NSN4SC 2020 Evaluation Report

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Nova Scotia Network for Social Change

The Nova Scotia Network for Social Change (NSN4SC) is a partnership of the NS GovLab and Inspiring Communities, funded for three years by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Before describing the Nova Scotia Network for Social Change project, an understanding of the work of the NS GovLab is required.

NS GovLab

The NS GovLab is the Nova Scotia government's social innovation lab, focused on population aging, and is part of the Department of Seniors. It was established as an action of *Shift: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population*. It was formed using the *Social Innovation Lab Guide* models from the Rockefeller Foundation and Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience. Using this guide and local contextual research, the NS GovLab fellowship model was developed. The model has been adapted throughout its work since March 2018.

The NS GovLab has four goals:

- To deeply understand our aging population;
- To build skills and capacity for social innovation;
- To build and test prototypes to support our aging population; and
- To create a network of engaged social innovators.

It focuses on systems and design thinking. Its work is guided by two overarching questions: How might we:

- Create a province where people can age at home and stay connected to their community?
- Foster connections across generations and cultures to create resilient communities in Nova Scotia that can adapt to their changing demographics?

Social Innovation Lab Approach[1]

Social innovation labs aim to transform systems by getting to the roots of complex problems and involving a diverse range of stakeholders in the process.

Labs recognize that many of the biggest problems are embedded in the institutional logic - the patterns of power, authority, and marginalization. By working intersectionally and bringing citizens and systems closer together, labs aim to generate new collective narratives based on shared understandings of how things could be different. The problems we work on are

[1] Adapted from RADIUS SFU. Canadian Social Innovation Labs Landscape, SURVEY 2018.

complex and intergenerational, problems for which there are no quick fixes and no one organization able to solve them.

This work is by necessity experimental. The answers do not exist already, so labs try things out and learn from doing. Labs create a safe container for this experimentation and learning to happen. They enable citizens to have a sense of creative agency over their futures.

Lab practitioners consider not just what they do, but how they know what they know, how they feel and how they are being. This reflexive way of seeing, being and doing is at the heart of lab practice.

The NS GovLab work has focused on a fellowship program, bringing together diverse groups of Nova Scotians interested in the issues of population aging and social innovation, to become cohorts or groups (group) of fellows and partners to come together to participate in action research and professional development. The fellowship experience has had two components:

Part 1: Foundations - A cohort comes together on a regular basis to learn the foundational approaches of NS GovLab.

Part 2: Collaborative practice - Participants build a community of practice by applying skills learned in Part 1 to a real-world challenge related to population aging. You set the schedule and choose the design challenge in consultation with the NS GovLab leadership team and their colleagues.

To date four cohort groups have participated in this process. In addition, the NS GovLab has hosted and co-hosted other events to provide additional educational opportunities and to expand its reach.

Nova Scotia Network for Social Change

The purpose of the Nova Scotia Network for Social Change is to broaden the NS GovLab and Inspiring Communities' collective reach and create value for Nova Scotians through integrating the two organizations' network of communities and public sector social innovation focus by seizing the opportunities.

Once a cohort has completed their fellowship, they are considered part of the NSN4SC, as are people who have participated in NS GovLab events.

The NSN4SC focuses on learning about and identifying the challenges faced by the province's aging population and deepening understanding of social innovation skills and approaches within the social innovation lab process and in community.

Specifically, over the life of the ESDC funded project, the NSN4SC intends to:

- Use experimentation to develop a deeper understanding of population aging in Nova Scotia;
- Identify gaps in current services and approaches;
- Build a diverse network of engaged and connected social innovators by working with partners in new ways to improve services, programs and policies directed at Nova Scotia's aging population; and
- Create new multi-sectoral sector partnerships to build and test potential solutions to improving aging in place while staying connected to community and creating connections across generations and cultures to build resilient communities.

The NSN4SC's theory of change identifies that connecting social innovators across Nova Scotia to learn and apply social innovation lab tools, methods and approaches with their work will yield a more sustainable, adaptive and resilient ecosystem of social innovators, as well as potential solutions for an aging population. Working with the people directly impacted by the issues, as well as those working on the front lines, provides the timely and relevant input and feedback to inform the work.

Social innovation networks comprised of diverse community and government stakeholders will broaden the organizations' reach and create value for Nova Scotians. By integrating knowledge of social innovation with the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors, the Network can collectively focus on seizing the opportunities that an aging population presents. As Nova Scotia grapples with issues including housing, food security, transportation, and racism and discrimination, in the context of an aging population, the NSN4SC provides a collaborative and supportive 'space' to learn, experiment, and partner to test and find solutions to these complex and multi-layered issues in an inclusive way.

The NSN4SC's logic model delineates the three components of the initiative:

- Understanding aging in Nova Scotia;
- Network of Social Innovators; and
- Building and testing solutions via partnerships.

At this point in the project work, we should expect to see progress toward several of the identified short-term outcomes. By project component, these include:

Understanding Aging in Nova Scotia

- Nova Scotia's Innovation Network will have diverse learnings about population aging in Nova Scotia, including gaps and successes in services and approaches, which are available to the public.
- Network members develop a deepened understanding of the impacts of population aging in Nova Scotia.

- Social Innovation Network members identify potential areas to deepen individual and collective understanding of shifting demographics and population aging through the development of the experimentation and prototyping.
- Social Innovation Network members understand the gaps and facilitators of success in current services and approaches.
- Nova Scotia's Social Innovation Network will have a rich and contextual understanding of population aging that is publicly accessible and can be leveraged by anyone wanting to undertake social innovation work.

Network of Social Innovators

- Increased awareness and capacity for social innovation work in Nova Scotia.
- A collective and multi-faceted understanding of Nova Scotia's aging population.
- Network members work with unlikely partners to generate new prototypes.

