



A SAFE AND AFFORDABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME

Spring 2024 Newsletter

FEATURED

- Safe and Affordable Project Launch
- First National Meeting
- The Safe and Affordable team
- Safe and Affordable Training Series



SAFE AND AFFORDABLE PROJECT LAUNCH

A Safe and Affordable Place to Call Home: A Multi-disciplinary Longitudinal Outcomes Analysis of the National Housing Strategy (herein referred to as Safe and Affordable or Project) represents a collaborative effort to tackle the pressing housing challenges experienced by some of the most vulnerable members of the Canadian community.

The Safe and Affordable project is housed at Carleton University funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - CMHC and administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council - SSHRC over five years from 2023 to 2027 with a funding contribution of \$4.8M.

At the heart of the Safe and Affordable Project is a commitment to conducting thorough multi-disciplinary research. By utilizing the expertise of diverse fields including social sciences, engineering, architecture, medicine, and health sciences, we aim to gain comprehensive insights into the complexities of housing dynamics in Canada.

The primary goal is to analyze outcomes longitudinally, examining the effectiveness of various housing strategies and policies. The Project delves into the experiences of individuals living in different housing arrangements, from social and community housing to private market residences with subsidies. Through careful assessment, our team aims to uncover insights to lay the foundations for more inclusive and sustainable housing solutions.

In addition, we are exploring several supplementary research streams. These include analyses of funding mechanisms under the National Housing Strategy, integration of a rights-based approach to housing, support for Indigenous and Northern housing initiatives, and exploration of alternative housing models.

Our team recognizes the importance of collaboration, co-creation, and community engagement. We are committed to working closely with non-academic partners, Indigenous councils, and First Voice co-researchers to ensure that our research reflects our communities' diverse needs and perspectives.

Visual representation of a *Safe and Affordable* governance structure:



FIRST NATIONAL MEETING

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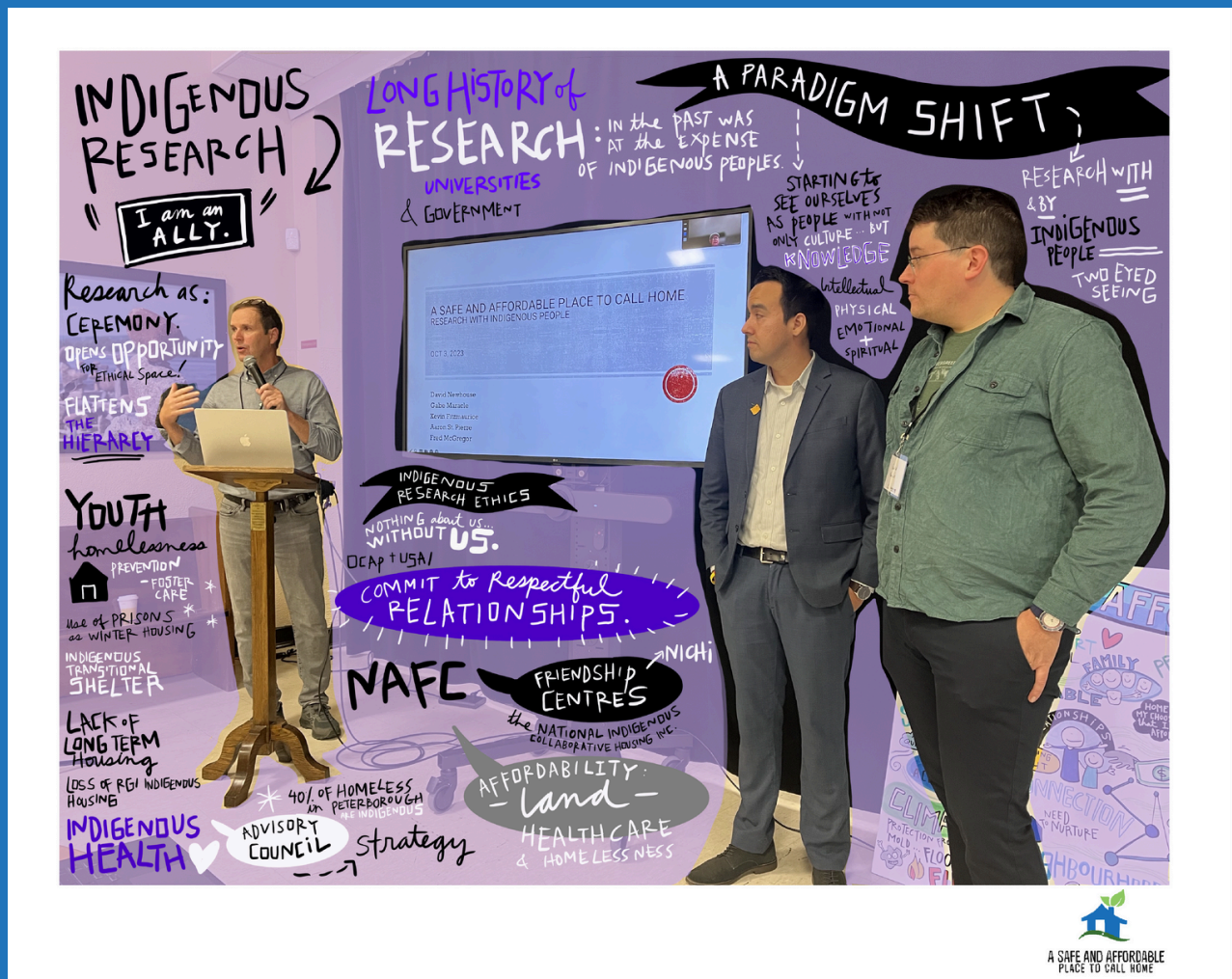
On October 2nd and 3rd, 2023, the Safe and Affordable Housing project brought together academic researchers, community partners, lived experts, Indigenous community leaders and others in Ottawa for the first in-person meeting. This event was specifically designed to create an inclusive space for knowledge sharing, collaborating, and establishing relationships. This report provides an account of the activities that unfolded and the key opportunities identified during the event. The event's design opened up space for rich conversations, resulting in a vibrant collage of insights, and new and productive connections between participants and sparking new ideas for exploration.

