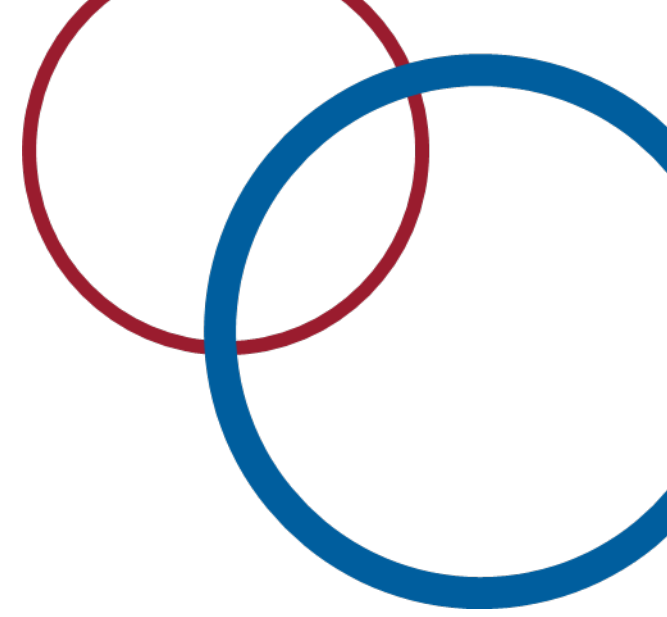




FSC Incubation Network

Evaluation findings – Final report
December 8, 2023

This report was produced as part of a project funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), with financial support from the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Future Skills Centre or the Government of Canada.



Executive summary

At its core, the Incubation Network was designed to create an enabling environment for cross-Canada collaboration and brainstorming amongst innovators in newcomer integration, to overcome the lack of infrastructure and opportunity for this. FSC staff took a different approach to this initiative from its previous ideation efforts - they deliberately sought out organizations with innovation experience and high potential to contribute to collective ideation; all share a common focus on newcomer integration. FSC also provided coaching during proposal development, funding, skilled planning and facilitation support for Network sessions, and a developmental evaluation team to support the overall process.

Several structural issues - particularly delays in approvals & contracting, resulting in limited time and partner capacity - necessitated a shift in the overall goal of the Incubation Network from generating ideas to address systems-level challenges, to providing a forum for collective support to deal with project-level implementation challenges. This aligned with the goals identified by project partners, and with their reduced capacity for extensive co-design of Network sessions. Less onerous and more flexible administrative processes (e.g., for contract and REB approvals, reporting) would align more with the focus on innovation and collective ideation.

While the same time constraints limited the degree to which the evaluation could focus on individual projects' contributions to newcomer integration to date, projects have nevertheless generated an impressive number of tools, resources, curricula, partnerships and networks, as well as models for community-wide approaches to supporting newcomers. The list of implementation lessons learned is also long and provides FSC with practical suggestions for ways to support partners in the future that are working in this sector.

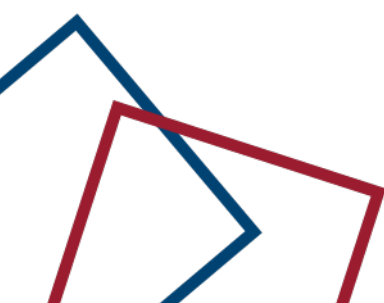
Executive summary cont'd

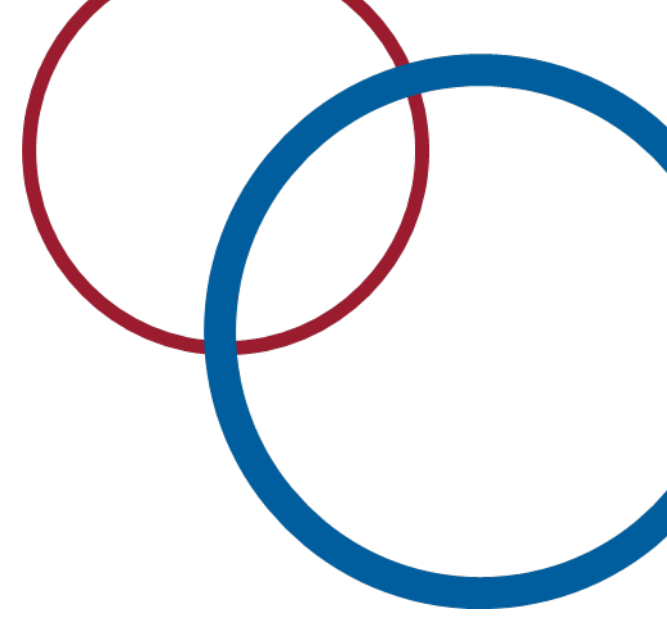
In terms of the Incubation Network as a whole, the evaluation determined that most of the immediate and short-term outcome goals were achieved. Specifically, a supportive, trusting environment was created in the four Network sessions (which ran from March to June 2023) that engaged participants and enabled them to make connections, learn from each other, share their challenges and ideas, and identify potential for collaboration. For example, the structured opportunity for each partner to share project challenges in small groups helped create a sense of shared responsibility among partners to attend the four sessions and support each other's work, generating project-level insights in the process. In this respect, there is much to celebrate in terms of creating a successful community of practice in a short timeframe.

Partners saw value in this as a preliminary initiative while also seeing greater potential value in working together, though for the most part, connections did not appear to extend much beyond the four sessions. They made several suggestions for improving the model, and this report provides considerations for moving the work forward to realize ideation-related goals such as generating systems-level insights and understanding areas of promise and opportunity in newcomer integration. Implementing these suggestions will depend on whether FSC is in a position to continue the initiative with the same members, refine and expand it, and/or apply it to other focus areas. With a clear purpose, sufficient timeline and resources, there is considerable potential value in an initiative like the Incubation Network in terms of what it can offer to participants, the selected sector, and FSC as a knowledge generating and brokering organization.

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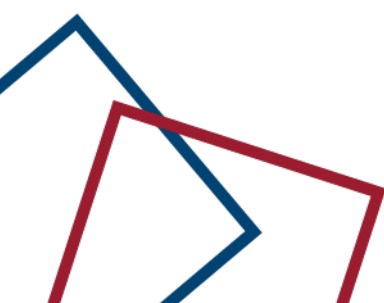




Evaluation overview

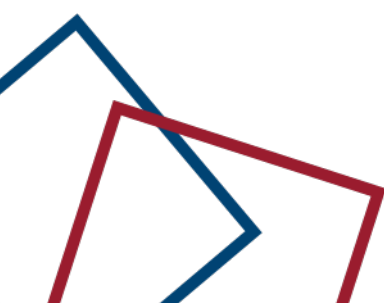
Background - Context and purpose of the Network

- FSC built an experimental "Incubation Network" to multiply its reach and learning about skills development in newcomer integration, a strategic priority area. The Network was a pilot project to test a specific model (i.e., high-touch, facilitated, shared mandate) and way for FSC to fulfill its objective to encourage innovative thinking and practice among project partners and more broadly, in the skills development ecosystem.
- Seven co-delivery partners from across Canada were selected for their ability to incubate innovative ideas and solutions, both within their individual projects and together as part of the Network. Projects were highly diverse in terms of geography, models, methods, leadership, and stakeholder/participant group. One of the selected partners – Purpose Co. - was responsible for facilitating partners' engagement in the Network and helping to achieve its aims, in addition to its own project.
- At FSC, the project ran from July 2022 to October 2023. Planning discussions with Purpose Co and SRDC began in January 2023, and the four monthly Network sessions ran from March to June of that year.