Building and Testing Solutions Via Partnerships

- Development of a multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational Social Innovators Network in Nova Scotia.
- Development of experiments and prototypes to better understand the conditions needed to age in place while staying connected to community, as well as building resilient communities comprised of intergenerational and cross-cultural connections.
- High fidelity prototypes are adopted in different communities to test for scale for learning and integration.

Changes Over Time

The NS GovLab's fellowship process has adapted with the completion of each cohort group, as has the thinking, resources, and supports for the development of the NSN4SC. The following is a brief overview by cohort timeframe. Information for this section is drawn primarily from the *Lessons Learned: NS GovLab Fellowship Cohort One and Two* and *C3 Lessons Learned*. Specific lessons learned from each cohort are described in the finding sections of this report.

Cohort 1

The first cohort in March 2018, consisted of twenty-five fellows. The process reflected a human-centred design process, including an orientation retreat, synthesis workshop, prototyping workshops, learning journey preparation and presentation. The second component of the process engaged fellows in co-creation and leadership in hopes of creating a connected community of practice. Three ideas moved forward from this work: offering master classes where fellows could learn more about specific topics, connecting fellows with others from outside the lab who wanted to work in this way, and creating an online platform to share information and collaborate. From these suggestions, the following were put in place:

- A four-part series on creative media to learn new skills around storytelling through video, music, and arts;
- A public ask-and-offer event at the Central Library in Halifax; and
- A Slack group (an online collaboration hub) for NS GovLab as its online platform.

Cohort 2

Cohort 2 began in September 2018. Twenty-four participants were part of this cohort. The groups' gatherings shifted to longer periods of time, allowing for more time for work and reflection between sessions. The orientation session was identified as key to build relationships and the foundation of working together. Other ways of knowing and embodiment were added to the process. The human-designed process continued.

An addition to this iteration were coaching sessions with fellows between their gatherings. A shared digital platform of templates, readings, and tools was also added.

Cohort 3

Cohort 3, consisted of fourteen fellows, and began in May 2019. In this phase, the NS GovLab principles were a more explicit component of the work and demonstrated through the framing of in-person gatherings and in the communication with fellows. The amount of time fellows participated in the program was tweaked again in this round, with an increase in time for gatherings and between them. A Mi'kmaw Elder was also added to the leadership team, as was a Council of Elders and Knowledge Keepers to amplify different ways of knowing and strongly consider decolonization.

New resources were also developed – the NS GovLab Sourcebook and The Little Book of Design Research Ethics was shared.

Cohort 4

This cohort's focus grew from the NS GovLab's commitment to reconciliation and focused on Indigenous issues. The group will develop from the program's partnership with the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre and provide the opportunity to develop relationships with the urban indigenous community in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

It should be noted that, like many initiatives, organizations, institutions, and communities, the NSN4SC's work was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic closed workspaces and moved people to working from their homes, allowing for no in-person connection as staff, with fellows, or Network members, and all in an environment burdened by worry of the unknown.

Work planned through early 2020 has been postponed.

The initiative has also been impacted by several changes in project staff, both in management and community coordination.

About This Evaluation

The Nova Scotia Network for Social Change (NSN4SC) is a partnership of the NS GovLab and Inspiring Communities, funded for three years by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). As part of its ongoing work, annual evaluation reports are to be developed that will identify learnings, successes, and changes over the time of the initiative. The intent is to use this information to strengthen the work over the course of the project.

The evaluation process to date has consisted of the development of an overall evaluation plan (required by the funder), development of a theory of change and a logic model to graphically represent the elements of NSN4SC, their connections, and the outcomes expected to be achieved. (See Appendix A for the theory of change and logic model.)

Data collection methods included:

- Review of NS GovLab and NSN4SC documents;
- Focus groups with representatives of Cohorts 1 – 3, and with Nova Scotia GovLab and NSN4SC; and
- A web survey shared with all past fellows of the initiative and anyone who had attended a GovLab/NSN4SC event.

The document review work was carried out on an ongoing basis, while the focus groups and web survey were completed in June 2020. A listing of project deliverables is included in Appendix B.

As described above, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the project work, including the evaluation, particularly in relation to data collection.

It should also be noted that evaluation participants, in responding to questions, often focused on their experience within the two components of the NS GovLab fellowship, rather than the Network itself.

Report Structure

The next section reports on the findings of the evaluation, drawing on the focus groups, web survey, and document review.

Following the findings sections, a brief progress towards the identified outcomes is included. Shared next are considerations for the Network going forward within the context of work carried out, resources, and supports put in place, and feedback provided by evaluation participants.

Findings: Understanding Aging in Nova Scotia

This section reports on the findings related to the Network's goal of using experimentation to develop a deeper understanding of population aging in Nova Scotia, and the identification of gaps in current services and approaches for the province's aging population.

Understanding of Shifting Demographics

Most evaluation participants participating in the web survey identified that their understanding of Nova Scotia's shifting demographics had changed because of their involvement in the NSN4SC.