A fundamental shift in the concept of affordability was advocated, emphasizing financial sustainability and the need to support renters in building capital and preparing for emergencies. Additionally, the significance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives in housing research was highlighted, emphasizing the importance of respectful engagement and collaboration.



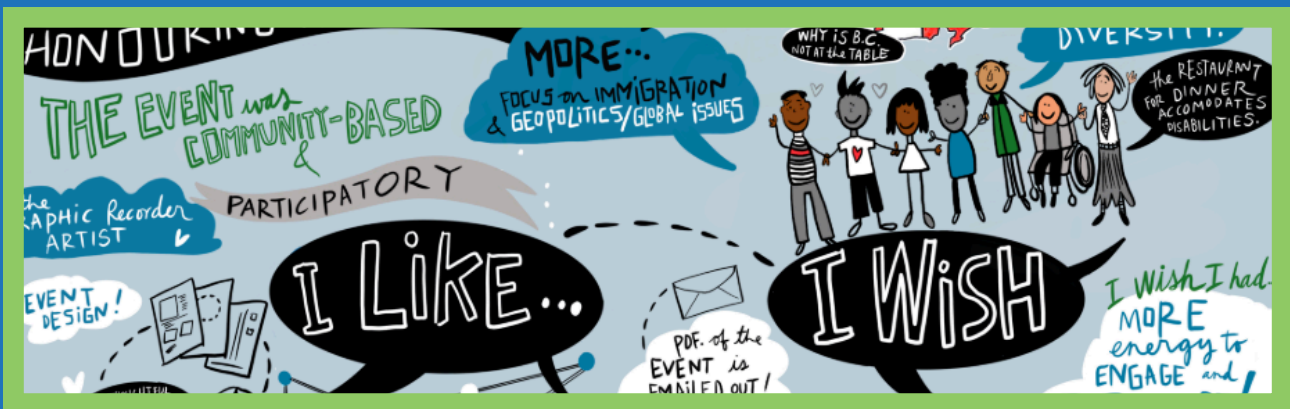
The event's structure prioritized community-building and mutual understanding, with participatory design methods guiding activities. Participants engaged in reflective exercises and collaborative tasks, ensuring diverse voices were heard and valued.

Day one focused on sharing experiences and defining core project themes, while day two centred on collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, Lived Experience Experts, and Community Partners. Indigenous Elder Fred McGregor opened the event with a ceremonial offering, setting the tone for discussions on truth and reconciliation in the context of housing.



Graphic recordings captured the essence of conversations, enriching the co-created body of knowledge. The participatory design approach facilitated mutual learning and genuine participation, underscoring the importance of inclusive and democratic processes.

The First National meeting had in attendance over 60 people comprising academic researchers, community partners, lived experts and members of Indigenous communities from across five provinces in Canada (Ontario, Saskatchewan, Québec, Nova Scotia, and Alberta), plus Canada's North.



