



**Equal
Housing
Initiative**

Building Inclusive Communities

Who We Are

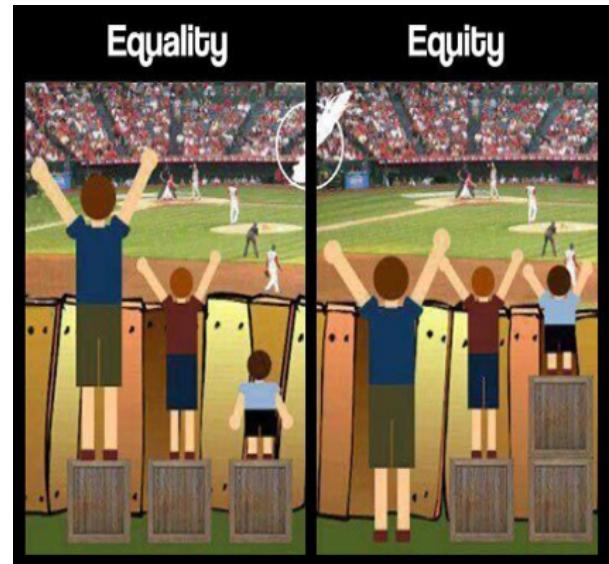
Introduction – A Question of Housing

Guided by article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Equal Housing Initiative (EHI) believes Housing is a basic human right that everyone is entitled to, without discrimination. This right is important in ensuring affordable and accessible housing stock and most importantly, a *housing environment* that facilitates participation in community life and promotes physical, emotional and spiritual health.¹

In practice, however, the most marginalized of our society - those in absolute homelessness, poverty, living with mental illness/chronic addictions and other health issues, face numerous barriers in accessing this most basic human right. Although steps have been taken towards the provision of housing – including efforts to accommodate disadvantaged individuals in housing policies – the most vulnerable continue to face significant challenges and barriers that limit the exercising of their human right to appropriate equitable and equal housing.

This raises questions relating to how equity and equality for all is accommodated in the provision of housing. It raises questions relating to the detrimental impact that inappropriate housing has on individuals, not just in terms of forcing them to move into sub-standard or institutional housing, but in terms of their other human rights. For example, insecure and inappropriate housing can have serious detrimental impact on an individual's right to health, particularly mental health.²



- Equality -

“Ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.”

Equality means ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities and receives the same treatment and supports.

- Equity -

“Giving more to those who need it”

Equity is about giving people what they need through inclusion in decision making about their lives in order to make things fair with freedom to choose.

¹ Quinn & Degener, 2002, p. 22.

² Battams & Baum, 2010, p. 1026.

Who We Are

Framing the Evidence - “Belonging nowhere”

The United Nations (UN) has called homelessness “*perhaps the most visible and most severe symptom of the lack of respect for the right to adequate housing*”. The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has noted that homelessness’s most common definitions recognize that an element of social exclusion is part of the experience of the homeless - In this respect homelessness implies belonging nowhere rather than simply having nowhere to sleep.³ EHI believes everyone has the right to and needs a sense of belonging.

Poverty is a common denominator in the experience of the homeless. Other causes or factors which make people more vulnerable to homelessness are unemployment, a lack of social security systems, a lack of affordable housing, forced evictions, non-availability of social housing, conflicts and natural disasters, (COVID-19) as well as a lack of attention to the needs of the most vulnerable. The “deinstitutionalization” of mental health care, which first started in the 1960s and 1970s, led to persons with disabilities swelling the ranks of the homeless.

Besides the violation of their human right to adequate housing, homeless persons may be deprived of a whole range of other human rights. Laws that criminalize homelessness, vagrancy or sleeping rough, along with “street cleaning” operations to remove homeless people from the streets, under bridges and near river banks have a direct impact on their physical and psychological integrity. Merely by not having a secure place to live, nor any privacy, homeless persons are much more vulnerable to adverse effects of addiction, violence, threats and harassment.⁴

“Not belonging is a terrible feeling. It feels awkward and it hurts, as if you were wearing someone else’s shoes.”

- Phoebe Stone



³ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

⁴ Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (United Nations publication, Sales No. 07.XVII.8 P), para 1.328.