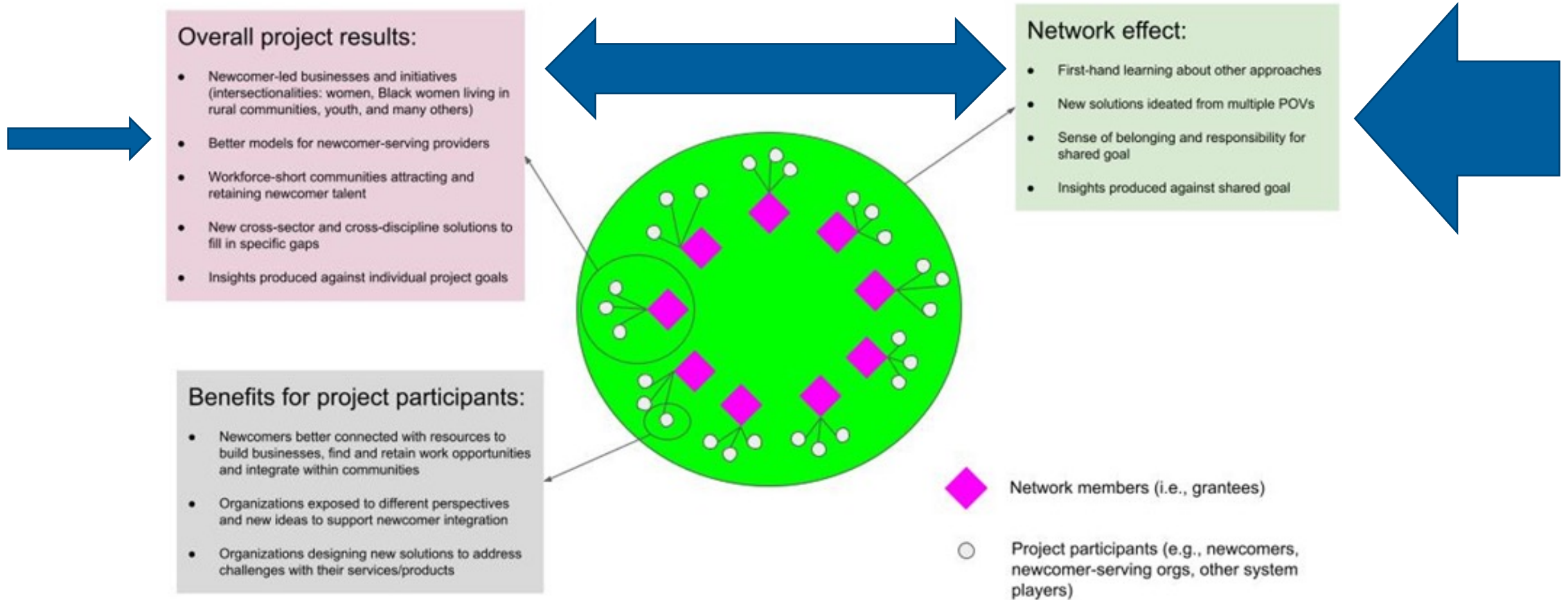


Developmental evaluation approach

- SRDC undertook a developmental evaluation of the Incubation Network, working collaboratively with FSC and Purpose Co. to support planning and implementation of the Network. Our role was that of a ‘critical friend,’ clarifying assumptions, asking provocative questions, and weighing the pros and cons of different options as the Network evolved over roughly six months. In the process, we prompted, participated in, and documented our collective reflection and learning.
- The evaluation’s *primary* focus was on the Network, in terms of understanding the extent to which the Network achieved its goals, how individual projects have contributed to these, and how, in turn, the Network may have contributed toward their project-level goals. A *secondary* focus was on capturing the extent to which individual projects contributed on their own to newcomer integration, independent of Network effects. However, condensed timeframes – in particular, project extensions that precluded access to their final reports - meant our ability to address this second focus area was limited.
- Where there was need and interest, SRDC also provided a limited amount of technical support for evaluation/learning to individual projects on a case-by-case basis. This included reviewing one partner’s draft survey and another’s REB exemption application and providing input into another partner’s assessment of participants’ project ‘pitches.’



Primary and secondary focus



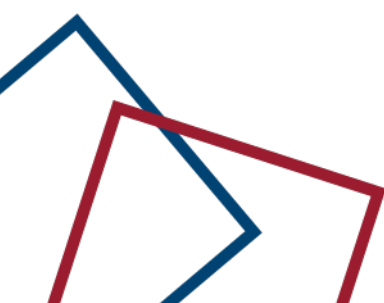
Evaluation questions

Re: Design and support

1. What problem is the Incubation Network trying to solve?
2. What does it take to effectively design and support an initiative such as the Incubation Network? What have been the barriers and enabling factors?

Re: Outcomes

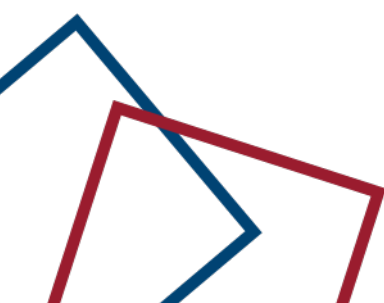
3. To what degree have projects contributed to newcomer integration independent of the Network?
4. What has been the level of participation and engagement in the Incubation Network among project partners?
5. To what extent has the Incubation Network achieved its immediate and short-term outcomes?
6. Have there been any unintended consequences of the Incubation Network?
7. What is the perceived value to projects of a network approach over and above funding projects individually?



Evaluation methods

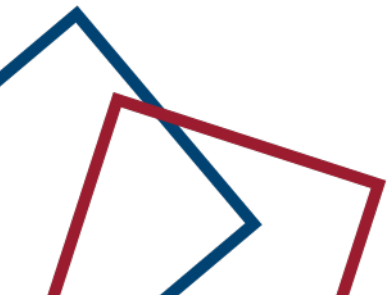
Primary methods:

- Document review – FSC documents and project reports
- Three early reflection sessions with FSC team members
- One interview midway through the project (June 2023) with outgoing FSC Director
- Multiple network and planning meetings throughout the project with FSC and Purpose Co.
- Evaluation support meetings with project partners throughout project
- Incubation Network session notes and observations
- Post-Network interviews with all seven project partners
- Post-Network reflection sessions with FSC & Purpose Co.
- Post-Network interview with Incubation Network facilitator



Analysis and outputs

- Focus on both strategic and operational outcomes
- An Evaluation Plan
- A Logic Model for the Network
- Spotlights of participating projects to illustrate themes, issues, challenges, and accomplishments at both the project and Network level
- Summary report at the end of the project

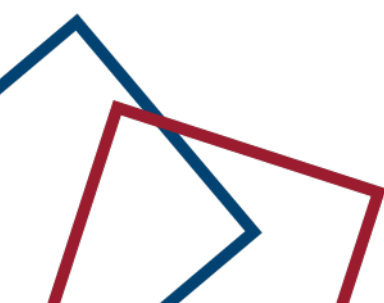


Limitations

This evaluation had features and circumstances which pose limitations on the interpretation and extrapolation of its findings.

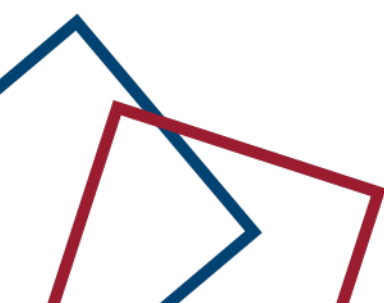
Chief among these were:

- **No counterfactual** - We had no direct basis for comparison other than what we gleaned from the practice-based literature on ideation and SRDC's experience evaluating other cohort and collective impact initiatives. FSC staff reflected on the differences between the Incubation Network and other ideation initiatives they had sponsored (i.e., Ideas Lab, Accelerator initiative) and with which they were familiar (e.g., Nou Lab), and made deliberate choices in planning and execution to build on lessons they had learned from those experiences. However, evaluation findings are primarily based on our knowledge of the Network and its projects.
- **Constraints on the lines of evidence** – Halfway through the project, restrictions were imposed on the data that could be used for the evaluation. As a result, we had to rely heavily on feedback provided in post-Network interviews with project partners, reflections of FSC staff and the facilitator, and on interim (not final) project reports. A greater range of data collection methods and timepoints would have provided more in-depth information and perspective.

