



DRIVING INCLUSIVE, INNOVATION-DRIVEN  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NOVA SCOTIA  
THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT

SEPTEMBER 2021



IMPACT REPORT

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

ONSIDE was launched in 2019, with an ambitious mandate to support and foster a prosperous Nova Scotia through inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship (IDE). We set out on this journey with the knowledge that regions that have found ways to play to their strengths and cultivate this kind of entrepreneurship are more productive and dynamic. The question is—how do you translate this concept of IDE acceleration into meaningful initiatives and actions that also produce the widest benefit? Answering this question and furthering inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship in Nova Scotia has been our focus and intention. It is through this lens that we examine our impact and where we can go from here.

At ONSIDE, we have learned a few things along the way. First, embrace complexity and the disruptive ideas that help address our challenge to nurture inclusive IDE. Second, recognize and run toward the many capable partners with skills and resources that are all deployed today with overlapping and adjacent pursuits. Third, always accept that while advancements are being made, deeper impact can be achieved through collaborative engagement and action. Bringing people together to solve complex problems that cannot be solved by a single player is a powerful first step in creating the conditions for moving forward together. We anchor our work, as a team, in collective impact principals and follow evidence-based ecosystem acceleration strategies put forward by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP).

Like most organizations, 2020 was a year of change for ONSIDE. It was also one where the impact of fulfilling our mandate could not have felt more meaningful or acute. Due to COVID-19, our team adapted to rapidly changing conditions, ways of working, and convening and connecting with others, while sharing the opportunities associated with IDE. In real time, we could also see the immediate negative impacts on small- and medium-sized businesses, traditional industries, women, and under-represented groups who were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Black Lives Matter (#BLM) and the death of George Floyd took centre stage and reached around the globe, forcing important conversations on race, belonging, and participation that had long been ignored. As the pandemic raged on, #StopAsianHate, #IndigenousChildrenMatter, #StopIslamophobia also became a top-of-mind focus. The glossy veneer of a modern and innovative society started to crack, and we have had to step back to ask—who is actually participating in and benefiting from this innovation economy we are trying to build?

To deepen understanding of these issues and identify solutions, ONSIDE has piloted numerous initiatives and collaborations highlighted in this report. Included are the launch of the rural-based MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia program, the Nova Scotia Inclusive Innovation Monitor, inclusive financing programs with Future Capital and Sandpiper Ventures, and work focused on black entrepreneurship and the role of place in fostering inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship.

Gaps remain in our ecosystem as we rebound and rebuild in a post-COVID-19 world. As Brad Feld mentions in his 2020 book, *Startup Communities*, it is so important to be intentional about the innovation economy and community you are building. Together, all Nova Scotians can take action toward growing an inclusive, innovation-driven economy that will create the best conditions for shared and enduring prosperity.

These complicated challenges require dedicated individuals bringing their unique perspectives and experiences as we work together toward solutions to these issues.

ONSIDE would like to acknowledge with gratitude funding from the Province of Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), and Develop Nova Scotia, as well as all of the contributors to the MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia program. We'd like to say thank you to our partners including: Sandpiper Ventures, Future Capital, Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship, Halifax Innovation District, Rural Innovation District & Hubs, NSCC, MIT, Dalhousie, Volta, Tribe Network, NATIONAL Public Relations, Podstarter, Outpost East, One Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Partnership, Develop Nova Scotia, The Forge Institute, and Mashup Lab; as well as office-mates Inspiring Communities, Nova Scotia Gov Lab, and Community Links. Thank you to the wonderful ONSIDE team and to the board and our partners. Our Impact Report would tell a less compelling story if not for your unflagging energy, guidance, and optimism.

Alex McCann  
Executive Director, ONSIDE



## ONSIDE

Organization for Nova Scotia Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurship is a not-for-profit organization that amplifies the power of inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship and disruptive ideas. We mobilize collaboration to turn ideas into impact for a more prosperous and entrepreneurial future in Nova Scotia.

## BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE



When I moved back to Nova Scotia in 2015 after 20+ years in Asia, I was amazed by the thriving startup scene which seemed to have magically appeared. I jumped in headfirst as CEO of a health research company, joining the ranks of Nova Scotia's entrepreneurs trying to figure out how to scale. I was in the weeds and took advantage of the many resources available to entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia.

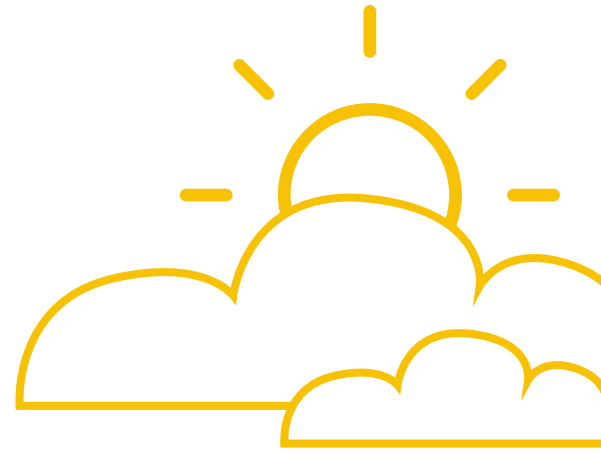
A few years into my new job, I was invited to join the Nova Scotia delegation of the MIT Regional Entrepreneurial Acceleration Program (REAP). I jumped at the chance, learning about a process for regional economic growth through entrepreneurship fueled by multi-stakeholder partnerships between governments, academic institutions, venture funds, industry partners, and local entrepreneurs. It brought me out of the weeds of my personal entrepreneurial journey and gave me a bird's-eye view of the much bigger economic growth opportunity unfolding for Nova Scotia through entrepreneurship.