Who We Are

Equal Housing Initiative – Who we are

Equal Housing Initiative (EHI) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Not-For-Profit Canadian Charity with a mandate to bring evidence based best practice, advocacy and practical support for the creation and sustainability of housing that is equal and equitable for all. Guided by article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, EHI envisions a country where every Canadian enjoys adequate and equitable housing as part of a basic standard of living for the health and well-being of the individual. EHI's mandate is to advance systemic solutions and strengthening communities. Our work on housing includes shaping and sharing policy ideas, investing in innovative solutions, and supporting partners working to strengthen communities through the provision of:



Expertise	To organizations working in the area of “Homeless Health” and Housing.
Advocacy	For evidence based best practices in Homeless Health.
Practical Supports	To assist organizations with projects that advance equal housing solutions.
Funding Partnerships	To assist organizations with projects that advance equal housing solutions.
Service Coordination	To support successful equal housing outcomes.
Sponsored Research	To develop innovative solutions.

Who We Are

EHI Core Functions

Equal Housing Initiative operationalizes its mandate through six (6) core functions:

Filtering	Organizing and managing the most relevant and reliable information.
Amplifying	Taking new, little-known, or little-understood ideas, giving them weight, and making them more widely understood.
Investing	Offering a means to give projects the resources they need to carry out their main activities.
Convening	Bringing together different, distinct people or groups of people.
Community Building	Promoting and sustaining collective values and standards.
Learning and Facilitating	Helping members and projects carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively.

Equal Housing Initiative's governance and leadership are guided by the following principles:

Innovation

Always exploring and transforming ideas into practical realities

Dedication

A commitment to the unwavering pursuit of equal and equitable solutions

Excellence

With integrity, always aligning actions with values

Evidence

Make decisions based on the best available evidence only if the evidence is consistently and systematically identified, evaluated and selected

How We Work

EHI Framework

Equal Housing Initiative is structured as a **community of practice**. A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. This definition reflects the fundamentally social nature of human learning. It is very broad. It applies to a street gang, whose members learn how to survive in a hostile world, as well as a group of engineers who learn how to design better devices or a group of community members (such as in the case of EHI) who seek to improve service to citizens.⁵

In all cases, the key EHI communities of practice elements are:



The Domain

Members are brought together by a learning need they share (whether this shared learning need is explicit or not and whether learning is the motivation for their coming together or a by-product of the initiative they share).

The Community

Members' collective learning becomes a bond among them over time (experienced in various ways and thus not a source of homogeneity).

The Practice

Members' interactions produce resources that affect a shared outcome (whether they engage in actual practice together or separately) that results in innovative outcomes and solutions to shared issues or a problem that might not be achieved separately. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope.

⁵ <https://wenger-trayner.com/resources/what-is-a-community-of-practice/>

How We Work

EHI Structure

Equal Housing Initiative's Community of Practice is managed by a **core group** based on an agreed coordination mandate as noted earlier in this document. The core group provides administrative and program support as necessary.

The **inner circle** serves as a voluntary advisory steering committee with an informal structure, meeting on a quarterly basis or as frequently as the community decides (individual members may contact the core group on demand).

The **outer circle** embraces interested members, contributors, and readers in a loose network, that may come and go, meeting and engaging as needed.



EHI Community of Practice Core Group and Inner Circle Advisory Members

Dr. Andrew Bond	Co-Chair	Canadian Network for the Health and Housing of the Homeless (CNH3)
Kerri Ervin-Ross	CEO	McDonald Youth Services
Matt Allard	City of Winnipeg Councilor	City Councilor - St. Boniface
Michael A. Jack	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	City of Winnipeg
Daniel Lussier	CEO	Réseau Compassion Network
Mike Payne	Executive Director	Nine Circle Community Health Center
Mike Watts	Pharmacist / Owner	Brothers Pharmacy and Phoenix Recovery
Gordon Taylor	Executive Director	Salvation Army – Hope Center
Tara Snider	Executive Director	Sara Riel Inc.
Dr. Laura Sims	Professor Diversity / Indigenous Studies	Université de Saint-Boniface (USB)
Keith LaBossiere	CEO / Managing Partner	Thompson Dorfman Sweatman Law
Al Wiebe	Lived Experience Advocate	Host - CKUW 95 Radio No Fixed Address
Ryan Gorrie	Senior Associate, Architect	Brook McIlroy Architects
Dan Bockstael	Vice President Pre-Construction	Bockstael Construction
Rick Lees	Executive Director	Equal Housing Initiative Core Group
Sebastian De Lazzer	Director Strategic Initiatives	Equal Housing Initiative Core Group
Erwin Dayrit	Director Administration/Logistics	Equal Housing Initiative Core Group
Tahl East	Director Program Development	Equal Housing Initiative Core Group