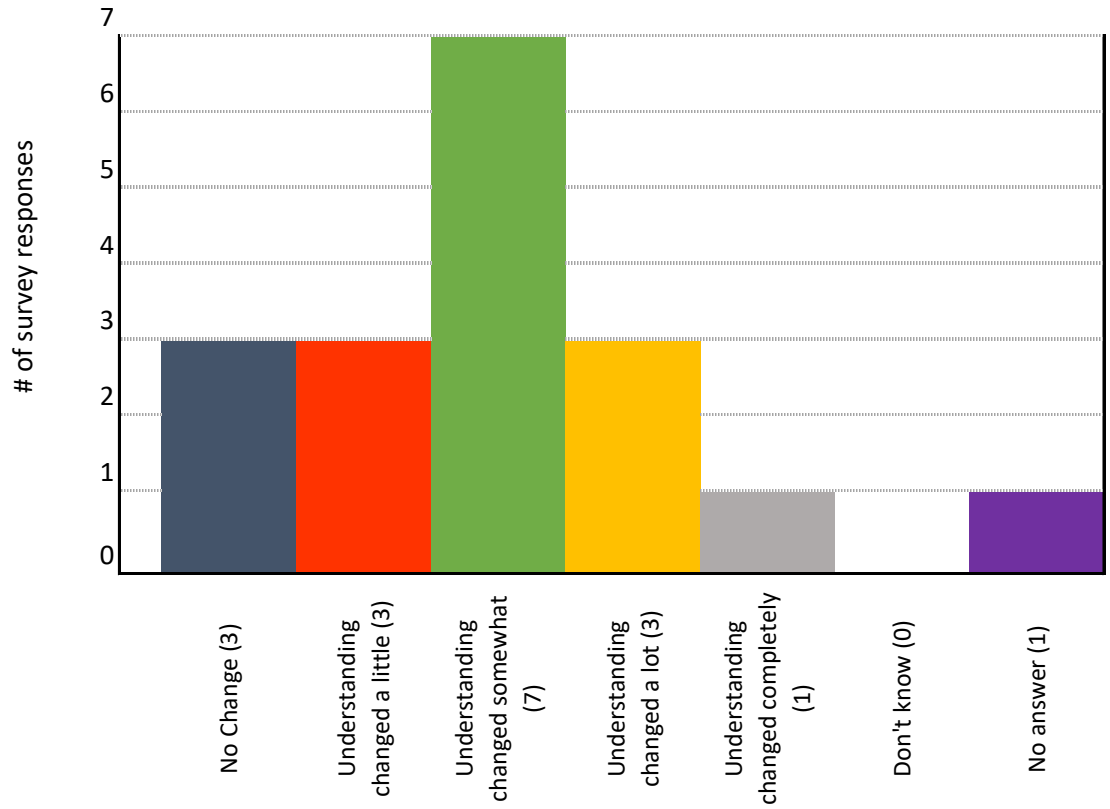

Figure 1: Degree of change of evaluation participants understanding of Nova Scotia's shifting demographics

Web survey participants were asked to identify the opinions they had had regarding the province's aging population before becoming part of this work. They reflected that they had thought seniors were a homogenous group, living in rural areas, with issues different than those younger. They said they had thought Indigenous people all lived 'on reserve' or oppositely were integrated into urban communities. They said loneliness and isolation came

with later life, that long-term care either was the solution or no one wanted to be there, and that resources are plentiful.

Through the involvement with the NSN4SC and NS GovLab, their thinking had shifted, reflecting a new understanding of the diversity of the senior population, long term care being acceptable - if appropriate care is in place. They also had a clearer understanding of Indigenous people's relationship with their home community and the impact of racism. They identified that they better understood the impacts of the social determinants of health. They recognized that older adults benefit society and the economy.

The staff focus group reported that cohorts had identified their least amount of learning was around a deepened understanding of population aging but had expressed surprise by the number of programs and services, rather than the lack.

Impact of Aging Population

Web survey evaluation participants reported that there are benefits to the province of an aging population, including the knowledge, history, and experience that they have. They also identified the impact on the workforce and fewer people working. At the same time, they reflected that seniors are a strong part-time volunteer and labour pool, as well as being a significant customer segment. The impact on all aspects of the healthcare system – primary, mental health, and continuing care (long term care) were also identified.

Evaluation participants also reported a variety of issues related to transportation as impacting this population. They include the lack of, the accessibility of, and need for transportation, particularly in rural areas.

The importance of keeping seniors informed and involved to combat social isolation was also identified.

Activities to Deepen Understanding

Evaluation participants in the staff focus group reported on several activities/events that were held to deepen Network members' understanding around the aging population. These included:

- Co-created and hosted the Well Being[2] event;
- Partnered on two CIHR grants related to Elders/seniors and LGBTQ+ housing; and
- Participated in Gesturing toward Decolonial Futures session.

[2] Co-creating Wellbeing was an event – a prototype of Cohort 3 held in September 2019, that brought together strangers to generate ideas around connections between older adults and newcomers to access microfunding from NS GovLab via Community Links.

Gaps and Areas for Innovation

Evaluation participants were asked, as part of the web survey, to identify gaps and important areas for innovation in programs, services, and/or policies related to the province's aging populations from three perspectives – through the elements of their fellowship and involvement in the Network in research, in prototyping, and in analysis of policy.

Their responses reveal a few commonalities across the three components:

- The issue of social isolation and lack of connection, reflecting on a need for enhanced connections, including interracially and interculturally;
- The need for better public transportation, particularly in rural Nova Scotia; and
- Affordable housing, particularly for those on fixed incomes.

Some participants also identified the need to include seniors in decision-making, focusing on and contributing to something of real value to older adults (versus a quick fix idea or the latest technology).

The staff focus group reported that the introduction of the Elders Council improved and expanded the identification of gaps which then impacted the types of prototypes. They also identified that the partnership with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and having Debbie Eisan, their Community Planner, embedded in the project team and the work around Gesturing Toward Decolonial Futures, has shifted the way work is done and helped in understanding different ways of knowing. This partnership enabled identification of more gaps in programs, services, and policies.

Lessons Learned[3]

As part of ongoing reflection and reporting, project staff created two documents chronicling lessons learned from Cohorts 1 - 3. The following reflect these learnings:

- The catch-all category of seniors is a challenge because it includes up to three generations of people. New language was required, and consideration of issues that identify behaviour and barriers that impede aging well were considered.
- Incorporation of first voice/lived experience in the work is valuable to the process.
- When gaps in research are identified, further research is needed (rather than moving directly to prototyping).
- How an issue is framed can lead to exclusion of individuals or seeing it only as impacting seniors (versus a broader societal concern).
- Access to, use of, and comfort with technology is a consideration and cannot be assumed.

[3] All lessons learned are drawn from the NS GovLab document: Lessons Learned: NS GovLab Fellowship Cohort One and Two and C3 Lessons Learned.

