

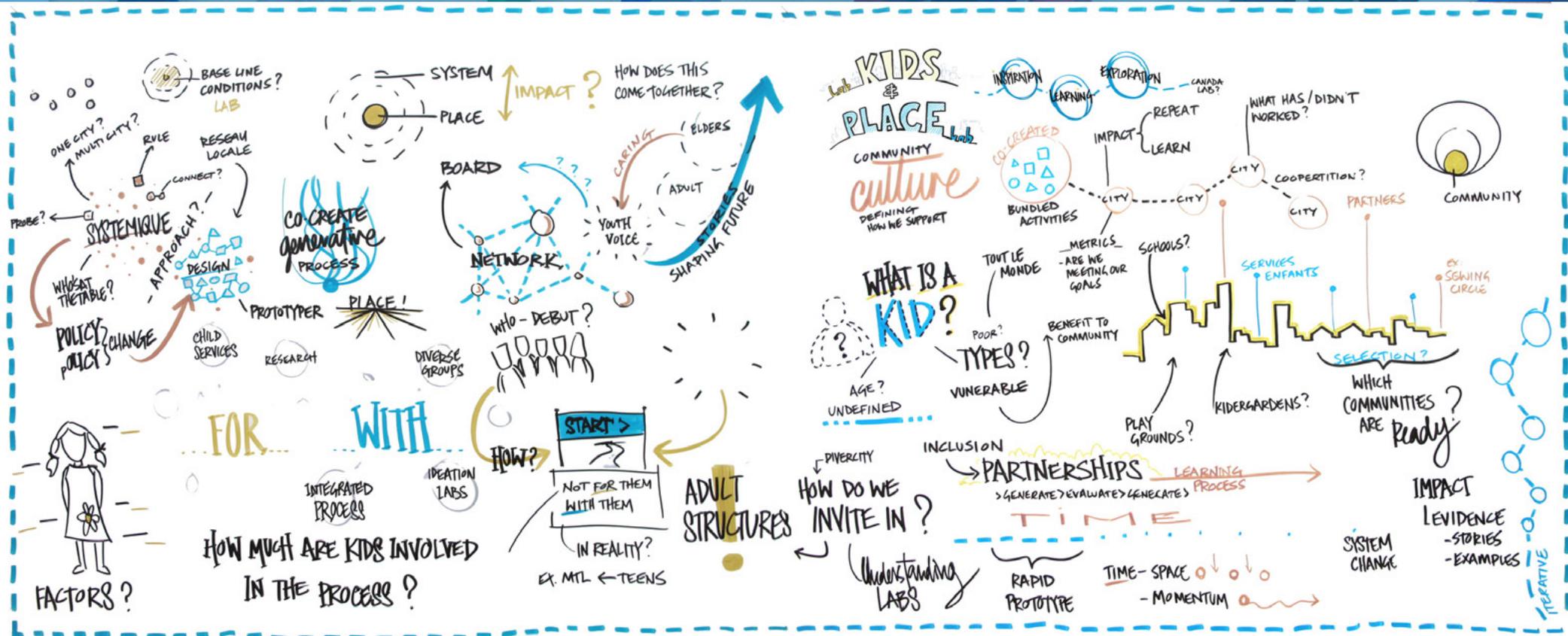
KIDS AND PLACE LAB

Learning from the United States and exploring for Canada