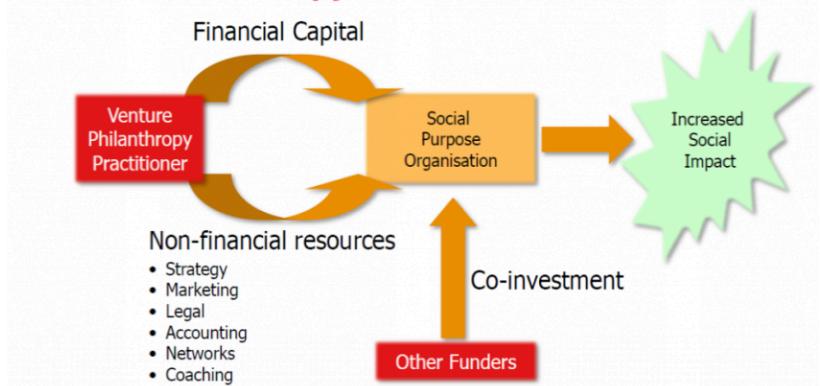
How We Work

EHI Funding Model – Venture Philanthropy

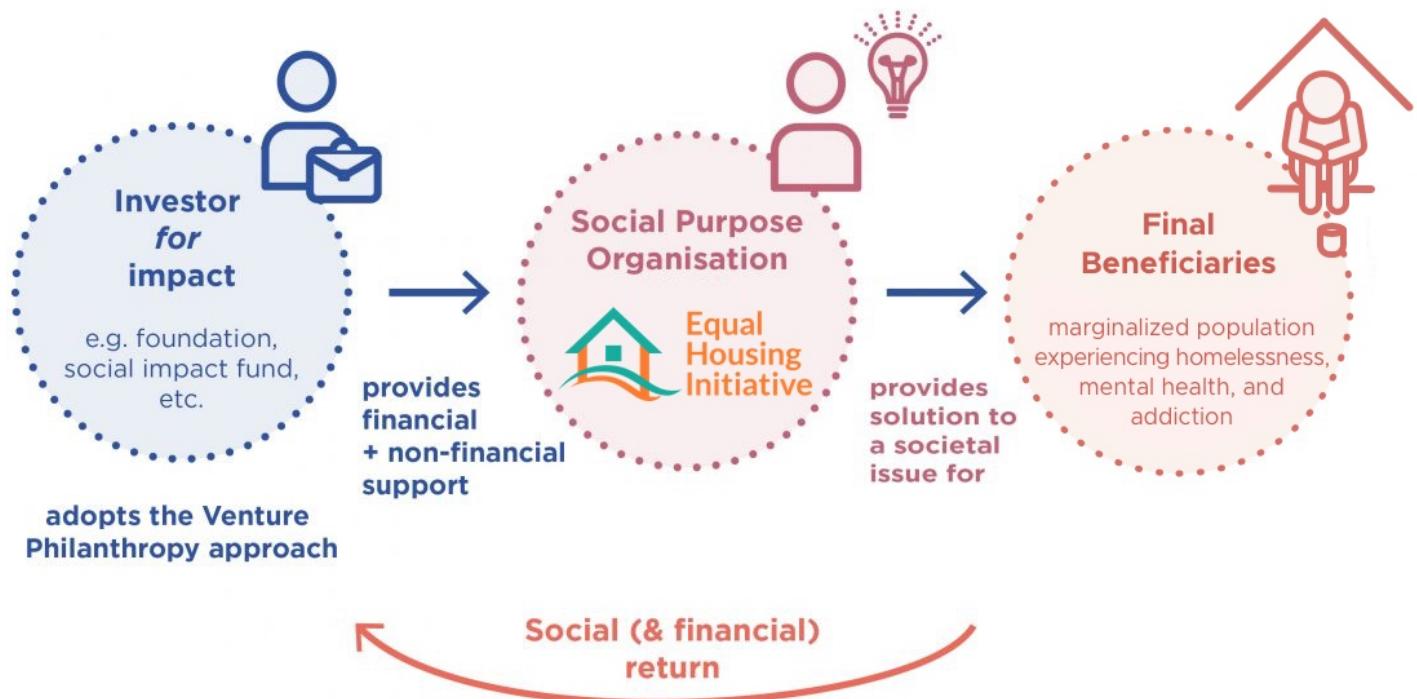
The term Venture Philanthropy was originally coined by John D. Rockefeller III in 1969, who described it as "*an adventurous approach to funding unpopular social causes.*" The Rockefeller Foundation remains a leading outlet for socially-attuned investing.

