



  
**Inspiring**  
Communities

**STRATEGIC  
DIRECTIONS**

2022



Inspiring Communities was founded through the courage of government partners who envisioned creating a safe space for experimentation, where communities could try new things. We have evolved as an organization since that time, but carry forward that courage, vision and space for experimentation. Approaching all the aspects of systems change through an equity lens, Inspiring Communities fosters experimentation, evaluation of impact and continuous learning.



**Mary Ellen Gurnham**  
Board Chair

For me, collaborative action for social change means systems change (and equity and justice). It's about asking ourselves, "for whom does the system need to change, in what ways, and to what degree?" Reflective questions like these are inclusive and bring people together, because there is something for everyone across generations. Perhaps we are all related through these kind of questions.

**Louise Adongo**  
Executive Director





The Inspiring Communities team gathered in Cornwallis at the beautiful Annapolis Basin Conference Centre for a staff retreat in May, 2022.

Back row: Nancy Carter, Treno Morton, Elissama Menezes, Manal Salha.

Centre row: Des Ong, Suzi Oram-Aylward, Charlene Boyce, Evelyn Headley-Boutilier, Megan MacLeod

Front Row: Erika Rolston, Morgan Dunn, Louise Adongo.

Photo taken by the talented Michael Carty.



## Who is Inspiring Communities?

Inspiring Communities is an equity-centered systems change leader in Atlantic Canada.

We recognize that our current systems and institutions don't work for the people who need them most. We believe that collective action is essential, so we innovatively connect communities, which may be geographically co-located or spread out. We create collaborative systems partnerships and measure our impact. To ensure our effectiveness and sustainability, we maintain a strong core.

We engage in reflective evaluation practices to learn from our experiments, integrate that learning into our work, and share what we've learned through our regional and national networks.

We are a not-for-profit organization based in Nova Scotia.

## **Our** VÍSIÓN

Equitable, thriving communities built on fundamentally reimaged systems.

## **Our** MISIÓN

To achieve our goal of equity, we will innovatively connect communities, create collaborative partnerships, measure our impact and maintain a strong and sustainable core.



