

Phase I Output Report
October 2020

EMERGING LESSONS & IMPACTS





Background of the Nest Lab

In 2019, the organization Nelson at its Best hosted a series of cross-sectoral community roundtable conversations to begin to uncover innovative solutions to climate change.

Nelson at its Best recognized that the complex challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change demands an extraordinary, collective response and requires working with many diverse actors with different viewpoints from across sectors.

Simultaneously, the City of Nelson began the process of developing an ambitious community-level climate change action plan to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

These events and activities merged and led to the shared realization that a different way of

engagement was needed in Nelson, and that the most appropriate way forward for both groups and processes, would be the development of a collaborative social innovation lab. The initiative was convened by the City of Nelson, Nelson at its Best and Interior Health. With seed funding from the 'Systems Change' grant stream at The Vancouver Foundation, as well as in-kind support from local organizations and individuals, a test phase of the Nest Lab was able to launch in the spring of 2020.

The Nest Lab Team

The people who worked together to make Nest Lab happen are:

Core Team

Staff from The City of Nelson, Interior Health and Nelson at its Best who worked together to procure funding, design an RFP for experienced workshop design and facilitation services, and manage the lab's smooth progression and evaluation.

Champions Group

An informal group of citizens, business owners, engagement professionals and non profit leaders focused on moving roundtable talks to action. This group offered continual support, guidance and insights with recruitment, evaluating success and communications.

Lab Designers and Facilitators

Pong Leung (Travesia Partners) and Steven Cretney (The Forest) were hired to design and facilitate the first phase of the Nest Lab. Travesia Partners is a social enterprise committed to helping organizations and communities create credible and robust sustainability strategies, collaborate effectively to realize these strategies, and communicate their lessons and stories. The Forest is a Nelson-based design and engagement studio focused on endorsing social, environmental and educational initiatives.

The Nest Lab at a glance

Recognizing that climate change is a complex and systemic challenge, and that the health of our community, ecosystems and economy depend on how we respond to it, the Nest Lab was launched as a first step in laying the groundwork for long-term, collaborative and innovative community action on climate change in Nelson. It was also devised as a mechanism to inform the City of Nelson's new Climate Change Action Plan to ensure community support and inclusion.

Nest Lab's convening question:

The intention of the Nest Lab is to work collaboratively to explore solutions to the following question:

How might we harness Nelson's collective resources and creativity to create a prosperous, resilient, and low-carbon future for all?



Embracing a "Nest Lab" mindset...

- ...where diversity of perspectives is valued
- ...where we are comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity
- ...where we build on the ideas of others more than shoot ideas down
- ...of humility in facing complexity
- ...where we can shift between reflection and action
- ...where we are willing to be wrong, make mistakes and learn
- ...where we don't jump to conclusions quickly
- ...of trust, respect and confidentiality

Adapted from the
Social Innovation Lab Field Guide,
Ben Weinlick & Aleeya Velji, 2016



Responding to COVID-19: Online Approach

The Nest Lab was originally envisioned to be a series of in-person, connection focused workshops, launching in March 2020 and wrapping up in June 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly caused physical distancing requirements at that time, however, the lab team had to make the difficult decision to pivot all the engagements to online instead of delaying or cancelling the lab. This decision was driven by the urgency to address our climate challenge, even during a pandemic. Further, choosing to adapt in this way allowed the lab team to exemplify the lab spirit of being adaptive and reacting to constantly shifting contexts and it gave our community participants a chance to connect when they needed it most.

What is a Social Innovation Lab?

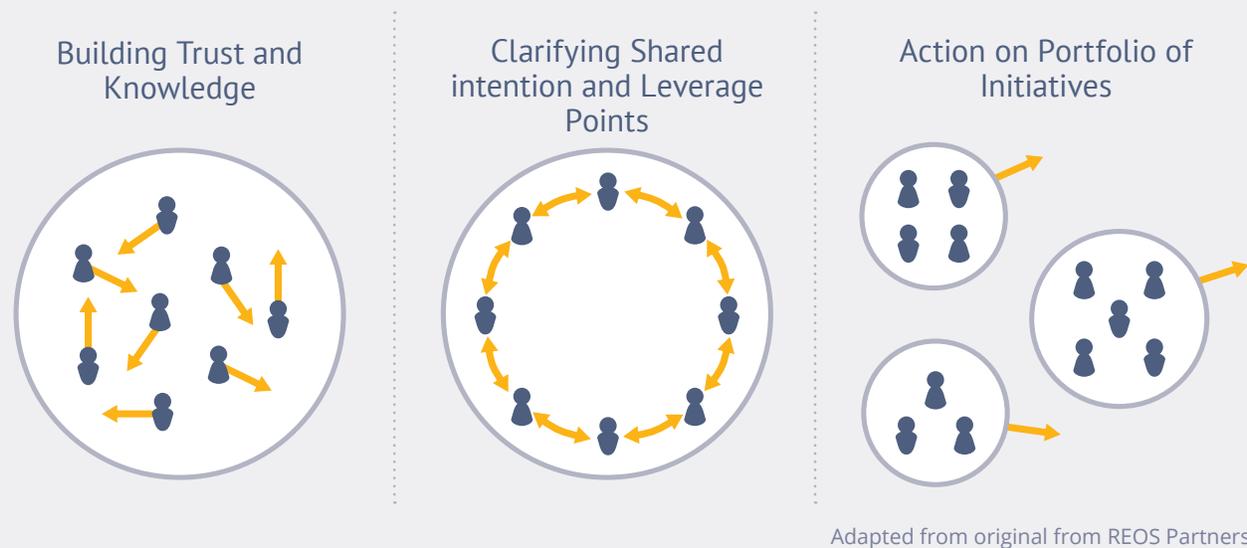
In short, a social innovation lab is an ongoing platform for collaborative innovation towards a shared intention.