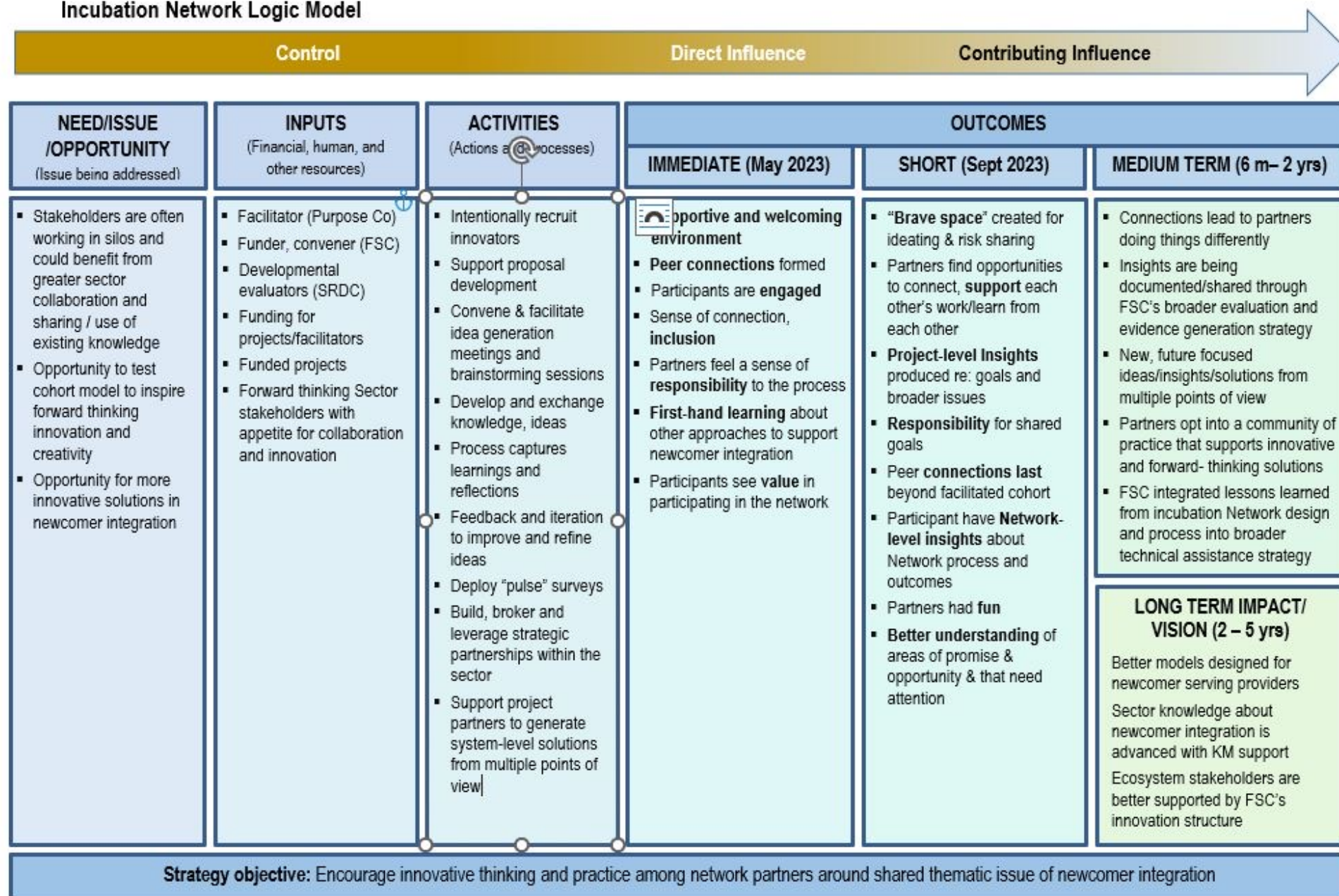


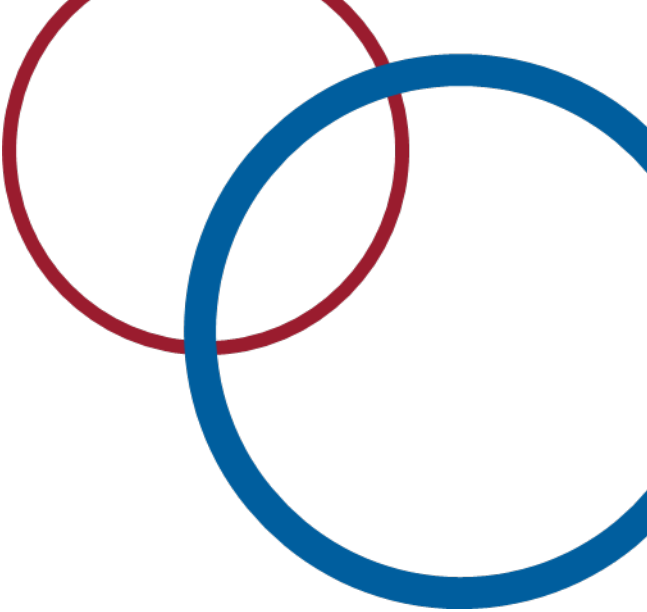
Limitations cont'd

- **Turnover of key staff on most projects** - The result was that many people who attended the Network sessions did not participate in the final set of evaluation interviews, and conversely, a few of those who did participate in those interviews had only limited experience and knowledge of the Network. Since interviews were one of our primary data collection methods, this hampered the depth of insight we gleaned from participants.
- **Extensions to projects** - Although these extensions provided welcome opportunity to partners to extend their project operations, they exceeded the timeline for the evaluation. Without end-of-project reports, we were limited in our ability to assess the contributions of individual projects, independent of the Network.



Incubation Network Logic Model





Evaluation findings re: Network design & support

Solving the problem

Q1: What problem is the Incubation Network trying to solve?

- FSC staff observed – and project partners agreed – that service delivery organizations in the settlement sector **often work in silos and could benefit from greater sector collaboration and knowledge exchange**. There is a lack of infrastructure to bring them together to respond to common challenges in newcomer integration and labour market participation.
- FSC can work with project partners in a different way, beyond its role as a funder, **to encourage ‘outside-the-box’ thinking, better connections across project partners, and real time learning and adaptation from each other**.
- Building on FSC’s previous ideation initiatives such as the Ideas Lab and the Accelerator initiative and inspired by community-based initiatives such as NouLab, the creation of the Incubation Network was **an opportunity for FSC to pilot and test a network approach** to support service delivery organizations to come together and generate innovative ideas and solutions to facilitate newcomer integration.

“How do we generate more innovative ideas and accelerate learning for skills-related solutions for newcomer integration?” – FSC staff

Network design and support

Q2: What does it take to effectively design and support an initiative such as the Incubation Network?

- **Intentional recruitment and selection of participants** – Instead of an open call for applications, a “curated approach” was used to identify and select participant organizations, based on word of mouth and/or prior knowledge of the organizations’ work., FSC staff worked one-on-one with a diverse group of organizations to determine whether they had the capacity and interest to engage in the Incubation Network. All participants had to be involved in the thematic area of newcomer integration, be working with accelerator/incubation/ideation initiatives, and have the infrastructure, expertise, and networks to support development of innovative solutions. They were also asked to send at least one representative to every Incubation Network session, and to have a consistent representative at every one of the four sessions. This commitment to consistent attendance - while not always fulfilled - is nevertheless essential for building the relationships necessary for successful collaboration and ideation.
- **Coaching through proposal development** – Each participant organization was funded to work on an innovation project independent of the Incubation Network. During proposal development, FSC staff worked with each organization to ensure proposed projects were feasible. This included scaling back targets and making suggestions about new delivery approaches to try. This appears to have had the effect of enabling the perception of FSC as a collaborator, not only a funder.

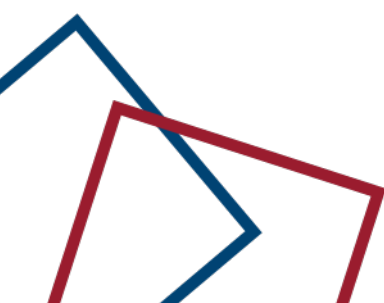
Network design and support cont'd

- **Funding** – Each participating organization received funding to implement an innovation project. Incubation Network participation was included as part of the agreement for the funding; to our knowledge, they did not receive additional funding for this purpose. This may have contributed to some of the lack of uptake of tools and resources to connect.
- **Skilled facilitation support** – A highly skilled facilitator from Purpose Co. was brought on board to set the tone for the Network sessions and guide the discussions at each meeting. As subsequent findings show, this role is critical to establishing the conditions and support for successful connections and collaboration, and ultimately, ideation.
- **Extensive planning and the flexibility to “course correct”** and adapt according to participants’ needs – In the weeks prior to the first Incubation Network meeting, the project team (FSC, SRDC, and the facilitator) met regularly to plan the design of the series of four sessions and articulate their purpose and goals (see the co-developed logic model for the project on page 11).
- **Co-design** was an explicit part of the model. While the original plan was to have project partners actively co-create the Network’s design and delivery, condensed timeframes and partners’ focus on completing their projects meant these expectations had to be scaled back. Nevertheless, participants were asked at each session about what they wanted to see at subsequent sessions, and the project team met after each session to debrief and plan how to incorporate participants’ feedback, as well as into tools and resources to support participants in between sessions.

Network design and support cont'd

"Some of the things that we haven't been able to do is encouraging more innovative thinking through the Network model within a specific space of newcomer integration. What has held us back from that is it hasn't been where the energy of the group is. If you're going to get people together to ideate something they could potentially do, especially for us as a funder, it's our responsibility to find out how to honor people's contributions and figure out what they're bringing to the table." – FSC staff

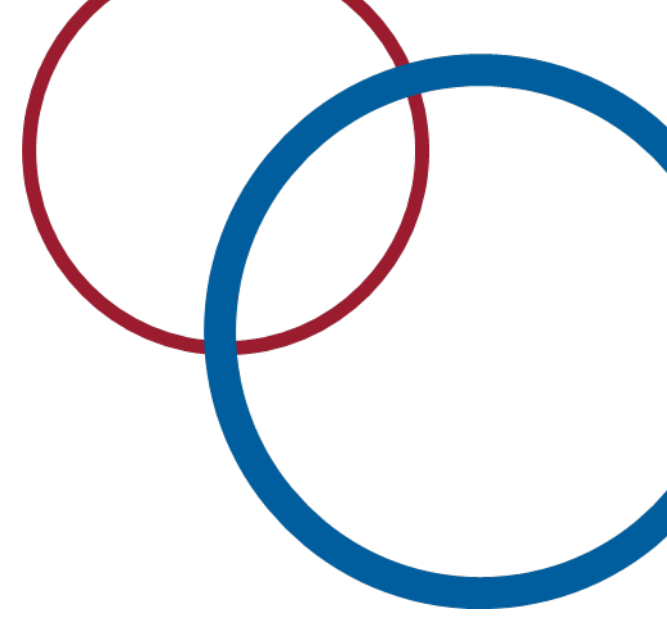
- **Simple, flexible, and nimble administrative processes** – Administrative processes such as developing and executing project contracts and amendments, obtaining Research Ethics Board (REB) approvals/exemptions/amendments, and quarterly reporting took considerable time and were largely responsible for the condensed timeframe and reduced scope of the Network and the evaluation. These processes placed considerable demand on both FSC staff and project partners and created barriers to timely progress. Moreover, some of these processes – particularly traditional REB review – do not seem well aligned with the goal and process of collective ideation and advancing innovation.



Network design and support cont'd

Spotlight on collaborative networks – Purpose Co.