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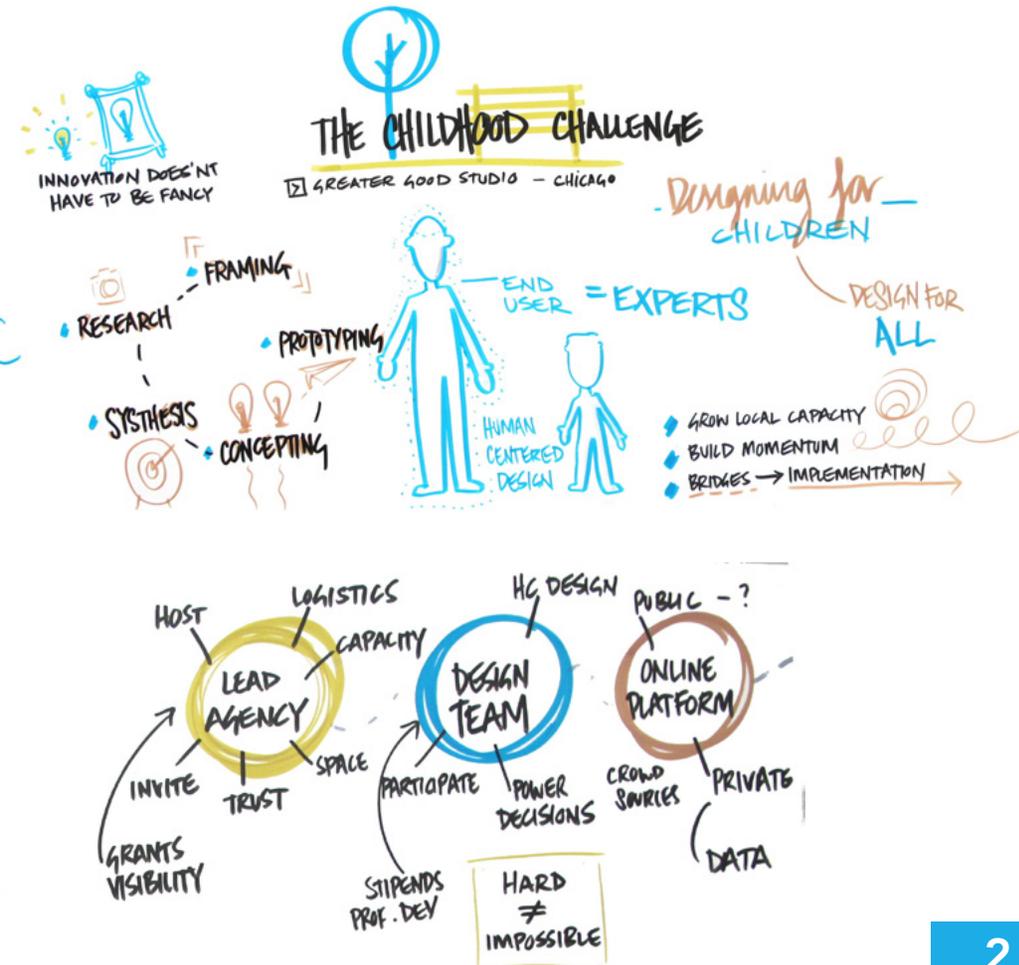
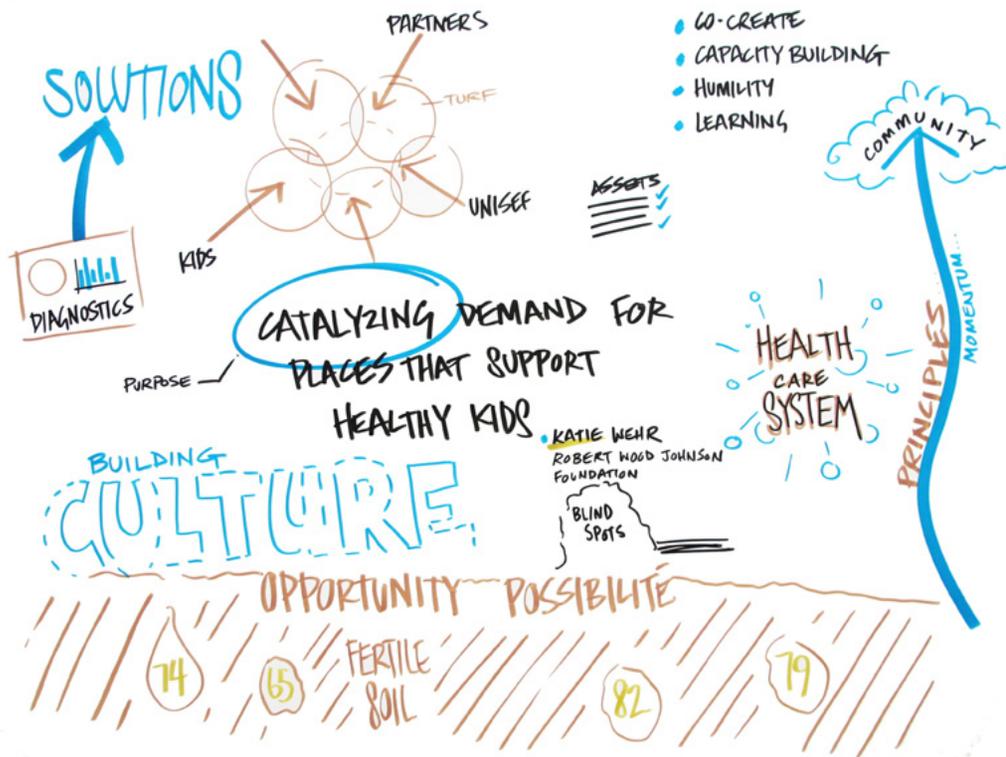