A social innovation lab (often called 'a social lab') is a community engagement and problem solving approach that draws on the "strengths, empathy, creativity, and wisdom of a collective to explore new ways of making progress on a complex challenge".¹ Social lab processes are rooted in the trust that community members can and will effectively engage on important complex issues to develop new solutions that align with their shared values and interests.

Social labs are platforms for people to work together over time. This is distinct from a series of workshops or a planning process, which has a start and end. Lab processes are deliberately generative, and can extend for months or years through multiple iterations of creative engagement.

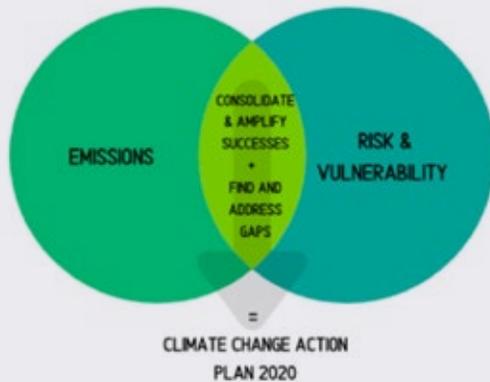
An effective social lab platform developed over time requires:

- **A Safe Container:** A space for participants to build relationships and feel comfortable expressing personal views and new ideas.
- **A Backbone Organization:** An organization with the capacity to provide logistical, administrative and facilitation support to enable effective collaboration.
- **A Shared Intention:** A collaborative articulation of the greater contribution that the group wants to work together to make.
- **A Portfolio of Initiatives:** A suite of collaborative activities, prototypes and experiments that allow for the testing and elevation of the most promising ideas.



Climate Change Community Action Plan

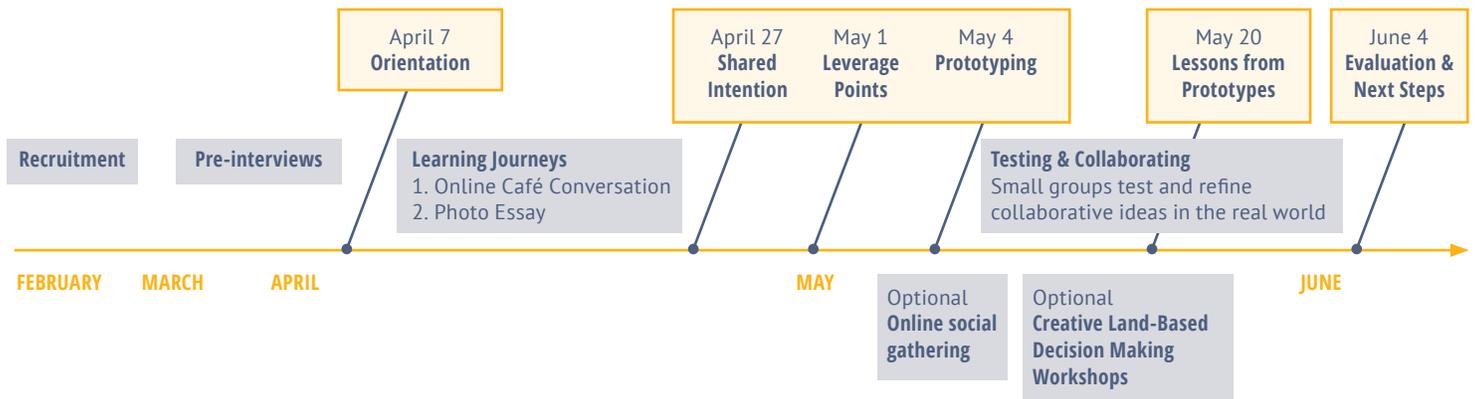
The City of Nelson has shown longstanding environmental leadership in recent decades. With leading edge programs related to corporate greenhouse gas reduction, on-bill financing for retrofits, a community solar garden and extensive emergency management programming. There is a large foundation of climate change action to learn and draw from here. Building on previous successes, the City is now developing an integrated Community Climate Change Action Plan focused concurrently on climate change mitigation and adaptation priorities. The Plan will be consolidating and coordinating previous policies and actions, while developing a roadmap for addressing remaining gaps and new risks.



