

HEALTH CHANGE LAB 2019

# Bringing Older Adults Together

Process Book

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# Acknowledgements

## **INSTRUCTORS**

Paola Ardilles, Tim Ames, & Alia Sunderji for their endless support and guidance.

## **COMMUNITY MEMBERS & CLASSMATES**

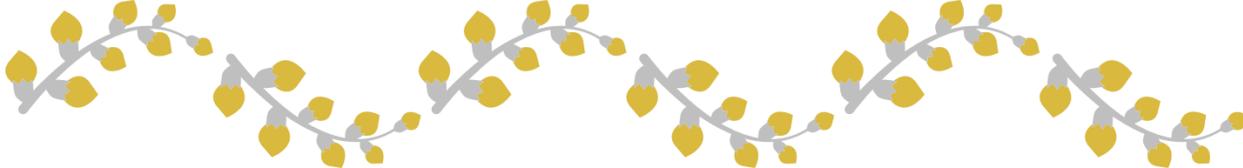
Especially Sahra-Lea Tosdevine-Tataryn (City of Surrey), Kathy McIntyre (City of Whiterock), and the students in Change Lab 2019 Cohort!

## **USER GROUP**

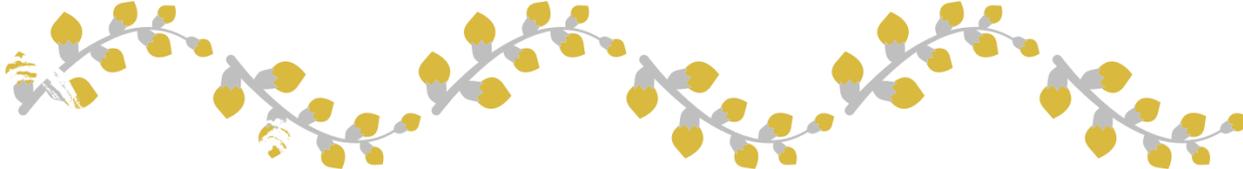
To the older adults living at Cherington Place, to those who spoke to us so kindly at Brock House Society, and all around Surrey.



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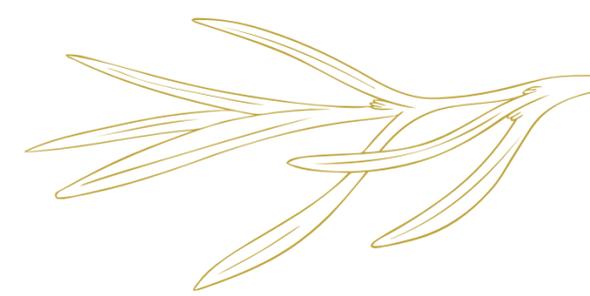


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# The Team & Motivations



**DIANE LU**

**Health Sciences**

"Inspired by experiences of my family and to ensure people are living their best lives. The older adult population is an important place to begin."



**ELEANOR WONG**

**Health Sciences & Kinesiology**

"I have not had very much experience working with the senior population and I wanted to push myself beyond my comfort zone!"



**PANEET GILL**

**Kinesiology & Gerontology**

"Knowing that there is an aging population and thinking of my grandma's situation, I wanted to work on something I truly cared to make a difference for."



**SIMAR THUKRAL**

**Business & Communications**

"Inspired by the vision of my parents settling in Canada and being afraid of how they would be isolated, leaving their social circle back in their home country."

# EQUITY CENTERED DESIGN

## & OUR PROCESS

### NOTICE

We first have to notice our individual identities, privileges, and disadvantages before we can begin to empathize. We noticed how our beliefs influence our interactions and acknowledged the biases we hold.

### EMPATHIZE

We explored and learned about our audience (seniors).

We listened, engaged, and observed to gain deeper insight and better understanding into their needs.

### DEFINE

We defined our problem based on the information we obtained from our user interviews and our secondary research. We redefined our problem with each iteration.

### IDEATE

We brainstormed ways in which we could bring older adults in Surrey something that would address the root problem, bring value to the user, and be sustainable and innovative.

### PROTOTYPE

Out of our 3 ideas, we considered what our users really need and what is viable. We created a basic prototype to showcase our idea to help facilitate understanding

### TEST

We let our users and other people visualize, feel, and experiment with our prototype. We asked questions and encouraged feedback.

### REFLECT

We reflected on our own biases, our emotions, and why we think the way we do. Also reflected on the key insights obtained from user interviews. At the end, we reflected on how we could make this product truly valuable to the user.

# WHY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

- 22% of all seniors in Surrey live alone, increasing their risk of loneliness and associated health consequences
- Social isolation can lead to negative health behaviours, cognitive decline, cardiovascular issues
- Involvement in meaningful activities and maintaining close relationships is essential for a healthy well-being
- Extended TV use associated with poorer cognition and increased Alzheimer's disease risk

**2x**

The 65+ population in Surrey is expected to double in the next decade

**1.4 million**

older Canadians report feeling lonely

**3.1 million**

Canadians are the primary caretakers of their parents

**21%**

of those caretakers report feelings of depression

**EMPATHIZE**

# USER PROFILE



## GLEND A CHANG

77 yrs. old | Chinese & Speaks Cantonese only |  
Widowed & Living with daughter

- Home alone on weekdays while daughter works
- Watches TV for most of day
- Only leaves home when necessary
- Previously enjoyed gardening, but is unable to do it now due to lack of accessibility to materials and does not want to bother her daughter

### Barriers:

- Prefers not go out alone as she cannot drive and feels transit is unsafe
- Language & cultural differences (not familiar with English)
- Wants to do more than just homemaking, but doesn't know where to start
- Wants to learn more about community events and be connected to people with similar interests



# Problem Statements

1

Socially isolated seniors need companionship & better access to community services/networks because loneliness may have a significant impact on their mental & physical health

Went from targeting the socially isolated seniors to seniors as whole, as we found factors preventing social isolation and encouraging social connection were common amongst all seniors we interviewed.