I. CONTEXT

There is an emerging movement connecting children's well-being with city well-being and rethinking urban design from child-centered design. In line with this movement, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation opened space to explore the potential of a Kids and Place Lab in Canada.

Thirty odd organizations from Canada and beyond, convened for two half days, including people working on childhood well-being, healthy cities and people with lab expertise.

Two special guests working on a Kids and Place Lab in the USA joined the convening: Katie Wehr from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Sara Cantor Aye from Greater Good Studio (GGS). This report is the result of that convening.



II. LEARNING

What are we learning from our neighbors?

i) Co-creation is important

Through the eyes of our neighbors, we saw that inviting in an ecosystem to explore together what a Kids and Place Lab could be, though messy and uncomfortable, is the appropriate approach for Canada. It allows for a collective and emergent strategy owned by a wider field.

The American process was a more conventional one, whereby decisions made by the board led to an RFP process that was won by the Greater Good Studio tasked with implementing processes to engage with the communities and ecosystem actors. The exchange confirmed the desire to continue in this co-creative pathway, while recognizing it as a bit chaotic.



What are the questions that we share?

ii) We share some of the same questions

Some of the core questions are:

- How do we keep the children at the centre of this process (for children/with children/by children)?
- How much are the structures and processes kid versus adult oriented? How do we invite in?
- What is the power and opportunity in the voice of youth?
- How to ensure both evidence based work and emergent strategy at the same time?
- What is the real impact that we want from a lab? How do labs change the future of youth that partake in them? What does success look like and how do we evaluate it? What are big and small policies we would like to change?
- What is a « kid »? Does it need to be defined or left open? Do we focus on vulnerable neighborhoods?
- How do you determine what municipalities take place in a lab? How do we know the readiness of a community? Do communities need to have labs in parallel?
- How do we engage municipalities in a way that they also take responsibility and an active role in the lab creation process and the initiatives that could come from it?
- How do we do local human centered/driven design and effect wider system change at the same time?

III. ASPIRATIONS

What could be the aspirations and broader vision of a Canadian Kids and Place lab

- 1** The notion of **RADICAL EQUITY** should be a principle and a guide.
- 2** Beyond a lab, a Kids and Place Studio could be a place for **ONGOING LEARNING AND EXPERIMENTATION**.
- 3** Obtain **SMALL SUCCESSES** in known areas such as schools and then branch out.
- 4** "Keep spirit": **ENGAGE KIDS**, go outside with them and walk with mentors; connect kids through visits to different places and pilot projects; open their minds and imagination to more opportunities.
- 5** Knowledge production and transfer: **SHARING EXPERIENCES** between cities or countries, learning from this lab and translating this knowledge to: decision makers; communities; and university students who will be practicing in these areas post graduation.
- 6** The lab is **BY CHILDREN**, not only for children and with children.
- 7** Begin now: **FOCUS ON ACTION** by co-creating with lots of diversity and meeting people where they are.

IV. SCOPE

What is a preliminary scoping of a Canadian Kids and Place Lab?

When?

The focus could be short term action and long-term commitment.