Through their experience of participating in the Incubation Network as well as facilitating other similar stakeholder groups, Purpose Co shared some design successes and lessons learned. For example, they have found that bringing people together around a common theme and expecting to achieve knowledge sharing may not be enough. In their experience, where participants already know each other or can learn about each other's organizations *prior* to beginning to work together has proven to be more time effective as it does take time to build trusted relationships. Additionally, helping stakeholders narrow down their challenges to a single common goal before meeting for ideation can help focus future group work toward achieving the goal. They have also discovered that it requires a strong anchor organization to gather other stakeholders, and the more credible and trustworthy this anchor organization is (like FSC), the more action stakeholders are willing to take.



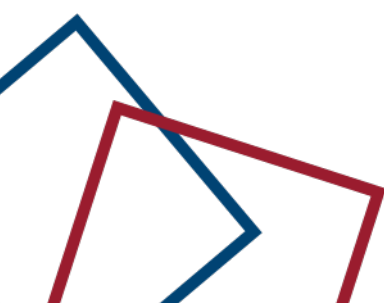
Evaluation findings re: Projects

Information sources for project-level findings

Q3: To what degree have projects contributed to newcomer integration independent of the Network?

The following pages in this section provide a high-level overview of the seven constituent projects whose sponsor organizations made up the Incubation Network. They encapsulate each project's objectives, implementation successes, lessons learned, and specific achievements. To produce these summaries, we did an in-depth review of each project's quarterly, annual, and learning reports, and included information from interviews with project representatives.

An analysis of the collective contributions of these projects follows the summaries. This analysis is preliminary, a foundation for FSC's review of projects' final reports, to be submitted in February 2024.



Partner - de Sedulous

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Implement the online Retail Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) and Retail Incubator Lab (r iLab) programming with 3 cohorts of newcomer women entrepreneurs across Canada and in rural Alberta.	Recruited immigrant women entrepreneurs with the necessary commitment, then provided training to help them reach a level of readiness to present and sell their products.	Recognize that delays in funding approval can impact the recruitment process, though targets might still be achieved in the available time.	Implemented the REAP program with a total of 37 immigrant women entrepreneurs from across Canada and delivered workshops to 55.
2. Provide program participants with hands-on, practical mentorship coaching to help them develop their products.	Provided participants with opportunities to connect with peers, successful retail coaches, and industry experts.	Hiring new staff locally is challenging, and broadening hiring to include remote staff from nearby cities can help. Enhance bonding among staff by using a combination of in-person and virtual staff meetings.	Provided training to immigrant women entrepreneurs that enabled them to reach a level of readiness to present their product successfully to big box store representatives (i.e., Hudson Bay, Loblaw, Costco). In cohort 1, 86% of women presenting their products to big box stores received positive responses to having their products in stores.
3. Provide opportunity for participants to pitch their products to big box store representatives through the iLaunchHERproduct initiative.	Preparation of course materials and hiring new staff were successful prior to program start.	Adapt recruitment strategy by adding a small registration fee to ensure prospective participants are committed and ready.	Provided data-driven business information to guide immigrant women entrepreneurs in preparation and decision-making for their products.
	Re-designed the social media platform to better showcase program activities.	Engage the community in a new initiative before launching by surveying the target audience. A larger geographic region may be needed to attract program participants.	
		Use terms that best reflect the subject matter, such as Retail Incubator Hub instead of iLab.	

Partner - DMZ

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Provide low-touch technical support to one cohort of 25-30 projects between Oct - Dec 2022, and develop new workshops related to the Newcomer Entrepreneurship Program.	In-person connections were highly valued and requested by participants from the first cohort, which led to the successful implementation of a hybrid delivery model of cohort 2.	Respond to participant feedback (such as moving to the Toronto-area), to address the desire for participants to meet in-person and to meet regional demand.	Implemented two versions of the program for newcomers to Canada, one pan-Canadian and one local to the GTA, with a total of 50 participants. This is an equity-seeking group DMZ had never focused on before.
2. Increase availability or access to public and private entrepreneurship resources in underrepresented and minority communities.	Participants valued hearing stories from DMZ alumni who are also newcomers.	Incorporate opportunities for participants to hear experiences from DMZ alumni who are also newcomers.	Responded to participant requests from first cohort to include in-person meetings during lunch hours, stories from DMZ alumni who were newcomers, personal support as well as business supports, and larger prizes for a small number of Demo Day winners.
3. Compile/create online entrepreneurship resources to supplement workshop content.	Participants valued learning about personal supports along with business supports.	Offer workshops during times that accommodate when participants are available, such as lunch hours.	Strong personal connections were reportedly achieved among participants, particularly among those highly committed to the entrepreneurship program. According to DMZ, these people are forming lasting relationships with each other and the wider DMZ ecosystem.
4. Engage experienced mentors, especially EDI members, in DMZ programs and workshops.	Expanding outreach to include new organizations broadened networking opportunities for new and alumni participants.	Leverage partnerships from the first cohort to expand recruitment for subsequent programs, particularly in the region of focus (Ontario).	
5. Increase marketing and outreach to newcomers across Canada.	Demo Day was successful in terms of program participants and social media promotion, where all participants pitched their business ideas to each other, judges, and a wider audience, and winners received seed money.	Improve participant vetting process to ensure people are committed and ready to engage seriously in the program. Consider adding a cost associated with joining the program.	

Partner - KEYS

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Gather data on gaps in existing services newcomers experience.	The co-development approach used in developing a new service provision model is increasing stakeholder ownership and commitment.	Adopt a community-led approach, where service providers hear the needs of the target audience when designing new service models.	Engaged 14 service-providing organizations to participate in the project, all of which are committed to fostering an inclusive community for newcomers and underrepresented populations.
2. Collectively brainstorm with Kingston service providers to discover new approaches to help newcomers integrate in the community.	Utilizing the Design Thinking model worked well with the stakeholders.	Provide vulnerable groups a safe space to voice their experiences and challenges.	Provided a safe platform for engaging newcomers to share their experiences and challenges, to be used in the design of the inclusive service delivery model.
3. Identify and prioritize 2-3 service provision practices to move from the ideation phase to the prototyping phase.		Stakeholders recognize that the need to develop an inclusive service delivery model is very high.	Identified three main gaps in the current service delivery models: language, intercultural sensitivity, and lack of information, which are also common to other regions across Canada, indicating that extending the ideation group to umbrella organizations may be useful in the future.
4. Develop a prototype of new practices generated from participating organizations.		Newcomers are highly motivated to share their challenges and barriers with service providers.	Created an app prototype and improved it with feedback from partners and target users, though it is still in the development and testing phase.
5. Finalize the prototype and move to a pilot phase to implement the new model within at least one organization.		Service providers appreciate opportunities to better understand barriers newcomers face and are motivated to use this input to improve services.	

Partner - NL WIC

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Help strengthen the perception, reputation, and attractiveness of the Burin Peninsula region to newcomers and showcase the strong quality of life that it offers.	Implementation of this project has been delayed due to competing priorities from other NL WIC mandated activities, and budgeting approval and changes to project plan concept development from Immigration, Population, Growth and Skills (IPGS). However, the engagement of multiple stakeholders in the proposal development phase to incorporate a systems level approach to newcomer integration created a sense of ownership and worked well.	Projects designed to have substantial community engagement are subject to delays, particularly when there are multiple funders or governance issues involved.	Conducted 20 Round 2 committee meetings from April to May 2023 with continued satisfaction from participants in the Regional Workforce Development Committees Action Planning process.

Partner - North Forge			
Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. To provide support and empowerment to highly qualified newcomers facing licensing barriers (originally targeted to Startup Visa newcomers) using an online portal with on-demand, self-paced learning videos.	Reached recruitment goals by changing target population from newcomers within the Startup Visa Program to highly qualified newcomers facing licensing barriers due to challenges encountered by the former group in terms of privacy concerns.	Engage industry experts in Canada to provide insights and knowledge to support women entrepreneurs.	Recruited more than planned (more than 700 recruited, 550 targeted). The recruitment numbers are a great increase from June 2023 (183 recruited).
2. To provide online roundtable sessions, including a learning component and networking opportunities to all newcomers, particularly women.	Continuously collected feedback from newcomers who engaged with the online course and used the feedback to improve the course and meet the evolving needs of learners.	Use simple and clear language when creating services/courses that newcomers will be using. Avoid jargon and technical terms that may be difficult for non-native English speakers to understand.	Successfully introduced the <i>GEI-Tech Edition</i> specialized course with a strong emphasis on the technological aspects of starting and running a business. This complements original curriculum and is based on feedback from newcomers who expressed their desire for advanced learning opportunities.
	Networking and nurturing relationships with partners at every level of the project to learn ways to mitigate challenges and reach project goals.	Offer ongoing support to newcomers through use of forums, webinars, roundtables, and other resources.	Gained global and international interest (e.g., invitations from international incubators and entrepreneurial hubs for collaboration, and interest from youth-focused initiatives and organizations supporting individuals with physical disabilities).
			Developed a 70-page booklet (called <i>The BOOKLET</i>) by condensing the online course and encapsulating the essence of the Canadian business ecosystem. <i>The BOOKLET</i> has been distributed to 100 newcomers in Canada, and to 250 individuals in Pakistan and Dubai.

Partner - Purpose Co.