SAME

UNDERSTANDING

FACILITATION



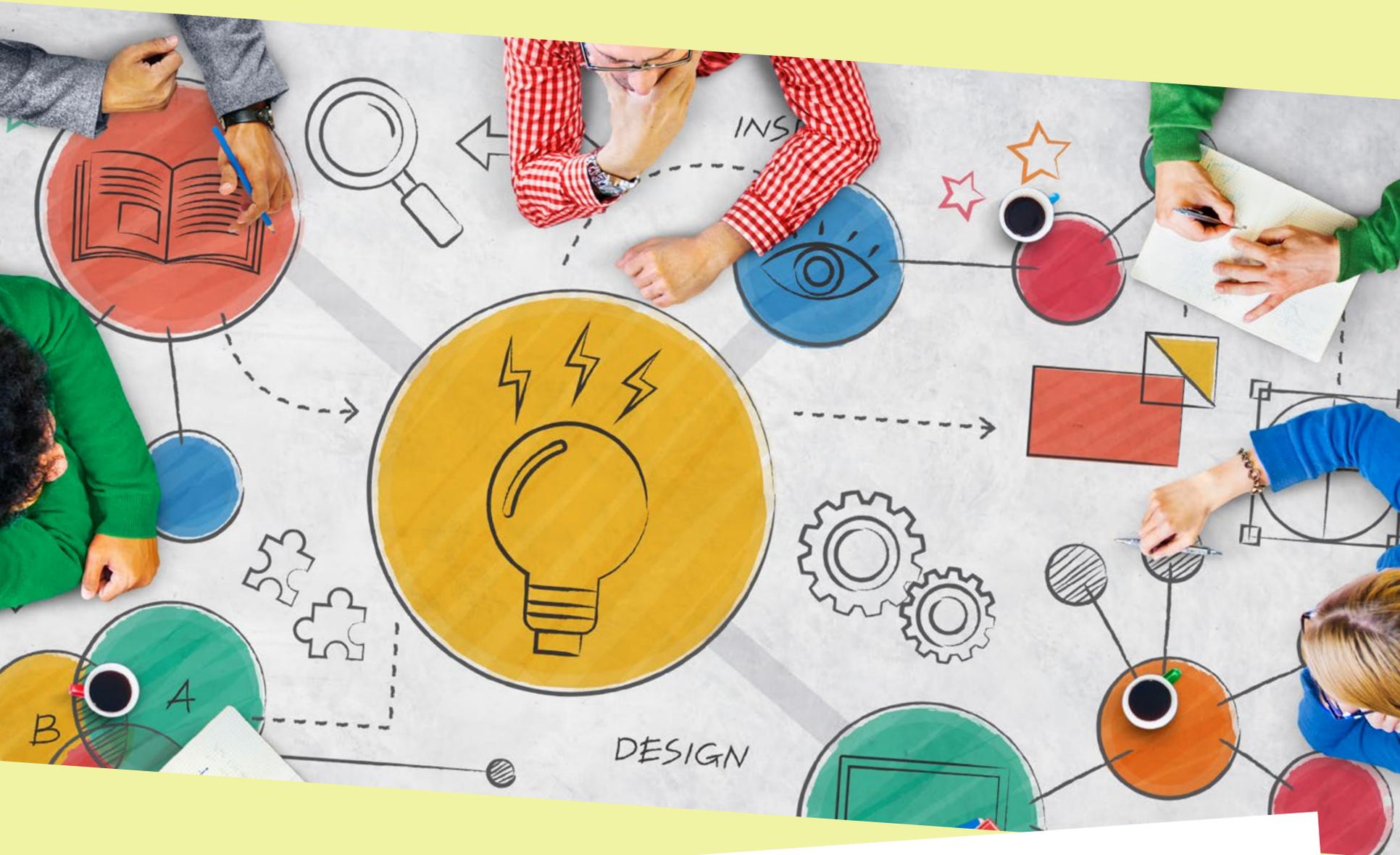
MAKES IT EASY



NORTH SIDE RESIDENTS

COMMUNITY STAGES





# Our Scope of Work

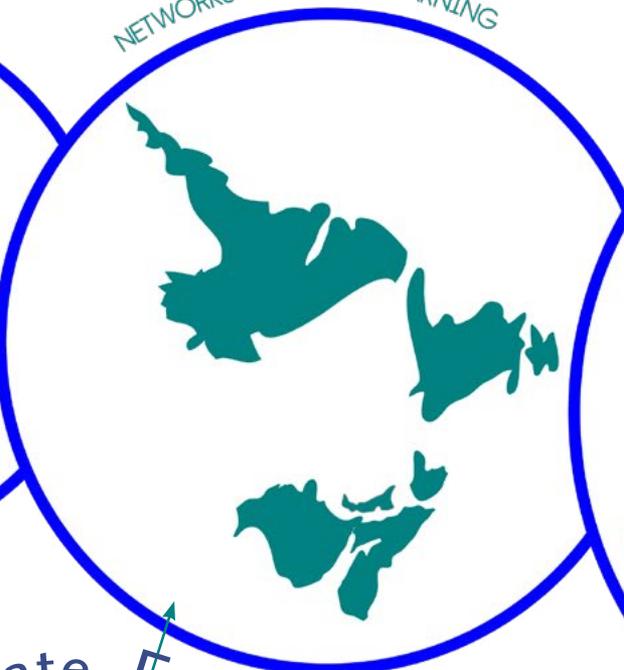
Equitable Systems Change

# Our Geographic Scope

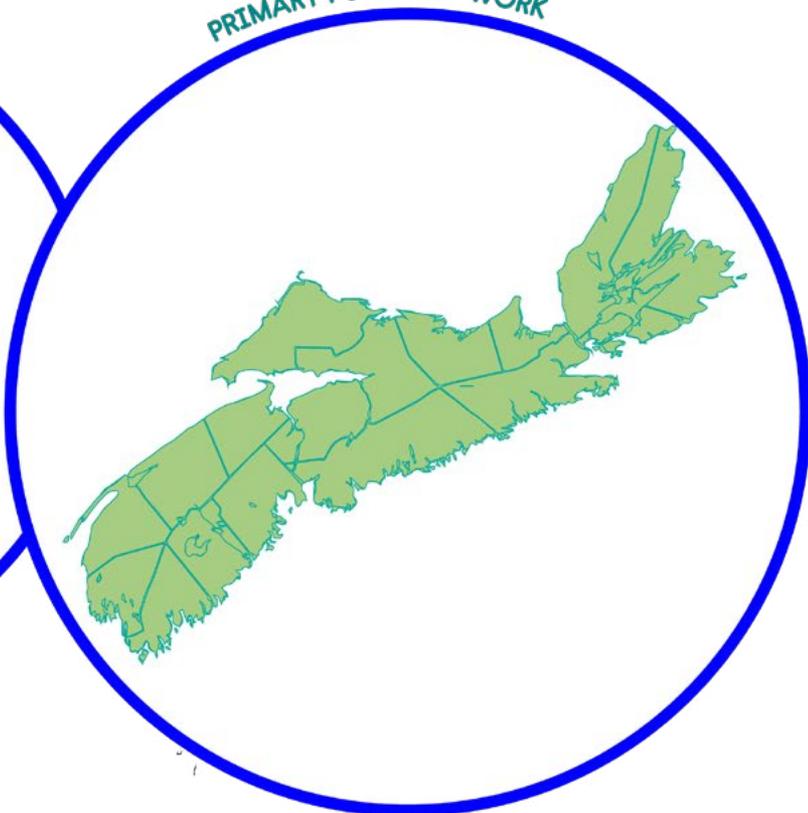
NETWORKS & CONNECTIONS



NETWORKS for SHARED LEARNING



PRIMARY FOCUS OF WORK



# Our Guiding Principles

## Equity, Inclusion & Representation

- We act for social justice.
- Our work is driven by equity to improve social inclusion.
- We are mindful of the need for reconciliation.

## Starting from Strengths

- We start from the belief that all individuals and communities have a wealth of assets.

## Lifelong Learning

- We are curious and open to innovation. We trust the process. We learn from each other.

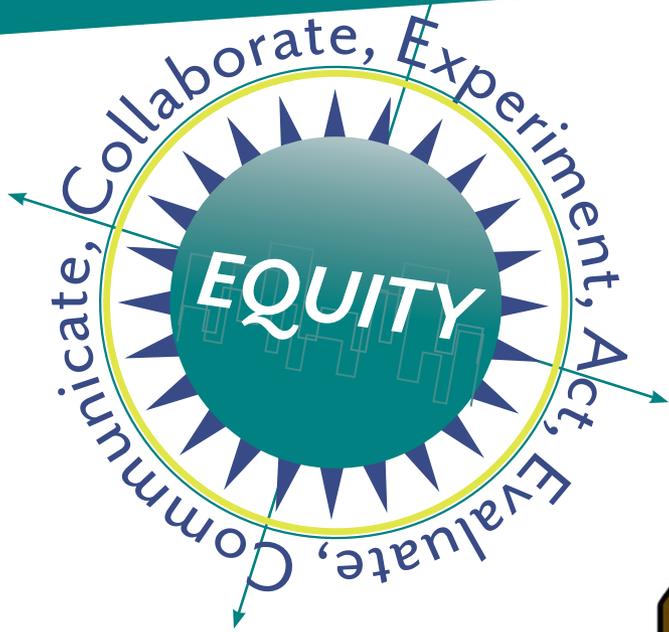
## **Intentionality**

- We make time to get to know each other.
- We mind the pace. Sometimes that means slowing down, and sometimes it means speeding up.
- We take care to establish trust and understanding in our work because we know it is essential for collaborative change.

## **Mutual Benefit/Reciprocity**

- We know working for change isn't always easy.
- We know we need each other to go far. We approach relationships with an intention for mutual / collective benefit to achieve greater outcomes than we could individually.

# Our Strategic Priorities



Strengthen  
Community Connections



Build On our  
Collaboration Success

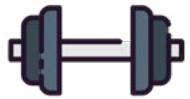