- Something can and should be initiated rapidly, by spring 2017, even.
- There is a sense that putting a time constraint can help the project move forward (for example 6, 8, 12 or 18 months) and there is a strong desire to do something a bit more substantial time wise, such as 3 or 5 years.
- There is also a strong voice for doing something that is sustainable over time, 25 years, as long as possible or continuously.

Where?

In order of interest expressed:

- Montréal (a natural priority with the conditions ready for a lab)
- Winnipeg and Edmonton (already have labs), Vancouver, Toronto
- Indigenous communities: Kahnawake, Wendake and Nunavik
- Rural areas: Joliette, Saint-Camille, northern Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
- Yellowknife, Halifax, Charlottetown, Newfoundland, Calgary
- Richmond, Hamilton,
- Ottawa, Québec, Whitehorse



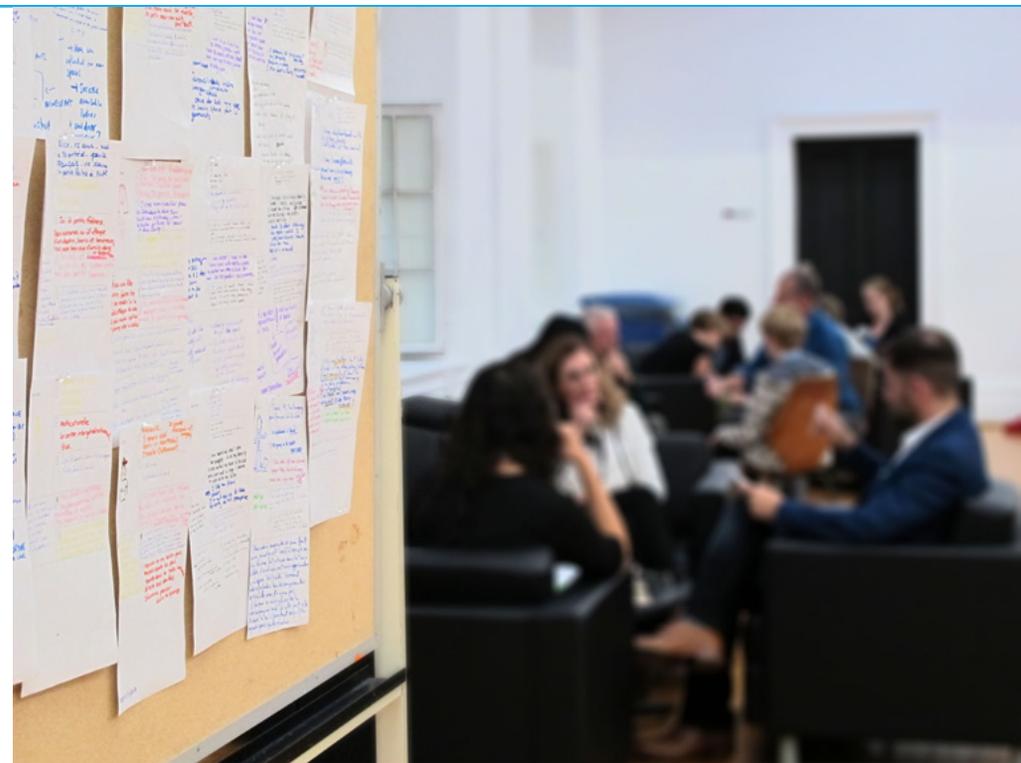
Criteria for deciding where to implement labs:

- Municipal policy, capacity and purpose, complementary social capital, desire and capacity for a lab.
- Have some partners : Kids and Place vibrant communities; deliberative engagement of « second cities ».
- 1) urban/rural, 2) momentum, 3) diversity, culture(s).
- 1) Different sizes working in clusters. 2) Building on existing momentum + readiness. 3) Sister cities.

Who?

