



Community Development Framework

March 2025



North York
Community
House

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Introduction

North York Community House (NYCH) is committed to empowering residents and strengthening communities through both place-based and asset-based approaches. Our Community Development Team works in underserved neighbourhoods across northwest Toronto, helping residents become leaders and agents of change. We champion collective action aimed at improving conditions locally, citywide, and beyond. By leveraging the strengths and resources inherent within communities, we drive sustainable change that is both meaningful and long-lasting.

We recognize that the physical space of a neighbourhood plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and ownership. By nurturing strong connections within neighbourhoods, we enhance community engagement and empower residents to actively shape their environments. The neighborhoods we serve are often recognized as Neighbourhood Investment Areas, emerging neighbourhoods, or revitalization zones. Through delivering comprehensive leadership programs for all ages, from childhood to seniors, we empower residents.



Our Village Bloggurls program supports marginalized, racialized and underserved girls from ages 7 to 12, our Youth Community Animator program supports youth aged 13 to 24 with a focus on youth aged 13-19, and we have a leadership program designed for adults including seniors.

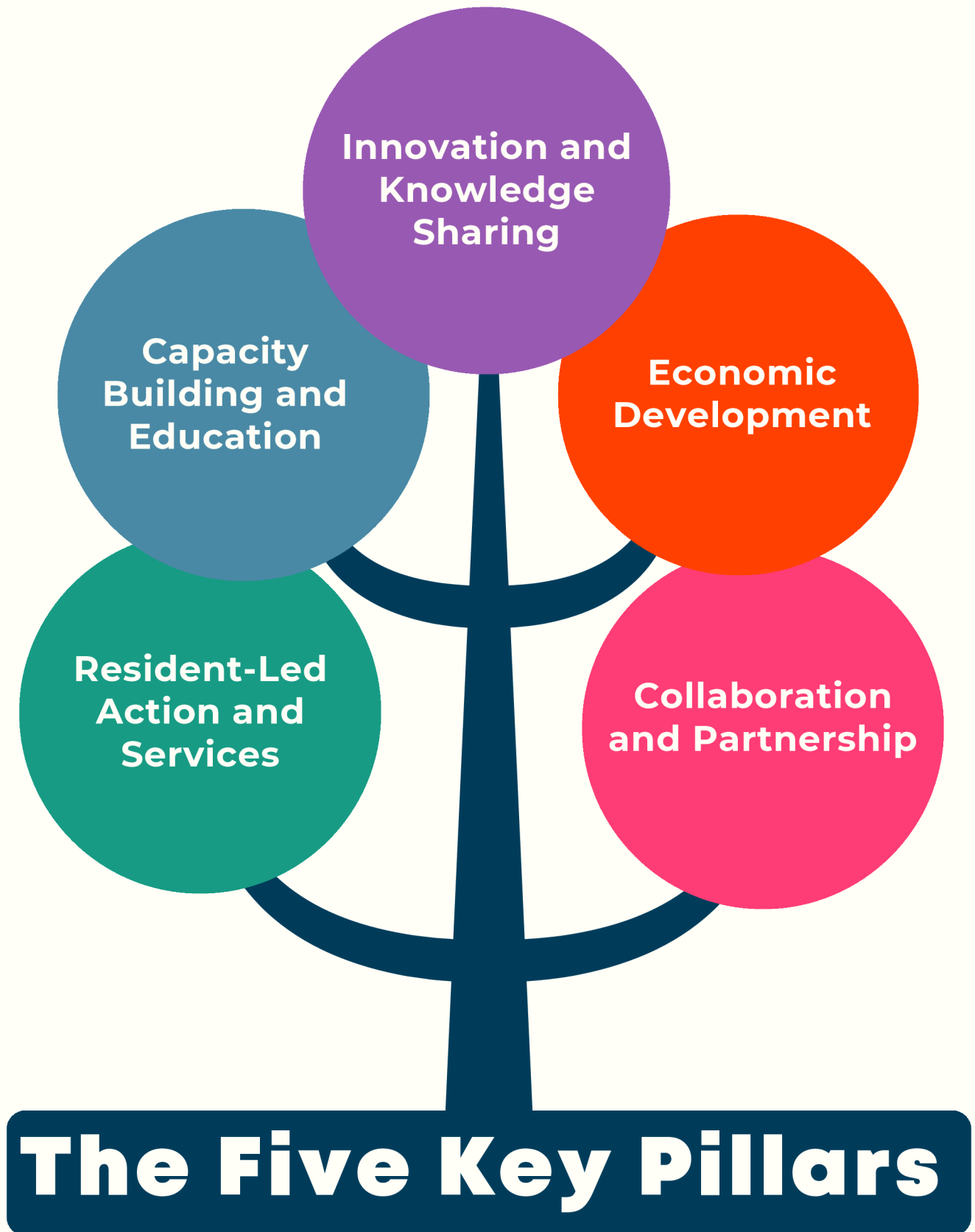
Our work involves facilitating the formation of resident associations and supporting resident-led initiatives, engaging with partners and stakeholders, delivering targeted training and education, and fostering a strong community of practice. Additionally, we are committed to promoting economic development and civic engagement within these communities.

Our aim is to address systemic inequities and empower residents with the knowledge, mindset, and skills necessary to transform their neighborhoods and lives. Through resident-led actions and collaborative initiatives, we facilitate meaningful participation in community development processes, promoting a more equitable and vibrant community for all.