We wanted to refine our statement so the problem itself (social isolation in seniors) was highlighted and clear.

2

seniors need companionship & accessibility to community services/networks because a lack of social connectivity to a larger community promotes social isolation & hence causing adverse mental & physical health outcomes.

3

Seniors are more likely to experience social isolation due to a lack of social connectivity & accessibility to community services.

Finally, after many interviews and user tests, we came to the following problem statement. We wanted to showcase factors promoting social isolation that were relevant to the information we've obtained in our research and interviews,





**Older adults lacking social connections and a cognitively-stimulating environment are more likely to experience social isolation and adverse health issues.**

**DEFINE**



# WHAT WE DID...

## COMMUNITY PARTNER INTERVIEWS

We spoke to **80 seniors** from various backgrounds in mall food courts, rec-centers, and community events as well as **25 community partners** and experts, and **10 caregivers** to understand current community offerings, what the gaps are in the community for older adults, and where we could intervene. We reflected on how we could both make a difference and create something of value.

## RESEARCH

From our research on various articles and reports, we learned that **isolation & loneliness have been proven to accelerate the aging process** and lead to detrimental health outcomes. Also older individuals tend to engage in passive activity more frequently, resulting in decreased social activity and cognitive stimulation. Thus increasing the risk for adverse health issues to arise. This can all be **prevented by social inclusion** and consistent stimulating activity.

## EMERGING THEMES

From our user interviews, many common themes arose. First of all, **older adults long to pursue old and new passions**, but were unsure how to do so as they didn't want to spend large amounts of money. In addition, **elders felt that there was not much to do** apart from homemaking and watching television. Finally, many individuals who are **caretakers to their senior parents experience burnout and stress**, thereby negatively influencing their health and quality of care for their parent.

EMPATHIZE

REFLECT

# OUR JOURNEY

Through our research and our first few interviews, we began to understand some of the barriers seniors face. We didn't have a clear direction on what senior age group exactly we wanted to address.

As we continued to do more interviews, however, we began to grow confused as to who our specific user was, and were unsure whether to narrow in on a smaller subset or target all seniors.

So we refined our problem statement, brainstormed over 70 ideas and narrowed it down to 3.

We went to user test our ideas at Brock House Society, where we were invited to speak about our ideas and gained positive feedback on linking seniors with other seniors in their area.

After meeting with our key community partner, Sahra Lea, we decided to address social isolation through fostering social connections.

Eventually we realized we don't need to narrow in, because the barriers we wanted to address were common amongst a broader range of seniors.

We obtained great feedback after our midterm presentations. One that really stuck to us was the suggestion of utilizing the children of seniors... but we didn't think much of it at the time.

We decided that Rent-A-Hobby would be the most feasible in the time we had. Shortly after, we scheduled a meeting with Sahra Lea who guided us in the direction of social prescription, so then we decided to settle on that.

## Legend



**Pivot**



**Aha! moment**



**Regroup**



**Brainstorm**



**Problem**

# AFTER MIDTERMS...

We started to explore social prescription more and researched intensively on the benefits and logistics.

Luckily, we were able to schedule a meeting with Kathy McIntyre who helped use her connections to connect us to health care professionals who could help

This is when we started to spiral. We had 3 weeks left to develop a whole new idea and did not know what to do!

So we started conducting research, but did not know how to get in contact with dementia patients or their children. We were stuck again!

We developed some prototypes and tested them with seniors at the malls, as well as individuals who live with their grandparents or older parents to obtain feedback.

We decided the best way to execute this would be through doctors, in which we would act like a booking agency for recreational activity. Our biggest challenge was getting doctors to respond though.

Then we had an interview that turned our project upside down! We spoke to a coordinator at Seniors Come Share, and found out that social prescription would soon be happening in Surrey making our project redundant...

We met with Sahra-Lea again and from there decided to make kits for seniors suffering from dementia; as often they suffer from isolation from their family.

After a very frantic debriefing with Paola, she was able to knock some sense into us and we decided to create a new iteration of the Rent-A-Hobby idea which is called Creationary!

Now we've presented at final presentations and got some great feedback! We know that the real journey is only beginning....

# Our Three Ideas



## SOCIAL PRESCRIPTION

The idea of this was to implement the prescription of social activities alongside medicine, but we chose not to do this since it required policy level changes - which was not feasible in 6 weeks.

## RENT - A - HOBBY

Rent - A - Hobby was aimed to allow seniors to rent kits with activities they wanted to try, with the goal of connecting them to individuals with similar interests. In the end, we chose to do an iteration of this idea.



## SENIOR'S APP

This app would have been a one stop shop for seniors to find doctors, caregivers, information and new companions. We chose not to do this as we realized that those who use technology are already fairly socially connected.