OUR TEAM

LIAM O'BRIEN

Project Director



Liam O'Brien, Ph.D., P.Eng. is a full professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Carleton University. He is the principal investigator of the Human Building Interaction Lab, which consists of a team of 15 researchers with diverse backgrounds in engineering, architecture, and psychology. He has authored over 200 publications and three books on these topics. He is the Operating Agent of IEA EBC Annex 79: Occupant-Centric Building Design and Operation and the past president of the Canadian chapter of the International Building Performance Simulation Association.

JACKIE KENNELLY

Project Director



Jackie Kennelly, Ph.D., is a Professor in Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University her research covers youth cultures, urban sociology, and homelessness. She founded the Centre for Urban Youth Research (CUYR) and organized an international conference on youth homelessness. Her work blends traditional ethnography with innovative methods, influenced by scholars like Bourdieu and Arendt. She is currently the PI of the SSHRC Partnership Development Grant to build on the work begun through a Mitacs-funded grant (with Charlotte Smith, MA student). Working Upstream focuses on the experiences of homeless youth in Ontario schools.

JERRY PIVAGA

Project Coordinator



Jerry Pivaga is a Public Policy and Administration graduate from Toronto Metropolitan University with a keen interest in social and community development. He began his career at the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure, pioneering policy programs to develop towns and small communities in rural Ontario through the ICIP Green Infrastructure program. Later, he transitioned to the University of Ottawa, managing a portfolio of grants focused on Track 2 diplomacy negotiations in the Middle East. Known for his dynamic leadership and strategic vision, Jerry is committed to humanitarian causes. With a business administration and project management background, he brings valuable expertise to the "Safe and Affordable Place to Call Home" project he coordinates.

DAMOLA ADETOYESE-OLAGUNJU

First Voice Coordinator



Damola Adetoyese-Olagunju recently graduated from Carleton University with a Bachelors in Psychology. Currently serving as the First Voice Advisory Coordinator for the Safe and Affordable project, her primary responsibility is to support the activities of the First Voice Advisory Committee, providing a safe space for individuals with personal experience with homelessness to contribute to the project. With experience in event coordination, social media management, and administration, Damola's professional background lies primarily in the social service sector. She has worked with various non-profit organizations, such as the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre, Ottawa Community Housing, The Ottawa Mission, and CHEO, focusing on creating social service programs for children, youth, and families, as well as fundraising and collecting donations to support low-income families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Additionally, she gained experience in HR and medical support while working in Nigeria for Chevron Nigeria Limited's Employee Assistance Program.



MARRISSA MATHEWS

Indigenous Coordinator

Marrissa Mathews is Omushkego Cree from Treaty 9. Marrissa graduated from Lakehead University with an Honour Bachelor of Arts in Political Science-Pre-Law and York University with a Master of Arts in Political Science. She is currently working on completing her PhD in Political Science at McMaster University with her work focusing on urban Indigenous youth success in the Friendship Centre Movement.

SAFA ABDULMALIK

Comms and Social Media Coordinator



Safa Abdulmalik recently graduated from Carleton University, achieving a bachelor's degree in Industrial Design. Her journey is characterized by a profound passion for developing innovative design solutions that positively impact the lives of individuals and communities. Her commitment to social impact is evident in her hands-on experience, particularly working with low-income communities like the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre. Safa has also worked with organizations such as Abilities Living Laboratory, The Care Work, Aging and Health Lab, and Hillel Lodge (The Bess and Moe Greenberg Family) as part of her capstone project to create a lighting system in the shower that maintains resident balance and serves as a guide to regulate their breathing.

TRAINING SERIES

The Safe and Affordable team is currently running a series of virtual webinar training sessions that started in February 2024. These trainings are an opportunity for graduate students, post-docs, community partners, and co-researchers to acquire discipline-specific training and mentorship on the different facets of our project. Check out our website for training schedules.

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main content area displays a slide with the title "Partenariat SCHL-INFC" in yellow text on a dark blue background. Below the title is the phrase "Vous soutenir ensemble" in white. The slide also features two images: a construction site with a crane and a man and a woman reviewing blueprints. A large white play button is centered over the images. At the bottom of the slide are the logos for "Stratégie nationale sur le logement" and "Canada SCHL CMHC". The Zoom interface includes a vertical list of participants on the right, with names like Elisabeth Feltaous and Liam O'Brien visible. A grid of icons for other participants is also shown.

The first virtual webinar training was held on February 26th, 2024. The topic of the webinar was the National Housing Strategy led by Elisabeth Feltaous, Senior Specialist, Research Division, Canada Housing Mortgage Corporation, and CMHC. The training discussed the comprehensive approach taken by the National Housing Strategy (NHS) to measure and evaluate its impact on Canadian households.