For this Plan to have a meaningful impact on climate change, it will need to be informed by localized baseline data, deeper and broader community engagement, as well as the skills and interests of the people and organizations that will be a critical part of the Plan's implementation. Nest Lab was launched at a crucial time in the Plan development process, serving as a mechanism for unearthing and integrating a wider and more diverse range of community perspectives and ideas than would emerge with more conventional engagement methods.

Lab Journey

Below is a timeline of the principal activities and online workshops defining Phase I of the Nest Lab. An elaboration each is provided in the following sections.



February: Participant Recruitment

GOAL: Recruit 15 participants with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, experience and values.

METHOD: Requirements included committing to participate fully in the lab and motivation to take action on climate change. Special attention and effort was also given to ensure that participants represented a diversity of sectors, demographics and viewpoints. Through a short application process, 26 number people applied and 15 participants were initially chosen.

RESULTS: Phase 1 participants joined the lab from a range of the following sectors, organization and institutions types, and as unaffiliated individuals (4):

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Food Security (Non-Profit) | Media (Independent) |
| Conservation (Non-Profit) | Academia (Institution) |
| Research (Non-Profit) | Energy Efficiency (Business) |
| Theatre (Non-Profit) | Construction (Business) |
| Forestry (Business) | Architecture (Business) |
| Agriculture (Non-Profit) | Real Estate (Business) |

By the final session, total participants were reduced by four. Two stating increased COVID-related work demand leading to capacity issues, one stating they felt the process was not suited to them and another who never responded to inquiries as to why they stopped attending sessions.

March: Pre-interviews

GOAL: Connect individually with each participant to surface personal stories, initial thoughts on climate action opportunities and barriers, tensions or areas of alignment within the group pre-lab, and questions participants might have.

METHOD: 20 minute one-on-one interviews with each lab participant

RESULTS: Below is a summary of the themes we heard from the 16 interviews we conducted:

A collective sense of hope...

“Going in with my eyes wide open and see where it takes us.”

Overwhelming sense of gratitude for what we have here in Nelson

Hoping this is a starting point for new ways of doing things and taking action

We can only work on these complex and multi-faceted issues collectively

These tensions became clear:

Nelson is/should be a leader in climate action

vs A lot of Nelson’s climate actions have been oh-so-virtuous

Nelson needs a bold vision and strong commitments

vs Nelson needs more realistic, practical, pragmatic solutions

Barriers to climate action include lack of...

Funding Incentives Support Collective focus

Interest areas for climate action:

Food security and growing
Commuter traffic
Buildings, infrastructure
Energy conservation and efficiency

Fear of..

Time Futility Polarization
COVID 19
“Need” for perfection

April: Session 1 – Orientation

GOAL: Help participants feel welcomed, connected, excited and prepared to be fully engaged in the Nest Lab going forward.

METHOD: The session included an introduction to using the online Zoom platform, information about social labs and the process for the Nest Lab, participants sharing personal motivations about why they are compelled to work on the convening question, preparation for personal learning journeys and a chance to surface and test an early portfolio of ideas for collaborative action.

RESULTS: The Initial Portfolio of Initiatives included:

- Community Casual Rideshare/Delivery
- Sustainable Building Internship
- Capture Energy from Non Recyclable Waste Plastics
- Local Carbon Offset Program
- Increase Reliability/Resilience of Nelson Electricity Supply
- Residential Envelope Retrofits for Energy Use Reduction
- Ensuring Inclusion in Our City and Broader Regional Community in a Time of Climate Change
- District Heat Generated from a Lake Source Geothermal Loop
- Food Resilience Innovation Lab
- Selous In Bloom Agroforestry Project
- Climate Change-Focused 'Embedded' Public Art Program
- Building Development Permits Linked to Food Production Requirements
- Urban/Backyard Garden Sharing / Community Harvest Share Program
- Green Data Server
- Nurturing a "We/I Can Make a Difference" Positive Attitude To Tackling Climate Change
- Green Bloc Neighbourhood Groups
- Promotion and Education Around Conservation
- E-Bike Share Program
- Public Vehicle Share Program



April: Learning Journeys

GOAL: Encourage participants to interact, engage with and learn more about from their peers and neighbors' values and behaviours related to climate change.

METHOD: Participants were asked to complete two personal learning journeys between the Orientation and the Shared Intentions workshops:

1. **Online Cafe Conversation**
2. **Simple Photo Essay**

RESULTS:

Learning Journey One: **Online Cafe Conversation**

Participants were asked to host a one-hour conversation with a small group of their personal and/or professional networks to honestly share their feelings about climate change while exploring different and aligning perspectives and ideas for climate action in Nelson. A short guide template was provided that included a few trigger questions to spark the conversation:

- i. Climate change, what does it mean to you and what do you think causes it?
- ii. How important is taking action on climate change for Nelson? Why?
- iii. What ideas for community-based collaborative climate solutions would you like the Nest Lab to consider?