ONSDIE was born out of the MIT REAP program, conceived as a backbone to support economic growth through entrepreneurship using 'collective impact', a proven approach to collaboration. There's a buzz about entrepreneurship in our region, as startups in Atlantic Canada have increased at a rate of about 15% per year with over a \$1 billion investment dollars flowing into the region since 2019.

Despite this progress, major gaps remain, especially in inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship. In 2020, only 14% of startups in the region were female-led, and they had raised only 3% of the equity funding. Visible minorities led only 13% of companies in 2020 and only 1.6% had indigenous founders or CEOs. Strides seen in urban centres have also been slow to translate to rural areas.

This is where ONSDIE comes in. Our aim is to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem and encourage participation by historically under-represented groups. It's early days, but the inaugural Nova Scotia MIT REAP Focus program, publication of the first NS Inclusive Innovation Monitor, and partnership with Future Capital to train female venture capitalists are steps in the right direction. Read on to learn about these and other innovative programs. If you're as inspired as we are, I invite you to join us!

Chère Chapman  
Chair of the Board of Directors, ONSDIE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Impact Stories.....	<u>5</u>
Who We Are.....	<u>6</u>
Our Impact by the Numbers.....	<u>7</u>
ONSIDE as a Backbone Organization .....	<u>8</u>
MIT Reap Focus Nova Scotia .....	<u>10</u>
An Inclusive Innovation Monitor for Nova Scotia.....	<u>12</u>
Building a Culture of Innovation in Nova Scotia .....	<u>13</u>
Nova Scotia Innovation Tour.....	<u>14</u>
Innovation Celebration Mural.....	<u>15</u>
The ONSIDE Podcast.....	<u>16</u>
Foundations in Startup Investing .....	<u>17</u>
Operational Resilience Workshop.....	<u>18</u>
Leadership Coaching to Female Entrepreneurs .....	<u>18</u>
Four Things to Remember .....	<u>19</u>
Conclusion .....	<u>20</u>



## OUR IMPACT STORIES

ONside is an organization focused on inclusive, Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurship (IDE) and the idea of collective impact. When executed well, these two concepts will help build a prosperous Nova Scotia that amplifies our advantages and finds new areas for success. This report will summarize the impact that ONside has made in its relatively short history. The work that has been done so far shows both the potential of IDE in Nova Scotia and how much more work remains to be done.

# WHO WE ARE

## WHAT

We harness the power of disruptive ideas and collective impact to accelerate an inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nova Scotia.

## HOW

We believe that if we bring people together, share knowledge, inspire, and link great initiatives, we can co-create a prosperous region.

## WHY

We believe that fostering inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship (IDE) has the power to transform our economic and social future.

### ONSIDE IS ON A MISSION TO:

- **Convene** individuals and organizations to build trust and quality partnerships which are essential for the advancement of innovation-driven entrepreneurship.
- **Connect** stakeholder efforts, facilitate learning, and share best practices to bring awareness and amplify the power of inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship.
- **Catalyze** innovation-driven entrepreneurship by mobilizing resources, stirring action, and creating awareness.

Innovation is a key driver of economic and social progress around the globe, and many regions are trying to capture these benefits for their communities with varying degrees of success. Nova Scotia is no different. However, cultivating an innovative economy is complex, and trickle-down economic development strategies of the past have had disparate results leading to the concentration of opportunities in certain locations and among certain groups of people. In fact, no one is actually in charge of entrepreneurship, and harnessing the power of citizens, businesses, and stakeholders into meaningful steps to foster the innovative culture we desire takes collective action. Our goal at ONSIDE is to unlock the full force of Nova Scotia's innovation and entrepreneurial capacity for a prosperous and inclusive economy.

To achieve this goal, ONSIDE focuses on two main things: **1) inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship, which evidence indicates pulls in resources, skills, jobs, contributes to social benefits, and has a multiplier effect on local economies; and 2) mobilizing key stakeholders through collective impact to transform the way we create our ecosystem together.** Regarding inclusion, ONSIDE focuses primarily on women, African Nova Scotian/Black-identified, indigenous, and rural communities, as underrepresented groups within our innovation economy. Working at a system level, these pillars allow us to focus on shifting the mindsets, the resources, and collaborative efforts to foster a prosperous Nova Scotia. To be clear, focusing on inclusive, innovation-driven entrepreneurship cannot solve every problem, but is a key vehicle that will help us reach our destination.

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

If we leverage collective impact and disruptive ideas (that accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship), **then** we can turn ideas into impact.