- Provision and access to tools and collaborative digital platform should encourage sharing of data and contribute to the overall body of work.
- Acknowledgement of class as a factor of aging. Wealth, privilege, and power does not directly translate to an ability to problem-solve and self-sufficiency.
- Gaps were identified within the current service delivery models for both older adults and their families and current offerings are not necessarily well planned nor meeting needs.

Findings: Network of Social Innovators Evaluation

Evaluation participants were asked about a variety of elements related to the building of a diverse network of engaged and connected social innovators by working with partners in new ways to improve services, programs and policies directed at Nova Scotia's aging population. The Network is intended to be built on a foundation of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Because of the impact of COVID-19, participants were also asked to reflect on its impact on the NSN4SC.

Network Development

Evaluation participants were asked as part of the web survey to identify what had worked well and what have been the challenges in developing and maintaining the NSN4SC.

A few participants identified that regular communication worked well, as did the opportunity to come together to network, 'recharge', and to work on a key challenge.

Other evaluation participants reported that they were not aware of the Network, its organizers, or any work to develop it; they did not understand the difference between NSN4SC and the NS GovLab, and had questions around the value of the Network.

Other challenges identified via the web survey included the 'metro-centric' nature of the Network, participants' competing priorities for their time, differing reasons for involvement in the work, leadership's risk aversion, difficulty in completing the work and tensions with partnerships, and the inability to easily access contact information for past fellows.

The staff focus group identified the project's tension point: what is the work of NS GovLab and what is the work of the NSN4SC, as well as the relationship to and differences between this Network and Inspiring Communities' Network. They identified the dependency on the cohort fellows to continue to experiment and develop prototypes and reflected that there was regular and ongoing communication with fellows/Network members.

The staff also reflected that there have been learnings and 'unlearnings' in building a network. Shifts have been required, as has stepping back to see the bigger picture of the work. They shared that though the work is good, diverse representation within the cohorts has been difficult. They pointed out that this reflects the social innovation space generally and our current systemic approach. Inclusion must be foundational, and all involved need to push beyond comfort levels.

As pointed out by one evaluation participant: '*being from different parts (of the province) and walks of life is both a strength of the Network and also a challenge*'.

Network Members' Role

When asked about their role in the support and ongoing development of the NSNSC, most evaluation participants in focus groups felt that they did not have a great role in moving things forward in the Network and experienced a feeling of disconnect. They expressed though, that they were excited about the opportunity to work on seniors' issues and moving ideas forward.

A focus group reported that the work with the NS GovLab felt experimental. Another shared that there was interconnection with different parties, that they attended events when they were able to, and that the work is a journey, and the destination has not been reached.

Most focus groups reported that more clarity and definition of roles and goals of the Network would be helpful. They shared that they saw their role as sharing and offering ideas and perspectives.

The staff reflected that the NSN4SC had been intended as a self-directed initiative with past fellows taking leadership, working with unlikely partners to further innovate, test, and learn. A variety of supports and resources were put in place, described within the Changes Over Time section (pages 4-5), to support the Network in is development. They shared that although the expectation was for the Network to be self-directed, they learned that this became challenging when the participants were not meeting regularly, and other commitments and priorities took precedence. A network requires sustained attention, which became impossible, particularly within the context of the impacts of COVID-19.

Key Elements Needed

When asked about key elements that are or need to be in place to continue to develop and maintain the Network, focus groups with cohort fellows identified that a resources that clarifies who is involved, in what way, and the status of the work would be helpful. They also suggested that the work was about the learning process rather than arriving at or taking an innovation forward. A focus group with fellows reflected that, particularly around diversity, equity, and inclusion, the work can not take a '*government approach*', (i.e. a bureaucratic, top-down approach).

Community of Practice

Evaluation participants in the staff focus group were asked to reflect on the project's intention of cohort fellows being a Community of Practice (CoP) for further development of skills in social innovation. (The CoP is considered different from the NSN4SC, as the Network can have broader involvement. Only staff were asked about the CoP)

They reported that the CoP currently is not in place and there is lack of clarity about its role and relationship with the NSN4SC. They reflected again on what is the work of NS GovLab, the CoP,

the NSN4SC, as well as the relationship to and differences between this work (the CoP and network) and Inspiring Communities' Network. The staff discussed the ongoing value of trying to create the CoP.

The staff participants identified that the expectation has been that the CoP would be self-directed, and that this has not been the case. They highlighted that the session with Gesturing Toward Decolonial Futures work highlighted how colonialism and modernity have impacted on ways of thinking, knowing and being. These impacts can be seen in current day consumerism in every aspect of life and a desire for simple solutions. They reflected that this may be part of the reason that a self-directed Community of Practice lead by participants has not been achieved to date. Staff did not create the CoP as an offering people could participate in but rather as an opportunity for members to create the offering for themselves.

The staff participants also shared that consistent communication supports that reflect the needs of different communities and creating trusting relationships will be key to moving toward the building of a CoP.

Diversity, Inclusion & Equity

When asked if and how commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity has been actioned with the Network, evaluation participants participating in focus groups stated there was no question that this was the intent of the Network. Some felt there was diverse representation in knowledge base and backgrounds within the groups and felt that in moving forward there was a need to keep working to include all sectors and communities and address the gaps. Some felt it important to hear and highlight the stories and experiences from all communities and cultures.

The cohort focus group identified that the perspectives of other people were needed to keep growing in understanding, and that there was a rural/urban divide, as well as under-representation of First Nations and the African Nova Scotian community. More explicit and direct work to attend to African Nova Scotian communities, First Nation communities, rural communities will support relationship development and benefit everyone involved.

The staff focus group reflected that unconscious bias and blind spots exist and need to be addressed for learning and unlearning. Being aware of the larger pattern of racism, colonialism, sexism and how to address these things within the work going forward is critical. The project must have strong(er) conviction around diversity and be intentional in its work in this area.