# WHY CREATIONARY?

*Creationary is our refined iteration of our Rent-A-Hobby idea.*

- It was feasible in the amount of time we had
- It was broad enough that it could address social isolation in a larger population
- Addressed the needs we uncovered in our initial interviews (lack of activities to do, feelings of loneliness)
- Gave us the flexibility we needed to create a sustainable business
- Provided opportunity to become translatable to other sub-populations

## Our realizations...

Would be inconvenient to ask seniors to come to just borrow the kits, and then return them



Instead, its better to create kits that do not have to be returned and can be kept

Decided these kits will be delivered to the individual



Removes the barrier of accessibility

Seemed natural to provide opportunity to make this subscription based



Subscription would be optional offering and would be monthly

Came to terms that if someone does not want to be connected to the community, there is little you can do about it



Decided to focus on individual kits as at least this way, those who live in isolation would be able to stay cognitively stimulated



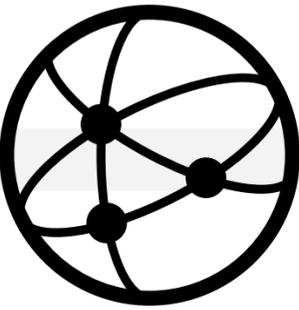


# CREATIONARY



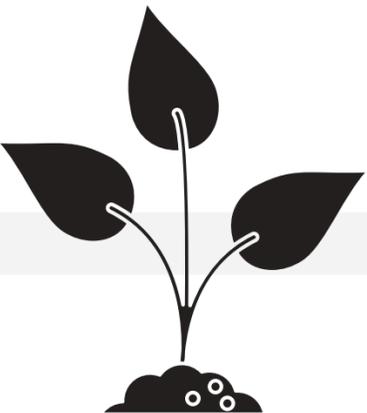
## Cognitive Stimulation

Engagement in passive activity, such as TV watching, tends to increase with age. Without a stimulating environment, a faster decline in cognitive health may occur. Creationary helps slow cognitive decline, through the participation in stimulating activities like painting.



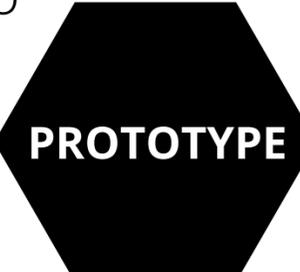
## Social Connection

As we age, so does our social circle and often we may lose friends over time. When individuals move to a new country, they may also leave their friends and family behind. Creationary provides individuals to connect with others who have similar interests in order to foster new friendships.



## Eco Friendly

Creationary aims to have a sustainable lens in making kits that help the environment. There will be little to no plastic materials, the box will be biodegradable, and certain activities will give back to the environment (e.g. gardening).



# How It Works

Taking feedback from our final presentation, we wanted to provide a clearer depiction of how Creationary socially connects individuals and reaches seniors in isolation.



# Value Proposition



## SPARKING NEW & OLD INTERESTS



Equipping individuals with the tools they need to try something they've always wanted to. It's never too late to try something new

## STIMULATING THE MIND



With passive activity being one of the causes of cognitive decline, we aim to keep people's minds engaged to slow the aging process

## CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS

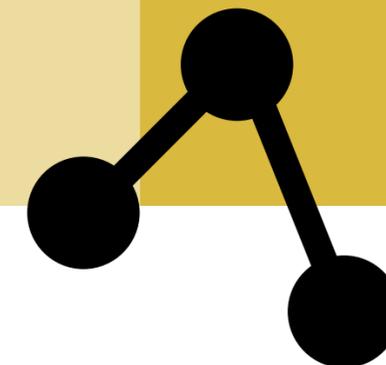


By connecting individuals with similar interests, we aim to foster fruitful relationships that prevent isolation

## BRINGING OLDER ADULTS TOGETHER



We hope to allow seniors to get to know the other older adults in their area and create their own relationships



# COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

## AND WHERE WE FIT

\*We were told to look into KiwiCo. during final presentation



Subscription Boxes focus primarily on one type of product rather than a range. They also do not allow for social connection!



Hobby Stores require you to find all the materials yourself and are often full sized and may not deliver. They also don't have the social connection piece!



Kiwi Co. offers subscription hobby kits, however, these are tailored for children only and don't have a social connection tool. Our kits would be designed in partnership with older adults, keeping their various needs in mind.

# business model canvas

*designed for socially isolated seniors*

## Key Partners

- City of Surrey - Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors
- Community Organizations
  - Seniors Come Share Society
  - PICS
- Surrey recreation centres
- Surrey libraries

## Key Activities

Wide range of hobby kits, for promoting cognitive stimulation and engagement for older adults.

- gardening kit
- oil painting kit
- multicultural kits

## Key Resources

- Business Patent
- People to add to team to help out with operations

## Unique Value Proposition

As seen on page 17.

Essentially, want to increase social connections for people lacking them currently. Want to inspire people to engage in new activities,

## Customer Relationships

- Long-term loyalty programs to stay connected
- Referral discounts

## Customer Segments

- Older adults (65+)
- Caregivers of seniors
- Families

## Channels

- Online via website
- Partnerships with community organizations; allow them to relabel kits to personalize it towards their organization

## Cost Structure

### Fixed (per month)

- storage space - \$ 60
- website - \$15
- branding - \$65
- marketing - \$100

### Variable

- boxes - \$!/box
- supplies - \$5 to \$7
- shipping costs - \$ 3
- printing instructions - \$0.10

## Revenue Streams

- E-commerce sales of kits
- In store and partnerships with community organizations
- Grants

# Budget

We are only in the pilot phase of this project, so we want to start small to test and ensure that our business model really works before reevaluating and aiming for a larger goal.