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Co-design a Solutions Design Table with key stakeholders in SK-licensed family childcare to collaboratively generate system-level solutions for integrating newcomers into the licensing process.	Conducted labour market research and engaged stakeholders in interviews to narrow down sectors and regions, then conducted interviews with stakeholders within the chosen sector to gain specific insights into their needs, challenges and capacity for driving change.	Complete a thorough study of the specific needs and priorities of the stakeholders through individual interviews before meeting with the group.	By leveraging a strong anchor organization with pre-existing relationships with other stakeholders, and facilitating regular, ongoing communication and collaboration among the stakeholders, less brokering from Purpose Co will be possible.
2. Research the industry and regions to identify areas of need.	The initial interviews were also opportunities to gauge stakeholders' readiness and needs for their further participation in the project.	Recognize the existing practices, concerns and constraints of stakeholders where initiatives need to align and assess their readiness for change. Make it easy for organizations to participate in the project by providing meaningful supports.	
3. Engage stakeholders in interviews and focus groups to further inform issues and to participate in the Design Table.	Ensured that an actionable solution was generated that could be implemented by stakeholders.	Create ways to maintain sustained engagement with stakeholders, such as regular check-ins and feedback mechanisms.	The Solution Plan outlines specific components to develop a pilot program that tests the agency model of governance in Saskatchewan, and is aimed at facilitating the entry and support of newcomers in family childcare.
4. Facilitate the creation of a Solution and Action Plan with stakeholders.	Capitalized on an anchor organization that had connections, trust and credibility with the other stakeholders.	Leverage pre-existing relationships within organizations to enhance collaborative efforts and provide an objective third-party to facilitate the collaborative process.	The groups of stakeholders succeeded in developing a detailed Solution Plan, an Action Plan with a proposal that will be directed towards the Ministry of Education, and a detailed description of a 3-year pilot, with proposed activities, to test the model solution.
5. Facilitate the creation of a 3-year pilot to test the model solution.	Provided various supports to increase stakeholder buy-in, including generous honoraria.	Encourage stakeholders to actively contribute and participate in the initiatives to create a sense of ownership and a deeper level of engagement and commitment.	

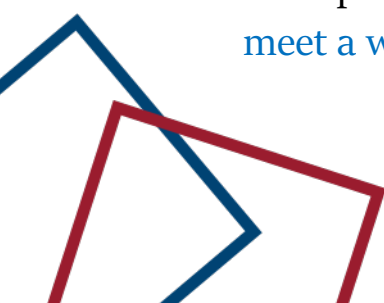
Partner - RADIUS

Objectives	What worked well?	Lessons learned	Achievements
1. Based on learnings from community consultations, map insights and program ideas to rebuild RADIUS programming curricula for business validation and acceleration phases, centering equity and newcomer and racialized voices	Deep community consultations to inform the process of the project.	Co-creation and feedback loop sessions with communities are based on trust, which takes time, needs to consider community members’ personal priorities, and cannot be nurtured under duress. Participants should also be recognized for their time through compensation or other ways.	Recruited more people than planned (69 recruited, 65 targeted).
2. Pilot new workshops, cohort models, types of support, based on developed curriculum.	Consultations with internal and external individuals with expertise to co-create an iterative program design.	Holding institutional space for intentional design and inviting stakeholders to contribute requires significantly more attention and time than typical grant-funded program timelines traditionally account for, which typically assume pre-existing relationships and aligned worldviews.	Refined program design and curricula to support mid-stage systems-change.
3. Gain knowledge on learnings, new models, what works/what doesn’t work, for distribution of information to others in the field, and to build evidence for full launch of revised program.	Hiring a project manager who understands the intention of the project and supports staff in what they want to create/accomplish.	Need for staff to have appropriate technical skills needed to adapt curricula to integrate practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and perspectives from professionals, experts, and mentors.	Flexible Entrepreneur in Residence office hours offered participants low barrier support and has been well attended.
	Engaging in co-creation curriculum and program design sessions with internal RADIUS design team and lab managers who have experience working with newcomer and racialized change makers.	Providing personalized support to participants (such as following up with a participant when they miss a meeting and troubleshooting any supports to prevent future absences) reduced program attrition.	Dismantling power dynamics between service providers and clients by using Creative Facilitation principles during programming sessions.
	Expanding the typical model of program information sessions and offering two “application co-work jam sessions” to support participants throughout the application period. This initiative has received positive feedback.		

Project-level contributions

Q3: To what degree have projects contributed to newcomer integration independent of the Network?

- A couple of projects [developed curricula incorporating newcomers' voices and perspectives](#) through consultations and co-design processes, and continuously took feedback to improve the curricula and projects to better meet newcomers' needs.
- Many projects provided [workshops, trainings, and supports to newcomers to improve their integration](#) to Canada in terms of well-being, employment, entrepreneurship, and building social connections.
- Several projects [developed tools and resources to support newcomer integration](#) with the intention of sharing widely across Canada.
- A couple of projects worked directly with employers and [created networks of local stakeholders](#) to address some of the sector-specific barriers newcomers face in integration.
- A couple of projects were able to generate models for system-wide approaches to [providing supportive environments that meet a wide range of needs](#), so newcomers can succeed and remain in the community.



Implications for FSC

At the proposal stage:

- **Help applicants align the design of their projects with available resources and timelines.** This is particularly true for projects involving curriculum development and community consultation and engagement. For instance, curricula needs to be based on adult learning principles, aligned with delivery format, and be continuously adapted through learners' feedback – this needs technical expertise, flexibility for adaptation, and considerable time.
- **Encourage applicants to include provisions for hiring staff and sub-contractors with specific roles and responsibilities,** particularly for project management and technical roles. Help applicants reflect on what roles have previously worked well (or not) in previous projects, consider what new roles might be needed, which roles might have too many or not enough responsibilities in the planning stage, and adjust accordingly. The availability of appropriate staff and other resources in smaller centres should be considered.
- **Emphasize that target groups with specific identity factors have different needs and require different services.** Ensure that a needs analysis of newcomers – including specific sub-groups - and the sector/context has been conducted, and that project design takes this into account (e.g., projects delivered online may work better in remote or rural areas than in-person delivery).

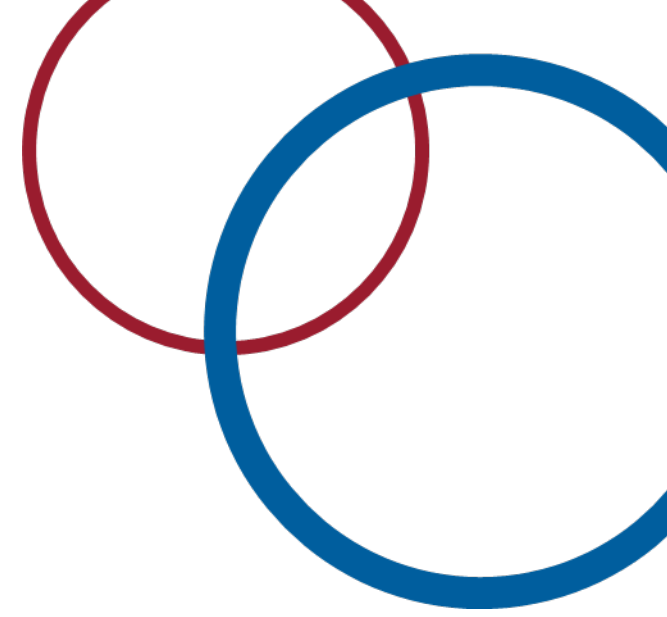
Implications for FSC cont'd

At the project implementation stage:

- Although community consultations and engagement are often critical to a project's success, they can take a lot of time and staff resources. [Build in flexible and sufficient timelines](#) to enable project partners to develop their capacity to engage meaningfully with community members and organizations.
- As organizations adapt their projects based on early feedback from participants and stakeholders to better align with the target audience, [allow flexibility in the size, scope, and timing of projects](#), even if this results in fewer participants and/or a smaller geographic reach.

Funding considerations:

- Where appropriate, [include a funded needs assessment or proof-of-concept phase](#) as a potential first project phase. This phase could begin by using community consultations to identify and fully understand the complex needs of the target population and how they should be addressed, or research from previous projects.
- With project partners, [assess the need and feasibility of scaling projects](#) across diverse locations or participant populations. Consideration is needed of the geographical contexts, specific needs of target populations, and the depth of knowledge/evidence of what intervention components work and what needs to be improved or adapted. Consider if expectations for regional or national scaling of projects may have the unintended consequence of stifling innovation.



Evaluation findings re: Network outcomes

Participation and engagement

Q4: What has been the level of participation and engagement in the Incubation Network among project partners?

- **All partner organizations were represented at most sessions** – All seven partner organizations attended three of the four Network sessions, and six partners attended the other session. The number of participants per organization varied between one and four. With the addition of three to four staff each from FSC and SRDC plus the facilitator, this meant time in plenary ranged from 15 to 25 people.
- **However, scheduling conflicts affected participation and engagement** – Participants from one organization had to leave early on two occasions for meetings. Their absence was acutely felt during some of the small breakout room activities, when there were more FSC and SRDC staff in attendance than those from partner organizations.
- **Individual attendance also varied considerably** - Each organization was asked to send a consistent representative to all four sessions. However, scheduling conflicts (particularly in May and June) and staff turnover meant there was a lack of consistency in attendance across all four sessions for most of the partners. This undoubtedly affected engagement in terms of both those who were new to the Network as well as connections across partner organizations.

