



## ABOUT THE EDMONTON SHIFT LAB

Addressing racism and discrimination continues to be identified as a critical piece of the puzzle in how we reach the big goal of ending poverty in a generation in Edmonton. Building on the work of many local initiatives, the diverse collective making up the Edmonton Shift Lab is stewarding an exploration to develop potential service, policy, system and community action prototypes that will help reduce racism as it contributes to poverty. We want to be bold and explore how to Shift ideas. Shift attitudes. Shift Systems and Shift into new ways of solution finding with community.

*“The Edmonton Shift Lab’s deep dive social innovation lab approach to address racism in our city is a strong and concrete initiative that will move our community forward to action”*

Bishop Jane Alexander, Co-Chair, EndPovertyEdmonton

*“Racism affects many living in poverty. Racist beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours violate fundamental principles of human rights relating to respect, equality, and dignity for all. Confronting and eliminating racism is a critical part of ensuring that everyone can fully engage and participate in our community.”*

EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy 2015

The Edmonton Shift Lab is based in amiskwaciwâskahikan on Treaty 6 territory, traditional meeting grounds for the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Métis, and Inuit.



“Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees experience **discrimination** in workplaces, housing, services and facilities that **exclude** them from opportunities and put them at **risk of poverty.**”

EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy 2015



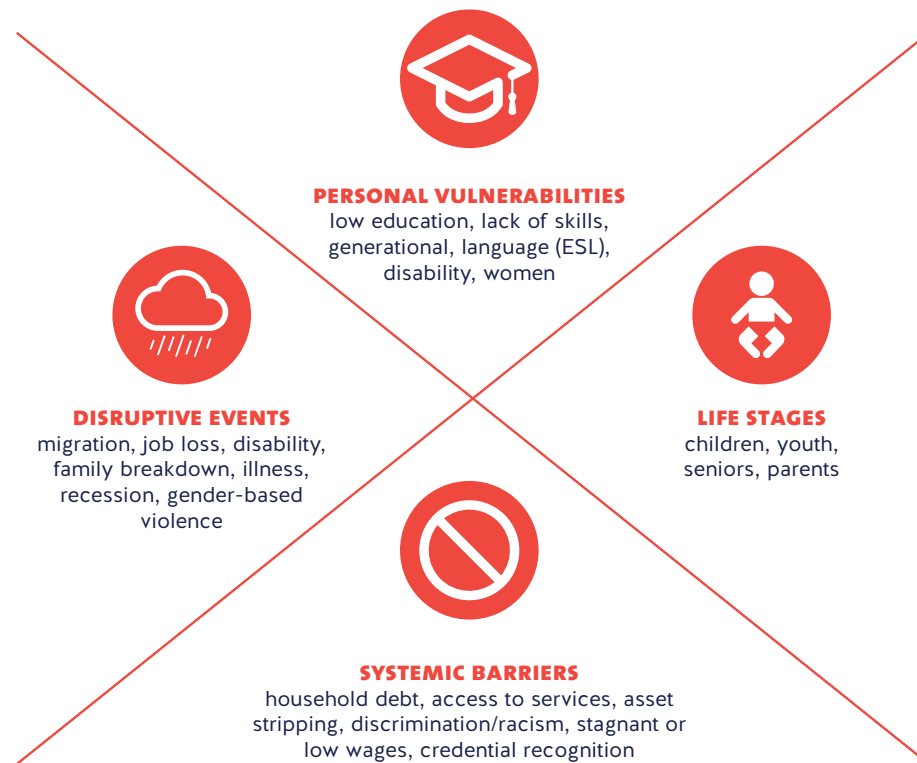
# WHY THE INTERSECTION OF RACISM AND POVERTY?

According to Edmonton Social Planning Council 2015 research, one out of every eight people living in Edmonton (100,870) lives in poverty. That means 12% of Edmontonians do not have the means to assure stable housing, adequate nutritious food, or the conditions that foster health, safety and basic quality of life. In alignment with feedback from Aboriginal leaders and many community members through EndPovertyEdmonton's work, the Edmonton Shift Lab also considers poverty to be more than just an economic issue. Poverty of inclusion, belonging, and opportunities are also key pieces.

**"The Cree word for poverty is Okitimakisiw which loosely translated into English means a person in need, or one who lives poorly. Cree people recognize you can be monetarily rich but poor without a circle of true friends or values to guide you."**

## ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY

### SOURCES OF VULNERABILITY



# SHIFT LAB COLLECTIVE

Responding to the work of EndPovertyEdmonton, Edmonton Community Foundation and the Skills Society Action Lab partnered to develop the Edmonton Shift Lab (ESL). Understanding the value of bottom up approaches to social change, the initial partners began laying the foundation for growing the four key groups stewarding the work of the Shift Lab.