The NHS emphasizes a Human Rights-Based Approach to Housing, focusing on the needs of vulnerable populations and encompassing principles such as participation, inclusion, accountability, and non-discrimination. The strategy aims to reduce homelessness, ensure affordable and sustainable housing, address the housing needs of Indigenous groups, and promote social and economic inclusion. It emphasizes six priority areas for action, including housing for those in greatest need, community housing sustainability, and the housing needs of women and children.

The training highlighted the need for more data on housing outcomes to make evidence-based decisions and emphasized the partnership between CMHC and Infrastructure Canada (INFC) to support the implementation of the NHS.

The event was successful in bringing forward the NHS strategy that is designed to address housing issues in Canada, focusing on vulnerable populations, affordability, sustainability, and social inclusion. It introduces a multi-faceted approach to measuring its impact and emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making and collaborative partnerships between key stakeholders.

CANADA HOUSING BENEFIT



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. On the left, a presentation slide is displayed with the following content:

- Logo:** A stylized house icon with vertical bars in blue, green, yellow, and red.
- Text:** "People Places Policies and Prospects" and "Affordable Rental Housing for Those in Greatest Need".
- Title:** "The Right to Adequate Housing: What About Rent Subsidies?"
- Play Button:** A large white play button is centered over the title.
- Speakers:** "Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid, Associate Professor, Cape Breton University", "Megan Digou, CBU research assistant", and "Dr. Jacqueline Kennelly, Professor, Carleton University".

On the right side of the screen, a grid of participant avatars is visible. The top-right corner shows a larger video feed of a woman speaking. The grid includes avatars for participants with initials: AM, LQ, RM, PM, AN, AN, OA, NK, KR, AC, SB, and jerryseku...

On March 1st, 2024, the Safe and Affordable team held another virtual training webinar on the Canada Housing Benefit led by Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid, Associate Professor at Cape Breton University. Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid delves into the impact of rent subsidies on tenants' access to adequate housing through the research conducted in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. The study involved 22 interviews with tenants and staff from a non-profit housing organization and a review of government documents and secondary data collected between the fall of 2021 and 2022. The findings revealed a mixed impact of rent subsidies on the security of tenure, with some tenants reporting understanding landlords, while others faced housing conditions in need of major repair.

The study highlighted the challenges of affordability and habitability faced by tenants receiving rent subsidies, with some living in distressed neighbourhoods and struggling to cover energy costs. Dr. Catherine Leviten-Rei discusses the importance of a rights-based approach to housing and the need for comprehensive reforms to address affordability, habitability, and security of tenure issues. She also emphasizes the critical role of rent subsidies in ensuring adequate housing, pointing out the necessity of available housing in the community for subsidies to be effective.

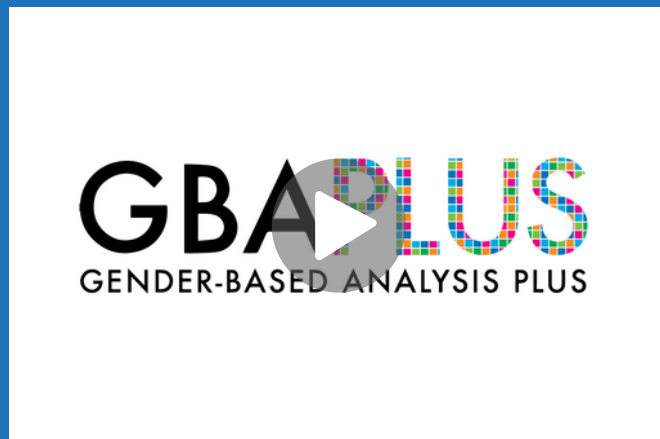
The training provided valuable insights into the complexities of rent subsidies and their impact on tenants' access to adequate housing, offering crucial recommendations for policy and program improvements to ensure the effective realization of the right to housing.

CHECK OUT OUR OTHER WEBINARS



WRITING OP ED AND COMPELLING STORYTELLING WEBINAR

On April 10th, 2024, The Safe and Affordable Place to call home organized a twin webinar series titled "Writing Op-Ed and Compelling Storytelling". These trainings are housing specific and were provided by our partner - Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative(CHEC) and led by Cynthia Belaskie.



GBA+ WEBINAR

On April 19th, 2024, The Safe and Affordable place to call Home organized another webinar titled: GBA+ from Noon to 1 pm EST led by Dr Brenda Parker, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Disclaimer:

"A Safe and Affordable Place to Call Home: A Multi-disciplinary Longitudinal Outcomes Analysis of the National Housing Strategy receives funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC); however, the views expressed are the personal views of the authors and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them."

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OUR PARTNERS:

