Shared Resources:** Offer co-working spaces equipped with resources, tools, and technology that newcomer innovators can use to develop and test their ideas.
- **Cross-Cultural Mentorship:** Pair newcomer innovators with mentors who have experience in both the local business community and the newcomers' native culture, bridging the gap and providing valuable insights.
- **Innovation Challenges and Competitions:** Organize innovation challenges and competitions focused on newcomer-led initiatives, recognizing and rewarding their innovative contributions.

The Mom & Pops

Minh, 48

Small Business Owner

Background: Minh is a driven and entrepreneurial individual who owns a small business in his local community. He understands to stay ahead in an ever-changing, competitive market, his business must embrace digital solutions. Minh is seeking assistance to adopt new technologies and find creative solutions to enhance his business operations, improve customer experience, and drive growth. He believes that collaborating with an innovation hub can provide him with the resources, expertise, and networking opportunities necessary to scale his business.

Goal and Motivations:

1. Explore innovative technologies and trends that can benefit her business.
2. Connect with experts and mentors who can provide guidance and industry insights.
3. Access resources, such as funding opportunities and specialized training programs.
4. Collaborate with other small business owners to exchange ideas and experiences.
5. Identify new market opportunities and expand her customer base.

Challenges:

1. Balancing family priorities and day-to-day business operations with engaging in the innovation hub's activities.
2. Identifying and implementing the right technologies or solutions for specific business needs.
3. Overcoming financial constraints and securing funding for innovation initiatives.
4. Adapting to changing market dynamics and customer preferences.
5. Managing time effectively to stay updated on industry trends and participate in learning opportunities.

Suitable Programming + Services:

- **Small Business Workshops:** Offer workshops covering essential business topics, such as financial management, marketing strategies, customer service, and inventory management.
- **Technology Adoption Training:** Provide training sessions to help mom-and-pop owners embrace technology, such as setting up a website, using social media for marketing, and adopting point-of-sale systems.
- **E-commerce Enablement:** Assist mom-and-pop businesses in establishing an online presence and implementing e-commerce solutions to reach a broader customer base.
- **Digital Marketing Assistance:** Provide guidance on digital marketing strategies, including search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and online advertising.
- **Financial Literacy Programs:** Offer financial literacy programs tailored to small business owners, teaching them how to create budgets, manage cash flow, and analyze financial statements.
- **Government Compliance Support:** Assist small business owners in navigating regulatory requirements, licensing, and compliance issues.
- **Succession Planning and Family Business Management:** Provide resources and workshops on succession planning for family-owned businesses to ensure a smooth transition to the next generation.
- **Online Webinars and Digital Resources:** Offer online webinars and digital resources that mom-and-pop owners can access at their convenience to learn at their own pace.

Category 3: Underrepresented Professional Personas

Diverse Intrapreneur

Aisha, 25

Business Professional

Background: Aisha recently graduated from post-secondary and has entered the workforce with a strong desire to contribute to innovative projects. Aisha brings a unique perspective as a diverse individual and seeks opportunities to leverage her skills, collaborate with others, and continuously learn and grow within the innovation hub.

Goal and Motivations:

1. Engage in meaningful and impactful work that aligns with her values.
2. Access opportunities for professional development and skill enhancement.
3. Connect with mentors and industry experts to gain guidance and insights.
4. Build a strong professional network and establish connections with like-minded individuals.
5. Champion diversity and inclusion within the innovation hub and contribute to equitable innovation practices.

Challenges:

1. Navigating the early stages of her career and finding opportunities for growth.
2. Overcoming potential imposter syndrome and building self-confidence.
3. Balancing work responsibilities with engagement in the innovation hub.
4. Identifying and accessing resources and training programs for professional development.
5. Promoting diversity and inclusion within the innovation hub and addressing any potential biases or barriers.

Suitable Programming + Services:

- **Professional Development Workshops:** Offer workshops and training sessions on relevant topics, such as leadership, communication, project management, and industry-specific skills.
- **Technology and Digital Literacy Training:** Provide training on using new technologies, digital tools, and software relevant to their roles.
- **Upskilling and Reskilling Programs:** Develop programs that focus on retraining professionals for emerging job sectors or industries.
- **Continuing Education Programs:** Provide access to continuing education courses and certifications that help professionals stay updated on the latest trends and advancements in their fields.
- **Career Coaching and Counseling:** Offer one-on-one coaching and counselling sessions to assist professionals in setting career goals and developing strategies to achieve them.

- **Leadership Development Programs:** Develop leadership development initiatives that prepare diverse professionals for management and executive roles within the innovation hub and beyond.
- **Networking and Industry Events:** Facilitate networking opportunities and encourage professionals to attend industry events and conferences to build connections and stay informed about developments in their fields.
- **Mentoring and Shadowing Programs:** Pair professionals with experienced mentors or provide opportunities for job shadowing to learn from seasoned experts in their industry.

The Inbetweeneer

Phillip, 32

Unemployed (In-between jobs)

Background: Phillip is currently unemployed and actively seeking new opportunities. He has a diverse background with experience in various industries but is currently facing challenges in securing stable employment. Mark is determined to improve his skills, expand his network, and explore innovative avenues for career growth and self-employment. He sees the innovation hub as a valuable resource to enhance his employability, develop new skills, and potentially start his own venture.

Goals and Motivations:

1. Enhance employability by acquiring new skills and knowledge.
2. Network with industry professionals, mentors, and potential employers.
3. Explore entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities.
4. Gain access to job placement resources, training programs, and workshops.
5. Stay updated with emerging trends and technologies in the job market.

Challenges:

1. Overcoming gaps in skills and experience that hinder employability.
2. Finding relevant job opportunities in a competitive job market.
3. Building a professional network to increase job prospects and obtain references.
4. Addressing financial constraints while seeking employment or exploring entrepreneurship.
5. Overcoming self-doubt and maintaining motivation during the job search process.

Suitable Programming + Services

- **Skill Development Workshops:** Offer workshops and training programs that focus on in-demand skills and technologies relevant to the current job market.
- **Career Counseling and Coaching:** Provide personalized career guidance, resume reviews, and interview preparation to help professionals identify their strengths and explore potential career paths.
- **Job Placement Assistance:** Facilitate connections with employers, recruitment agencies, and job fairs to help professionals find suitable employment opportunities.

- **Networking Events:** Organize networking events and seminars to allow precarious professionals to meet potential employers and build valuable industry connections.
- **Internship and Job Shadowing Programs:** Offer internship opportunities or job shadowing experiences that allow professionals to gain practical experience and showcase their skills to potential employers.
- **Entrepreneurship Support:** Provide resources and mentorship for professionals interested in starting their own businesses or freelancing careers.
- **Mental Health and Well-being Support:** Offer counselling and mental health resources to help professionals cope with the emotional challenges of unemployment or precarious employment.
- **Upskilling and Reskilling Programs:** Develop programs that focus on retraining professionals for emerging job sectors or industries.
- **Certificate and Credentialing Programs:** Develop programs that offer industry-recognized certifications to enhance the employability of justice-involved individuals in certain sectors.
- **Online Learning Platforms:** Partner with online learning platforms to provide access to free or discounted courses for skill development and career enhancement.
- **Virtual Job Fairs:** Organize virtual job fairs to connect job seekers with employers, providing a safe and accessible platform for networking and recruitment.
- **Job Retraining Programs:** Develop retraining initiatives that target industries experiencing high demand for workers and offer financial support for enrollment.

Second Starter (Justice-Involved)

Marcus, 32

Precarious Employment

Background: Marcus is a justice-involved professional who has recently completed his incarceration and is determined to rebuild his life. He recognizes the importance of education, personal growth, and entrepreneurship in creating a positive future. Marcus is driven to break the cycle of reoffending and seeks an opportunity to leverage his skills, talents, and experiences within an innovation hub. He is committed to using his journey to inspire others and advocate for justice reform through innovative solutions.

Goals and Motivations:

1. Obtain new skills, knowledge, and experiences to enhance his employability and career prospects.
2. Connect with mentors and industry professionals who can provide guidance and support.
3. Develop innovative solutions to address challenges faced by justice-involved individuals.
4. Network with like-minded individuals who are passionate about social justice and reform.
5. Empower others by sharing his own story and promoting second chances.

Challenges:

1. Overcoming stigma and bias associated with his justice-involved background.
2. Navigating the reentry process and finding opportunities for personal and professional development.
3. Accessing resources, such as training programs, mentorship, and job placement assistance.
4. Rebuilding trust within the community and establishing a positive reputation.
5. Balancing personal growth and engagement in the innovation hub with other life commitments.

Suitable Programming + Services:

- **Job Readiness Training:** Offer workshops that cover essential job readiness skills, such as resume building, interview preparation, communication skills, and workplace etiquette.
- **Skill Development Programs:** Provide training in specific job skills or vocational areas that align with the job market demand and the interests of justice-involved individuals.
- **Certificate and Credentialing Programs:** Develop programs that offer industry-recognized certifications to enhance the employability of justice-involved individuals in certain sectors.
- **Case Management and Support Services:** Assign case managers or counselors to provide individualized support, assess job readiness, and address personal barriers to employment.
- **Expungement and Record-Sealing Assistance:** Offer guidance and legal support to help justice-involved individuals navigate the process of expunging or sealing their criminal records, where applicable.
- **Mock Interviews and Role-Playing:** Conduct mock interviews and role-playing exercises to help individuals build confidence and improve their interview skills.
- **Transitional Employment Programs:** Establish transitional employment opportunities that allow justice-involved individuals to gain work experience and demonstrate their abilities.
- **Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Support:** Offer resources and training for justice-involved individuals interested in starting their own businesses or freelancing careers.
- **Job Placement Services:** Partner with employers willing to hire justice-involved individuals and provide job placement services.
- **Job Coaching and Mentoring:** Pair justice-involved individuals with mentors or job coaches who can provide ongoing support and guidance throughout their employment journey.
- **Employer Education and Sensitization:** Educate employers about the benefits of hiring justice-involved individuals and dispel common misconceptions.
- **Post-Employment Support:** Offer post-employment support to help individuals successfully integrate into the workforce, retain employment, and advance in their careers.

Category 4: Catalyst Personas

Founder First Investor

Sheri Mitchell, 42

Early-Stage Investor

“My role isn’t just about funding. It’s about fostering growth, nurturing talent, and enabling visionaries”

Background: Sheri Mitchell is a Managing Partner at Inclusive Ventures, a VC firm whose vision is to make a more inclusive Canadian entrepreneurial landscape through making pre-seed and seed-stage investments in diverse-led companies. Her objective is to be intentional in her search for promising diverse founders that have technology and technology-enabled start-ups.

Her philosophy revolves around investing in the founder, nurturing their growth, and spotting the next game-changing idea in the tech ecosystem.

Goals and Motivations:

- Position Inclusive Ventures as a leading investor in next-gen technology solutions and thought leader in DEI.
- Foster an environment where diverse innovators feel supported and empowered.
- Achieve a certain ROI for stakeholders while also making impactful investments.

Challenges:

- Finding high-potential diverse startups or ideas amidst the noise.
- Balancing the portfolio with a mix of high-risk/high-reward and stable, more guaranteed returns.
- Managing time effectively between scouting for new opportunities and nurturing current investments.

Attraction:

- **Quality of Startup Talent and Ideas:** The presence of highly skilled individuals and high potential startups would be a major draw, Sheri seeks to invest in the best and brightest.

The Conscious Banker

Anita Ali, 45

Banker

"Diverse businesses are the bedrock of a thriving, innovative economy. When they thrive, we all benefit."

Background: A seasoned banker with two decades of experience in banking with a focus on SME lending and financial solutions, she currently spearheads the business loan division at Innovate Banking of Canada.

Goals and Motivations:

- Establish a dedicated loan program targeting diverse startups, ensuring they receive both funding and mentorship.
- Build strong success stories from the funded businesses to inspire and attract more diverse entrepreneurs.
- Foster financial literacy among diverse business owners to ensure their sustained growth and success.

Challenges:

- Navigating the fine line between promoting diversity and ensuring sound financial lending practices.
- Keeping updated with the fast-evolving start-up ecosystem and industry trends.
- Addressing the unique financial challenges and needs of diverse business owners.

Attraction:

- **Successful Alumni:** Track records matter. Knowing that the hub has mentored and launched successful startups (traditional and high-growth) would assure Anita of its effectiveness. She is looking for startups that could be potential clientele for her loan program and conversion into long-term customers.

Inclusion Innovator

David "Dave" Adeyemi, 38

Head of Talent Acquisition and Diversity Initiatives

"Diversity is not just about numbers; it's about enriching perspectives and sparking unique, new ideas."

Background:

Dave Adeyemi grew up in an underserved, marginalized community and now stands at the forefront of talent acquisition at Include Global Enterprises, one of the world's leading professional services firms. His empathetic yet strategic approach aims not just to fill positions,

but to curate a mosaic of diverse backgrounds that fuel innovation. In Dave's vision, true innovation blooms in a workplace where every individual feels seen, valued, and inspired.

Goals and Motivations:

- Increase the percentage of underrepresented groups in the workforce
- Establish mentorship and training programs that foster growth and development for diverse employees
- Continuously enhance the company's reputation as an inclusive and desirable place to work

Challenges:

- Overcoming biases (both overt and subtle) in the hiring process
- Ensuring that the company's policies and environment are truly inclusive
- Keeping pace with the rapid evolution of the tech industry and the changing landscape of talent needs

Attraction:

- **Access to Emerging Talent:** As someone responsible for talent acquisition, a hub bustling with fresh, innovative minds offers Dave a direct line to emerging talent proficient in cutting-edge technologies and methodologies.

Appendix B: Location of Survey Respondents

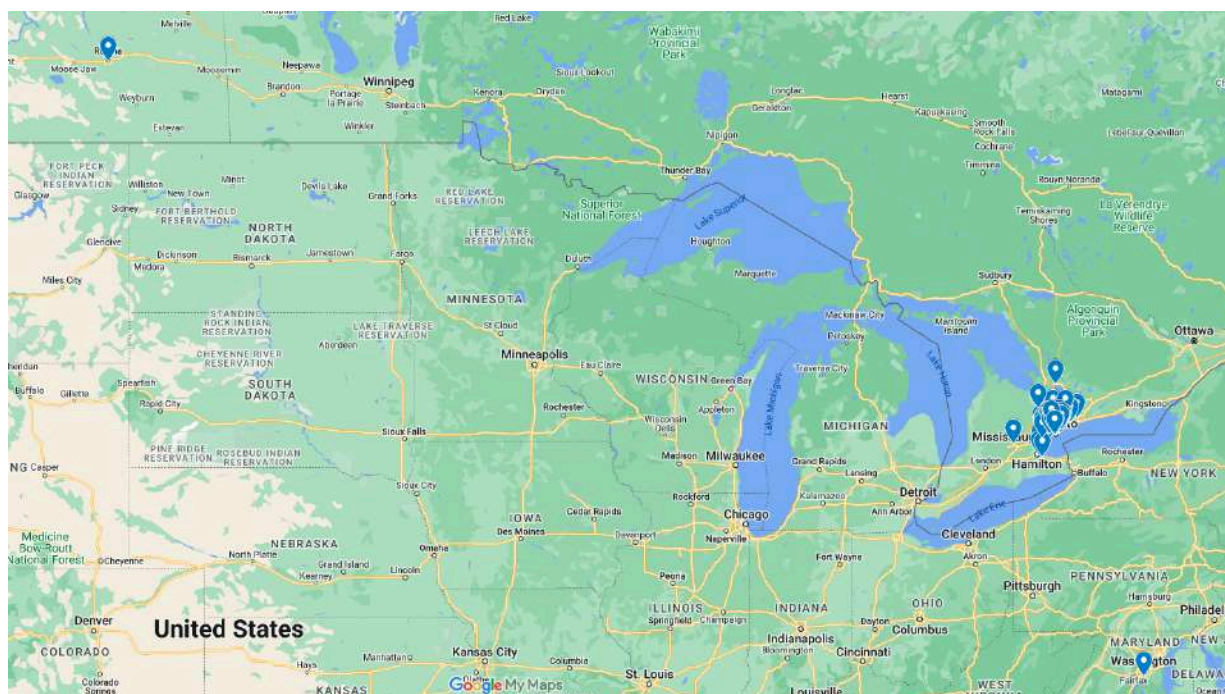


Figure 1. Geography Reach of Survey Respondents (Canada and USA)