Web survey evaluation participants generally agreed that commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity was shown through diverse groups and events – that it had been put into practice. Some evaluation participants, within the web survey, disagreed however, reporting that commitment had not been demonstrated because of the make-up of the groups of cohorts, staffing, and external facilitators. Older adults were also reported to be in the minority (at least in one cohort).

Like focus group participants, web survey participants identified there is more intentional work to be done in this area to ensure all groups are aware of the work and offered the opportunity to participate. They recommended a framework for monitoring, tracking, and reporting on change (and ultimately share the results and related tools). A few participants also recommended compensation be considered to enable people with limited financial means to participate.

Additional actions suggested by these evaluation participants included:

- Expand the search for cohorts and staff beyond government and social media, including people retired from the private sector;
- Engage more elderly people in discussions;
- Become a hub for connecting people and projects;
- Become people-centred versus structure-centred;
- Create intentional spaces for intentional communities;
- Be explicit about prototypes that impact/alleviate harms for the most vulnerable; and
- Expand partnerships.

Impact of NSN4SC Involvement

Evaluation participants, as part of the web survey, were asked how being involved in the NSN4SC had impacted them to date.

Several participants reported that the Network has provided an opportunity for reflection and energy restoration; has enabled them to call on like-minded people; has provided exposure to issues and opportunities; and had changed their lives. Some stated that the experience had encouraged them to think '*outside the box*', to try new solutions and think more broadly. A few reported they were now excellent advocates.

Application of Understanding Nova Scotia's Shifting Demographic

Web survey participants were asked how they have applied their understanding of Nova Scotia's shifting demographic/aging population within the Network, to their work outside NSN4SC, as well as with other opportunities.

Application to Social Innovation Work as Part of the NSN4SC

Individual evaluation participants, via the web survey, identified they look for opportunities to be involved, be part of creating change, and speaking out. Others identified it has allowed them to engage with others, including the mentoring of younger adults. Another identified work with transportation accessibility.

Evaluation participants in the staff focus group reported that prototyping work with NSCAD and Northwood incorporated a diversity lens and shifted the thinking around older adults for the youth involved in that work.

Application to Work Outside the NSN4SC

Evaluation participants shared they had applied their understanding of the province's shifting demographics through a better understanding of the needs of the population and the issues that they face (poverty, housing, health, etc.), and by providing advice and supports. Others saw themselves as '*being the change*' and devoting themselves to the issue.

Application Within Other Opportunities

When asked how they have applied their understanding within other opportunities, evaluation participants discussed using it in providing learning opportunities, in personal projects, and their ongoing day to day work.

Changes Because of COVID-19

Focus group evaluation participants reported that understanding and clarity about the Network's mission, role, and what it hopes to achieve is needed. They shared that they did not have much knowledge about the Network, felt disconnected, and that work needed to be done to strengthen the ties. They reported that there was an opportunity for the Network to show leadership and provide direction in this time of change.

The focus groups with cohorts reported that:

- Regular, more personal communication would be helpful;
- The staff and focus have shifted;
- Going forward, the sharing of information as a Network or coalition is important;
- There is an opportunity to do things with care, compassion, and humility; and
- That GovLab itself is going through a process of discovery and that there is a need to do this well before adding more layers or expanding the Network, or whether the Network needs to exist as a formal structure.

The staff focus group also described the NSN4SC prior to COVID-19 as an informal, loosely knit group and even more so because of the pandemic. They also discussed their concerns regarding the structure and requirement for the Network to meet funder requirements. They shared the varied types of communication prior to the pandemic, as described in Changes Over Time (pages 4-5).

Lessons Learned

As part of ongoing reflection and reporting, project staff created two documents chronicling lessons learned. The following reflect learnings from Cohort 1-3, in relation to building skills and capacity for social innovation and creating a network of engaged social innovators:

- The phenomenon of 'peaktoolkits', that though there are an abundance of tools, there is little content outlining how to introduce new tools and approaches, particularly when there is resistance to doing things in a different way. There was also lack of content around skills and pre-conditions required to use the tools and approaches. Time and opportunity to practice are needed.
- Offering experiences that take participants to the edge of their comfort zone, exploring different modes of expression, and using improv techniques broaden communication and understanding of doing things differently, which can lead to different outcomes.
- Action, including collaboration, happens at the speed of trust. Connections made among participants was impactful and were leveraged to support work within and outside the social innovation lab experience.
- Opportunities to spend time together, through social gatherings, to deepen relationships will lead to building the trust required.
- Time availability and capacity to coordinate a network were lacking for fellows and for staff.

Findings: Building and Testing Solutions via Partnerships

Partnerships or Collaborations Resulting from Involvement

Evaluation participants were asked to share any new partnerships or collaborations that have resulted from their involvement with the NSN4SC. Some participants reported they now volunteer with community organizations, while others said they have stayed connected with their cohort fellows, personally and professionally. Other evaluation participants reported their work with NSCAD and Northwood as a new collaboration, while others said their involvement helped them get a new job. Others identified they would like to stay better connected; and though another had many ideas, it became too much to manage on their own.

Evaluation participants in the staff focus group shared that the prevalence of individualism has a negative influence on collaboration and working together to find solutions. They reported that within the project team there was a strong sense of partnership, openness, and humility to embrace the not knowing. They shared that in at least one prototype, collaboration bureaucratic barriers were put in place, and that a lack of accountability and openness impacted the collaboration and ability to work together.

Involved in Prototype Development

Most evaluation participants reported they had been involved in the development of a prototype, primarily as a NS GovLab cohort.

When asked what worked well in their experience developing a prototype, some participants identified the process itself as working well, while others reported their group had worked well together. Others felt they had worked on a valuable project or idea.

Evaluation participants reported, when asked about challenges, that infrequent meetings and the ability to meet as a group outside NS GovLab set meetings was difficult. Others reported that the inability to fully test their prototype was challenging. Others identified the inability to sustain enthusiasm and motivation to complete the work.

Next Best Experiment

Evaluation participants, via the web survey, were asked what the next best experiment the Network/NS GovLab could try to continue to develop the NSN4SC.

Evaluation participants identified moving forward with already developed prototypes and/or develop actual products/services for seniors. Other evaluation participants expressed they were not aware of the Network nor its function and connection to the NS GovLab. A clearer definition of missions and goals of each was recommended. Others pointed out the need to

tackle racism in its different forms (across the province), particularly the need to understand the challenges for Indigenous people and new immigrants in long-term care.

Individual evaluation participants provided a variety of ideas for the next best experiment, including:

- Make previous cohorts' work accessible online, as examples;
- Invite all cohort NS GovLab fellows to suggest/propose opportunities for social change as the needs of seniors' change;
- Provide opportunities for former cohorts to share information, organize monthly zoom meetings for cohorts or fellows and give out new information;
- Take one issue at a time and work through it;
- Shorten the cohort experiences;
- Share local change stories;
- Provide tools for effecting social change;
- Keep going;
- Move outside Metro;
- In rural and smaller communities, encourage associations to learn how to help themselves and provide supports for other seniors in area;
- Tackle the different forms of racism that can be found across the province; and
- Determine the challenges for Indigenous people and new immigrants in long-term care.

Focus group responses to this question included changing the name of the Network; expanding the work around diversity, equity, and inclusion; looking more intentionally at the role of technology; and because the work is experimental, it will take resiliency and continued effort.

Lessons Learned

As part of ongoing reflection and reporting, project staff created two documents chronicling lessons learned. The following reflect learnings from Cohort 1-3, in relation to building and testing prototypes to support our aging population:

- Clarity of purpose of a prototype is critical and will potentially require several iterations or change in focus;
- Prototyping is a new concept to many and the development of capacity in this area takes time and effort;
- Protype testing also takes time, including development of relationships and trust needed to identify testers, the logistical coordination required, and dealing with the challenges of technology; and
- Use of language around the activities related to prototyping are critical, i.e. it is not a competition. Explicit modeling of behaviours and language regarding the process, with an emphasis on learning by the project leadership, are key.

Progress Towards Outcomes

The table below outlines the short-term outcomes identified for the NSN4SC work. Based on the evaluation findings and the evaluators understanding of the project, progress has been made in the following areas.

Outcome	Progress
Understanding Aging in Nova Scotia	
NSN4SC will have diverse learnings about population aging in Nova Scotia, including gaps and successes in services and approaches, which are available to the public.	✓
Network members develop a deepened understanding of the impacts of population aging in Nova Scotia.	✓
NSN4SC members identify potential areas to deepen individual and collective understanding of shifting demographics and population aging through the development of the experimentation and prototyping.	✓
NSN4SC members understand the gaps and facilitators of success in current services and approaches	✓
NSN4SC will have a rich and contextual understanding of population aging that is publicly accessible and can be leveraged by anyone wanting to undertake social innovation work.	✓
Network of Social Innovators	
Increased awareness and capacity for social innovation work in Nova Scotia.	✓
A collective and multi-faceted understanding of Nova Scotia's aging population.	✓
Network members work with unlikely partners to generate new prototypes.	Very early progress
Building and Testing Solutions Via Partnerships	
Development of a multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational social innovators network in Nova Scotia.	Very early progress
Development of experiments and prototypes to better understand the conditions needed to age in place while staying connected to community, as well as building resilient communities comprised of intergenerational and cross-cultural connections.	Early progress
High fidelity prototypes are adopted in different communities to test for scale for learning and integration.	No progress to date

Considerations as the Work Continues

This first annual evaluation of the NSN4SC is meant to identify what is working well and the challenges so far in the development of the Network, its progress towards its identified outcomes, and as an additional element, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Learnings from the evaluation findings will inform the project work going forward.

The following discussion and considerations are offered as the project engages and reengages with its Network members and moves toward building a stronger NSN4SC.

Clarity and Defining the NSN4SC

The majority of evaluation participants reflected in some way on the need to clarify or further define the NSN4SC. In many cases, evaluation participants who had been part of the fellowship did not know of the NSN4SC or delineate it from the fellowship component of their involvement. Staff evaluation participants discussed the place of the Network in relation to NS GovLab, to Inspiring Communities and its varied initiatives and network, as well as other social innovation initiatives/networks.

- Consider creating a clear mission for the NSN4SC that reflects its place within the NS GovLab fellowship experience; and how it interacts with other social innovation initiatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

In a related area, evaluation participants who were fellows did not see themselves as leaders of a Network. Some wanted to be engaged but did not seem aware of the communications and resources that were in place to maintain that connection. The staff and document review outlined supports and resources provided through each iteration of the work.

- Consider development of a document/communique that outlines who Network members are, their roles, their responsibilities, the value of involvement, and opportunities to continue in the work.

- Consider building in an explicit discussion of the NSN4SC into the orientation session and closing session with each new cohort group.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Evaluation participants identified that diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued and an important foundation of the NS GovLab and NSN4SC's work.

- Continue to build on the engraining of these principles into the work, while addressing unconscious bias and unlearning.

Beyond HRM

Many evaluation participants noted that this work has been 'metro-centric' – focused on the Halifax Regional Municipality.

- Consider, should resources allow, how to engage potential participants in the Network beyond HRM. The need to work from a virtual space may allow for increased involvement in the Network by those interested in social innovation.

Working in the Context of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the work of every organization, government agency, family, and individual in Nova Scotia and the NSN4SC, NS GovLab and Inspiring Communities are no different. At the writing of this report, restrictions on in-person gatherings remain in place.

- Continue to focus on how to use the online space for connecting NSN4SC members for networking and information sharing and considering clarification and next steps for the Network;
- Because participation will continue to be limited, consider specific populations to engage or focus efforts on. For example, vulnerable seniors;
- Consider what barriers exist for these participants to enter the online space and what supports could be put in place; and
- Consider how to build these participants skills and comfort with tools to meet and collaborate in a virtual space.