Participation and engagement cont'd

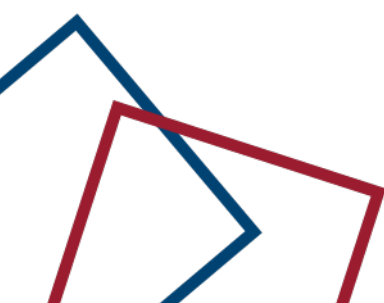
- **Views on session scheduling were mixed** – Most partners noted that Fridays were a good choice for Network sessions, since they typically have fewer meetings that day. However, the chosen time slot – which worked for most participants - was not ideal for NL WIC, since it meant working late Friday afternoons. May and June are typically also busy with conferences and other events, so that posed a problem for a few participants. Overall, however, scheduling was done with a fair bit of advance notice to allow most participants to work their schedules around Network sessions.
- **Participants were engaged in session activities** – We observed that participants seemed well engaged – discussions were lively and focused, and those present seemed to enjoy themselves. Partners indicated they liked being able to self-select breakout rooms, and to present the specific challenges they faced with their projects. Discussion in breakout rooms was observed to generally be more animated than those in plenary, though participants said they appreciated the mix of opportunities to participate (e.g., chat, Jamboard, one-to-one, plenary).

“Getting the opportunity to talk with a smaller group of people is good, because it is really challenging in a big Zoom or Google call because you can’t have side conversations to talk about things.... The breakout rooms do give that opportunity for two, three or four people to have a bit more of a meaningful conversation.”

Partner A

Participation and engagement cont'd

Engagement outside Network sessions appears to have been limited - Despite eliciting and responding to partner feedback on which communication tools participants wished to use in between Network meetings (e.g., LinkedIn, Slack), there was almost no activity on the chosen platform. This could be the result of demand characteristics of the meetings – partners saying what they thought FSC wanted to hear – or simply a matter of good intentions not followed through.



Immediate and short-term outcomes

Q5: To what extent has the Incubation Network achieved its immediate and short-term outcome goals?

- A **supportive and welcoming environment** was created – The facilitator’s friendly demeanour, thoughtful guidance, and structured approach to leading the Network sessions were well-received by partners, and the majority shared that they found him to be skilled in creating a safe and comfortable environment for discussion.
- The tremendous amount of **planning for sessions** appears to have paid off, too - partners appreciated the use of tools like Jamboard and breakout rooms to maintain engagement in the virtual setting, and the way open discussions about project challenges and exchange of ideas was encouraged. The variety of communication tools available meant everyone had a choice of what to use in both large and small group settings. Pulse surveys after Network sessions also allowed partners to help shape upcoming sessions, such as providing more time in breakout rooms.

OUTCOMES	
IMMEDIATE (May 2023)	SHORT (Sept 2023)
• Supportive and welcoming environment • Peer connections formed • Participants are engaged • Sense of connection, inclusion • Partners feel a sense of responsibility to the process • First-hand learning about other approaches to support newcomer integration • Participants see value in participating in the network	• “Brave space” created for ideating & risk sharing • Partners find opportunities to connect, support each other’s work/learn from each other • Project-level Insights produced re: goals and broader issues • Responsibility for shared goals • Peer connections last beyond facilitated cohort • Participants have Network-level insights about Network process and outcomes • Partners had fun • Better understanding of areas of promise & opportunity & that need attention

Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

“It was such a safe space. The facilitator was always so welcoming the second we all got into the room and ensuring that we knew it was a safe space and everyone had the opportunity to talk. It’s hard when there’s so many people around, especially in a virtual setting. I liked that there was a Jamboard, that there was a breakout room... It kept the engagement high, especially at a time when it’s so easy to have two or three screens going at the same time. And for us... to be able to openly say this is something we have run into and ask for thoughts and suggestions was helpful because a lot of the times, people don’t want to put out that ‘ask’ to their peers.”

Partner B

Partners’ and FSC’s goals for connection, inclusion, and learning were met – Partner representatives came to the first Network session with an appetite to connect with other Network members and by the end of that first session, were already issuing invitations to each other to connect. In interviews, all partners indicated that participating in the Network had provided them with opportunities to engage in open communication and one-on-one interactions with other participants, and allowed for connections to be made that might not have occurred otherwise. Partners reported that their goals for connecting and learning about each others’ work had been achieved, which also aligned with FSC’s goals for the Network. All partners expressed a desire for more discussion, and FSC and SRDC observed connections occurring organically in the breakout groups.

Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

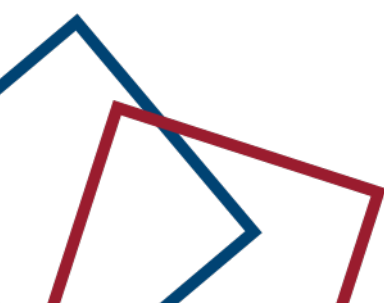
A common focus in newcomer integration seems to have also contributed to a sense of connection and inclusion – We observed that the common thematic of newcomer integration seemed to help create a foundation for discussions among partners that quickly became in-depth sharing of issues, challenges, and promising practices, rather than more general descriptions of services. This was a deliberate choice on FSC's part, since the lack of a common need had been a barrier to relationship building in previous ideation initiatives.

"We are all working towards the same mission ... in the interest of the national good."

Partner E

"It was very important that we all work within the newcomer integration sector - having a common ground with each other and moving towards a similar goal but in different, creative ways. We speak the same professional language."

Partner F



Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

Sharing challenges within breakout sessions helped establish a sense of shared responsibility to the Network process, generated project-level learning/insight, and created opportunities to support each other's work. Discussions revealed that many organizations face similar challenges in newcomer integration, leading to "aha" moments of realization and shared experiences. One partner revealed how the discussion of retention challenges – which they too shared – reinforced that they are not alone in this experience. Moreover, it served as a reminder of the challenges newcomers face in participating in settlement and employment programs, particularly those focused on entrepreneurship.

"Having these open conversations and opportunities to communicate with partner organizations one-to-one...For example, with DMZ, I know they are one of the designated organizations and everyone is busy with their own stuff, and I didn't have the chance to knock on their doors and tell them that we are also a designated organization and offer to share best practices. And within the Network sessions, it was not by chance that I met DMZ and now I know more about what DMZ is doing. Having open communications was one of the best things I could have gotten from these sessions."

Partner C

"I liked the case studies [breakout sessions]. I liked learning about what other people had to say, what they were doing with their projects and their initiatives. I liked that we could provide feedback. That was valuable. I wanted to learn about what other people were doing, and what their practices looked like in their work."

Partner D

Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

- [Peer connections and responsibility to broader shared goals appeared limited to the Network sessions.](#) As noted earlier, most partners – with a couple of exceptions – did not reach out to others between meetings or by using LinkedIn. When asked about this in interviews, answers varied - several felt four sessions were not enough to build the kind of meaningful connections needed to foster ongoing relationships. Others said that while there was an initial effort to learn about other programs, they did not feel a strong connection with other participants after the meetings ended.
- [A similar pattern was noted regarding collaboration.](#) When partners were asked if they wanted to collaborate on a hypothetical future project, an after-meeting poll indicated lower interest than what was expressed in the meeting. Both findings are a reminder that capacity and resource constraints tend to be more top of mind when one is immersed back into day-to-work; this needs to be considered in future planning. However, participants also need to see how such activities support a broader purpose, in order to make their own determination of effort vs benefit. For example, one partner indicated they did not feel ongoing collaboration was a priority for them based on the stage they were at with their project and with competing priorities.

“As much as we would like to continue working together and develop a relationship, we don’t know if our funding contracts will last beyond a certain timeframe. So, it’s harder to make those lasting connections when the field is set up to be quite transient.”

Partner C

Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

- **Project diversity was a double-edged sword.** Although the diversity of organizations and projects in the Network was perceived as valuable, a few partner organizations disclosed that this diversity – particularly in stages of project implementation - made it challenging to find commonality. The theme of newcomer integration was considered by some to be too broad to establish a clear and immediate case for collaboration. Not having a common set of tasks to work on in the Network, or clarity about what opportunity was needed or being offered may have also contributed to this lack of follow-through.
- **However, there was an upside to having projects at different stages of implementation** – DMZ chose to deliberately share the challenge they had experienced earlier in their project with retaining clients in their program, even though they were already in the final stages of their second cohort and any suggestions from others would come too late for them to implement. Nevertheless, they raised this as a challenge because they felt other partners might benefit from hearing about this challenge and the kinds of insights and solutions generated in discussion.

In fact, RADIUS engaged in a discussion with DMZ about strategies for client retention and participation, which prompted the latter organization to consider the reasons behind the level of client participation and engagement. They acknowledge that clients' unique circumstances, such as running their own businesses, might affect their ability to attend scheduled workshops. As a result, they aimed to tailor their program to better accommodate clients' needs and ensure consistent engagement.

Immediate and short-term outcomes cont'd

- The Network facilitated substantial shared learning and insights, usually in response to the sharing of project challenges in breakout rooms. Though this was generally at the level of projects rather than systems, as originally conceived by FSC, it provided tangible proof of the benefits of collaboration, and could be a solid foundation for ideation at a broader level in the future.