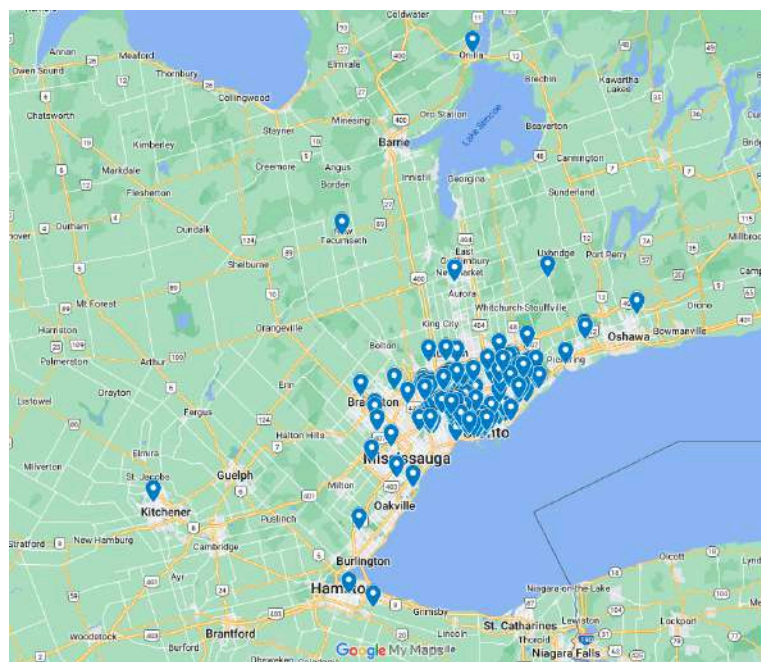


Figure 2. Geography Reach of Survey Respondents (Southern Ontario)

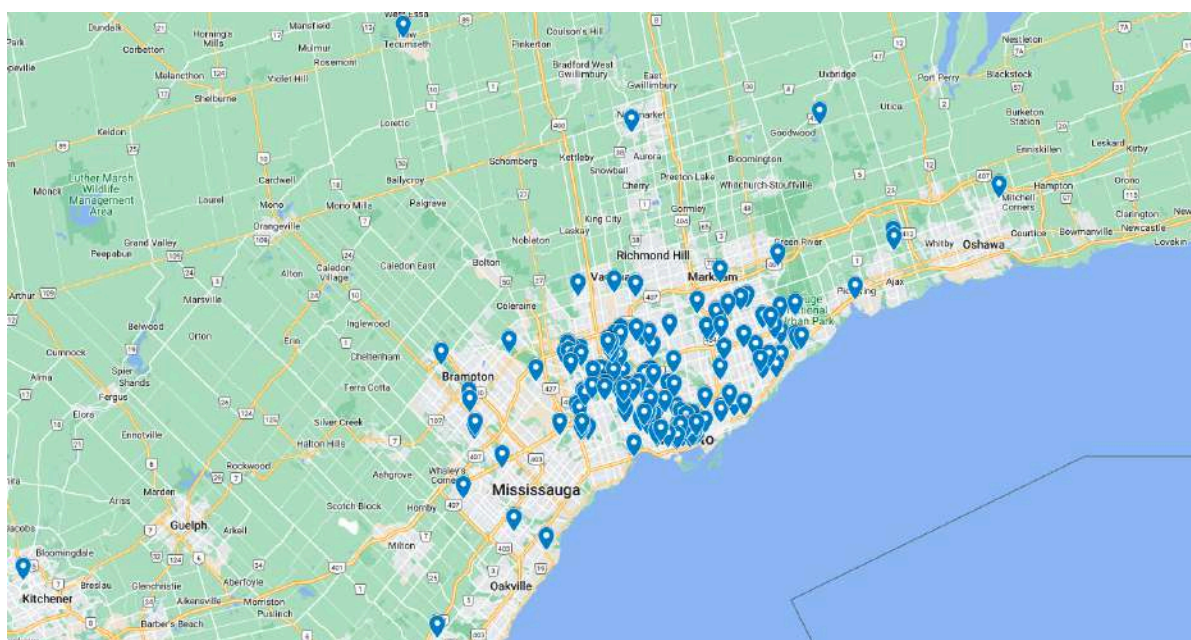


Figure 3. Geography Reach of Survey Respondents (GTHA)

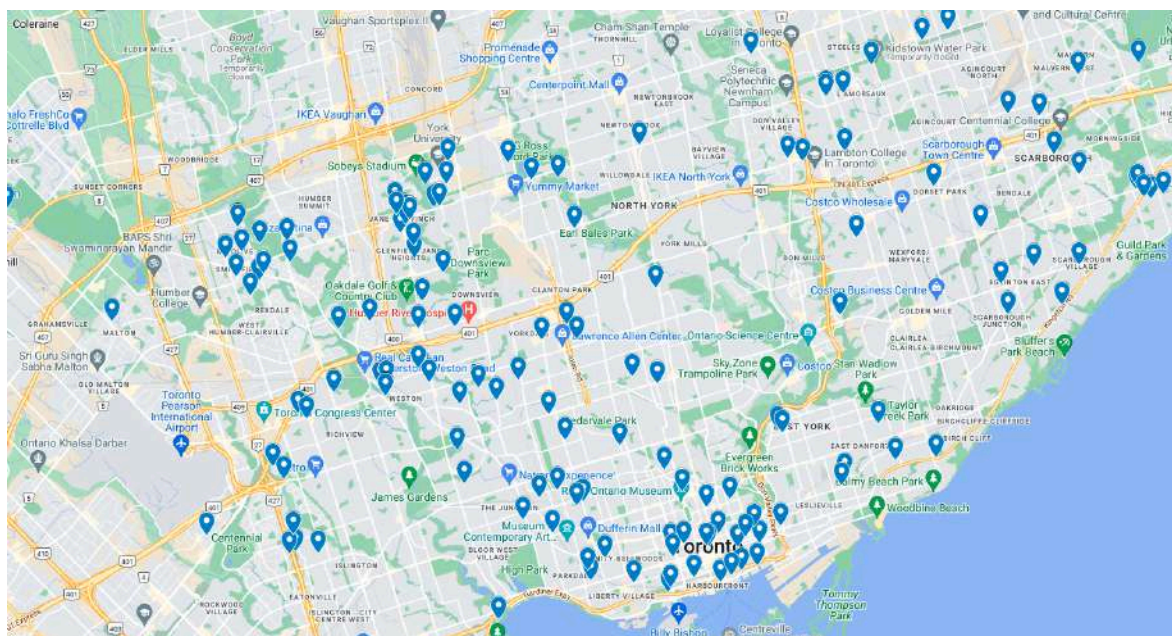


Figure 4. Geography Reach of Survey Respondents (Toronto)

Appendix C: Case Studies

Centre for Social Innovation (CSI)



Source: Centre for Social Innovation, n.d.