## LAB ADVISORY

A diverse group of 8-10 leaders who have lived experience with the challenges we are addressing, are champions for creative processes that spark critical change, and/or are leaders within key systems that can influence change.

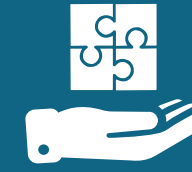
This group will support the lab by providing input when critical questions arise in the lab process and act as key levers supporting the public presence of the Shift Lab.



## COMMUNITY VOICE

An ever growing collective of organizations and people that are interested in or already working on addressing racism and poverty in Edmonton.

This group will act as a bridge connecting community experiences to the lab process. This will support sensemaking around racism, poverty, and systems and provide a link to people to co-design solutions with community.



## LAB BACKBONE STEWARDSHIP

A group of 5 people that represent diverse ethnocultural community perspectives and have knowledge and know-how around the coordination of human-centered design thinking and change labs.

This group will steward the design of the lab, research and gather data to ensure the lab is rooted in sound principles, coordinate and organize the logistics of the lab, and help co-facilitate lab sessions.



## CORE LAB TEAM

A diverse group of 7-9 people with backgrounds in human rights activism, design thinking, systems thinking, anthropology, service innovation, community building and human services.

This team will undertake on the ground research with community to first explore assumptions, ideas, and realities around racism and poverty in Edmonton and then co-design and test solutions with people.

## WHAT IS A LAB?

To aid the move from roundtable talks to action, a promising approach is emerging in the social innovation ecosystem. Often called a social innovation lab, the approach draws on the strengths, empathy, creativity, and wisdom of a collective to explore new ways of making progress on a complex challenge. These labs are guided by convening diverse perspectives on an issue, gaining insight from people with lived experience of a challenge, facilitated ideation, building prototypes of solutions, and testing them to see how they work on the ground with people. A lab creates a safe zone for a collective to explore, question assumptions, be bold, be agile enough to adapt as learning emerges and experiment with solutions. As evidence emerges of what prototyped solutions are working, solutions can be scaled and spread to impact systemic change. To help scale solutions systemically, key champions are needed who can open doors, steward policy shifts and build capacity for embracing change.

*“I was thrilled to hear that the Edmonton Shift Lab would be exploring the intersection of racism and poverty. Thinking back on my time as co-chair of the community well-being working group of EndPovertyEdmonton I can recall many discussions that focused on the impact of systemic racism on well-being and consequently on poverty. It is of utmost importance to recognize, explore, and ultimately address how it is that oppression and racism factor into the complex issue of poverty. I look forward to seeing how the Shift Lab uses social innovation and collaborative human-centered design approaches to tackle this challenging issue.”*

Robin Mazumder- Co-Chair Community Well-Being Working Group of EndPovertyEdmonton



*“A social innovation can be a product or new service but it can also be a principle, an idea, a piece of legislation, a social movement, an intervention, or some combination of them.”*

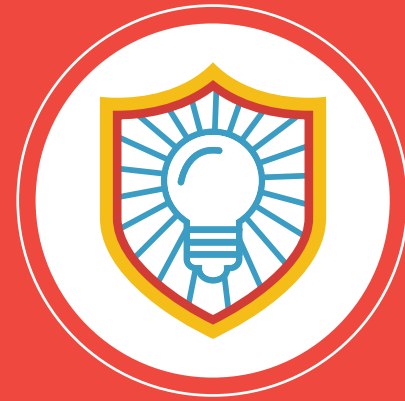
Stanford Social Innovation Review

# A LAB EXPLORATION IS ABOUT THE JOURNEY AND THE GOAL

The Edmonton Shift Lab is about exploring the intersections between racism and poverty. While its goal is to develop innovative prototypes to help address the issues and needs of our communities, the journey towards this goal is equally important. The collective learning that will emerge from the lab is a vital part of the process. As we move forward together, we are diligent about documenting the learning of what's working and what isn't so that the journey is as transparent as possible and is designed to build and share knowledge.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Some principles guide and underlie the approach of the Edmonton Shift Lab. These core principles are reminders to help the collective understand the mindset and conditions that lay the foundation for success. As the lab evolves new principles will emerge and be incorporated over time.