## REVENUE

- Based on our market research and from the feedback we received from individuals of various backgrounds, we have set the price of each kit at \$19.95
  - However, we want to subsidize kits for people with lower incomes
- In the first year, we aim to sell 250 kits
- Our main revenue stream will be through online sales of the kits
- Would also like to work with community organizations to help sell our product to relevant audiences

## COSTS

- Our costs to operate are relatively low
- Costs to run our business includes rent, marketing, and other logistical fees, as well as our material costs to create the kits
- Estimate that each kit will cost roughly \$9 to create
- As a team, we have decided to forgo any personal income in the first year to ensure that this project gets off the ground

### Legend

	incoming revenue
	outgoing costs

**Additional sales/revenue**  
*(community organizations, grants)*

**Revenue**  
*(online sales)*  
 $\$19.95/\text{kit} \times 250 =$   
**\$4987.50/year**

**Variable Costs**  
 $\$9/\text{kit} \times 250 =$   
**\$2250/year**

**Fixed Costs**  
**\$2880/year**

# Marketing Strategies

## FOCUSING ON CAREGIVERS

By targeting caregivers, this widens our marketing channels and may help us reach isolated older adults. As younger generations tend to be better versed with social media and technology, we can advertise using social media and see through online sales.

## PARTNERING FOR CONNECTIONS

By partnering with organizations who already work closely with the senior population, we can use their impact to increase ours. With their help, we will be more likely to be able to reach older populations.

## ADVERTISEMENTS

Our primary form of marketing would be through word of mouth and meeting seniors where they are. This would include creating lunch and learns in local rec-centers, story telling through testimonies, attending trade shows, and working with radio shows.

## REFERRAL PROGRAM

Most people know at least one person who is somewhat withdrawn from society. To encourage people to reach out to these individuals, every kit will include a card with a personalized referral code in which them and a friend can receive 25% off their next kit!



# User Testing

## FEEDBACK AND IMPLEMENTATION

We attended seniors events, forums in communities, spoke to seniors in mall food courts and conversed with caregivers and the general public to gain feedback on our prototype. Tested our idea with around 25 individuals of various backgrounds and received the following feedback:

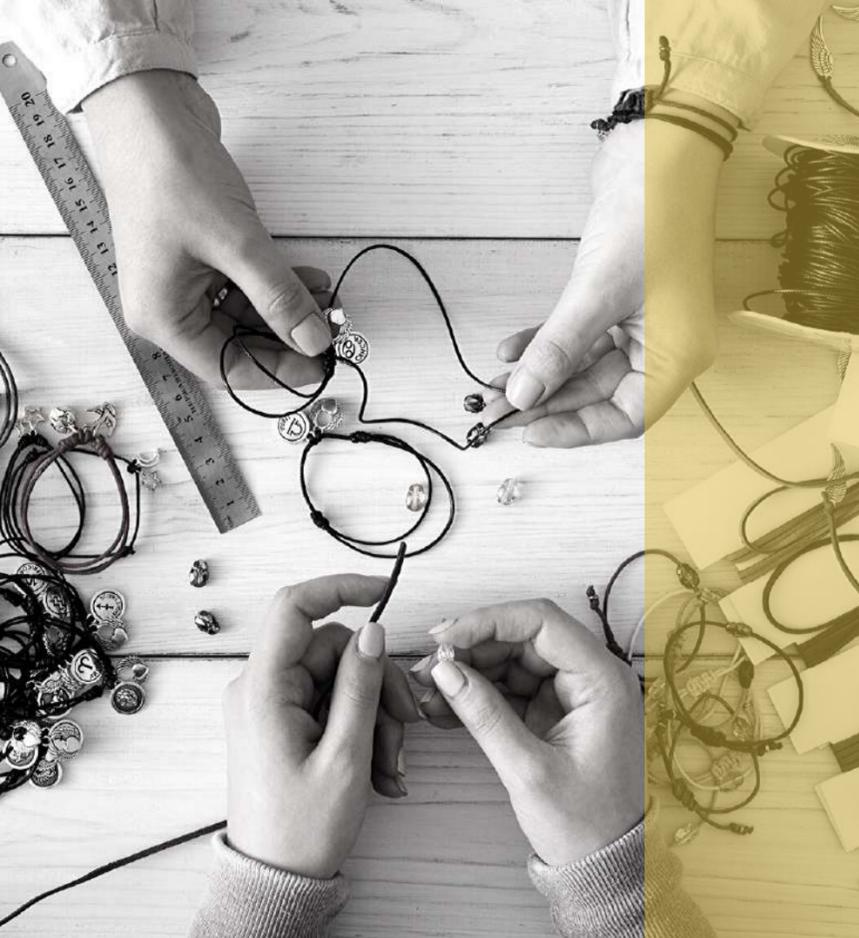
- Add more to the kits to ensure the kits lasted the time until the next delivery
- Make the subscription optional and provide the option for one time purchase
- Pilot in just a few neighbourhoods to test the idea
- Make the packaging eye catching and unique
- Add a multicultural lens to the kits to ensure inclusion of all cultures, perhaps around cultural holidays
- Ensure that instructions are low barrier meaning they are easy to read, understand and available in many languages
- Have a referral program that comes with a discount to increase reach

## WITH THIS FEEDBACK ...

We plan to incorporate these responses into our pilot, and then use critique from there in designing our final product. As we continue to test, we will continue to ask for further feedback to make the most inclusive and low barrier product possible. We aim to co-create with individuals from different backgrounds in order to create accurate, appropriate and relevant kits!