Location

Toronto, Canada

Type

Non-Profit Organization

Innovation Model

Hub

Governance

Executive Team, Staff, and Board of Directors*

Program Costs

Free and Paid

Funding Streams

Community Bonds, Space Rental, and Membership Fees

About

Since its inception in 2003, the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) has established six locations spread across Toronto, London (Ontario), and New York City (USA). When it first opened its doors in 2004, CSI created one of the first co-working spaces in Canada and has since grown to Canada's largest social innovation community (CSI, n.d.a., par.1).

Programming

Most of CSI's programming centers around convening ventures and experts and creating a community of practice where founders can accelerate their various endeavours and broaden their networks. They also provide a series of accelerators, mentorships, events, and programming for those of all ages centered around social entrepreneurship. Some of the programming is led in partnership with other organizations that cater to specific personas. For example, CSI collaborates with Women of Ontario Social Enterprise Network (WOSEN) to offer a series of training programs for women and gender non-binary entrepreneurs about social entrepreneurship (CSI, n.d.e). They also run the TechSoup program where they provide nonprofits with affordable hardware and software.

Built Environment

CSI initially started in a 5,000-square-foot space and gradually expanded its footprint, eventually acquiring two main buildings: CSI Annex, a 36,000-square-foot building purchased in 2010, and CSI Spadina, a 64,000-square-foot building. building acquired in 2014 (CSI, n.d.f). The buildings were purchased thanks to the use of community bonds (\$2 million for CSI Annex and \$4.3 million for CSI Spadina), an innovative social finance tool invented by CSI. Both buildings are located near complimentary amenities such as restaurants, bars, fitness and recreation centres, entertainment hubs, and more that make the space attractive to users. Furthermore, CSI Spadina, hosts the Toronto Tool Library and community maker space where founders can access fabrication equipment, programs for all ages, and events for a paid membership or for free (during one of the library's publicly-accessible Community Nights) (CSI, n.d.d).

With membership starting at \$36, CSI offers a range of flexible workspace options including virtual offices, bookable or dedicated desks for groups or individuals, and office spaces. Alongside these amenities, members also benefit from mail services, a community kitchen, free snacks from local providers, ideation spaces, printing equipment, 24-hour access, and a dog-friendly environment. Additionally, members have the opportunity to book event spaces and meeting rooms as needed. Membership grants users access to exclusive events and networking opportunities, as well as CSI's online community, known as The Common Platform. For those who prefer to stay connected without a membership, they can sign up for the newsletter at no cost (CSI, n.d.a).

CSI also owns a cottage in the province's Muskoka region called Wasan Island that can host up to 25 people. For \$10,000 + HST per night, groups can rent Wasan Island, for company retreats and/or visioning sessions, and gain access to meals prepared by CSI's professional chef, recreational and business amenities, and participate in CSI-led programming (CSI, n.d.h).

Notable Project(s)

CSI Community Bonds

Community bonds “turn a non-profit's social capital into financial capital” and since their invention by CSI in 2010 have since been used by organizations worldwide (CSI, n.d.g, par. 2). Using community bonds, from 2010-2014, CSI was able to raise \$7.5 million in community bonds from over 400 community investors and charitable organizations (CSI, n.d.f). Starting in 2020, the bonds are being used to invest in CSI's programming and projects. In collaboration with Tapestry Community Capital, CSI sells a guidebook and legal templates for nonprofit organizations interested in creating their own community bonds.

Community Animator Program

The Community Animator Program, allows emerging entrepreneurs to immerse themselves in the social entrepreneurship industry and tap into CSI's network of 2,500 members (CSI, n.d.b). In exchange for 7 hours (1 day a week, for a six-and-a-half-month term) of their time managing CSI spaces, Community Animators (CAs) get access to all of CSI's exclusive amenities, resources, and programming. CAs play a critical role in keeping CSI spaces animated and their duties include helping tidy common spaces, offering IT support, staffing the welcome desks, and more.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Leverage social finance tools for fundraising and community-wealth building:** By embracing social finance instruments like community bonds, organizations can not only secure the necessary resources to support their initiatives but also empower community members to invest in their own development and contribute to long-term economic growth and sustainability.
- 2. Turn volunteers into capacity-building opportunities for both the organization and the community:** As seen via their Community Animator Program, hubs can provide volunteer opportunities that can help to build the capacity of young entrepreneurs in a meaningful way; ensure a constant state of vibrancy in the space that renders them more attractive to members; and expose underrepresented founders and/or community members to networks critical to their personal and professional growth. The role of ambassador-type roles to help build bonds across the network was identified by two of the interviewees as important for maintaining long-term engagement with the innovation

hub that can lead to potential funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities that strengthen the hub's offerings.

3. **Make the hub accessible at different price ranges:** Offering a variety of membership plans allows a diverse community of entrepreneurs, innovators, and professionals to access the resources and benefits of the hub, fostering inclusivity and collaboration.
4. **Provide 24-hour building access:** CSI recognized the reality that many founders pursue their entrepreneurial endeavours outside of their regular working hours and have multiple commitments. Therefore, offering 24-hour workspaces, as observed by CSI and echoed by interviewees, can greatly enhance the hub's value and utility for aspiring founders who require flexible working options to accommodate their schedules.

IDEA Square One Innovation Hub



Source: IDEA Mississauga, n.d.

Location

Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Type

City-run

Innovation Model

District

Governance

Executive team, Staff, and City support (Economic Development Office)

Program Costs

N/A

Funding Streams

Donations, Sponsorship, Partnerships, Space Rental, Membership Fees, and Government Funds

About

The IDEA Square One Innovation Hub is an integral component of Mississauga's mission to establish itself as a leading global innovation center. It serves as the central hub for the IDEA Mississauga Innovation District, led by the Economic Development Division within the city's Planning and Building department. This initiative aims to catalyze innovation and entrepreneurship throughout Mississauga by providing a wide range of resources, including data, training, mentorship, and support. The hub is just one facet of the city's broader vision, which encompasses initiatives such as the Smart City Mississauga program, the expansive 340-acre Sheridan Sciences and Technology Park, and the upcoming Lakeview Innovation District (*see Section 4.2 for more*).

Programming

The IDEA Mississauga Business Entrepreneur Centre (MBEC) oversees the programming, comprising experts in Small Business, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation, along with Digital Main Street personnel. This team is dedicated to offering information and assistance to emerging businesses, founders, and community members. Through MBEC, individuals can access a wide array of programming and resources, including support for workforce development, guidance on government funding, assistance in talent acquisition, opportunities for market development exploration, and connections within the business-to-business (B2B) sphere, among other services (IDEA Mississauga, 2021c).

The cornerstone programming partners include Altitude Accelerator, Sheridan EDGE, ICUBE UTM, and SpinUP at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Leveraging an extensive network of industry, institutional, community, and academic collaborators, the hub delivers tailored programming to various specific groups, encompassing newcomers, LGBTQ+ community members, BIPOC individuals, women, students, youth, and seniors. The range of programming covers diverse areas, from Entrepreneurs-In-Residence and business consultancy to investment readiness, accelerators, and support for social entrepreneurship. The hub's focus spans sectors like Life Sciences, Technology, Information & Communications Technology (ICT), Cleantech, Food & Beverage, Advanced Manufacturing, Mobility, and more (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Built Environment

The IDEA Square One Innovation Hub's 4,300 square-foot facility is located in the heart of Downtown Mississauga, on the second floor of the Square One Shopping Centre. Hub members get access to various spaces, including workspaces, shared areas, and event venues, available Monday to Friday from 9-5pm. Membership options for IDEA Square One Innovation Hub are available at different price points, starting from \$150, \$350, to \$550 per month. These membership tiers offer varying levels of amenities, which may include access to office space, desk usage, and digital promotional opportunities. For those seeking a more flexible arrangement, day passes can be obtained for \$25 per day. Regardless of the membership tier, all members enjoy access to common areas, co-working spaces, business consultations, meeting facilities, event participation, and the opportunity to showcase their projects (IDEA Mississauga, 2021e).