Considerations for the Evaluation

This first annual evaluation of the NSN4SC reflects a traditional approach to evaluation – what evaluation participants reflected had worked well, what were the challenges, incorporating lessons learned, and progress towards the intended outcomes. Because the Network exists within a space for social change and innovation, the evaluation framework and key evaluation questions will need to be examined and potentially revised to better reflect this environment, while still meeting the project's obligations to the funder.

Appendix A: Theory of Change and Logic Model

Theory of Change

Social innovation practices support Nova Scotians who want to work differently
A resilient Social Innovators Network contribute to transformative system change around Nova Scotia's aging population

7-10 Years

Social Innovators influence system level changes through development, implementation and evaluation of services, programs and policies re NS's aging population

Nova Scotians age in place and are connect to community

Nova Scotia has resilient communities build on intergeneration and cross-cultural connections

4-6 Years

SIN is in place; learning and collaborating to influence change in programs, services and polices re NS's aging population — 2,3,4, 5.6

1-3 Years

SIN understand more deeply the multi-faceted aspects of NS's shifting demographic and population aging the required conditions to age in place and build resilient communities — 1, 2,5

Relationships exist between and among social innovators and communities — 3.6

The capacity for and awareness of social innovation in NS is increased — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

A multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational Social Innovation Network is in place — 3,6

NS's aging population is supported through higher fidelity[2] prototypes — 4,5, 6

SIN understand gaps and facilitators for success in current services and approaches in NS — 1, 2,

SIN members are collaborating and with unlikely partners through prototype development — 2,3, 5.6

Social Innovation Network members[3] have access to and understand population aging in NS — Q,2, 4

SIN understand the impacts of an aging population in NS — 1, 2

Assumptions[2]	Problems facing communities are increasingly complex Traditional approaches are not working to address these problems Institutions and people need to work together Participation of individual and groups from diverse backgrounds and intersectional identities will produce relevant solutions for aging populations Learnings will be adapted as needed and leveraged to work iteratively
Principles	**NS Gov Lab Principles** Be in relationship with people & planet • Learning over knowing • Start somewhere – go everywhere • Everybody is needed • Be scrappy, care deeply • Discomfort happens – it's temporary • Whimsy, creativity, & wonder • Co-create our Future
Activities/ Interventions	1. Use experimentation to develop a deeper understanding of population aging in NS (and related issues). 2. Use collaborations with network members to depict a system's level view of Nova Scotia's aging population 3. Build a diverse network of engaged and connected social innovators by working with partners in new ways to cocreate a future for Nova Scotia's aging population. 4. Identify and share required conditions for aging in place in NS and to develop and integrate prototypes that impact aging in place 5. Experiment and prototype 6. Create new multi-sectoral sector partnerships to build and test potential solutions to improving aging in place while staying connected to community and creating connections across generations and cultures to build resilient communities.

[2] Adapted from Canadian Social Innovation Laves Landscape, Survey 2018, Radius.
[2] High fidelity inters an iterative approach to work that is responsive to learnings as well as changes at the systems level.
[3] Social Innovation Network members are NS GovLab fellows, participants from Inspiring Communities' work including, but not limited to the regional sites, and WeavEast as well as community members and groups interested in connecting with this work and working in this way.

Logic Model

Components	Understanding Aging in NS	Network of Social Innovators	Build & Test Solutions via Partnerships
Objectives	Use of experimentation to develop a deeper understanding of population aging in NS (and related issues) Identify gaps in current services and approaches	Build a diverse network of engaged and connected social innovators by working with partners in new ways to improve services, programs and policies directed at Nova Scotia's aging population	Create new multi-sectoral sector partnerships to build and test potential solutions to improving aging in place while staying connected to community and creating connections across generations and cultures to build resilient communities.
Inputs	• Community Network Coordinator time & expertise • NS GovLab Co-Leads leadership & project management • IC leadership & project management • NS GovLab physical space • NS GovLab innovation approach – ideation, rapid prototyping and testing modules • Web platforms (social media, web site, blog platform) • Lab materials • Evaluators	• Community Network Coordinator time & expertise • Web platforms • NS GovLab space • Lab materials • IC Community partners • NS GovLab Fellows – Phase 2 • Meeting supports (space, food, supplies) • Evaluators	• Community Network Coordinator time & expertise • Community partners time • NS GovLab Co-Leads leadership & project management • NS GovLab Space Lab materials • Prototype funds • Evaluators
Activities	• Quarterly meetings/Pop-up Lab events for IC Communities • # and type of blog posts, social media posts, and newsletters • 4 Lunch and learn events • Lab hours for NS GovLab fellows in phase 2 of annual fellowship • Developmental evaluation activities	• 4 Social Innovators Network Events (annual) • Rapid prototyping teaching • Rapid prototyping sessions • Developmental evaluation activities • # and type of gaps and facilitators in current services and approaches	• 4 Social Innovators Network Events (annual) • Rapid prototyping teaching • Rapid prototyping sessions • Evaluation activities • # and type of blog posts and social media posts • Developmental Evaluation activities