TEST



# WHAT'S NEXT...

## **SELL MORE, CONNECT MORE**

We hope by selling more kits, we'll also be connected more people to each other. Also using the revenue from our kits, we'd like to use it to fund workshops and events that utilize the skills that seniors have through encouraging them to lead intergeneration events around these kits.

## **CREATE A DIVERSE RANGE OF KITS**

As we gain more traction, we'd like to add a wider variety of activities, as well as kits with a multicultural lens such as kits for cultural holidays (such as Chinese new years or Diwali).

## **EXPAND TO RESELLERS**

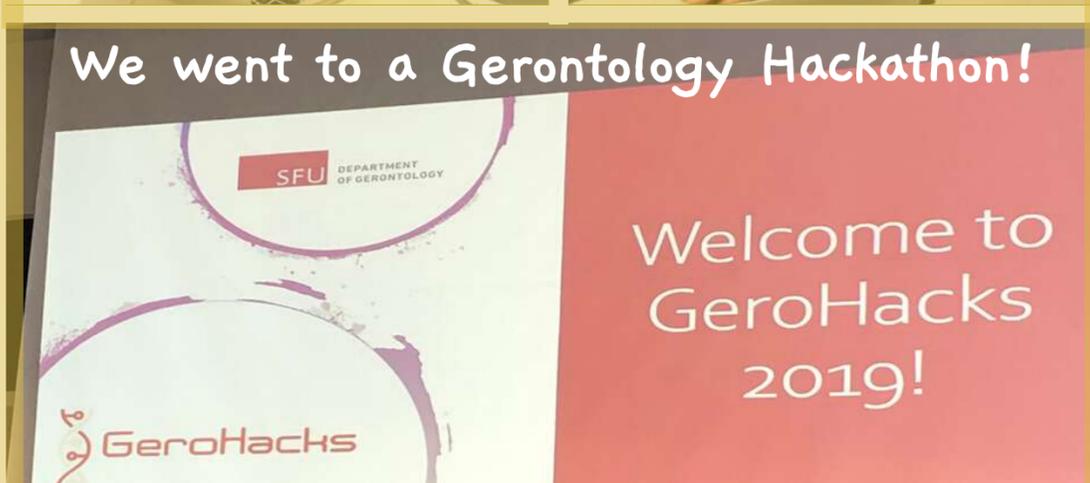
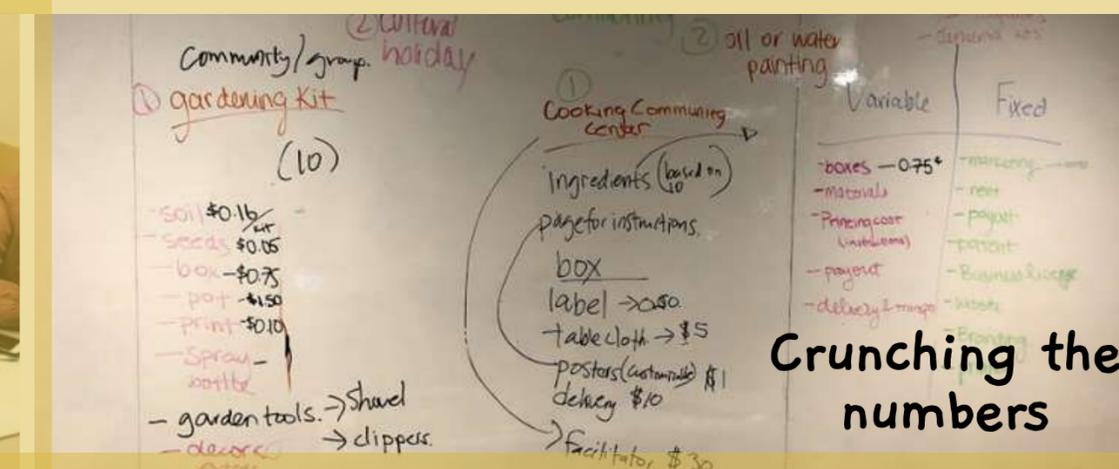
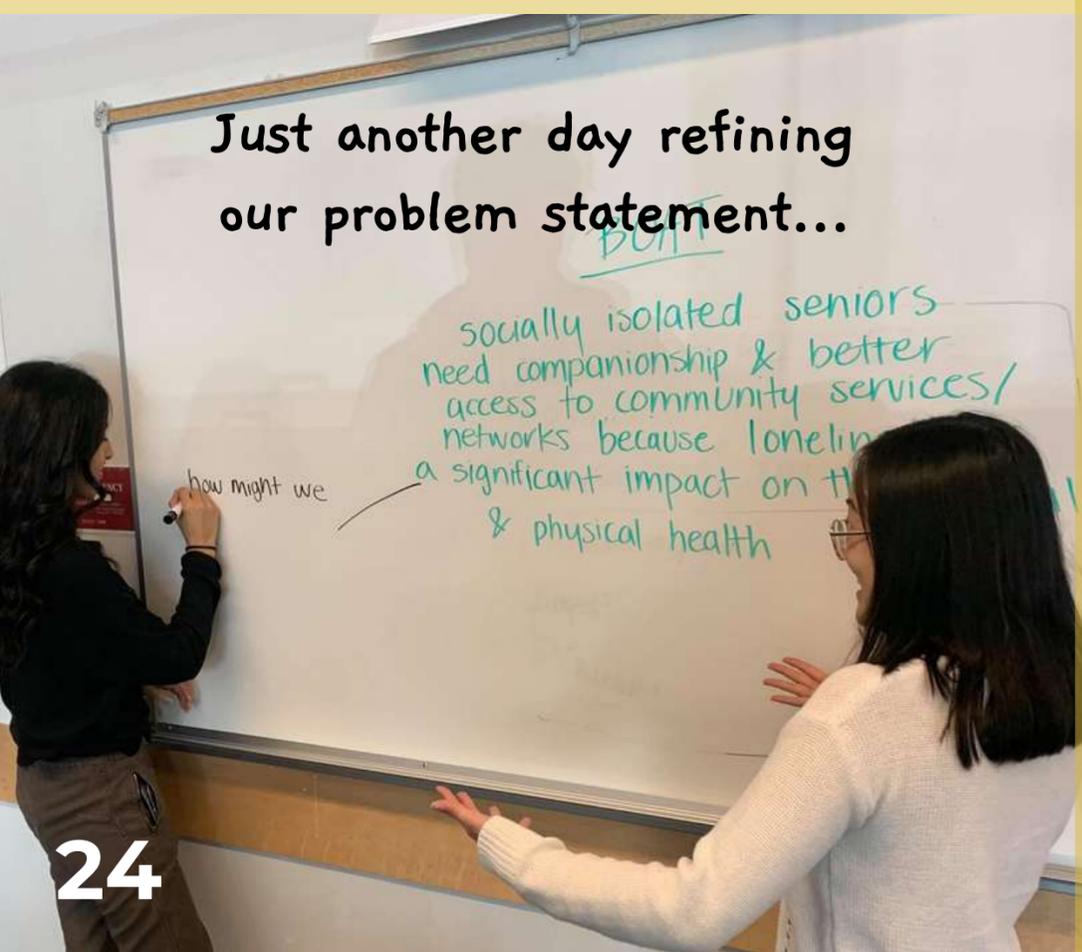
We would like to form partnerships with organizations who already work closely with seniors to sell our kits, and allow them to relabel the kits specific to their organization.