Notable Project(s)

TalentEdge Internship Program (TIP)

Led by the Ontario Centres of Innovation (OCI), the TalentEdge Internship Program (TIP) under the Next Generation Network Program (NGNP) supports college and university students, along with recent undergrad and Masters grads. Through TIP students/grads engage in industry-driven R&D projects on Next Generation Network (NGN) tech at Ontario SMEs via the Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks (CENGN) platform. This enables companies to access top talent from Ontario's post-secondary institutions and enhance their ability to innovate, while interns gain valuable industry experience for success in the digital economy (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Market Readiness Co-Investment Fund

The Ontario Centres of Innovation (OCI)'s Market Readiness Co-Investment Fund offers direct investment to Ontario companies and entrepreneurs with innovative IP in disruptive technologies, helping them grow into scalable businesses (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Next Generation Networks (NGN) Demonstration Program

Led by the Ontario Centres of Innovation (OCI), the NGN Demonstration Program helps Ontario-based SMEs use the Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks (CENGN) testbed for proof-of-concept or demonstration projects aimed at innovating technologies, products, processes, or services (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Voucher for Innovation and Productivity (VIP)

The Ontario Centres of Innovation (OCI) offers a program that fosters collaboration between academia and industry to address industry-specific challenges and advance the

commercialization of Intellectual Property (IP). Through this program individuals work directly with industry partners on viable commercial solutions and get access to targeted training (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Summer Company Program (Young Entrepreneur Program)

The Summer Company program, offered by Mississauga Business Entrepreneur Centre (MBEC), is designed for Ontario students aged 15 to 29 with a business idea. It offers business training, mentorship, and a chance to receive a grant of up to \$3,000 to kickstart their summer business (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Social Impact Catalyst

Sheridan EDGE offers a program for young aspiring impact entrepreneurs who wish to explore social impact, entrepreneurship, and leading social ventures. The program focuses on climate change and environmental sustainability themes and is designed for those with promising ideas or ventures in this area. Participants will learn alongside like-minded changemakers (IDEA Mississauga, 2021f).

Key Takeaways

1. **Streamline access to resources and programs:** One of the key challenges highlighted by locals is the abundance of community resources with limited visibility. Therefore, the hub should act as a central aggregator, simplifying access to these resources through a streamlined system. Much like the system IDEA Mississauga has implemented on their website, users should be able to filter resources and programs based on sector focus, demographics, specific needs, or their current stage of entrepreneurship. For reference, click [here](#).

Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC)'s Bristol Living Lab



Source: Knowle West Media Centre, n.d.

Location

Bristol, UK

Type

Non-Profit Organization

Innovation Model

Hub

Governance

Executive team, Staff, and Board of Trustees

Program Costs

Free and Paid

Funding Streams

Donations, Sponsorship, Partnerships, Service Fees, Program Fees, Space Rental, and Social Enterprise

About

The Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) is an arts centre and charity that combines technology and culture to provide youth employment opportunities and skills-building through their various programs, training, and initiatives (KWMC, n.d.a). Leveraging several decades of experience supporting the underserved communities that reside in Knowle West (a neighbourhood in Bristol, UK) the non-profit organization launched the *Bristol Living Lab* in January 2013 (ENOLL, 2017; KWMC, n.d.d). The Bristol Living Lab is a registered member of the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL).

Through the lab, KWMC connects artists, technologists, researchers, municipalities, businesses, public sector organizations, and communities both locally and globally, to co-produce “and test new ideas, tools and technologies” that tackle local and global challenges (KWMC, n.d.e., par. 1). Their work is guided by their award-winning *Bristol Approach to Citizen Sensing (BACS)* created with the Bristol City Council and Ideas for Change, which aims to address the gaps in digital and social inclusivity, ensuring that no one is left behind. BACS is a “six-step framework for delivering technology and innovation projects that use IoT [Internet of Things] devices, sensors, and ‘smart’ technology to ensure that they place communities and their priorities are the heart of innovation” (ENOLL, 2017, p. 65; KWMC, n.d.e.). In essence, the approach boosts capacity-building for locals, creates new business opportunities, and develops solutions to local issues that can be integrated into broader city projects and goals (ENOLL, 2017).

Programming

Through the Living Lab, KWMC provides consulting services engagement and professional training to support organizations, local authorities, institutions and businesses capacity-building efforts, manages artist-led urban revitalization and development initiatives, and training groups on how to use BACS (KWMC, n.d.e.).

Overall, the organization provides a series of arts, media, and technology-oriented programming, workshops, and courses for youth. But they also work as a consultant to local authorities, businesses, and universities to develop funding bids, curate arts activations, music production, social media and professional development training, and hosts various events (KWMC, n.d.e.).

Through their *Eight Creative Agency*, they can also be commissioned for video production and graphic design services, through their. Building off of their Junior Digital Producers program, KWMC provides web design and development, branding and social media, photography, film production, animation, photography, and graphic design services to socially conscious clients, while providing experiential learning and capacity-building opportunities to emerging creatives of

diverse backgrounds (KWMC, n.d.a.).

Built Environment

KWMC runs *The Factory*, an award-winning maker space and innovation centre specializing in digital manufacturing and product design (KWMC, n.d.a; KWMC, n.d.b). For a small membership fee (£5/approximately \$9 CAD), members can access free targeted training and entrepreneurship support, and use the centre's equipment such as laser cutters, fabric presses, and 3D printers (KWMC, n.d.c.).

KWMC also owns the *Straw Bale Building* and rents it out for events (of up to 70 people), meetings, and office space (KWMC, n.d.a.). The building also hosts a music studio (and complementary audio services and equipment) and co-working spaces (KWMC, n.d.f). They also provide catering services in collaboration with a local catering company (KWMC, n.d.f). Finally, while the space is located in central South Bristol, it provides parking for cars and bikes, and it lies in close proximity to a bus stop making it easily accessible for attendees outside the neighbourhood (KWMC, n.d.f). Due to the building's use of eco-friendly materials and techniques and accessibility, the KWMC also hosts tours to learn more about its environmental features (KWMC, n.d.g). The building was designed hand-in-hand with a group of youth in the community through the KWMC's *Archimedia Project*. Through the project, local youth consulted residents, selected architects, defined the project scope, provided progress reports to funders and stakeholders, and worked closely with the design and construction team throughout the building's development (KWMC, n.d.g).

Notable Project(s)

WeCanMake

WeCanMake is a Community Land Trust (CLT) and neighbourhood testing ground exploring community-led avenues of producing affordable housing. Through the project KWMC has built two low-carbon homes, made locally in the neighbourhood of Knowle West. Each house and the land that they were built on will be held in perpetuity by the community. To build their homes WeCanMake leverages community-led infill development (or what they refer to as 'urban acupuncture') to construct homes in underutilized spaces (such as laneways and gardens) throughout the neighbourhood producing gentle densification.

The project is also focused on building community wealth by localizing the production of homes within the community. KWMC purchased a BlockBuild Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) cassette system license, which they then trained local residents and the future homeowners on how to use in order to construct modular housing in a neighbourhood micro-factory. The micro-factory is an 80 sq. m (861 sq. ft) fabrication space located in the community where they can build the housing parts that can then be delivered on-site for assembly by a team of local tradespeople. The construction materials are low waste and recyclable, and the homes run on renewable energy (i.e. via Photovoltaic Panels and Air Source

Heat Pumps). Through this initiative KWMC not only builds low-carbon, custom homes but jobs and workforce skills that generate long-term community wealth (WeCanMake, n.d.b.). As the model is replicable they have produced a playbook sharing insights of their work with other communities facing similar challenges (WeCanMake, n.d.a; WeCanMake, n.d.b.). [Click here](#) to access the *WeCanMake Playbook*.