Spotlight on shared insights – KEYS

The opportunity to share a challenge they were facing with other partners provided multiple rewards for the KEYS partners. Firstly, they appreciated the depth of support that other network members provided by offering suggestions and sharing their experiences. Secondly, KEYS heard multiple insights that helped them approach their challenge in a new light. They were inspired to move from trying to build a universal service model that would fit each sector, to develop a set of universal principles from which they could build a service model that would fit the needs of the different communities.

Spotlight on shared insights: North Forge

After discussion with KEYS, North Forge broadened their recruitment focus, shifting their attention to highly educated newcomers facing challenges in finding employment in their field rather than a sole focus on newcomers in the Start-up Visa Program. North Forge encouraged entrepreneurship as an alternative career path to clients, which ultimately helped North Forge surpass their recruitment goals.

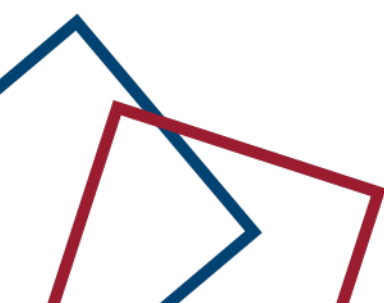
Unintended consequences

Q6: Have there been any unintended consequences of the Incubation Network?

- **There has been positive unintended consequences to the Network** - One partner reported that being part of the Incubation Network and under the umbrella of FSC boosted their credibility and trust between their service providers and newcomers, particularly when working with newcomers who might be initially skeptical of free services. Another established a referral system that now lists Network partners as resources for their clients, thereby enhancing the support network available to newcomers. In both cases, being part of a collective effort was perceived as increasing the perceived legitimacy and reliability of their programs, making them more appealing to, and useful for, newcomers.
- **On the other hand, contract uncertainty led to staff turnover and a premature end to the Network** - In an ideal world, the Incubation Network and its constituent projects would have gotten underway much earlier and allowed more time for collaborative ideation on broader issues as well as shared insights on solutions to project-level implementation challenges. However, even with the real-life experience of a condensed timeframe, FSC staff had hoped to have more certainty around the extension or renewal of FSC's mandate and be able to offer a clearer vision of what might follow in terms of opportunity for ideation and potentially, joint work. While FSC was eventually able to offer contract extensions to most projects, in at least one case, this did not happen before staff left to pursue other opportunities.

Unintended consequences cont'd

- [There is also a risk of disillusioning partners](#) - As it was, the lack of certainty about what FSC could offer in terms of resources, opportunity, and support meant that Network sessions did not lead to a chance to *apply* shared insights and lessons learned to joint ideation work at a broader level. While the Incubation Network appears to have whetted the appetite of project partners for more connection and collaboration, without the support of FSC to facilitate these, momentum will inevitably stall, staff will move on to other projects or organizations, and it may be harder to generate collective enthusiasm next time around.

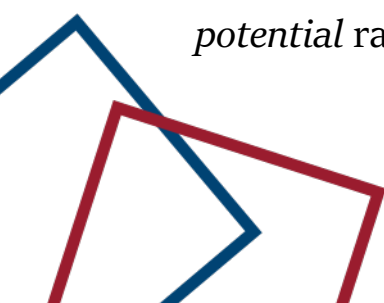


Perceived Value

Q7: What is the perceived value to projects of a Network approach over and above funding projects individually?

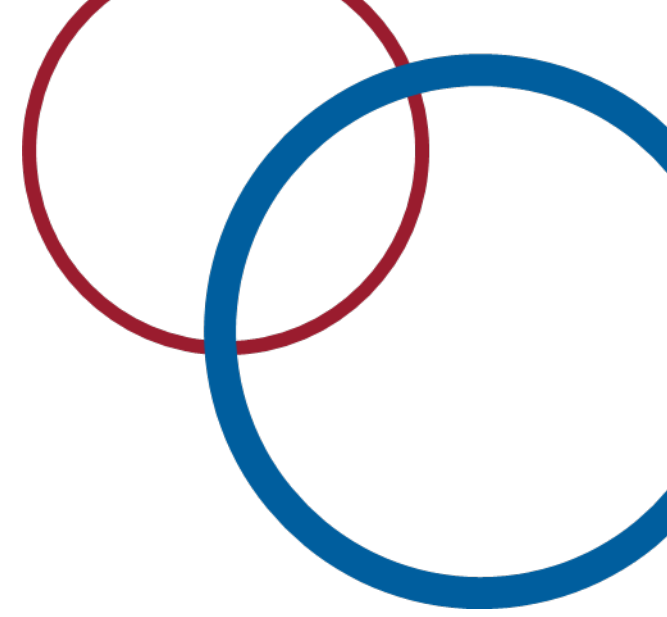
It would be fair to say [the perceived value of the Incubation Network among partners was mixed](#). Certainly, most partners' immediate and short-term goals were met in terms of making connections with peer organizations across the country, learning about each others' projects and broader work, and developing insights they could apply to their projects; these mirror FSC's own goals for the Network. Moreover, as one partner noted, they saw value in the reflection process generated by Network sessions, rather than having to focus only on project outcomes and "*business as usual*." As noted earlier, there was also value perceived in the boost in credibility from being part of a collective effort and potentially being able to refer clients to each others' organizations.

On the other hand, most partners perceived [limited value in terms of the day-to-day application of these connections](#), particularly without the opportunity to do so collectively and on a common need or problem. The lack of time, resources, and opportunity to support ideation and joint work are the reasons much of the promise of the Network is unrealized and in its value *potential* rather than fully demonstrated value.



Summary of findings re: Network outcomes

Evaluation Question	Status	Summary
Q3. To what degree have projects contributed to newcomer integration independent of the Network?	Met and ongoing	Collectively, projects are intentionally incorporating newcomer voices into the design of their programming and supports; developing tools and resources and sharing them more widely; expanding networks of contacts to support newcomers according to their needs, addressing equity, diversity and inclusion barriers with employers; and working on community-wide approaches to socially support newcomer integration concurrently with employment. Some projects had more success than others, but on the whole, the list of achievements to date is impressive.
Q4. What has been the level of participation and engagement in the Incubation Network among project partners?	Mixed	Attendance and participation at the Network meetings by partner organizations was high. However consistent individual attendance varied, and engagement outside of the meetings was limited
Q5. To what extent has the Incubation Network achieved its immediate and short-term outcomes?	Mostly met	In general, immediate, and short-term goals were met but were limited to the Network sessions themselves. Goals related to broader ideation in newcomer integration were not feasible given the timeframe, so success lay in creating a community of practice.
Q6. Have there been any unintended consequences of the Incubation Network?	Mixed	Being a part of the Incubation Network provided a credibility boost for at least one partner organization. However, the uncertainty regarding FSC renewal led to attrition of some key project staff at partner organizations, and risks disillusioning partners.
Q7. What is the perceived value to projects of a network approach over and above funding projects individually?	Mixed	Partners saw value in connecting with peers, learning from each other, being able to refer clients to a broader network of resources, as well as in developing insights and taking the time to reflect on their learning. While some were willing to work on a common idea or project, they saw this as needing more time, resources (especially funding), information, and facilitated opportunity.



Considerations

For moving forward with the Incubation Network

Establishing the pre-conditions for ideation

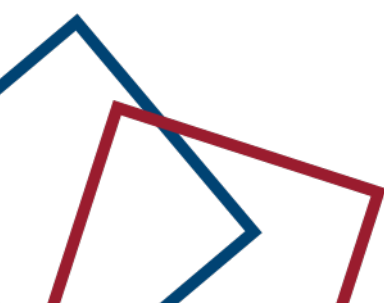
Many of us have been part of ideation exercises that bring people together for a single meeting to create solutions to complex, ‘wicked’ problems. Not surprisingly, the result is often unfocused, highly performative, and only modestly productive, in part because of the assumption that simply bringing knowledgeable people together is sufficient. This evaluation has found that the Incubation Network accomplished more than this, in providing the conditions and support for a time-limited community of practice that could form the basis for collective ideation in the future.

Based on the innovation and design thinking literature and our own experience, the following are important considerations for the planning and design stage of ideation initiatives:

- **Clarity of purpose** - A well-articulated goal and end-point, so everyone knows, broadly speaking, what they are there to accomplish together. The process can be flexible and adapt, but the focus should be clear.
- **Identifying the right people** – Ideation is a creative, dynamic, collaborative process – not everyone is comfortable with this. FSC’s decision to find people at the cutting edge of newcomer integration – either trying out innovations or experienced at helping others do so – makes perfect sense and should be considered for other ideation initiatives. Likewise, finding a group of people with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences will enrich the process provided there are enough points of commonality among them, and a clear goal, endpoint, and process.

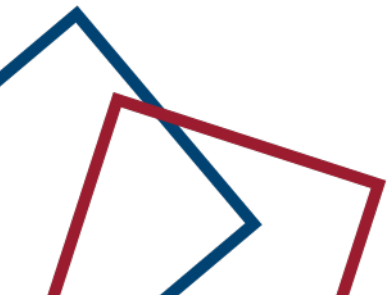
Establishing the pre-conditions for ideation

- **Enough of the right people** around the table – FSC kept the number of project partners low, which was helpful in plenary but meant that with variable attendance, they were outnumbered by FSC and SRDC staff in breakout rooms. Having more project/peer participants could make sharing and ideating in small groups more effective. Reinforcing the need for *two* people from each organization to commit to participating at all sessions, perhaps with dedicated funding – while no guarantee – could optimize participation and informed contributions.
- **Enough of the right people at the right times** - What is the right number of participants vs intermediaries, supporters, facilitators, and experts or resource people? Do they all participate in ideation or only project personnel? When is the right time to bring ‘outsiders’ in? Network members were understandably leery about bringing in outsiders while they were getting to know each other and sharing challenges (at the ‘forming’ stage of a community of practice) but this could and should change for the ideation process(see *Providing the right supports*, next page).