Venture philanthropy arose largely as a result of a growing public impression that traditional financing mechanisms (investments, government or university grants, etc.) rarely assisted non-profit organizations or other socially beneficial industries build capital.⁶

Venture Philanthropy Core Model



EHI Venture Philanthropy Impact Model



⁶ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/v/venture-philanthropy.asp>

How We Work

Key Values of the EHI Venture Philanthropy Approach⁷

While EHI decisions remain driven by its philanthropic mission and mandate, the venture philanthropy model provides a more rigorous focus on measuring and managing impact results (instead of focusing on the size of a grant or input-like indicators). Because venture philanthropy is oriented towards optimizing impact through a collaborative approach, entities of varying sizes, sectors, expertise, etc. can all be a key part of an EHI venture philanthropy initiative.

This funding model enables EHI to bring together both financial and non-financial resources as well as co-investment partners optimizing social impact and best evidence outcomes.

The following are some of the common value elements - (although each element is not necessarily found in every venture philanthropy initiative EHI undertakes):

- ✓ Target systemic change through collaborative, strategic capital allocation.
- ✓ Focus on scaled interventions at a sector level, as opposed to single organizations.
- ✓ Blended investing approach that combines the use of grants and return-seeking investments.
- ✓ Multi-stakeholder focus that promotes collaboration with key players within a sector.
- ✓ Long-term engagement with grantees and investees in alignment with a systems change mindset.
- ✓ Agile evidence based research encouraging swift adaptation of interventions as needed based on outcomes.

Over the past decade or so, there has been a significant shift in philanthropy's approach to addressing some of society's biggest problems and the growing popularity of market-based or market-inspired solutions to these challenges. At the same time, ideas like shared value, the notion of businesses favoring social good over a pure economic gain, or impact-investing have become more common. This is due in part to declining funding from traditional sources, including traditional government funding, and donors' growing demand for more impact from their charitable dollars.

Philanthropy and private equity used to be very distant worlds. Today, the idea of venture philanthropy has become more widespread.⁸

⁷ <https://www.sopact.com/venture-philanthropy>

⁸ https://ssir.org/podcasts/entry/how_venture_philanthropy_works_and_its_role_in_effective_charity

Equal Housing Initiative approaches its work through the convergence of evidence based practice, communities of practice and venture philanthropy. This approach allows all projects EHI takes on to be well informed and have the benefit of a collective knowledge of the EHI core and advisory community; thereby ensuring maximum social impact and sustainable outcomes.