## **EXPAND TO NEW PLACES**

Once we prove our model works in lower mainland we will expand to other areas and provinces, trying to reach as many older adults as we can.

**REFLECT**

# PICTURES OF OUR JOURNEY...

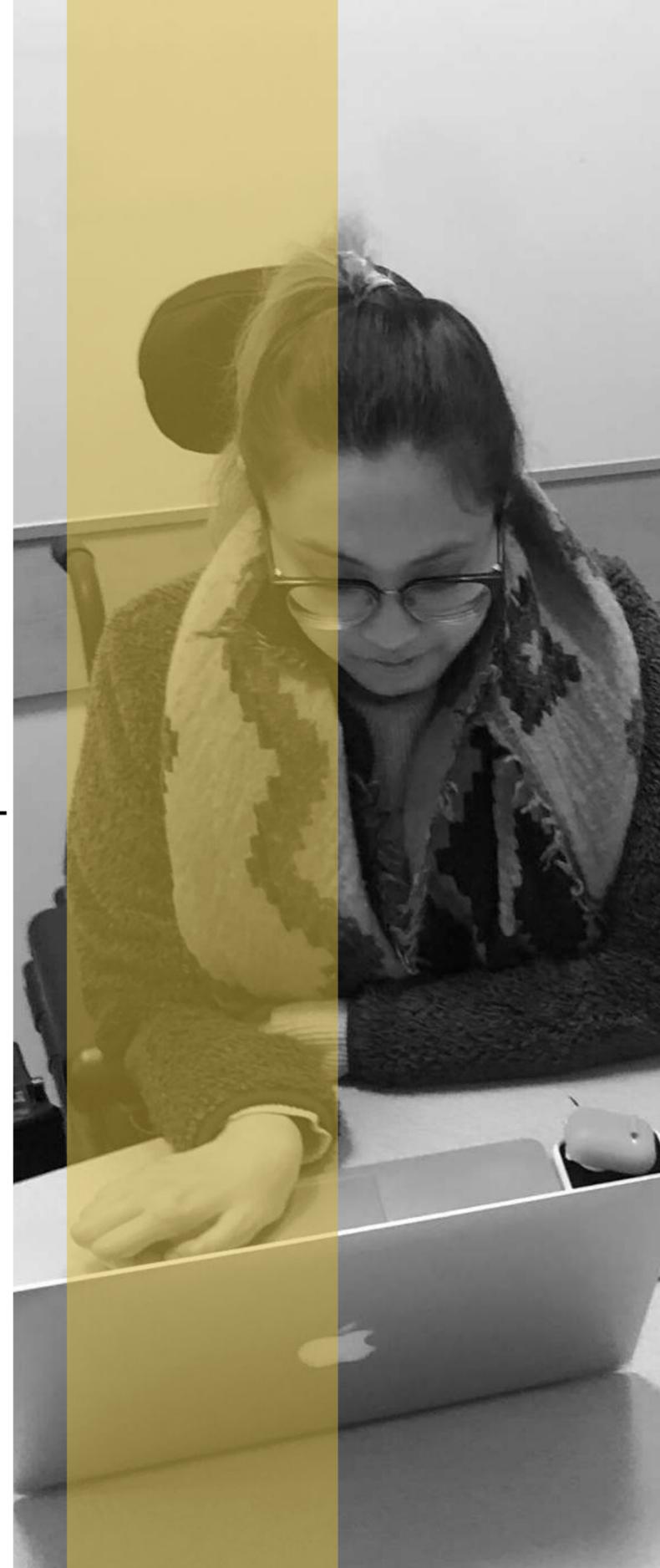


# Appendix

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- A DIANE
- B ELEANOR
- C PANEET
- D SIMAR
- E TEAM REFLECTION





## CONTRIBUTIONS

- Participated in initial interviews and testing with our user group at shopping centers
- Stepped outside of her comfort zone and talk to strangers about Creationary
- Reached out to community care homes via email and a community partner
- Contributed in planning the budget and the revenue plans of Creationary
- Actively participated in team meetings, both in person and over the phone
- Helped in dealing with team dynamics and staying empathetic with all parties