Damp Busters

In 2015, KWMC worked with local artists to consult with citizens in neighbourhood hotspots across Bristol about the level of dampness and mold in their homes as it leads to severe mental and physical health issues. Their research found that over 30% of homes in Bristol are affected by these issues and so through a series of workshops, KWMC united community members, academics, local schools, business, technologies, artists, city council, and more to run a series of co-design workshops and hack-a-thons to develop a solution. Using open-source software and technology, the group produced frog-shaped sensors that measured temperature and humidity data in homes and an online mapping tool to capture the insights that were eventually synthesized and visualized for all. Post-project completion, KWMC developed a curriculum for local schools on how to create frog sensors and analyze the data, and trained a local team of volunteers about the process so that they could continue to pass on the knowledge with community members (The Bristol Approach, n.d.).

The project has several positive outcomes besides just preventing dampness. With this project they fostered meaningful partnerships between the community, the city, the hub, and other key partners; provided upskilling and capacity-building opportunities for community members of different ages and disciplines; and launched several knowledge mobilization initiatives to ensure that both the insights and skills learned are passed onto future generations (The Bristol Approach, n.d.).

Key Takeaways

1. **Embed experiential learning into revenue-generating initiatives:** Through their creative agency KWMC leverages their revenue-generating activities to create opportunities for community impact, while advancing equity and inclusion in a notoriously gatekept industry. By leveraging their *Eight Creative Agency*, KWMC is able to offer specialized, high-value, and highly skilled work that aligns with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mandates of companies, making their offerings particularly appealing to these organizations. Therefore rather than outsourcing all the experiential opportunities to partnership companies and organizations, innovation hubs can think creatively about their capacity-building efforts and provide opportunities in-house in order to generate additional social impact to their income-generating work.
2. **Turn project insights into income:** As evidenced by their suite of consultation and training services, KWMC knows how to record metrics and turn the insights generated from their programming and workshops, into paid opportunities that help support the longevity and independence of the organization. This was recommended by several

interviewees, and so BEA and its partners should think creatively about how to leverage the learnings from their various initiatives into streams of income to support their free offerings.

3. **Consider sustainability and community in the building design:** This involves being intentional about the design of the building from an architectural sense but also an environmental one. As the innovation hub is a building that will reside in a neighbourhood long term, finding ways to meaningfully engage with the community prior and throughout the design phase *and* to consider environmental sustainability can go a long way to not only reducing the carbon impact of the building's operations but increasing the community impact overall. Involving the community helps to create a sense of community ownership that is essential to breaking down perceived barriers and cultivating a healthy sense of belonging.
4. **Focus not just on 'Smart Cities' but 'Smart Communities':** As a registered charity and Living Lab, all of the programming, spaces, projects, and income-generating activities are oriented towards creating some sort of community impact. This involves taking a creative approach to community participation to ensure that the innovations created not only benefit the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, or individual founders, but strengthen the local neighbourhood's capacity and autonomy overall.
5. **Cater to diverse types of innovation:** KWMC strategically designs their programming and creates spaces that cater to different facets of STEAM work. Their initiatives and facilities support not only technological innovation but also artistic expression, creative problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration. By providing a diverse array of resources and opportunities, KWMC fosters a dynamic ecosystem that encourages individuals from various backgrounds and interests to explore and engage with different aspects of innovation.

Platform Calgary Innovation Centre



Source: Platform Calgary, n.d.

Location

Calgary, Canada

Type

Non-Profit

Innovation Model

Hub

Governance

Executive team, Staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Council

Program Costs

Free and Paid (low-cost) and Merit-based

Funding Streams

Donations, Sponsorship (Events and Programs), Membership Fees, Partnerships, Event Booking, Space Rental, and Government Funding (Municipal, Provincial, and Federal)

About

In 2022, the Platform Innovation Centre became Alberta's first purpose-built downtown hub for tech and innovation. With the 2031 goal of increasing the rate of startup creation and scaling in Calgary tenfold, the centre aims to turn the city into a global innovation hub. Since its launch, the centre has developed a collaborative ecosystem of 110+ local and international partners, supported over 1,300 entrepreneurs, registered 447 memberships, and welcomed over 20,000 visitors (Platform Calgary, 2022). Through various programming, scholarships, and events Platform Calgary aims to contribute to Calgary's tech and innovation economy in four ways: Founder training and mentorship; Investor development and engagement, Industry-led innovation and Talent development and hiring.

Programming

Through the hub's training and mentorship for entrepreneurs at all stages of development, Platform Calgary leans on the community of partner organizations to increase access to talent, customers, and capital for their members. For example, the centre runs business incubators and pre-accelerators, investment readiness workshops, tailored mentorship opportunities for both C-suite and emerging entrepreneurs, and provides scholarships for youth. They also host several cornerstone events such as Innovation Week (a weeklong event series open to the general public and tech communities comprised of over 80 events such as networking dinners, hackathons, innovation challenges, pitch nights, and more), DiscoverTECHYYC (a tech expo), Tech Talent Tuesday (a biweekly event series where local tech companies can promote their work opportunities and insights), and Pitch Breakfast (an invitation-only breakfast series connecting investment-ready startups with investors) (Platform Calgary, 2022).

Built Environment

The 50,000-square-foot centre located at the heart of the East Village Master Plan neighbourhood revitalization was developed in partnership with the Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) and Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) (Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, n.d.). While the first two floors are dedicated to the Innovation Centre, the main level includes a publicly accessible sports court and the seventh floor includes an outdoor event rental space. The building also includes a seven-storey, 220,000-square-foot parkade that includes 503 vehicle parking spots, 99 bicycle parking spots, and six electric vehicle charging stations that are meant to serve the centre and nearby amenities like the Studio Bell (the home of the National Music Centre), City Hall, and Central Library. The building was designed to be

responsive to the current and future needs of the community by making it easy for commercial and/or residential conversions through increased ceiling heights (the floor-to-ceiling height is 1.5x higher than traditional parkades) and a central atrium that provides natural sunlight throughout the entire building (Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, n.d). The project was constructed over the course of 2.5 years and cost \$80 million (\$5.3 million of which were private donations) (Entuitive, n.d.).

The center itself features a stage, a community area equipped with audiovisual tools and streaming cameras, as well as various functional spaces for work, gatherings, classrooms, and meetings, all accessible to its members. Additionally, the center offers facilities and resources for prototyping and technology testing, although specific quantities are not disclosed.

Notable Project(s)

Platform Pillar Team

Through their Platform Pillar Team, Platform Calgary provides entrepreneurs with access to leaders in adjacent sectors who can provide the resources, services, and/or networks needed to level up their initiatives. For example, members can get accounting, assurance, and tax support from KPMG, real estate and infrastructure mentorship from CBRE and Colliers, legal services from Fasken, and banking and investment support from RBCx. Through the Pillar Team partnerships, members can also benefit from marketing, design and public relations services, employee benefits, and government grants and tax credits, and much more.

Key Takeaways

1. **Leverage entrepreneur-in-residence programs:** Having more mature entrepreneurs in the hub helps to bring valuable expertise, mentorship, networking, and credibility to an innovation hub, further enhancing its overall ecosystem and supporting the growth and success of startups and entrepreneurs.