Most clear:

- Community organizations, popular education, neighborhood committees, youth centres
- City, local authorities
- Schools, teachers, school boards
- Kids
- Provincial government, policy-makers, public administrations
- Family and extended family, parent associations
- Universities, researchers, research centers
- Foundations : McConnell, RWJ, Chagnon, Centraide
- Architects, urban planners, designers
- Health associations, health system
- Work places, local workers, corporate champions, local business



Important to include:

- Artists
- Clubs, sports associations, athletes
- Day cares, care-givers
- Federal government
- Professional orders and associations

And also:

- Placemaking organizations
- Social workers
- Amplifier Montréal
- Indigenous communities
- Québec en Forme and its network
- Bus drivers
- Banks, financial institutions
- Police
- Parks Canada

V. INTEREST

Where is there interest for taking things forward?

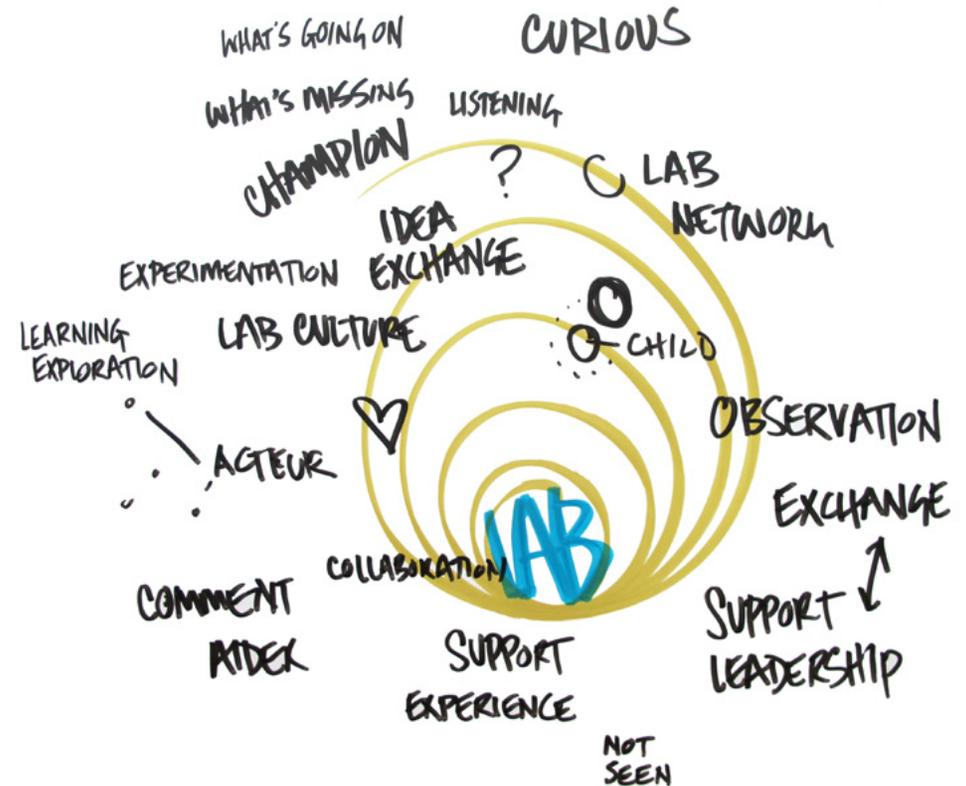
i. Many voiced a desire to be closely involved. Be it for support, exchange, collaboration, leadership, experimentation, learning and exploration. This included:

- Avenir d'Enfants, who offered sharing their experiences of collective impact prototyping, and to drive or support the project with the voice of children.
- Amplifier Montréal
- Exeko
- Evergreen
- Researchers
- Montreal Urban Ecology Centre
- Pépinère & Collaborateurs
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Greater Good Studio
- Cities for People

There is a mutual interest in pursuing the relationship with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)

ii. Others expressed interest to observe, curiosity, championing, idea exchange or identifying what's missing.

The energy in the room is saying let's start something small now, while a larger strategy gets built and make sure that kids are driving and designing it.



PARTICIPANTS

Kids and Place Lab

October 20-21, 2016

- Aaron Good, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
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- Audrey Charneux, Pente à neige
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- Robert Plitt, Evergreen
- Sara Aye, Greater Good Studio
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