## REFLECTION

Going into Health Change Lab, I didn't know what to expect. I had somewhat of an idea of what I wanted to get out of this program, such as learning more about innovative designs and the means for implementation. This was going to be a brand-new experience and a great opportunity to learn from - something different from a typical lecture in a classroom. It was far more dynamic than that.

With the support of the instructors and classmates, this created the perfect environment for growth. My teammates encouraged me to talk more both in the classroom and outside. These are two things I would normally not do. However, I felt I could be vulnerable in this space and openly discuss my thoughts without fear. I am more confident in my speaking and articulation of what I have to say. This is something I have always struggled with and am glad to see my improvement.

Health Change Lab has helped me grow with its unique way of teaching. Alongside working on personal development goals, I was able to thrive and be my best and authentic self. This experience truly helped me become a more compassionate person. I will take forward everything I learned here to build a better place and continue to improve myself.

# Eleanor's

experience



**B**

## CONTRIBUTIONS

- Took initiative in reaching out to community partners via email
- Worked on the organizational side of things to help manage team meetings and personal schedules through the use of Google Calendar
- Did the creative work through making posters, graphics, and videos in order to provide audience with greater understanding of prototype
- Designed and created the marketing materials such as brochures to reach out to the user population
- Was willing to step out of her comfort zone to speak to strangers and do cold pitches
- Attended majority of the interviews with community partners and users and with the team
- Helped develop the preliminary budget, business plan, presentation slides and script

## REFLECTION

Prior to entering Change Lab, I had set some goals for what I wanted to achieve by the end of the semester. I wanted to work on a topic that I was unfamiliar with, and really come to understand the barriers faced by this population. I wanted to grow more comfortable in my own skin by consistently being my most authentic self. Finally, I wanted to improve my skills of conflict resolution and team dynamics. Upon taking the advice of our instructors and approaching each interview and conversation from a place of compassion and a genuine desire to understand, I truly feel connected to the population and can empathize with the problems they face.

From working so closely in a team dynamic, I have also grown out of my fear of confrontation. What Tim shared about hurting others more by not sharing your true thoughts really stuck to me, and encouraged me to be more vulnerable with my team. This in turn helped me grow comfortable with who I was and sharing that with others, which allowed me to attend every meeting and class as my best and authentic self.

By far though, my biggest takeaway was growing aware of my privilege and my position and how that affects the lens in which I see the world. Change Lab has truly been a once in a lifetime experience, and has really helped me grow more aware and empathetic as a person!



## CONTRIBUTIONS

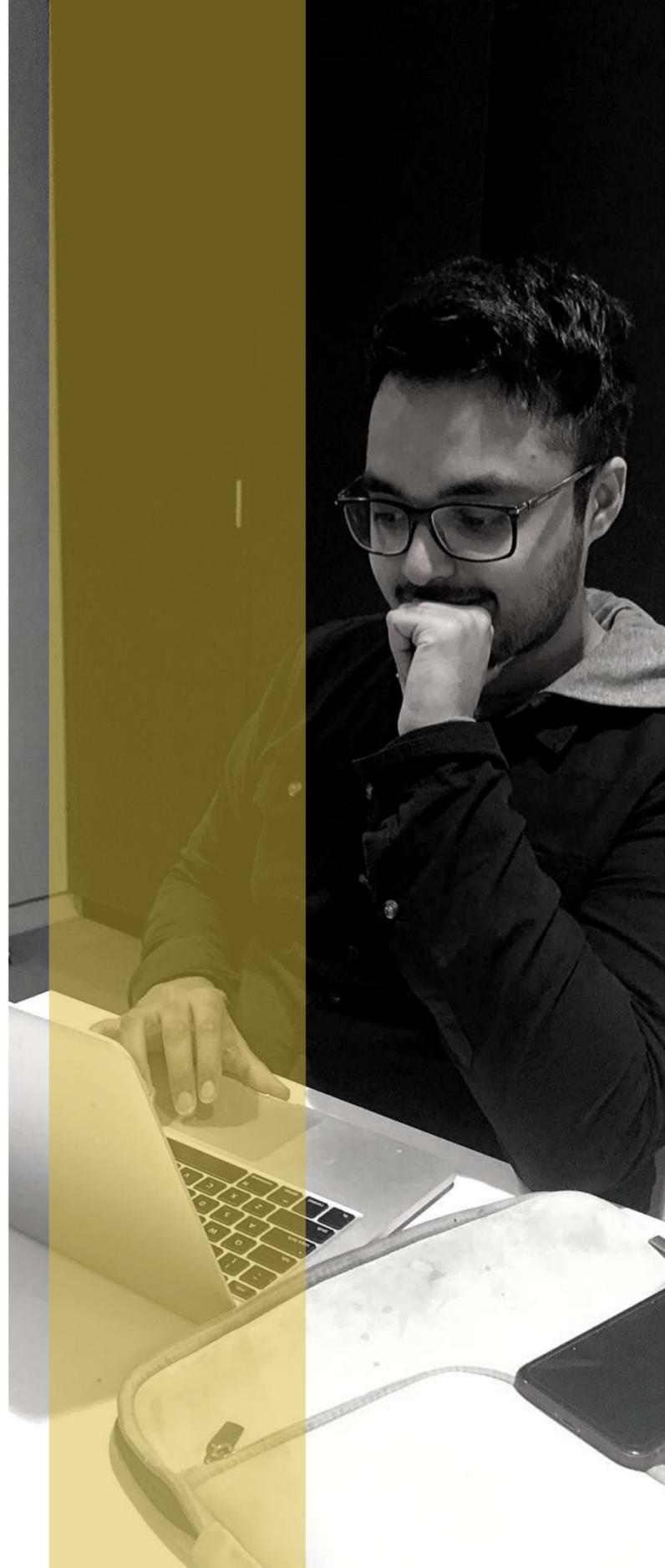
- Took lead in organizing interviews and communicating with community partners in order to take our project to the next step
- Attended all user interviews in various recreation centers, carehomes, and malls to gain a wide-scope of perspective and understanding of diverse older adults
- Consistently worked on presentation slides and process book to organize material in appealing and informative way
- Brought gerontology background and helped research relevant information
- Spoke publicly and took note of feedback to involve equity-centered design in our solution
- Fully engaged during team meetings and helped write presentation scripts
- Assisted in development of tangible midterm and final prototypes