Nine online cafe conversations were held, with 37 participants sharing their thoughts and feelings. Key insights from these cafe conversations are summarized below:

Key insights on Climate Change

- High-level of concern about the ecological degradation caused by climate change, especially Nelson's vulnerability to wildfires, the impact on snowpack and flooding.
- Although fear, anxiety and doom about what climate change means for the future were expressed by most, some indicated a sense of inevitability, while others shared feelings of hopefulness.
- Need to be especially aware of climate change impact on vulnerable groups and consider solutions that help lower socioeconomic groups.
- High-level of agreement that climate change is caused by human activity, although there were some who feel that we need to be careful of overexaggerating the human impact.

Key insights on Taking Action

- Most believe it is important to take action on climate change.
- Tensions between the need for individual action versus government action.
- Uncertainty about what the COVID pandemic means for climate change and climate action. Will it distract from climate action or will it demonstrate how a crisis can impact our communities and that we have the ability to quickly and globally react to issues?
- Be mindful of our global and national context, but let's act locally to make a difference. Some local areas of influence mentioned include: housing, transportation, waste management, local food production, tourism.
- Citizen engagement, transportation and food security were top of mind action areas. Others included recycling and composting, sharing economy, land and watershed management, youth engagement, home energy efficiency and water use.

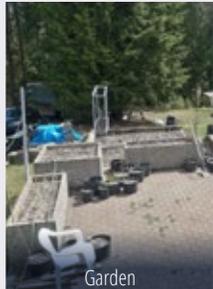
Learning Journey Two: Simple Photo Essay

Participants were asked to take three photos that represent what gives them the most hope that we can address climate change in Nelson, and three photos about what most concerns them about climate change in Nelson. These photos could be literal or figurative.

Hope that we can address climate change in Nelson:



Urban Gardens



Garden



Sprout



Garden



Small scale, low carbon, energy efficient construction



Residential high-efficiency retrofit



Zero emissions



Garden



High-density affordable housing



EV-CarCoop



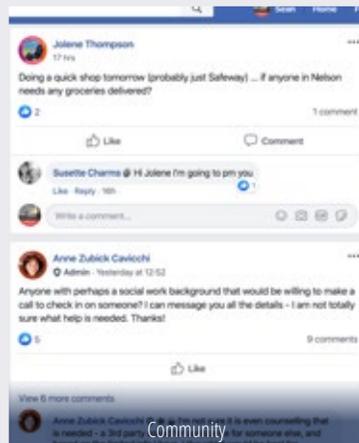
Have transitioned in past



Living in community and sharing meals



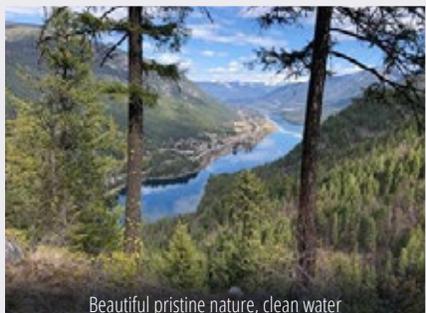
Community coming together



Community



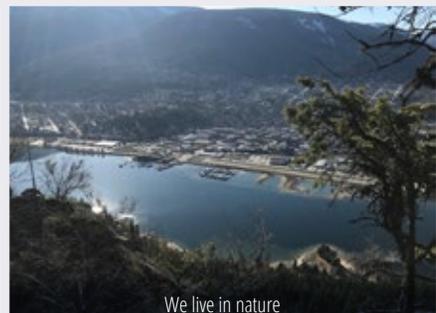
Communities and corporations being able to react to Covid



Beautiful pristine nature, clean water



Cottonwood



We live in nature

Simple Photo Essay continued...

Concern about climate change in Nelson:



Under-utilized / unproductive food space



Lack of / incorrect composting



Food waste



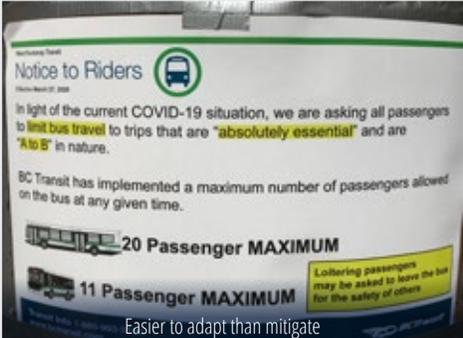
Contaminated soil and water



Poor waste management and recycling



Homelessness



Easier to adapt than mitigate



Clear Cutting in Watersheds



logging



clear cutting



Water supply



Wild Fires



high carbon construction materials



Urban planning that favours cars over people



Gas Guzzlers



Denying limits and effects of fossil fuels



Underutilized tools



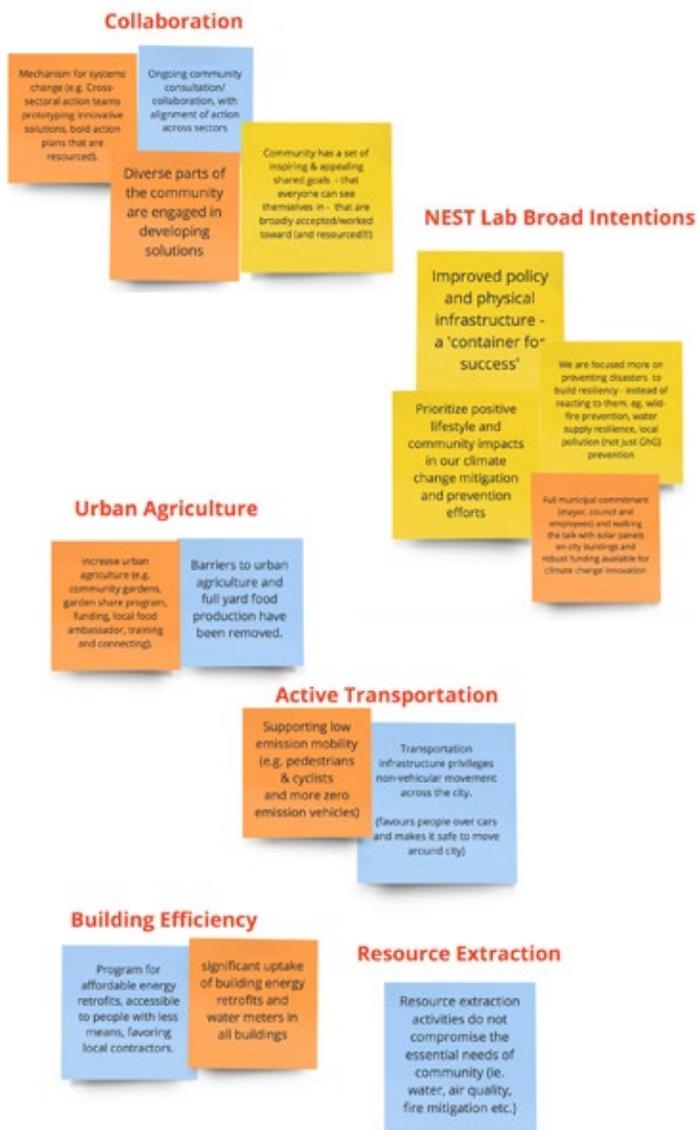
Favour macro economy over local

April: Session 2 – Shared Intention

GOAL: Surface and synthesize a set of success principles to guide our work together, i.e. what is it that we hope for the City of Nelson?

METHOD: A virtual whiteboard tool, Miro, was used so that everyone could use and edit “sticky notes” simultaneously throughout the session and facilitated exercises. In breakout groups, answers to the following questions were brainstormed: “If our work – and the work of Nest cohorts that come after us – is successful *in three years time* what difference will we have made in Nelson?”

RESULTS: Below is the resulting whiteboard of ideas, and to the right is the draft ‘Success Principles’ derived from the whiteboard notes and ideas.



Success Principles

In three years time, we have built and resourced the Nest Lab to be an engagement **model** and **collaborative platform** that:

- Enables **positive** and **innovative** lifestyle, policy and infrastructure **solutions that address climate change**
- Builds community **resilience** by encouraging a preventative mindset to natural disasters (e.g. wildfires, flooding, water supply).
- Engages **diverse** parts of the community to act boldly together for systems change.
- Is **equitable**, inclusive and accessible to all community members
- Acts **locally and regionally**, collaboratively pursuing impact beyond Nelson’s municipal borders.

In particular, we want to make a difference in the following areas in Nelson:

- **Urban Agriculture:** Removing production barriers and implementing regional food initiatives, e.g. full yard food production.
- **Active Transportation:** Prioritizing active, safe and low-emission transportation infrastructure (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists and zero emission vehicles).
- **Efficient Buildings:** Enabling significant uptake of energy efficiency retrofits and water meter installations in all buildings, with programs accessible to people with less means and favouring local contractors.
- **Engaging Industry:** Supporting local industry to take risks and innovate, in order to support broader impact and help fulfill the essential needs of the community.

May: Session 3 – Leverage Points, Session 4 – Prototyping

GOAL: Surface and prioritize initiatives that align with shared success principles and create prototype teams and projects to test assumptions.

METHOD: These two sessions used the initial portfolio ideas from the first Orientation Session as a jumping off point. These ideas, along with others that emerged since then, were presented, discussed, revised and plotted onto a matrix of impact relative to feasibility.



Impact:

The difference we want to make as outlined in the Success Principles, in particular on “positive climate solutions”.

Feasibility:

Our ability as the Nest Lab to make this difference.

RESULTS: Through a variety of facilitated, collaborative exercises, participants surfaced and assessed ideas that aligned with the previously developed success principles and Nelson’s priority climate change challenges. After voting to move higher potential ideas to the top, each participant signed up for an idea they wanted to contribute to further shaping and testing, or in social lab terms: *prototyping*. The result was four prototype groups. Each Prototype Group started building out the high potential ideas during these sessions, in hopes that they would continue testing and shaping their idea through the rest of the lab, and potentially beyond.