First Housing Project

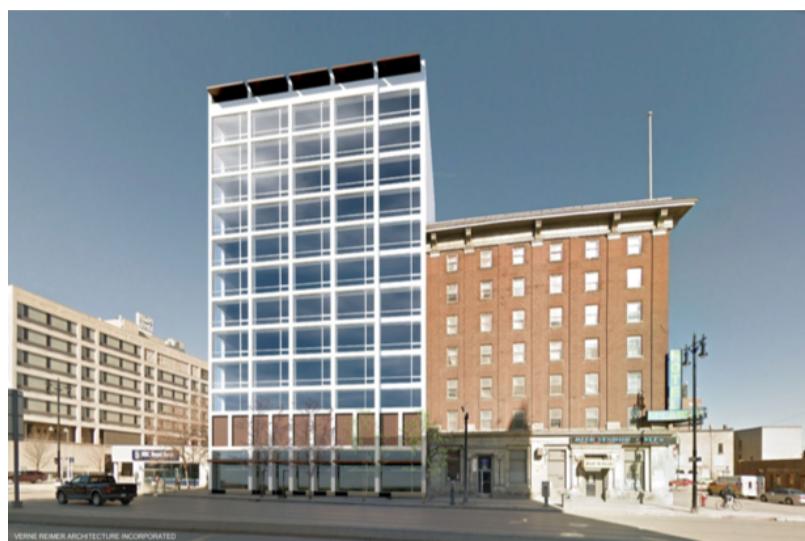
A Venture Philanthropy Initiative

McLaren Hotel - Supportive Housing

The McLaren Hotel ("the hotel") is a family-owned hotel located at 554 Main Street, Winnipeg. It is single room occupancy (SRO) hotel that provides last resort housing to Manitobans who require shelter and live in poverty. Residents are people who often face other barriers, such as addictions, mental health issues, and low to no regular income, unemployment, and overall insecurity. The hotel currently houses residents in 150 rooms spread over 6 floors.

Guided by article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the hotel owners using the Equal Housing Initiative's (EHI) *venture philanthropy model* have initiated a redevelopment process that includes, among others, renovating and repurposing the hotel into a safe and affordable supportive recovery housing. EHI will lead the Redevelopment Project, beginning with a research initiative to inform and design innovative best practices.

In addition to the hotel redevelopment project, the hotel owners are planning to concurrently develop the adjacent surface parking lot at 550 Main Street as affordable housing in partnership with Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation. The proposed development will offer 108 new affordable units.



By offering safe, affordable, and independent housing adjacent to supportive housing at the McLaren Hotel, residents can transition to independent housing once they have established a stable situation. Although more independent than the SRO hotel environment, residents are able to belong to a community that stabilizes and supports them.

The expected positive social and economic benefits are material and will generate meaningful return on impact investment by offering staged housing to our communities' most vulnerable. The target resident draws significantly on social services for survival, including shelters, social agencies and hospitals. They also tend to interact more frequently with police, fire and paramedics services.

Venture Philanthropist Rubi Gill, President of McLaren Hotel

First Housing Project

A Venture Philanthropy Initiative

McLaren Hotel - Project Objectives

The McLaren Hotel Redevelopment Project will:

- ✓ Realize the conversion of the McLaren Hotel to '3rd Stage Transitional Living' in partnership with the Equal Housing Initiative, in addition to affordable housing at 550 Main Street.
- ✓ Create a continuum of supports to encourage transition from SRO living to independent living in adjacent apartment building, while remaining a part of the McLaren community.
- ✓ Introduce stability and supports to empower individuals with the objective of enabling employment and contribution to the economy.
- ✓ Create affordable residential units in the Downtown, which is consistent with the City of Winnipeg's Downtown First Agenda and Our Winnipeg's call to foster continued Downtown renewal and residential growth.
- ✓ Support Venture Philanthropy Partnerships, including Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation and Equal Housing Initiative.
- ✓ Support thoughtful densification of the downtown by removing a gravel parking lot in the heart of Winnipeg's Downtown.
- ✓ Provide new revenues to the City of Winnipeg from a new Assessed Taxation Roll.
- ✓ Provide approximately 5,000 square feet of new commercial retail space at a zero-lot line, fronting onto Main Street, creating an active storefront street scene on Main Street that will increase pedestrian activity and public safety.
- ✓ Increase economic activity during construction, including induced, indirect and direct jobs creation, generating new economic activity and taxation for the City and Province.
- ✓ Preserve heritage components of the McLaren Hotel while ensuring the overall sustainability of the existing SRO.
- ✓ Increase energy efficiency at the McLaren through renovation.
- ✓ Increased Downtown Renewal and Safety.