Establishing the pre-conditions for ideation cont'd

- **Identifying the right model** or mechanism – By necessity, the Incubation Network ended up being more of a brief community of practice than a systems-level ideation forum, but this provided benefits in terms of establishing the trust, shared responsibility, and sense of belonging among Network members that are important for establishing a collaborative process needed for ideation and equalizing the risk of failure or looking foolish. Is there a role for *more than one model* - a broad, sector-based community of practice to share information AND a network to incubate ideation? Possible models could include a mix of meetings in plenary vs sub-groups, alternating meetings for different purposes, or establishing a satellite group specifically for ideation.
- **Transparency** about the process (length, time commitment etc.), and clearly defined roles for everyone present. FSC kept demands on Incubation Network participants low (e.g., only four sessions, max 90 minutes, no 'homework') but some indicated they'd have been willing to do more. Consider how to provide options for those who want to 'dig deeper' in-between sessions while not increasing the burden on all participants, to keep everyone as engaged as they are able.



Providing an enabling environment for ideation

Providing an enabling environment for ideation depends on having established the pre-conditions outlined previously in the design phase. In the implementation phase, the following considerations may be helpful:

- **Take a phased approach** to ideation – The practice-based literature (e.g., Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Westley, 2015) consistently cites the importance of first taking the time to identify, understand, and describe the needs and problems – including their root causes – to be addressed with ideation and particularly, and the perspectives of those with first-hand experience. It is important not to skip or rush this process; particularly in a resource-stretched sector such as settlement services, these problems must be acknowledged and the effort to overcome them duly acknowledged. There will likely be a mix of project-, program-level, and organizational challenges identified before people are able to consider broader, systems-level problems; it's necessary to get all these down on paper and acknowledged in order to focus on the level of interest, and then the process of collectively prioritizing problems can begin.
- **Provide inspiration** – Working on complex, intractable, ‘wicked’ problems can be demoralizing, and the pressure to develop ‘disruptive,’ ‘transformative,’ systems-level solutions can be daunting for even the most creative, optimistic person. Encourage out-of-the box thinking while minimizing normative or pressure-inducing terminology. Focusing on the process of sharing, learning about, and prioritizing the needs and problems to be addressed through collective ideation can help, as can examples from other fields of how creative, extraordinary ideas have had transformative effects. Look for examples of ‘positive deviance’ (Sternin & Choo, 2000) – instances of people improvising with modest assets and resources in a creative way to overcome a problem – and ways to identify the opportunity hidden with a problem.

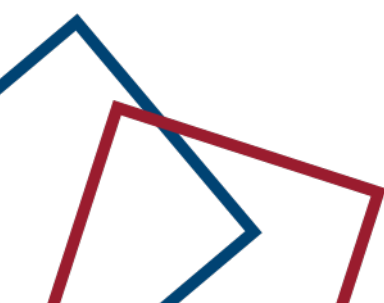
Providing an enabling environment for ideation cont'd

- **Provide a broad range of supports** for ideation – FSC provided (virtual) space for convening, funding, coaching for proposal development, networking tools, and planning, facilitation, and evaluation support to the Incubation Network – all foundational to the community of practice and laying the groundwork for ideation. To make the shift into active ideation, these supports could be broadened to include training, mentorship, expert advice, guest speakers, workshops, and brokered connections to others outside the Network.
- **Provide information on design thinking** – As the process moves from problem identification to ideating solutions, it is important to provide ways to think about the kind of change desired and the opportunities or levers for achieving that change. Social Innovation Canada (2018) identifies several change frameworks that can help: Tactics for Change (policy, culture, and markets), the Change Process (incremental or disruptive, internal or external; Leadbetter, 2005), and Steps for Innovation (ideation, invention, adoption, and impact). Likewise, information about complex systems can help people identify problematic dimensions, differences, and dynamics within the sector that could become opportunities or focal points for ideation. Here again, examples from other fields can provide both general inspiration and specific guidance.
- **Provide skilled facilitation support** – Participants in the Incubation Network were unanimous that the Purpose Co. facilitator had done an excellent job at creating a welcoming environment for participants and sharing ideas while keeping the process on track; extensive planning behind the scenes also contributed substantially to this. While one member suggested that a background in newcomer integration might have been helpful, we feel this may not be necessary, since it is the process of collectively identifying and reviewing sector problems is based on participants' experience. Ultimately, it is the participants with content knowledge who co-design the solution(s), so it is more important for the facilitator to know how to support collective ideation in an inclusive, respectful, and effective manner.

Moving on from ideation

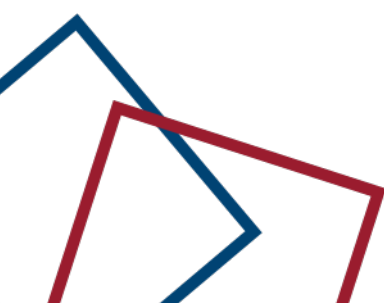
Of course, the purpose of ideation is not simply to generate insights into problems facing the settlement sector and develop creative ideas for newcomer integration, but to identify which of these potential solutions to take to the next stages of development, that is, prototyping, piloting, implementing, adoption, adaptation, and evaluating impact. FSC has a mandate to “accelerate innovation for learning and impact” in skills development and utilization. The more information that can be shared about its intention, process, and resources for subsequent phases, the more likely participants will fully engage in the ideation process and not worry about the ideas, time, or resources they share. Considerations for subsequent phases of work include:

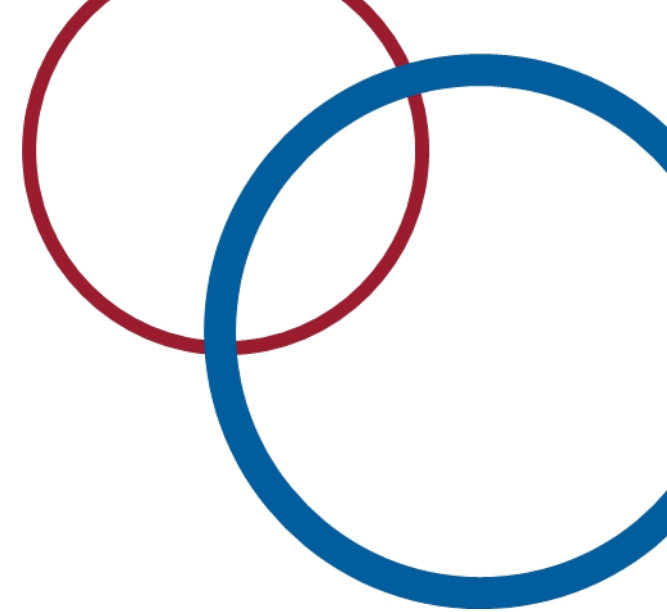
- **Clarity about who will carry this work forward** and how – Substantial work will be needed to prototype, pilot, and refine the solution(s) identified in the ideation phase, to move them from ideas into designs for testing. Beyond that, the Adoption phase involves replicating, scaling, and adapting these innovations, and then depending on their effectiveness, integrating them into broader practice. Articulating FSC’s role and how subsequent phases are likely to unfold will be important to the extent it is possible (recognizing that clarity about mandates and resources isn’t always possible).



Moving on from ideation cont'd

- **Sufficient time and resources** – The processes mentioned above may take a long time, especially if the focus is on systems-level change. Flexible, patient funding and support through implementation challenges is important
- **Define success and determining effectiveness** - It can be challenging and time-consuming to determine how well these innovations have been implemented, are effective, for whom, and under what circumstances. The ideation process can be a valuable source of insight into visualizing and defining metrics for success, for identifying unforeseen challenges and unintended consequences, and for guidance as to how to address these.





Conclusion

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Incubation Network was an important pilot initiative, building on previous ideation models to create a supportive environment for service delivery organizations to connect and ideate on issues affecting a shared focus – in this case, the strategic priority focus area of newcomer integration.

Implementation of the Network occurred during the final confirmed year of FSC's mandate, which posed challenges to achieving the original vision of the Network, exacerbated by delays which further shortened the timeline. With the looming uncertainty around next steps, it was necessary to scale back the Network's initial mandate to align with partner capacity and priorities, and to ensure objectives matched the available timeframe.

Despite the challenges, the creation of a community of practice that fostered peer connections and shared learning, and provided an opportunity to collectively troubleshoot project implementation issues was a noteworthy accomplishment and created value for partner organizations. As described in this report, the immediate and short-term outcomes were largely achieved. As part of FSC plans for renewal, there is an opportunity to leverage the robust foundation already established with this initiative. Lessons learned from the Incubation Network can be used to expand this model into other strategic thematic areas or to implement a model more explicitly focused on ideation, incorporating some of the design thinking principles articulated in the last section of this report.