



Design meets social innovation

Overlap Associates specializes in human-centred design, engagement, and strategy to deliver remarkable Solutions Lab experiences.

We work with organizations to draw out insights, generate relevant ideas, and arrive at practical, actionable solutions—enabling organizations to make headway on their most complex housing problems.

Overlap's Solutions Lab process is differentiated by our human-centred approach. We believe that the people within an organization or system collectively hold the knowledge and experience to design their own solutions.

We are process experts who help groups collaboratively apply their expertise to create something new—like a strategy, process, or solution. We are adept at conducting research and engagement, both virtually and in-person, to understand people, their motivations and their needs; at guiding groups to generate richer and more diverse ideas; and at helping teams communicate, prioritize, and make consensus-based decisions together.

We bring in our colleagues with education and experience in facilitation, inclusive design, and peace and conflict studies to ensure our engagement meets people where they are at.

Every Solutions Lab process has a range of internal and external stakeholders that need to be engaged from the outset of the project. Overlap collaborates with you to identify the correct mix of stakeholders and how to thoughtfully and equitably engage with them.

As a result, our Solutions Lab process generates more buy-in from organizational stakeholders, delivers a solution that better reflects the unique context of an organization, and increases the confidence and capacity of teams to implement their road map.

Our planning work moves through the four steps of design: **discover** new needs, insights, and connections; **define** and redefine the problem; **develop** innovation solutions to the problem; and establish a set goals, objectives and actions for **delivering** and scaling the solution through a road map.

We often bring into this type of work our strategic foresight team to help groups think about possible future scenarios to support better planning.

We believe the solution and road map coming out of the Solutions Lab should be useful, a tool you are able to reference and use to guide decisions, as well as being flexible to provide direction without rigidity. Our colleagues with expertise and a passion for service design, visual/communications design, and change management support the road mapping process to increase the odds of a successful implementation.

Understanding the one or two transformational changes that you can do really well over the next few years will set up your organization to navigate the challenges that we find ourselves surrounded by in the current climate and strike a bold path forward that can reimagine the role of organizations like your in reducing homelessness and improving housing.

Our approach to transformation

The Overlap team brings deep process expertise in human-centred design to help organizations make notable leaps forward. Elements of our approach include:



ENGAGEMENT AND INSIGHTS

We know that the best solutions come from people who know the problems best. By truly listening to and observing people, we surface insights and make them actionable.



FUTURES AND FORESIGHT

Using Strategic Foresight, we explore possible futures. Then we create strategies for today that can build your organization's resiliency against a variety of possible outcomes.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Overlap's mission is to democratize design and we're eager to share design tools and approaches. As part of our work with our clients, we teach teams new skills and practical tools for problem-solving.



FACILITATION

Our thoughtful session design and proven facilitation techniques prompt ideas, solutions, and action plans. We can help you work through challenging topics and get teams excited about new possibilities.



AGILE IS OUR ENGINE

Overlap approaches each project from an Agile perspective—a flexible, iterative approach to project management. We've adapted this framework to support our process and the needs of our clients.



SOCIAL GOOD

Overlap's work has always focused on supporting vulnerable populations and building communities. Through this work, we have developed particular expertise in child and youth wellbeing, community and belonging, aging, and addictions and mental health. We also have significant experience in the areas of healthcare, poverty, education, non-profit housing, libraries and culture, accessibility and inclusion, social finance, and technology for social good.



STRATEGY

We help you to leverage insights from your stakeholders and transform them into actionable strategies that respond to the needs of your stakeholders.



ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Overlap partners with organizations to improve accessibility, leverage the diversity of their teams and communities, and increase the inclusivity of their spaces, services, and practices.

Recent NHS Solutions Labs

Afri-Canadian Affordable Housing

The Solutions Lab *Affordable Housing for African Canadians* in partnership with the Rwandan Canadian Health Centre aimed at developing an innovative housing model tailored to the needs of Continental Africans living in Toronto, known as “The Village.”

This initiative involved collaboration with six African Canadian community organizations, engaging in a comprehensive design cycle to understand and define what an “ideal” housing scenario looked like for community members.

Building on these insights, the next phase of the project involved ideating a practical and culturally relevant housing framework that addressed the identified needs and challenges. The team used the information gathered from stakeholders and considered real-world constraints to design a housing solution that was both innovative and sustainable. This project represented a significant step forward in creating affordable housing solutions that were deeply rooted in the cultural and community values of Continental Africans in Toronto.

Check out AfriCanadian.org to learn more about the project.



Housing Transitions

The Solutions Lab *Accessing Affordable Home Ownership Opportunities for Community Housing Tenants* got underway in June 2020 and was led by a project team of Region of Waterloo staff in partnership with Overlap Associates. The aim of the project was to open up community housing spaces for households on the waiting list by supporting tenants into homeownership. This project was also supported through the involvement of a think tank composed of a wide range of community members in the finance, development, housing stability, academic, and tech sectors. Together, the think tank developed four prototypes to support the needs of tenants interested in exploring homeownership options to include: Incentives to Motivate Builders, Rent-to-Own Agreement, Multiparty Mortgage, and the Homeownership Hub.

The Homeownership Hub will soon be officially launched and will be maintained by the Region of Waterloo, while the three remaining prototypes are being further developed through on-going connections with the think tank and other community partnerships.

Visit the Housing Solutions Lab page on EngageWR.ca to learn more.



Mobilizing Resources

The Solutions Lab *Mobilizing Resources to Provide Adaptive Housing Solutions: Building With Mission* is a partnership led by the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada. Working with organizations with local and national expertise—including SE Health, Covenant Care, and Cahdco—the goal of the work is to establish a playbook for health care organizations with existing resources to build affordable housing for seniors.

The working group is supporting a series of demonstration sites—at various stages of the building process—to test and document which innovative tools work best for each step. The playbook explores methodologies such as foresight for establishing a future vision for senior's housing and human-centred design for engaging seniors in the design and build of affordable housing.

The work began in October 2020 and, instead of waiting until the end of the project, the playbook is being drafted, refined, and expanded through the work. The playbook lives online so the latest version is always widely available and ready for input from diverse stakeholders from across Canada.

Visit BuildingWithMission.ca to see our latest progress and leave us some feedback!



We believe better is possible

Our award-winning Innovation Programs team specializes in capacity building, so we don't just solve today's wicked problem, we prepare you for tomorrow's

About Our Team

Designers, facilitators, and strategists

Overlappers are a pretty optimistic crew. Our team of interdisciplinary practitioners span a variety of professional backgrounds—it's part of the magic and helps us see solutions and make connections.

We pull from a talented team of designers, facilitators, and strategists based on the needs of the Solutions Lab. Whether it's inclusive design, service design, strategic foresight, policy advocacy, or visual and communication design, we intentionally pull in the skills needed during each phase of the project.

We're a certified women-owned design firm that believes in the power of creativity, empathy and technology to unleash the potential in all of us to make the world better. Our Co-CEO Lisa Grogan is an inspiring leader that speaks about co-gendered leadership, women in business, taking big risks and philanthropreneurship.



**Do you have questions about
our Innovation Programs
or Solutions Labs?**

Get it touch today by emailing
hello@overlapassociates.com

Learn more about our approach at
overlapassociates.com/solutions-labs