## OUR TRAJECTORY

Building a community that embraces innovation and entrepreneurship as the means to prosperity and opportunity for all.

# OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



**\$700K**  
IN TOTAL  
PROGRAM SPEND

**\$1,381K**  
IN MATCHING  
CONTRIBUTIONS

**19 NEW  
FUNDING  
PARTNERS**

**50+** MIT REAP NS FOCUS  
MEMBERS IN **5 REGIONS**

**557+** REGISTRANTS FOR  
THE INNOVATION TOUR

**57** POTENTIAL  
INVESTORS  
TRAINED



**20** BIPOC +  
**42** WOMEN

**1 NEW INNOVATION MURAL**  
BUILT WITH **4** PARTNERS



**30+ INDICATORS**  
IN OUR **1 NOVA SCOTIA**  
INCLUSIVE INNOVATION MONITOR

**11 PODCASTS**  
RELEASED



**1** MASSIVE NETWORK  
TO MIT REAP  
GLOBAL ALUMNI



# ONLINE AS A BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

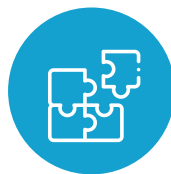
The concept of backbone support is rooted in collective impact, an approach that brings partners together to solve complex problems that cannot be solved by a single player. Collective impact encompasses a few main elements including:



Defining a common agenda



Maintaining accountability through shared measurements



Coordinating different, but mutually reinforcing activities to garner greater sustainability and impact of efforts



Constant communications



Backbone support through a separate organization that acts as the coordinating body for key initiatives

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Essentially, the backbone organization acts as the support infrastructure for a common initiative. Backbones can do many things, but often they facilitate planning and management of efforts such as communications, data collection and reporting, logistics, and administration. It is the foundation upon which the work rests.

ONSIDE employs a version of collective impact developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP), which is used to accelerate ecosystems through innovation-driven entrepreneurship (IDE). The model suggests five stakeholder groups that must be engaged for this kind of entrepreneurship to thrive in a region: entrepreneurs, higher education, corporates, risk capital, and government. ONSIDE pushes this further to leverage the model to activate inclusion within our IDE ecosystem.

Over the last year, ONSIDE has mobilized stakeholders, focused their attention, and created a sense of urgency around inclusive IDE. Being intentional about inclusive innovation creates access and opportunities for more people to share in the associated economic and social benefits. The organization has worked behind the scenes, adapting to the needs of different stakeholder groups and seeking out opportunities to advance IDE.

As the backbone support organization, ONSIDE has rallied partners behind a common agenda. Through MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia, ONSIDE has mobilized five Nova Scotia regions, outside of Halifax and with a lens towards diversity and inclusion in team formation, to develop strategies for economic growth. The regions are represented by teams made up of the five stakeholder groups suggested by MIT REAP. Each of the teams may have a slightly different understanding of the problem based on local factors but collectively, they share a primary goal: economic growth for Nova Scotia driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. The MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia teams are supported by municipal, provincial, and federal governments, higher education, corporates, local non-profits, and individuals, all of whom are united by the same goal.



## ONSIDE AS A BACKBONE ORGANIZATION CONTINUED...

Agreeing on a common agenda is only the beginning of the work. Partners have to agree on how success will be measured and reported. ONSIDE worked with the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship (BII+E) to develop a monitor measuring inclusive innovation in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Inclusive Innovation Monitor (NS IIM) used a set of clear metrics to measure inclusive innovation in Nova Scotia. These metrics are essential, not just because they paint a picture of the things we are doing well and what needs improvement, but they also provide a common language with indicators that partners can share. With the inclusive innovation monitor, ONSIDE is building our partners' capacity to contribute to and use the data which is essential for maximizing the benefits from a shared measurement system. With clear metrics and indicators, partners will be able to efficiently spot patterns, hold themselves and others countable, and create alignment to a common agenda.

Partners in collective impact initiatives do not come off an assembly line. Instead, each one focusses on what they do well in a way that supports the main goal. ONSIDE's Nova Scotia Innovation Tour showcased some partners and their unique contributions to growing inclusive IDE.

During the last year, ONSIDE organized regular meetings with groups like the Nova Scotia Innovation Districts and a working group of Black entrepreneurship supporters. Through such meetings, partners learned and solved problems together. The meetings were also an opportunity for the partners to recognize that all players' efforts were motivated by the same agenda. This continuous communication established trust and objective decision making, which was essential for each partner to commit to the initiatives and take action.

In conclusion, when ONSIDE travelled across Nova Scotia to introduce MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia to communities and recruit team members, or when we had close to one hundred people learning about the Nova Scotia Inclusive Innovation Monitor, or when we collaborated with Future Capital and Sandpiper Ventures to provide investment training to women, or when we facilitated communication between the bi-weekly meetings with the Cape Breton, Halifax, and Rural innovation Districts, we built momentum towards inclusive IDE.



# MIT REAP FOCUS NOVA SCOTIA

In 2016, a ten-member team from Nova Scotia participated in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP), a global initiative that engages with communities to boost innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystems and transform economies.