Demonstrate our Impact Clearly



Model Equitable, Efficient  
& Sustainable Processes

# Our Strategic Priorities in action



## Strengthen Community Connections

- Support community-driven participatory initiatives
- Launch and host Atlantic Regional Changemakers Council
- Initiate and deepen Atlantic Canadian partnerships, in particular with and centering Black, Indigenous, people of colour and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities that have been typically underrepresented and marginalized



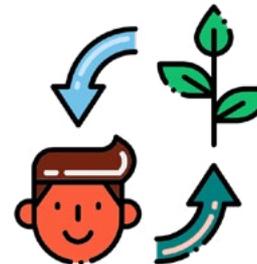
## Demonstrate our Impact Clearly

- Develop a Strategic Learning and Integrated Evaluation System that supports continuous learning and development.
- Engage in work that helps to influence the culture of evaluation towards less rigidity, and more rigor, accessibility for communities and changemakers.
- Tell our story about our journey and experiences across our varied initiatives through the years.



## Build On our Collaboration Success

- Build relationships with new and existing research partners
- Strengthen relationships with current system partners.
- Explore partnerships to expand evaluation practice to acknowledge and include other worldviews.
- Identify new partners in centering equity.



## Model Equitable, Efficient & Sustainable Processes

- Restructure and reshape our organization to meet current and emerging needs
- Introduce robust financial and operational processes.
- Regularly check in on our systems and tools to ensure they are meeting our needs.