## WE FOSTER A SAFE EXPERIMENTAL SPACE

This work is complex and often messy. In the Edmonton Shift Lab we choose to create a fun, open, and inclusive environment where we strive to be aware of our biases and bold with our ideas. We believe the opportunity to come together in a space that values making mistakes along the way builds trust and infuses learning, laughter, friendship and community building into the process.



## WE CREATE SOLUTIONS WITH COMMUNITY

Working in complexity is tricky. We believe the wisdom generated from the coming together of a diverse collective helps us get to more thoughtful solutions. Together, we build opportunities to learn from others, co-design with community, and test our solutions with people to ensure that they actually work.



## WE EMBRACE NEW WAYS OF THINKING AND ACTING

To get to better solutions we need new patterns of thinking and acting. Through Human-Centered Design Thinking and Processes to explore root causes of a complex issue we are opening up new ways of collaborative solution finding. Our exploration integrates creative problem solving practices with rigorous methodologies to help us carve new ways forward while navigating complexity.



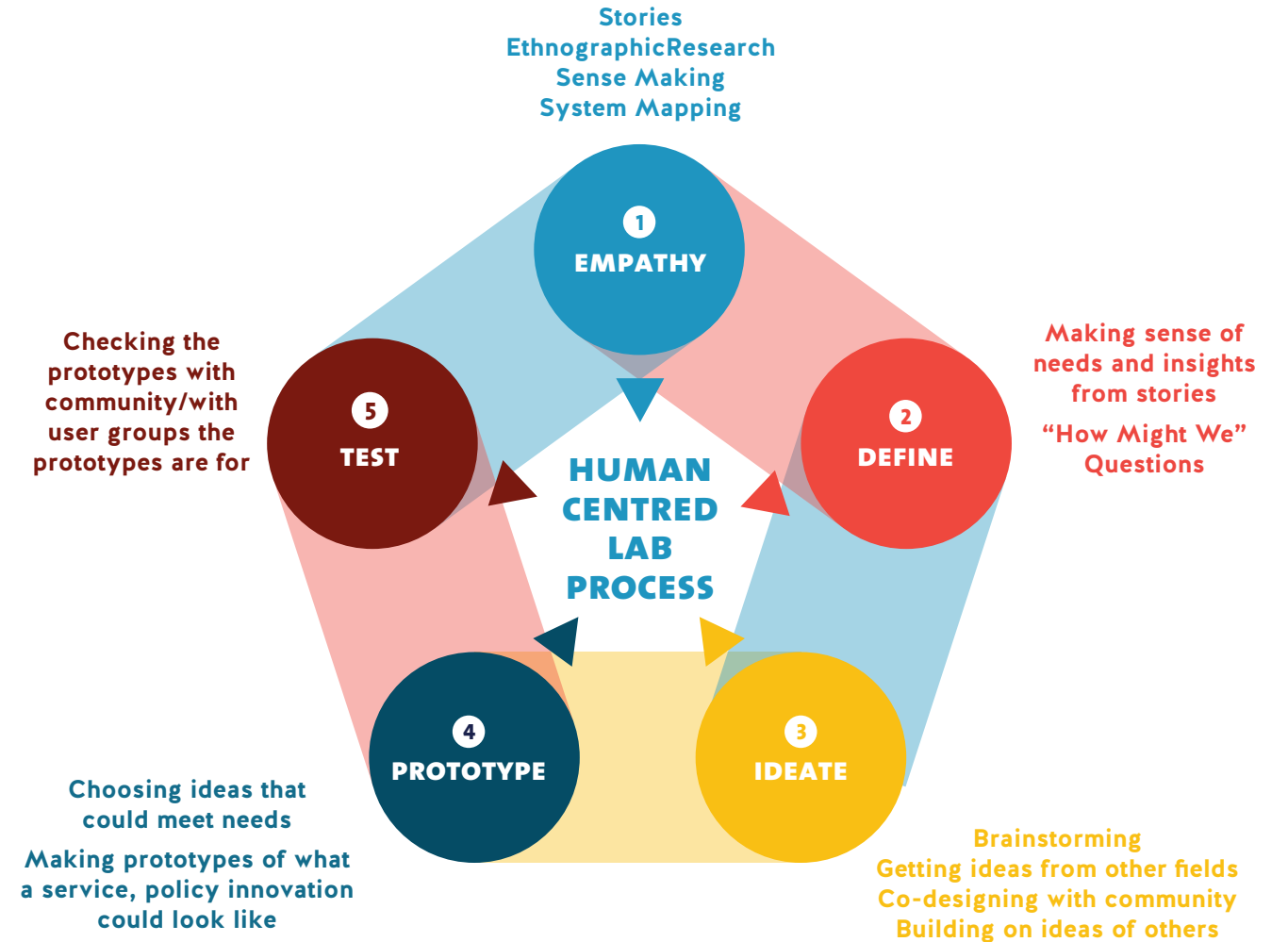
## WE FOCUS ON IMPACT

Getting to solutions that work for the people we serve is at the core of the Shift Lab. By working with people, using a creative process, and testing what we come up with, we believe we can discover some potential solutions to the messy, complex, and tricky problem of racism and its intersection with poverty.