This engagement contributed to Atlantic Canada/Nova Scotia winning the bid for Canada's Ocean Supercluster; the formation of ONSIDE, and additional support for the Emera Idea Hub, as well as Innovacorp and VOLTA.

Although the first REAP team made significant strides in accelerating IDE in Nova Scotia, like many other jurisdictions around the world, discrepancies remain in the ability of underrepresented and rural communities to access world-class acceleration opportunities such as REAP. ONSIDE is working to address this, and actively collaborated with MIT REAP to develop an acceleration program that could be deployed more broadly across Nova Scotia. Moreover, to deepen the potential IDE impact, **ONSIDE and One Nova Scotia Coalition** facilitated the development of teams representing five regions across Nova Scotia to engage in the bespoke version of the renowned MIT REAP.

Launched in January 2021, MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia is a 12-month program that leverages MIT frameworks and insights in an evidence-based and actionable approach to economic development. Five Nova Scotia regions are working toward strategies that address their regions' economic challenges by maximizing their comparative advantages.

Each of the five regions—**South Shore, Cape Breton/ Strait Area, Pictou, Valley and Western**—is represented by a team of 10 core members who comprise the five major stakeholder groups of MIT REAP's Innovation Ecosystem Stakeholder Model. The core teams are supported by individuals and organizations within their communities to drive meaningful, long-term economic and social progress.

Given our highly-educated labour force, coupled with investments and incentives around research and development, Nova Scotia has high capacity for innovation and is strengthening its entrepreneurial capacity as well. The MIT REAP Focus program has provided a unique opportunity for these regions to turn this capacity into strategies and action that can drive real economic and social prosperity for our province.





*Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians*, suggested that Nova Scotia was “on the brink of an extended period of [economic] decline,” if not addressed. The report also stated that Nova Scotia’s economic growth could only be achieved by embracing and supporting innovation. Nova Scotians embraced these recommendations. However, the need for innovation is even greater now as we navigate COVID-19 and its impact on our communities. MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia is helping the regions find innovative solutions that are compatible with their local history and culture.

The teams are uncovering their regional characteristics and comparative advantages and developing strategies for innovation and entrepreneurship that align with local needs. They are building upon existing local strengths and working collaboratively with their wider communities, which research has shown to be vital for modern economic growth.

In addition, the teams are interacting with the global MIT REAP alumni community and learning about how other regions, which are not so different from Nova Scotia, have approached their economic challenges and opportunities.

For the participating regions, it was easy to recognize the program’s potential to provide the tools to fundamentally change their economic and social future. In addition to committing time and energy, individuals and organizations within the regions went further to make financial contributions to the program. Additional funding was provided by Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Province of Nova Scotia.

With MIT’s world-class approaches, combined with some of the most resourceful members of our communities committed to the prosperity of our province, the outcomes of MIT REAP Focus Nova Scotia will no doubt amplify the IDE benefits we are seeing elsewhere in more regions across the Nova Scotia.

# AN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION MONITOR FOR NOVA SCOTIA

Inclusion has only recently become part of the innovation conversation, but evidence shows it is positive from both an equity and economic perspective.

An innovation economy is inclusive when there are opportunities for all people to participate as workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers; there is fair distribution of the benefits and harm produced by innovation; and there are opportunities for people to participate in decision-making about the priorities, direction, and regulation of innovation.

The Nova Scotia Inclusive Innovation Monitor uses thirty metrics including educational attainment, innovation financing, entrepreneurship, technology adoption, wages, and wealth distribution, examined through lenses such as sex, race, Indigenous identity, disability, and region.

ONSIDE worked with the [Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#) (BII+E) to develop an inclusive innovation monitor to measure innovation, equity, and inclusion in Nova Scotia. The monitor helps the province answer these questions:



Which resources or conditions support innovation, and who has access to them?

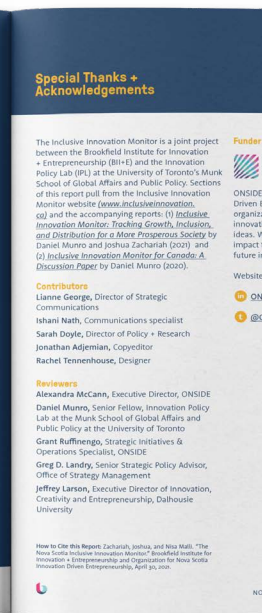
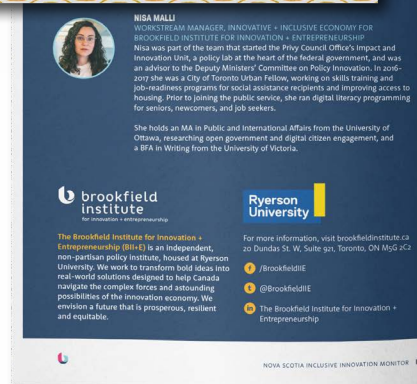


Which pursuits and processes foster innovation, and who is participating?



What are the results of innovation activity and who is benefiting?

With a highly-educated population, a growing startup ecosystem, significant research spending, and access to infrastructure, Nova Scotia has a remarkably strong foundation for a successful innovation economy. However, the monitor indicates that the province needs to expand participation in innovation by, among other things, addressing inequities in education and access to finance for women and racialized groups and expanding access to rural broadband.



## SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS ARE:

- **Women make up only 14 percent of startup CEOs in Nova Scotia** and only **19 percent** of the tech workforce.
- While Nova Scotia is doing a better job than other provinces at including visible minority groups in the workforce, **this is not true for Black people and West Asian women.**
- While overall racial pay inequalities are similar to national rates, those working in tech occupations who identify as a **visible minority make \$13,400 less** than those who do not identify as a visible minority.
- While **rural broadband** access is better in Nova Scotia than nationally, there remains room for improvement.

By showing a comprehensive picture of Nova Scotia's inclusive innovation economy, the monitor challenges us to achieve a better distribution of the benefits and risks associated with innovation. It also provides a much-needed baseline from which progress can be measured in the future.

The Nova Scotia monitor follows the [Canada Inclusive Innovation Monitor](#) which uses the same metrics to compare Canada's performance in innovation to other OECD countries. This monitor was developed by the BII+E and the Innovation Policy Lab (IPL).

We invite you to explore the NS inclusive innovation monitor here: <https://onsidenow.ca/inclusive-innovation-monitor>

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# BUILDING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION IN NOVA SCOTIA:

## Growing the Maker Movement

An innovative spark can start anywhere. It is not the exclusive domain of Silicon Valley tech stars or even university labs and tech incubators. Yet the process of innovation has been clustered into high-tech innovation parks, inaccessible to everyday inventors, students, citizens, and "makers".

Fortunately, there has been a growing recognition for the need to make innovation accessible. Having access to welcoming spaces that encourage experimentation, ideation, fabrication, making, crafting, and collaborating with others, is essential to the process of invention.

ONSIDE partnered with Develop Nova Scotia and ACOA to support the [Forge Institute](#) to map and understand citizen

makerspaces across Nova Scotia. The Forge Institute set out to find examples of citizen-based collective innovation happening within the province. This work laid a great foundation for future efforts to build a more inclusive innovation ecosystem model that ensures that all Nova Scotians have access to innovation spaces.

# NOVA SCOTIA INNOVATION TOUR

The Nova Scotia Innovation Tour was a three-month, bi-weekly speaker series highlighting the different pillars of a successful startup ecosystem. The first tour held between May and July 2021 focussed on data, placemaking, and risk capital.

## DATA

Peter Moreira, Founder & CEO of Entrevestor, presented a sneak peek into Nova Scotia-focussed startup ecosystem data ahead of the launch of Entrevestor's 2021 Atlantic Ecosystem Startup Data Report.

Author of the Nova Scotia Inclusive Innovation Monitor, Joshua Zachariah, and Senior Director, Mark Hazelden from the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship presented the monitor. The duo discussed indicators for innovation, equity, and inclusion with a focus on areas where the province is doing well and where we need to do better.

## PLACEMAKING

Sandra McKenzie, co-founder of the Forge Institute and champion for NS ingenuity, shared findings from her report, MAKE: Growing Community-Based Innovation in Nova Scotia. Developed through local, national, and international interviews and research, the report suggests that grass-roots innovation is key to growing resilient people and communities. This report was funded by ONSIDE, Develop NS, and ACOA.

Jennifer Angel, president & CEO of Develop Nova Scotia, discussed the role of large-scale infrastructure and placemaking in facilitating innovation. She highlighted that placemaking is a co-creation process where engaging communities in designing inclusive spaces that reflect their values and needs is the key to success.

## RISK CAPITAL

Marlon Thompson is an angel investor and founder of Future Capital. He hosted an investor panel featuring Malcolm Fraser, President & CEO of Innovacorp, Mary Long-Irwin, executive director of Northern Ontario Angels, Joanne Hames, angel investor and senior manager at Crombie REIT, and Rhiannon Davies, founder and managing partner of Sandpiper Ventures.

Rhiannon Davies facilitated an entrepreneur's panel to discuss risk capital from the perspective of the entrepreneur. The panelists were: Julie MacDonell, co-founder & CEO of Heirlume, Gabrielle Masone founder & CEO of Coloursmith Labs, and Marlon Thompson.

The tour was a great opportunity for different players within the Nova Scotia startup ecosystem to connect, and learn about the work of others and how they can support our entrepreneurial community. As COVID-19 gets under control, we hope that future tours will be physical events held in different locations so we can truly showcase all the innovation and entrepreneurship happening across our province.