Roxbury Innovation Centre (RIC)



Source: Roxbury Innovation Center, 2019

Location

Boston, USA

Type

Non-Profit

Innovation Model

Hub

Governance

Executive team, Staff, and Board of Directors

Program Costs

Free and Paid (low-cost)

Funding Streams

Donations, Sponsorship, Partnerships, and Space Rental

About

Opened in 2015, the Roxbury Innovation Center (RIC) is a community-based innovation hub managed by a non-profit called Innovation Studio, focused on making innovation and entrepreneurship accessible for all. The center is placed in the heart of Dudley Square, a low-income, racialized (mainly Black and Latino) neighbourhood in Boston, that is the site of much community advocacy and the focus of the municipally-led urban regeneration initiatives, plans and policies (Bevilacqua et al., 2017). The project was born from a public-private partnership between the City of Boston and the Venture Café Foundation, who are now working together to develop with a focus on mitigating displacement, community wealth building, empowering local residents, and turning a historically disinvested neighbourhood into a vibrant neighbourhood innovation district (Bevilacqua et al., 2017; Roxbury Innovation Center, n.d.). As a community-centered space, all of the programming is either low-cost or no-cost and co-working spaces are free for the public on weekdays until 4:30 p.m.

Programming

At RIC, programming is provided via the Innovation Studio which comprises a series of workshops, networking events, mentorship, and consultations, to help entrepreneurs at every stage of their entrepreneurship journey. The center also has a digital resource hub which catalogues the websites and descriptions of key local municipal departments, grants, and non-governmental organizations in the broader ecosystem and neighbourhood that provide support such as funding, small business, incubation programs and legal services with many focused on those in underrepresented groups.

The hub also has a digital Fabrication Laboratory, and a flexible co-working space with three meeting rooms (with a capacity of 100 people) available for rent for \$80 USD (\$104.8 CAD) per hour. Profits from the room rentals are reinvested into programming and management of spaces (Bevilacqua et al., 2017).

The center also has a community calendar highlighting events and opportunities for the community to take advantage of.

Built Environment

The 3,350-square-foot center is located on the second floor of the municipally-owned, mixed-use Bruce C. Bolling Building in the heart of Boston. RIC is centrally located and connected to transit via Nubian Station and is in close proximity to complementary institutions in the business ecosystem like Northeastern University. The remainder of the building hosts retail and the Boston Public School's offices.

Notable Project(s)

Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative (DSNI)

One of the hub's partners is the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative (DSNI), a community organization whose work focuses on mitigating displacement pressures, fostering civic engagement, youth development, and neighbourhood revitalization (DSNI, n.d). Through their various programs, they support resident advocacy and local economic development efforts, champion policy and planning (zoning) reforms to improve community support, resources, and growth; and notably, encourage the development of the neighbourhood without displacement via their Community Land Trust (CLT). The CLT manages over 30 acres of land in the Roxbury and North Dorchester Neighbourhoods which hosts 98 affordable homes, urban farms, green spaces, and commercial properties (Dudley Neighbors, n.d.).

Key Takeaways

1. **Get involved with local neighbourhood development coalitions:** According to Bevilacqua et al., (2017) the success of RIC is in part due to the regulatory environment (i.e. the variety of urban plans, policies, and initiatives informing the design and development of the neighbourhood), the network of community organizations involved in the development of the center, and the explicit focus on mitigating displacement for local residents. Therefore, working with local organizations similar to the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative whose work is at the intersection of neighbourhood revitalization, local economic development, civic engagement, and land ownership can be beneficial for ensuring local residents reap the benefits of the hub in the short and long term.

TechNexus Venture Collaborative



Source: TeamWorking, n.d.

Location

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Type

For-Profit Corporation

Innovation Model

Hub

Governance

Executive Team and Staff

Program Costs

Paid

Funding Streams

Membership Fees, Service Fees, Equity Stake, and Space Rental

About

Developed in 2007, the TechNexus Venture Collaborative is focused on investing capital in start-ups, incubating entrepreneurs through its various programs and co-labs, and creating building relationships between both corporate executives and early-stage companies to scale their projects (TechNexus, n.d.). They also focus on establishing intersectoral partnerships that strengthen the city-wide innovation ecosystem and the various underrepresented communities of Chicago entrepreneurial landscape.

TechNexus is driven by the idea that “ventures that prioritize diversity and build an inclusive, empathy-driven culture at an early-stage outperform, and are better equipped to succeed and create solutions that better serve their customers.” (TechNexus, n.d., par 5). They have a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through both the ventures that they fund and their partnerships with local organizations, collectives, municipal departments, and anchor institutions (like schools) on several programs and co-labs.

Programming

First and foremost, TechNexus is a venture collaborative firm investing in startups that align with their expertise in the Marine, Audio, Aviation, Outdoor, and First Response industries. Besides capital, to their early-stage founders they provide necessary mentorship and networking support through programs, connections to global entrepreneurial support organizations (ESOs), and events. They also provide tailored advisory support and partnerships to support business growth and expose them to industry expertise. However, what makes TechNexus’ work similar to an innovation hub is the role it plays as an SBO through its co-labs and its coworking space, TeamWorking. Furthermore, TechNexus has created and/or partnered with several institutions and organizations to create a series of co-labs that act as specialized innovation places centered around TechNexus’ niches of expertise (TechNexus, n.d.). All co-labs are based out of their headquarters in TeamWorking.

Co-Labs

IMMERSE

The IMMERSE co-lab is focused on tapping into the audio economy by fostering a global AudioTech and media ecosystem of innovation hubs, incubators, startups and other industry experts (IMMERSE, n.d.). Through the co-lab, TechNexus provides early-stage funding, resources, mentorship and networks to help grow audio-focused businesses such as Krisp and Clubhouse. They are also launching an Accelerator that provides “exclusive, sponsored pitch calls for ventures to solve a specific real-world challenge or objective defined by an ecosystem partner” (IMMERSE, n.d., par. 17).

V2:VC

As TechNexus and OCA Ventures are both prominent players in the Chicago Tech ecosystem, they partnered to launch V2:VC. V2:VC is a community of practice aimed at providing professional development, resources, and networking opportunities to empower the next generation of Chicago's venture investors and business leaders. Prospective members are selected via an application process. To enhance community engagement, they are preparing to launch an ambassador program that will facilitate meaningful connections and interactions with the community.

Podfund

The Podfund co-lab is focused on supporting podcast businesses and audio-driven startups with funding and resources. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and selected studios and creators can access between \$25,000 to \$150,000 USD to support their work, mentorships, peer and expert networking opportunities, and access to experts to support scaling and business development (Podfund, n.d.). Through Podfund, TechNexus generates revenue by receiving a share of the income generated from the podcasts they finance and from any podcast sales.

Smart City IoT Innovation (SCITI) Labs

SCITI was created via a partnership between TechNexus and the US Department of Homeland Security, Smart City Works, and Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) focused on providing smart city solutions to First Responders' needs. Through their lab entrepreneurs can receive funding for prototype testing and commercialization, and can work hand-in-hand with first responders, the government, and technologists to help accelerate their path to commercialization (SCITI, n.d.).

Built Environment

TeamWorking acts as a headquarters for TechNexus' core and co-lab initiatives but also provides a collaborative, modular hub for entrepreneurs. With a TeamWorking membership, founders can access private offices, event spaces (that can host up to 175 people), meeting rooms, and flexible co-working spaces. Entrepreneurs also have access to a variety of amenities such as studios (with one dedicated to recording, content creation, and podcasting each), a fitness centre, audio-visual equipment, 20 meeting rooms, three kitchens, a wellness room for prayer or meditation, lactation room, private phone booths, and more (TeamWorking, n.d.). The membership fees vary according to the type of use and space requirements starting upwards of \$1,000 USD (\$1,328 CAD) per month.