# SHIFT LAB PROCESS

The shift starts with people – it’s about working with community to co-design solutions. This means working in a very different way by using human-centred design approaches with a dash of systems thinking to work through this complex challenge. Design Thinking begins with empathy, is action oriented and helps people move from talking about ideas to making them tangible and testable. Systems Thinking helps people identify possible root causes of complex issues by looking at the different parts of a system, the spaces in-between those parts, and how those parts work together as a whole.



# THE EDMONTON SHIFT LAB PHASES



## PRE LAB

- Convene Core Lab Team
- Establish Advisory
- Developmental evaluation framework started
- Initial research for lab design
- Connect with community to research and learn from existing initiatives and leaders exploring the issue
- Website and artifacts to explain the lab, and share learning

MAY - OCT 2016



## LAB EXPLORATION

- Establish common vision and lab values
- Sense making of issues with community
- System mapping
- Ethnographic research in community
- Defining and narrowing scope
- Facilitated ideation of potential solutions with lab team and community
- Co-designing prototypes
- Testing prototypes
- Refining and iterating prototypes based on community feedback

### COMMUNITY CAMPFIRES:

Regular events to learn from community and about the work of the lab

NOV - FEB 2017



## POST LAB

- Evaluation of lab journey learning with community, core lab team, advisory
- Prototypes submitted for prototype funding round with ECF
- Prototype Incubator
- Defining what is needed next for the next lab iteration

NOV - FEB 2017



# OK, THIS ALL LOOKS NICE, BUT WHAT IS THE EDMONTON SHIFT LAB REALLY TRYING TO DO?

Here's the thing:  
Racism is unfortunately still around.

Discrimination towards Aboriginal people, refugees and newcomers to Canada is especially a problem. Racism makes it hard for people to find good jobs, good housing, helpful services and feel a sense of belonging in community-Racism is preventing people from getting out of poverty.



The Edmonton Shift Lab doesn't want to just talk about these issues with community. The Edmonton Shift Lab also doesn't have all the answers. The Shift Lab is bringing lots of diverse people together to create solutions that address racism and poverty. Solutions might be a new service that helps people in community, or it might be a community project or a new policy. As we create ideas together we're going to try them out and to see if they work for people. As we find stuff that works, we will be finding ways to make the good ideas grow and spread. The Shift Lab will have lots of help from leaders in many places who can help make change happen.

We need your voice, input and creativity. Stay tuned for in person Shift Lab explorations in your community.

## WHAT'S YOUR BIG IDEA ON HOW TO ADDRESS RACISM?

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# THOUGHTS FROM COMMUNITY



“A two way process to learn about each other’s culture, ‘interculturalism’, will lead to stronger sharing.”

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“Racism and stereotypes are major issues. People have stereotypes about me too, as a new Iraq Canadian.”

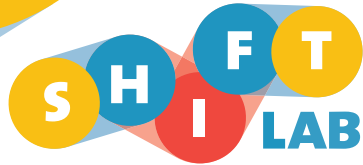
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“Ending racism means making ‘the other’ less intimidating – having fun, sharing culture and stories. Why do we always make it boring and dull? It should be about empowerment, joy and celebration.”



**IN ALL THE EFFORTS TO REDUCE  
POVERTY WE’VE COME ACROSS,  
RACISM IS CONSISTENTLY IDENTIFIED  
AS ONE OF THE SYSTEMIC BARRIERS  
AND ROOT CAUSES KEEPING  
MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN POVERTY.**

EndPovertyEdmonton identified 6 “game-changers” that need to be addressed in order to get to the root causes of poverty; eliminating racism was on that list. This is not a new realization: in its 2001 Durban Declaration, the United Nations noted the inextricable link between poverty and racism. Systemic barriers to education, employment, affordable housing, and social inclusion as well as on-going impacts of colonization and immigration policy mean that Aboriginal people and newcomers disproportionately experience poverty, which in turn can support racist attitudes and policy, which contributes to further poverty. There is no simple solution to this complex problem but the Edmonton Shift Lab hopes to find some pathways forward.



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