The Four Prototypes that emerged from these two sessions were:

1. **Nelson Neighbours:** Convene neighbourhood level groups that focus on connecting community members and empowering them to develop and implement collaborative, hyper-local climate actions.
2. **Increasing Uptake for Building Retrofit Programs:** Determine how civil society can best contribute to increasing the uptake of provincial and municipal energy efficiency programs in order to reduce the use

Prototype groups worked together in Miro to answer the following questions:

What is the idea? // Who is the team? // What is the desired impact? // What are the assumptions are we making in order for this to work? Which ones are we not sure of but need to be? // Who are the stakeholders we need to make sure are engaged? Who are the most important? // What is a simple prototype we could create to test critical assumptions and/or engage critical stakeholders? // What are our next steps from now to May 20?



Why Prototyping?

A prototype is a simple experimental model of a proposed solution used to test or validate ideas (quickly and inexpensively), so that the critical refinements or possible changes in direction are made before a solution is fully designed or adopted.

Interaction Design Foundation 2020

Why do it?

To Learn - To make ideas tangible, learn by doing, and quickly test whether they hold promise for further development.

To Probe - To help group learn more about the complex system in which they are operating and/or trying to change,

To Test - To visualize and test a concept or idea to determine whether it warrants further development and testing in the field.

Adapted from materials courtesy of Mark Cabaj, Here to There Consulting Inc.

of natural gas an ensure a more equitable distribution of program opportunities and benefits.

3. **Climate Change & Creative Sector Exchange Program:** Embed sponsored artists and creative sector experts into climate change-related initiatives (municipal and community) - and vice versa when appropriate - as a means to develop more creative, interesting and accessible responses to climate challenges.
4. **Backyard Garden Share:** Team members explored how to support an emerging initiative to increase local food production, strengthen local economies, and build community by matching underutilized productive land in the form of backyard gardens with those who can use it.

May: Session 5 – Lessons from Prototyping

GOAL: Debrief and share lessons and learnings from participants' prototyping experiences, and determine next steps.

METHOD: Prototype groups worked together online to answer the following questions related to their project:

What is the idea you are working on, who is the team and what is the desired impact? // What have we done since the last workshop? // What are highlights from feedback? // What have we learned about your assumptions of the ideas? Effectiveness, feasibility, viability, stakeholder support? // What do you feel is the next step for the idea? (Continue to develop, Pivot, Pause, Spin-off, Discard, Other?) // What needs to happen next?

Group #3:

Idea

Public Art/Climate Change Exchange and Festival

Team Members

Sarah, Kara and Brandon - but we're looking for more :)

Our Desired Impact

"engaging citizens on both the issue of climate change as well as options for responding to it in a more creative, interesting and participatory way - will lead to ..."

What have we done since the last workshop?

- Wrote a pitch
- Test Website
- Developed a survey to test assumptions/test the waters
- Sent survey out to 30 - 14 responses
- Research/reading

What have we learned about your assumptions of the idea's...

...effectiveness? This will be a challenge to measure in terms of OI&A and vulnerability directly but there is high potential behaviour change leading to larger behavioural climate impacts.

...feasibility? Major challenges to feasibility include COVID and huge amount of time/skill that will have to go into festival development.

...viability? Single name shows, numerous art events and groups.

...stakeholder support? Are there other initiatives, can you collaborate with?

What do you feel is the next step for the idea?

- Continue to develop
- Pivot
- Pause
- Spin-off
- Discard
- Other

Why?

- PIVOT! (And continue to develop)
- What if we start with an exploration of the "exchange" element of the festival?
- Creative sector + ...tech? Plus science? Plus forestry?
- Results = art and new ways of working
- May lead to eventual showcase/festival...may not.
- Embrace lab mentality - uncertainty ok for now...move slowly and carefully alongside our new emerging reality - and hopefully shaping it!
- Realistic approach for both residents, lab folks and our current situation

What are highlights

- Significant rate of response Shows interest and strength of our networks
- Overall - strong support re: idea and overarching assumption
- More ppl interested in experiencing/receiving it vs. helping organize
- Hesitation in answers likely related to COVID and mass gatherings (underlying and overt)
- Fair amount of ppl wanting to know more/help/stay in touch (1/3 responses)
- Idea seemed to inspire some folks/get the wheels turning right off the bat

What needs to happen next?

How can the City support your idea?

- Re-draft idea/pitch
- Research: What's already happening, locally and beyond?
- Grow the team!
- Don't rush ;)



Additional Activity: Creative Land-Based Decision Making Workshops
 Optional workshops designed to support participants in better connecting with one another and with the local environment that they are working to protect. Workshops were offered by local Art Therapist Sarah West to Nest Lab participants and the Champions Group.



Additional Activity: Bird Bath Social
 With Covid-19 limiting the ability for participants to develop personal connections and socialize, an optional afterwork 'social' was offered for participants and facilitators to connect on a more personal level.

June: Session 6 – Evaluation & Next Steps

GOAL: Draw out lessons from participants related to their experience in the Nest Lab and collaboratively explore future possibilities for the next iteration of Nest Lab.