Notable Project(s)

The Chicago Tech (ChiTech) Academy and TechNexus' Partnership

As part of TechNexus equity, diversity, and inclusion work the company partners with the municipality as well as several organizations, institutions, and collectives to provide financing, resources, and networking support to their various initiatives with a focus on underrepresented, women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC founders. While their core work does not focus on youth, through their partnership with the ChiTech Academy they provide volunteers to support the school's early-intervention STEM and professional development programming (TechNexus, n.d.). ChiTech provides experiential and project-based learning opportunities that teach their students how to tackle real-world problems and cultivate entrepreneurial, financial, and technological skills. On top of their core academic education, students receive entrepreneurship and technology classes, and have access to field trips, mentorship opportunities, internships, and weekly guest speakers (ChiTech, n.d.a & n.d.b).

Key Takeaways

1. **Take an ecosystems approach:** Communities of practice play a vital role in fostering an ecosystem and collaborative approach necessary for creating a strong culture for innovation and for sharing resources, building networks and relationships, and providing skill-building opportunities crucial to a founder's success. The importance of creating communities of practice was echoed in several of the stakeholder interviews and research.
2. **Curate meaningful intersectoral partnerships:** Partnerships can provide powerful revenue-generating *and* meaningful community-building opportunities as shown via TechNexus' creation of co-labs. Each co-lab focuses on a sub-niche of their work that allows them to create community, economic, and social impact, while staying aligned with their primary mandate.
3. **Collaboration with anchor institutions is key:** Working with anchor institutions and municipal governments can advance equity and accessibility goals, while grounding initiatives in a real-world/community context. By staying attuned to the goals of the municipal government, the hub can effectively address the ecosystem's needs and maintain a forward-thinking approach, keeping its programming relevant and impactful.
4. **Provide sector-specific amenities:** Physical innovation spaces should be thoughtfully designed to align with the specific focus and requirements of the hub's niche. This could include providing specialized equipment, resources, and amenities that cater to the specific activities and goals of the target personas. By tailoring the space to meet these unique needs, BEA and its partners can create an environment that fosters creativity, collaboration, and productivity, enhancing the overall experience and value for community members.

Appendix D: Overview of Aligned Community Organizations and Local Facilities

Table 1. Local Organizations Providing Services in Alignment with the Innovation Hub Goals and Personas

Type	Local Organizations
Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JVS Toronto, Employment Source Jane Finch, Youth Employment Services • Belka Enrichment Centre • Success Beyond Limits (SBL) • Firgrove Learning and Innovation Centre (FLICC) • Generation Chosen • York Woods Branch, Toronto Public Library • Inner City Outreach • Jane & Finch Boys' & Girls' Club (St. Alban's) • Ephraim's Place Community Centre • Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH) • Jane Finch Centre - The Spot Youth Centre
Skills Development and Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York University, TD Community Engagement Centre • Seneca College, Yorkgate Campus, Academic Upgrading/Literacy and Basic Skills • Hispanic Development Council • CAFCAN (Caribbean African Canadian Social Services) • Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) • Toronto Catholic District School Board, Norfinch Adult Education Centre, Adult High School Diploma Program • JVS Toronto, Ontario Employment Services • York Woods Branch, Toronto Public Library • Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Friends Association • Generation Chosen • Yorkgate Employment and Social Services • North York Dufferin Street YMCA Centre • Christian Horizons Employment Services • Humber College Employment Services • DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA): Employment Hub
Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delta Family Resource Centre • Albion Neighbourhood Services • Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre • Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services • York University, TD Community Engagement Centre • Seneca College, Yorkgate Campus, Academic Upgrading/Literacy and Basic Skills • Humewood House Association, Young Parent Resource Centre • York Woods Branch, Toronto Public Library • Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) • Jane and Finch Reaching Up • San Romanoway Revitalization Association • Hispanic Development Council • Lao Association of Ontario • National Council of Jewish Women of Canada - Toronto Section • Patronato ACLI • Somali Canadian Association of Etobicoke • Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples • CAFCAN (Caribbean African Canadian Social Services) • Jamaican Canadian Association Centre • Working Women Community Centre
Newcomer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Learning Development Foundation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto • Delta Family Resource Centre • Manantial Neighbourhood Services • Salvation Army, Immigrant and Refugee Services, North York Satellite Office • Canadian Human Rights International Organization • Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women • Northwood Neighbourhood Services • Tamogo
Cultural Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner Commons • Tastes and Sounds of Jane and Finch • Upfront Theatre Foundation
Business Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA) • Emery Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) • Yorkgate Mall • Jane Finch Mall
Entrepreneurship Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamogo • Flaunt-It Creative Coworking Studio • Black Creek Community Collaborative: Micro-Credit Program
Justice-Involved Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH) • Out of Bounds: Grief Support
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delore Quality Health Care Services • Black Creek Community Health Centre • LOFT Community Services, South Team, Behavioural Support Services -- Mobile Support Teams • Lumacare Services, Northwood Community Centre, BOOST Adult Day Program • Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sick Kids Centre for Community Health
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society for the Living, Food Bank • Black Creek Community Farm • All Nations International Development Agency (ANIDA) (Food Bank) • Salvation Army, Yorkwoods Community Church • Society for the Living, Food Bank
Tech Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Finch Reaching Up
Government Services	N/A
Indigenous Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet Grass Roots Collective • Indigenous Friends Association • York University Indigenous Students Association
Advocacy Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP) • Jane-Finch Housing Coalition (JFHC) • Black Creek Fair Economies
Recreation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domenico Diluca Community Recreation Centre • Driftwood Community Recreation Centre • Northwood Community Centre • Oakdale Community Centre • John Booth Memorial Arena • Jane/Finch Community Tennis Association (JFCTA) • Asante Soccer Academy • Flying Angels Track Club
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Finch Community Legal Services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamogo
Academic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto Catholic District School Board, Norfinch Adult Education Centre, Adult High School Diploma Program • York University, TD Community Engagement Centre • York University • Seneca College, Yorkgate Campus, Academic Upgrading/Literacy and Basic Skills • Youthrex (York University) • Jane Finch Community Research Partnership

Source: Black Creek Community Collaborative, n.d.; City of Toronto, 2022g; City of Toronto, 2022h; City of Toronto, 2022i; Toronto Central Healthline, n.d; Community Action Planning Group, 2019; Jane-Finch.com, n.d.; Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership, n.d.

Table 2. Inventory of Public/Private/Non-Profit Spaces For Community Use

Type	Local Organizations
Art Studio/Dance Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Woods Public Library • Ephraim's Place • Jane and Finch Boys and Girls Club
Art Gallery	Art Gallery at York University
Fitness Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driftwood Community Centre • Northwood Community Centre • Fit 4 Less • Planet Fitness
Multipurpose Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driftwood Community Centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oakdale Community Centre • Domenico DiLuca Community Centre • Northwood Community Centre
Multimedia Room	Driftwood Community Centre
Music Practice Room	RPSM at Monsignor Fraser College
Recording Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEACH • The Spot, Jane/Finch Centre
Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Woods Public Library • Palisades Recreation Centre
Multi-purpose Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flaunt-It Creative Coworking Studio
Community Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Creek Community Farm • York Woods Library • Oakdale Community Centre • Driftwood Parkette
Dedicated Youth Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Woods Public Library • The Spot • Success Beyond Limits • PEACH • Jane and Finch Boys and Girls Club • Northwood Community Centre • Youth Unlimited
Lounge	York Woods Public Library
Community Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Booth Memorial Arena

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driftwood Community Centre • Oakdale Community Centre • Domenico DiLuca Community Centre • Northwood Community Centre • Grandravine Community Centre • York Woods Public Library • Jane/Sheppard Public Library • York University-TD Community Engagement Centre • Jane/Finch Centre
Community Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driftwood Community Centre • Green Change/Community Development Office, Jane/Finch Centre • Black Creek Community Health Centre
Computer Labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JVS Toronto • Yorkgate Employment and Social Services • York Woods Public Library • Jane/Sheppard Public Library • Driftwood Community Centre

Source: Community Action Planning Group, 2019.