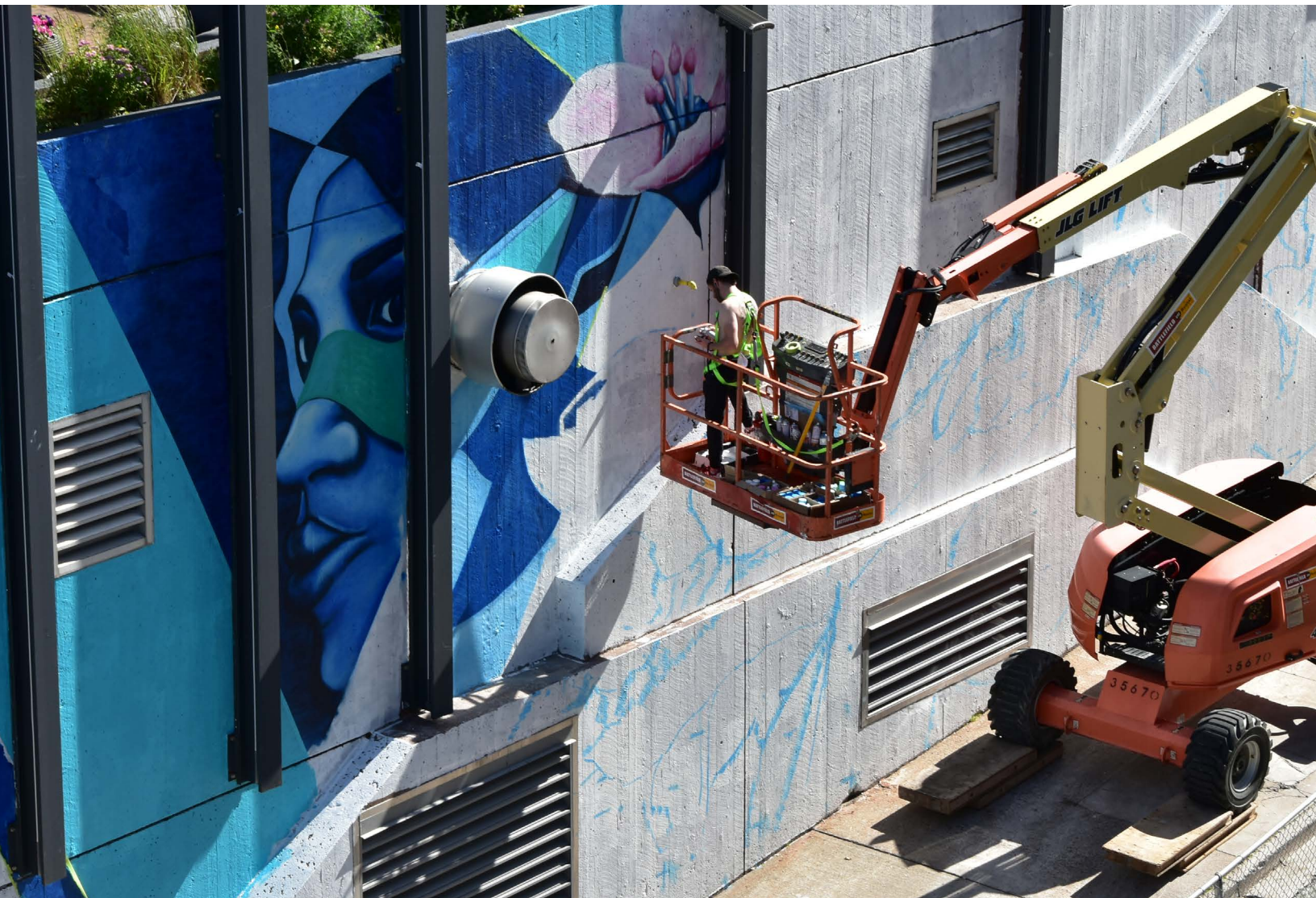
# INNOVATION CELEBRATION MURAL

ONSIDE worked with Halifax Innovation District, Volta, Slate Property Management, and the Downtown Halifax Business Commission's "Gritty to Pretty" to activate an inclusive innovation themed mural on the Salter Street wall of the Maritime Centre. The partnership around this project is a true representation of the diversity of stakeholders ONSIDE works with to get projects off the ground.

The mural celebrating innovation and entrepreneurship in Nova Scotia is a metaphor for ONSIDE's work as a backbone organization—the big picture.

As much as it is about celebrating the innovation that takes place across our province, the mural will have more direct impact as it inspires people walking past the Maritime Centre to imagine the innovation taking place inside Volta, and how they can join in.

To spread this benefit to the rest of Nova Scotia, ONSIDE is exploring the possibility of developing an interconnected network of murals across the province highlighting each community's local innovations while telling a more comprehensive story of innovation in the province as a whole.



# THE ONSIDE PODCAST

The ONSIDE Podcast was launched in early 2020 as part of our strategy to amplify IDE in Atlantic Canada. Our goal was simple—to tell the stories of the amazing companies growing and scaling here in Atlantic Canada to inspire new ideas and action and create a sense of excitement around IDE.

With ten episodes released to date, the podcast has acquired listenership across Canada and countries around the world, from Israel to Germany to Nigeria, among others.

Past episodes featured [Barbara Manning](#), founder of MillerManning; the president & CEO of Simply cast, [Saeed El-Darahali](#); CSO and president of Sona Nanotech, [Darren Rowles](#); founder and managing partner of Sandpiper Ventures, [Rhiannon Davies](#); founder and CEO of Ignite Labs, [Doug Jones](#); founder and CEO of Halifax-based Oberland Agriscience, [Greg Wanger](#); co-founder and CEO of Squiggle Park and Dreamscape and a former Olympian, [Julia Rivard Dexter](#); Coloursmith Labs Founder and CEO, [Gabrielle Masone](#); serial entrepreneur [Ohad Broide](#); Ardea Outcomes CEO, [Chère Chapman](#) and internationally renowned marketing guru and founder and CEO of Foundation Marketing [Ross Simmonds](#).