METHOD: To begin with, prototype groups worked together online to answer the following questions:

- What have we learned?
- What does this mean for our prototype?
- Now what should we do?

Afterwards, the focus turned to Nest Lab lessons and future possibilities. Participants individually journalled about how the lab was effective / ineffective in enabling collaborative climate change action in Nelson, and then shared their thoughts with the group.

RESULTS:

What was effective

1. Creative Online Facilitation. Participants noted that the creative use of online techniques and platforms exceeded expectations. Sessions were well organized with clear goals, and a good mix of listening, talking and interactive exercises.
2. Collaborating with Others. Participants noted the value of having diverse viewpoints and networks to draw from and being able to work with others who are motivated to take action. A special mention of having Kate Letizia in the group to bring in the perspective and leadership of the City of Nelson.
3. Working Together Over Time. Participants noted the value of working together over a series of months in a facilitated fashion. This allowed them to build trust and relationships, and remain accountable to each other through a series of deadlines. A special note of the resilience and adaptability of the group as the lab pivoted to online delivery and collaboration.
4. Clarifying Shared Success. Participants appreciated that the lab process allowed the group to engage others in Nelson through the learning journeys and develop a shared statement of success (see Success Principles) before jumping into action.



What was ineffective

1. Limits of Meeting Online. Participants acknowledged that meeting in-person would allow for more interaction and relationship building, and missed the informal nature of conversations over breaks. Participants also noted that the 2-hour limit to each online session made discussions more rushed than ideal. Additionally, some noted also technical challenges that they faced.
2. Background and Context on Climate Change in Nelson. Participants desired a better grounding of the specific opportunities and constraints around climate change and climate action in Nelson. They noted that having this background information would have helped to better identify the areas where they participants could have the most impact. One additional comment related to context is perhaps a missed opportunity to use the pandemic as a catalyst to open new possibilities.
3. Diversity of Perspectives. Participants noted a desire for an even wider range of perspectives and types of experience to be brought into the lab in some way, either through participant recruitment methods or via increased interaction and communication with the broader community.
4. Uncertainty of Working in an Experiment. Given that the Nest Lab itself was an experiment in learning new ways to work together and iterate, participants noted some confusion related to working in a way where the outcome is uncertain. In particular, participants mentioned a desire for more clarity around their roles in the prototype projects and a lack of clear guidance after Phase I of the lab.

Early Impacts of the Nest Lab

The following are notable ways that the Nest Lab has influenced and impacted climate action in its first Phase. These have been grouped into four main areas:

- Lab Participants
- Community of Nelson
- City of Nelson
- The Practice of Social Innovation Lab

Lab Participants

Capacity building

For participants, champions group, and facilitators

- Online tools (Zoom, Miro)
- Facilitation experience – online climate cafes
- Increased understanding of climate change (overall and locally)
- Increased understanding of social innovation principles, the social lab methodology and effective engagement tools/methods
- New skills related to ideation and program design
- Greater depth of knowledge related to the climate change ecosystem and policy landscape in Nelson

Impact on Individuals

- Participants noted varying degrees of impact on their individual understanding of climate change in general and on climate change

solutions. While some feel they gained a greater understanding of the issues and solutions after participating in the lab, others seemed to have realized throughout the lab that their knowledge wasn't as high as they initially thought.

- Participants overwhelmingly have confidence that collaborative, community actions will make progress on real world challenges associated with climate change. Although most participants' confidence remained high or increased, there were a few participants who noted their confidence in collaborative, community action reduced a little.

Four Prototype Projects

The prototype projects helped the participants learn more about the complex system in which they are operating and how to further develop their ideas and test their assumptions about what will have an impact on climate action in Nelson.

Broad community connection and engagement

Nest Lab reached more than its Phase One participants in a variety of direct and indirect ways, surfacing helpful engagement data while also shifting mindsets in terms of how to engage on a subject this complex/who is welcome at the table (p.s. everyone is!). Some of the following ripple effects were noticed before/during/after the Lab:

- 26 Applications and countless inquiries/requests for more information

- 9 online climate cafes took place, with a total of 37 people participating and learning about the lab process
- Participants with affiliations connecting with their organizations, colleagues and networks
- City of Nelson leadership and other key support staff learning about and supporting the initiative/a new way of engaging on complex issues

City of Nelson

Climate Change Community Action Plan

The Nest Lab has directly informed the development of the City of Nelson's Climate Change Community Action Plan as well as its implementation. Both in terms of some of the specific tactics that will be included in the Plan to be presented to Council - some stemming directly from the Lab and any others inspired by Lab proceedings - and in terms of its level of ambition and the specific mechanisms indicated for future engagement and co-creation.

City of Nelson practices being influenced

A second Phase of the Nest Lab will be included in the Plan's immediate implementation direction, as will other explicit methods for ensuring consistent, collaborative and representative engagement and program design over time. Other connected challenges and issues that might require a social lab/social lab-style process have also been discussed and explored, as have methods for weaving them into future Nest phases.