## REFLECTION

At the beginning, I recall the instructors telling us to find something we're truly passionate for. It was difficult as I did not have the lived experiences of a socially isolated senior, but what motivated me was my grandma. Before I could try to understand the user, however, this process took deep self-reflection and an ability to recognize my own privilege. Since then, I have attempted to enter conversations with openness and to learn by really listening.

Change Lab has allowed me to hands-on explore community issues and further propelled my interests towards public health. It has been tremendously exhilarating and unique in the sense that I learned more about myself than I have in any other course. Over time I became better in managing time and my stress, in communicating with diverse groups of people, and letting myself out of my comfort zone (such as giving a pitch to a seniors yoga class and in front of PhD students researching seniors). I also had no business background, so I learned to build prototypes with the user always in mind and how social entrepreneurship works in general.

This project was the most intensive team-based experience I've done, and working with people from different backgrounds, different skill-sets, and different perspectives was remarkable. Through working in a team for 3 months and being in constant interaction, it has required a great deal of vulnerability and reliance on others. My group has taught me to be comfortable with uncertainty, to become more accepting, and how to better utilize my creativity skills.



## CONTRIBUTIONS

- Took the initiative to speak to individuals in the malls to gain a deeper understanding of the problem at hand
- Went out of my comfort zone
- Stayed open-minded throughout whether it was to give up one's own idea or to presenting any part of the presentation
- Provided active feedback to the topic at hand and how teammates could improve
- Contacted community partners and experts via email
- Used background in business to support team on the business side of things

## REFLECTION

Before I enrolled into the Health Change Lab, I had set some major goals for myself. First was to improve my communication skills; to go out of my comfort zone and most importantly to form relationships within my team and also outside of our team (with stakeholders and the mentors), in which we could not only do our project for the semester (like other classes), but also continue afterwards. I always had a vision to turn this opportunity into a business venture. Also, by this experience I found myself at times going up to people which I would never do in my entire degree and talk freely to. From working closely with a team comprising of different backgrounds, I had a very different experience as compared to the other classes that I have taken. There were a lot of positives such as learning about new things, and with more heads and personalities, different ideas emerged. There was also potential to learn some new skills from each individual in the team that they specialize in.

Also, the support we were provided in the form of mentors played a crucial part in our overall success as a team and also, for me as an individual. After completing the Change Lab, I discovered that what was earlier my biggest fear, "communication" turned out to be my biggest strength.

# Team Reflection



Change Lab was a crazy ride for us all. As a team, we learned a lot, but most prominently, we learned to notice and address our assumptions before we talk to our user group, the seniors and ourselves. At first, we were all hesitant of approaching seniors, but overtime we became comfortable with them as we let go of our assumptions that they wouldn't be willing to talk to us, that they did not want to be bothered or would get angry at us, and that they wouldn't care what we had to say. From these eye-opening conversations, we learned how to empathize with others and their struggles, and the importance of equity.

For most of us, human-centered design was not something we had any previous knowledge of. Although we had initially considered various ideas, through speaking with our professors, community members, and others, we learned that we only wanted to go ahead with something that truly addressed the root problem, while also acknowledging barriers. We have learned that many people face different forms of oppression and although we may not be able to address them all, it's important we keep them in mind during the process of design.

Through all the ups and downs, we've also learned how to better navigate team dynamics. Change lab required us to become vulnerable and transparent with one another, so we could better understand how our personal life and our personal struggles may be influencing our individual experiences. We all come from unique and diverse backgrounds, so bringing it together took hard-work to ensure we were cohesive as a team, but we also had tons of fun learning new things from each other!

It was only when we were presenting our final presentation that we realized that all of this is *real*. It was not longer just a pie in the sky. We had an idea that had the potential to make a real difference as long as we stayed passionate about advocating for our problem area and user population. Although, it is a little overwhelming to continue developing such a large project without the safety net of the class setting and the consistent support of the instructors, we are excited to see where our journey takes us next!

**REFLECT**