Stories can be catalytic. By showing the world that innovative companies are starting and growing right here in Nova Scotia, the podcast inspires would-be entrepreneurs to start their ventures here.

We also know there are some gaps in our ecosystem, and the podcast brings new insights on how entrepreneurs, risk capital, post-secondary institutions, corporates, and governments can work together to address these challenges.



Greg Wanger, CEO, Oberland Agriscience  
and Alex McCann, Executive Director, ONSIDE



# FOUNDATIONS IN STARTUP INVESTING

ONside partnered with Future Capital to provide Fundamentals of Startup Investing to six cohorts, with more currently scheduled.

These week-long sessions immersed the participants in the role of an investor. Participants were introduced to the concepts, language, and strategies that are required to build an individualized portfolio of investments and learned how to evaluate investment opportunities hands-on by directly interacting with startup founders who were seeking venture funding.

One cohort was designated for leaders in startup support organizations to help equip them with the skills to support entrepreneurs in their quest for capital. Participants included Halifax Innovation District, Volta, Highline Beta, The Startup Zone, UNB, Be.For.Change Ventures at UNB, Nova Scotia Community College, CBDC Hants Kings, Innovacorp, Centre for Women in Business, and Centre for Entrepreneurship and Education Development. Other cohorts featured Nova Scotia entrepreneurs and novice investors looking to further develop their investment thesis and due diligence skills.

Additionally, research shows that only 2% of Canadian angel investors are women and that these low numbers could be a contributing factor in the equally low financing rates for women investments. To spark change in Nova Scotia, we sponsored two cohorts for women and partnered with [Sandpiper Ventures](#), a women-founded and led venture capital fund, to build the capacity of women investors. ONside also partnered with Tribe Network, an entrepreneurship and innovation hub for Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) entrepreneurs, to host an all-BIPOC cohort, and hopes for more.

In partnering with [Future Capital](#) and other partners, ONside aims to support and grow a diverse group of investors across the region. In addition to learning about high-impact investment strategies, the sessions have provided a unique opportunity for participants to build relationships with like-minded investors and leaders in the community. The goals of diversifying the investor base and building a network have been seen progress, but more is needed to grow the capacity of the investment community in Nova Scotia.



# OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE WORKSHOP

The business environment is always evolving, and successful companies are those that have learned the art and science of responding to the times.

Over the past 18 months with COVID-19, life as we knew it has changed drastically. The business landscape has evolved vastly, shifting the way we work. Businesses have not only been impacted by the magnitude of the changes, but also the speed at which the changes have occurred and continue to occur.

To help Nova Scotia companies build resilience and adapt to the impacts of COVID-19 quickly, ONSIDE partnered with [Imaginal Ventures](#) to provide an operational resilience program.

The specialized program equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to build resilience to allow them carry out their purpose and mandate despite the stress and disruption from COVID-19.

Participants learned about physiological development; self-responsibility; shifting from fear to trust as a means of building resilience; connecting personal values to business values to create alignment; and creating a growth mindset in business.

Whether by design or default, every organization has a culture which determines how they respond to different situations. This workshop equipped companies with the tools necessary to build cultures that would help them survive, and perhaps thrive, during and after the pandemic.

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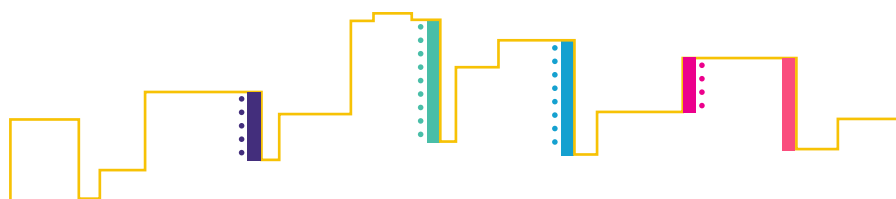
## LEADERSHIP COACHING TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS



In the early stages of a business, entrepreneurs have so much to pay attention to. The idea, the tech, profitability, building a team, and a lot more. ONSIDE partnered with the Coaching Nest to provide leadership coaching to female entrepreneurs to strengthen their leadership competencies.

Delivered by the [Coaching Nest](#), Calm Power helps entrepreneurs take a look within. The entrepreneurs are exploring their purpose, passion, values, motivators, key attributes, and competencies. They are mastering courage and resilience to advocate for sponsors, mentors, coaches, financial and family support despite current and past barriers

This supportive and confidential coaching program is impacting the way participating entrepreneurs show up, their self-awareness and ability to sense the emotions of others, and the power to remain calm, mindful, and intentional under pressure. It is building their resilience to lead with confidence and competence.



# FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT ONSIDE

**1** We mobilize collective impact and work to shift the innovation ecosystem to generate more prosperity for all, with a particular focus on groups that innovation has left behind, including women, rural, black, and Indigenous communities.

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**2** We share knowledge and data to create greater understanding of our innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem as a basis for informed action.