Overall, Nest Lab has been widely considered a 'success' at The City and by City Council, and has paved the way for a shift toward increasingly collaborative and inclusive engagement and action at the City.

Field of Social Innovation Labs

Demonstration of Online Delivery

As a response to restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nest Lab provided insights and lessons to practitioners on how a collaborative social innovation lab can be delivered in an online format.

Lessons Learned

The Nest Lab was evaluated through a series of online feedback forms and open discussions throughout its duration. The intention was to support participation and facilitation of Phase 1 by surfacing and interpreting challenges as they happened, while understanding and measuring the lab's impact for future phases.

The lessons learned are derived from those specific evaluation efforts, as well as observations from the core team and lab facilitators, and from 'lab outcomes' (learning journeys, success principles, prototypes, etc.)

Overall, it was recognized that there is a large pool of talented and enthusiastic people in Nelson who are keen to collaborate toward community-driven improvements. The Lab can and should be used as an ongoing convening tool to engage the broader community around climate change to develop a shared understanding of the issues, a common vision for change, and identify ongoing innovative solutions. It is felt that the lab approach to problem-solving can generate working solutions that will have a higher degree of buy-in from the public than those coming from more traditional top-down directives.

Final Survey Highlights:

- Participant's rated the the Nest Lab with a 'satisfaction score' of 4.1/5 (82%)
- 100% of participants are confident (or extremely confident) that collaborative, community action can make progress on the real world challenges associated with climate change in Nelson
- 100% of participants 'strongly agree' (67%) or 'agree' (56%) that lab style engagement on climate change needs to continue in Nelson
- 100% of participants indicated they are interested in staying connected to the Nest Lab and their cohort
- 100% of participants are interested in supporting Phase 2 as a volunteer, coach, champion, prototype collaborator and/or as part of an advisory

Lessons to carry forward:

Participants

- Expand diversity in the participant mix in terms of perspectives, values, experiences, race, gender and socio-economics (occupation, education, income, wealth and where someone lives). Equity and inclusion should also be a focus.
- A larger cohort may provide a greater variety of voices and viewpoints.
- Creating focused opportunities to effectively connect during and outside the lab sessions is important, especially in an online environment that is harder to achieve personal connections between participants organically.

Facilitation

- Continue using experienced facilitators – they are a must to effectively design and run sessions
- Help participants engage more effectively with complexity (most like to have concrete plans and complexity is hard to sit with) by ensuring they have a clear outline of the stages and process with explicit communication about expectations.
- Continue creating space for listening, reflection and for sharing – allowing introverts to truly participate.
- Continue having small group discussions and breakouts, as this is where many participants gained the most insights. Consider doing more of these small breakouts.

facilitation continued...

- Mixing up participants in breakout groups more often.
- Re-consider the lengths of sessions, especially in an online environment. In some cases, two hours seemed rushed and sessions could have been longer.

Climate knowledge

- Detailed background information on climate change should be shared, specifically information that is most relevant to this particular area.
- Build more of a shared understanding of key leverage points/areas of intervention that can have a big impact on the whole system.

Prototypes

- Participants need to have a clear understanding of their responsibility in carrying prototype actions forward, fine tuning them and deciding whether to try and fully implement them.
- Encourage prototypes focused on areas that have been identified as having the greatest impact.
- Invite expert input for feasibility analysis of potential actions and prototypes.
- Help implement appropriate support mechanisms to be in place for prototypes to be continued immediately after the Lab, building off and maintaining the energy created in the Lab.

Running the lab

- The more resources available, the more successful the lab can be. We did well on the shoestring budget for phase 1, but more resources are needed for the planning and operation of the lab, as well as for ongoing support of prototypes. The needed resources include financial, organizational and personnel.
- Consider having the lab operated by an independent organization non-profit
- Engage previous lab participants and partners in a co-creative process to build buy-in and capacity for the next phase.
- Provide concrete direction and expectations for Champions Group, Core Team and Facilitators. Create more cohesion between these various team members.
- Participant recruitment is harder, and takes more time than expected.
- Develop a communication plan that supports the recruitment process and ensures the Lab is more visible to potential partners, City staff & council, and the general public throughout the entire phase, and beyond.

Next Steps: Phase II

Phase I of the Nest Lab was planned for January to June 2020 as both an engagement exercise and an experiment with regard to social lab-style organizing in Nelson. While a search for funding and support to keep Nest Lab operational longterm was occurring from the moment the lab was launched, there was also an openness on behalf of the Core Team and Champions Team to only move forward with a Phase II if results from Phase I were favorable.

It became clear early on in the process that a Phase II (and beyond) was a viable and desired pathway for both the conveners and participants. The actual design of the Lab's next phase(s) will be determined by several factors, including early lessons shared in this report, a more detailed analysis of Phase I evaluation results, funding, COVID-19, and insights of community members and experts that originally convened the initiative.

The lab's Core Team are currently working on Phase II plans. If you are interested in learning more or getting engaged, please contact Kate Letizia at kletizia@nelson.ca.