# Our Tools & Resources



## COLLABORATION

- Facilitation / Hosting
- Basebuilding
- Participatory Research
- Social Research

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- Shared Learning - Technology Platforms
- Shared Learning - Data gathering supports

## LEARNING

- Developmental Evaluation
- Principles-based Evaluation

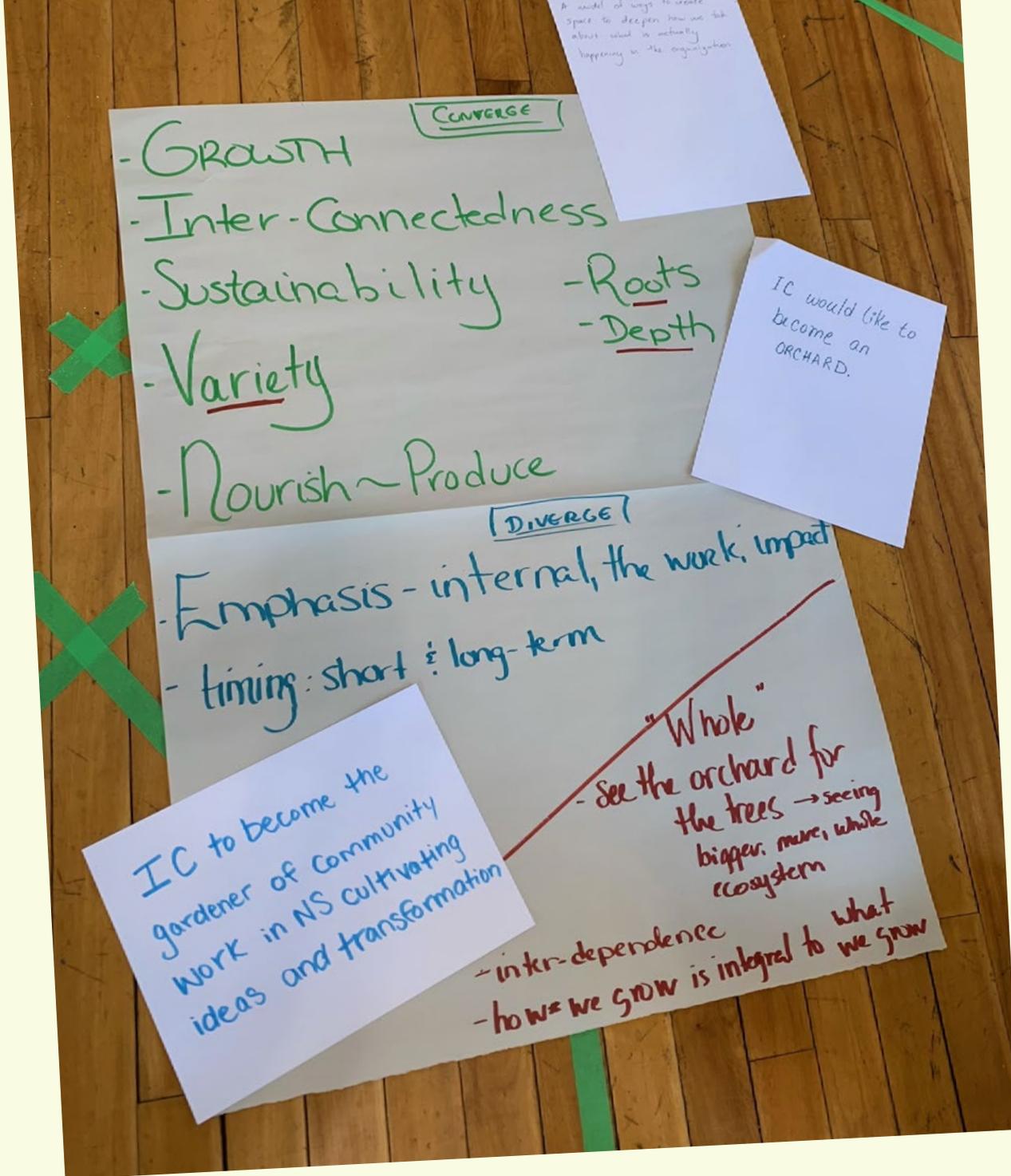
## SYSTEMS APPROACHES

- Collective Impact
- Design thinking

# Our Partners & Collaborators

- Changemakers
- Communities (Geographic)
- Communities of common purpose
- Equity / Change Organizations
- Foundations & Funders
- Governments
- International Systems Change Organizations
- National Networks





## Imagery References / Credit

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