	• # and type of gaps and facilitators in current services and approaches		
	↓	↓	↓
Target Groups[3]	• IC Communities • GovLab Fellows and communities • Event participants • CoP	• Event participants • GovLab Fellows • CoP	• IC Communities • GovLab Fellows • CoP • Event attendees
	↓	↓	↓
Outputs	• Experimentation or prototype reports, blog posts, and presentations • Public repository of learnings • Community of Practice annual report • Prototype plans, reports and Learning	• Social Innovators Network • CoP Annual report • CoP mailing list • Social Innovation Community events • Partnerships • Systems Map of CoP network	• Prototypes (integration focused) • New partnerships / collaborations: • Partnerships; • Prototypes for aging in place and community connection; • Prototypes for creating connection across generations and cultures; • Lessons learned, reports, presentations and blog posts; • Public repository of learnings • Social Innovation Community annual report
	↓	↓	↓
Short-Term Outcomes	Nova Scotia's Innovation Network will have diverse learnings about population aging in Nova Scotia, including gaps and successes in services and approaches, which are available to the public. Network members develop a deepened understanding of the impacts of population aging in Nova Scotia. Social Innovation Network members identify potential areas to deepen individual and collective understanding of shifting demographics and population	Increased awareness and capacity for social innovation work in Nova Scotia A collective and multi-faceted understanding of Nova Scotia's aging population. Network members work with unlikely partners to generate new prototypes.	Development of a multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational Social Innovators Network in Nova Scotia. Development of experiments and prototypes to better understand the conditions needed to age in place while staying connected to community as well as building resilient communities comprised of intergenerational and cross-cultural connections High fidelity prototypes are adopted in different communities to test for scale for learning and integration.

[3] Note: A Social Innovation Network member is defined as someone who attends an event or joins the mailing list. A Community of Practice Member is defined as someone who is actively participating in a partnership to prototype potential solutions to address the impact of an aging population in Nova Scotia.

	aging through the development of the experimentation and prototyping Social Innovation Network members understand the gaps and facilitators of success in current services and approaches. Nova Scotia's Social Innovation Network will have a rich and contextual understanding of population aging that is publicly accessible and can be leveraged by anyone wanting to undertake social innovation work.		
	↓	↓	↓
Intermediate Outcomes	Nova Scotia will have a diverse and established network of social innovators to learn from and collaborate with to influence change in programs, services and polices re NS's aging population		
	↓	↓	↓
Long Term Outcomes	Nova's Scotia's network of social innovators influence systems level change to the development, implementation and evaluation of services, programs and policies directed at its aging population. A province comprised of resilient communities built upon intergenerational and cross-cultural connections. Nova Scotians are able to age in place and are connected to community		
	↓	↓	↓
Ultimate Outcome	*A province where social innovation practices are offered to support those who want to work differently.* *As a collective, these individuals will form a resilient and adaptive network to better understand Nova Scotia's aging population in order to contribute to transformational systems change.*		

Appendix B: Outputs and Activity

Objective Area	Outputs and Activities
Obj.1A Use experimentation to develop a deeper understanding of population aging in NS (and related issues) Obj.1B Identify gaps in current services and approaches	
Deepen individual and collective understanding of shifting demographics and population aging through the development of the experimentation and prototyping	See report
Information around population aging publicly accessible	Resources: SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population (PDF 1.3 MB) Action Plan Highlights (PDF 475 KB) 18-month progress report (PDF 184 KB) Busting Myths about Aging: TEDxMSVU Aging Well (video) Beyond The Number (video) NS Govlab Older Worker Employment and Labour Force Participation - Phase 1: Setting the Stage (PDF 345 KB) Older Worker Employment and Labour Force Participation - Phase 2: Final report (PDF 851 KB) Older Worker Employment and Labour Force Participation - Booklet (PDF 24 MB) NS GovLab sourcebook Links: ***SHIFT and strengthen your skills*** START Job Creation Partnerships Skills Development Redefining Retirement ***SHIFT and strengthen your workplace*** Age-Friendly Workplace Nova Scotia Works offices Workplace Initiatives ***SHIFT towards a healthier you*** Mental Health and Addictions Let's Get Moving Action Plan Employment Support and Income Assistance ***Join the SHIFT and help create more vibrant communities*** Seniors' Safety Program Age Friendly Grant Program Housing and repair programs for Nova Scotia Rural community transportation

Objective Area	Outputs and Activities
	Caregiver Benefit Program **Medium blog posts:** 49 articles/posts
Gaps and/or facilitating successes have been identified in current programs, services, and approaches	See report
Information around population aging being leveraged/used to undertake social innovation work	See below
Objective 2: Build a diverse network of engaged and connected social innovators by working with partners in new ways to improve services, programs and policies directed at Nova Scotia's aging population	
Network members working with unlikely partners to generate new protypes	See report
Ob3 – Development of a multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational Social Innovation Community in Nova Scotia. Ob3 - Develop of experiments and prototypes to better understand the conditions needed to age in place while staying connected to community as well as building resilient communities comprised of intergenerational and cross-cultural connections	
Multi-sectoral, diverse, cross-cultural and intergenerational Social Innovation Network in Nova Scotia have been developed	See report
Experiments and prototypes been developed to: - better understand the conditions needed to age in place while staying connected to community - build resilient communities comprised of intergenerational and cross-cultural connections	**Teams** Cohort 1 – 25 fellows Prototypes: • Creativity bus to transport bodies, creative tools and supplies to different areas for participation and collaboration • Poster for community innovation event/website to test interest for online engagement in micro-funding of local community business to support aging in place • One stop shop web portal as a hub to connect existing organizations/volunteer matching service for older NS's living in apartments • Ground Zero entry point for information and services for older adults/assessment framework and business case for aging in place

Objective Area	Outputs and Activities
	<u>Cohort 2 – 19 fellows</u> Prototypes: • Narrated PowerPoint outlining trends of an aging population and components of aging • Facebook Group called Chores and Chums/microfinancing framework to enable existing organization to expand their current offerings for connection between older NS and newcomers to NS/ event for older NSs and newcomers to have lunch and garden together (Connecting in the Garden) • Wireframe mock-up of a dispatch platform for community transportation providers/event connecting international students from across NS with older adults at long-term care centres • Community Food Champion Facilitation Toolkit <u>Cohort 3 – 16 fellows</u> Prototypes: • Co-housing advertisement where homeowners rent out rooms in their homes • NS Social Connectors – building social connections to improve the health of older adults and their communities • Decision-making Game of Life (no prototype report submitted)
High fidelity prototypes adopted in Nova Scotia's communities to test for scale and integration	Not to date