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**3** We build networks and partnerships that connect Nova Scotia's inclusive innovation stakeholders to each other, and a global community. This includes MIT REAP and faculty, global REAP teams, plus international entrepreneurs, corporates, risk capital, and universities.

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**4** We are not afraid to try new things. We are comfortable stepping into new spaces and piloting new initiatives that align with an inclusive innovation agenda.

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# CONCLUSION

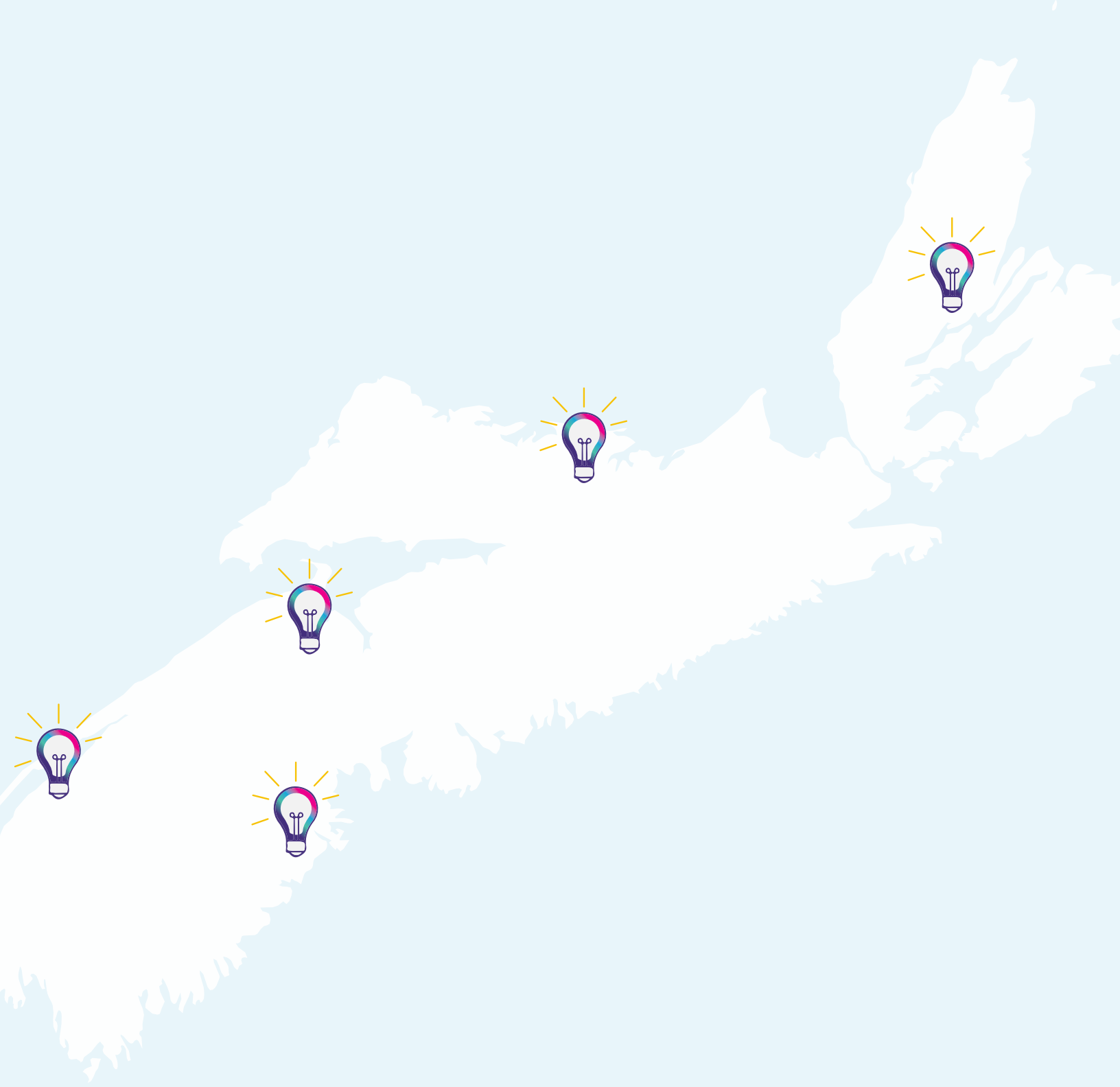
In the short time it has existed, ONSIDE has gone from an idea to a concept to an organization. It has connected organizations, people, and companies to each other and made the idea of IDE a reality in Nova Scotia. ONSIDE has made an impact, but it has certainly not done it alone. As a backbone organization, ONSIDE is a convener, a catalyzer, a spark that leads to ideas and action.

Establishing a culture of IDE takes time—years, not months. ONSIDE is committed to making that culture take root in Nova Scotia. ONSIDE will play a key role in harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit and energy of Nova Scotia and its people, helping build a brighter future for us all.

This is just a sample of our work. To learn about more of what we have been up to such as the MIT Solveathon we hosted, our support for the Digital Skills for Women program, and to keep up to date with our events and podcast, visit: [www.onsidenow.ca](http://www.onsidenow.ca).

## FOLLOW US





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