While our efforts primarily focus on the northwest section of Toronto, we have strategically concentrated our work in three key neighborhoods: **Lotherton Pathway, Lawrence Heights, and Weston-Mount Dennis.**

Furthermore, we are initiating exploratory efforts in the Downsview and Jane Finch communities to expand our reach and identify new opportunities for engagement.

In response to shifts in the community development sector and the evolving post-COVID landscape, we have introduced a new community development framework. This framework is designed to strengthen our internal operations, ensuring that our team and resources are aligned to better support community development. Our goal is to maintain a sustainable and adaptable resource model that meets the emerging needs of the communities we serve.



Our community development work is organized around five key pillars:

1 Resident-Led Action and Services

NYCH works closely with resident groups, providing mentorship, access to resources, and resident -led program delivery that reduces barriers to participation. Our goal is to empower residents to lead local initiatives, advocate for community issues, and become self-reliant.

2 Collaboration and Partnership

We build strategic partnerships with local organizations, networks, and coalitions to amplify the impact of our work. By participating in joint initiatives, we address systemic issues and advocate for meaningful policy change.

3 Capacity Building and Education

NYCH offers a range of educational resources and structured capacity-building programs, including workshops, online training courses, and educational content. These initiatives are designed to increase the knowledge and leadership skills of residents and community groups.

4 Economic Development

Our economic development efforts focus on supporting local businesses, creating job opportunities, and fostering economic resilience. We aim to build sustainable economic growth within the community, reducing inequalities and promoting self-reliance.

5 Innovation and Knowledge Sharing

As a learning organization, NYCH engages in ongoing research and evaluation to explore new strategies and practices in community development. We share our learnings and best practices through online platforms, formal training, and in-person events, contributing to positive social impact and systemic change.



Team Composition

Community Engagement Coordinator

The Community Engagement Coordinator plays a crucial role in directly supporting resident-led initiatives and civic education. This position focuses on empowering residents through programs that reduce barriers to participation and build leadership skills. Additionally, the coordinator oversees food-growing initiatives, fostering sustainable practices and community engagement around food security.

Girls' Program Lead

The Girls' Program Lead focuses on digital literacy, content creation, and amplifying the voices of young women and girls in the community. They are integral to our capacity-building efforts, offering training in blogging, social media, and multimedia storytelling. This team also contributes to innovation and knowledge sharing by engaging in research projects related to digital inclusion and youth engagement.

Youth Leadership and Engagement Worker

Dedicated to empowering young people within the community, the Youth Leadership and Engagement Worker leads initiatives that develop leadership skills, promote civic engagement, and provide job readiness training. This role is critical in building the next generation of community leaders, ensuring that youth have the tools and opportunities they need to contribute meaningfully to their neighbourhoods.

Community Development Manager

The Community Development Manager oversees the coordination and strategic direction of all community development initiatives at NYCH. This role involves leading partnerships, developing economic development strategies, and ensuring that all programs and services are aligned with our broader community development goals. The manager also plays a key role in research and evaluation, guiding the organization's continuous learning and improvement efforts.

Director of Strategic Initiatives (High-level support)

Provides high-level strategic guidance and support to ensure that NYCH's community development work aligns with the organization's long-term goals. This role involves forming and sustaining key partnerships, securing funding opportunities, and offering insights on research, innovation, and systems change initiatives. The director's involvement, though limited, is essential in steering the organization toward impactful and sustainable outcomes.

Collaboration with NYCH's Community Connections Team

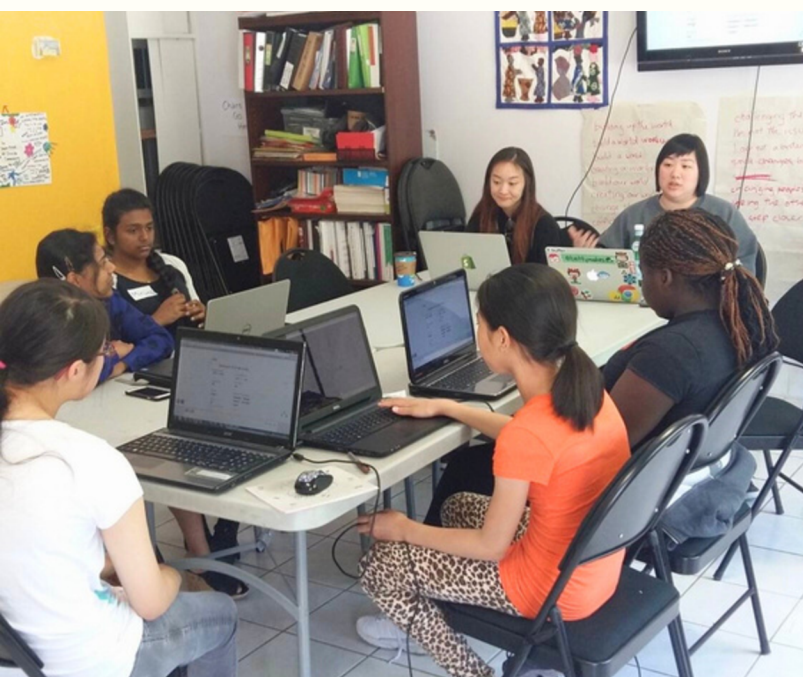
At NYCH, collaboration is central to our community development efforts. Our Community Development team works closely with the Community Connections team to create comprehensive, inclusive programs that address the needs of residents at all life stages. By integrating insights across teams, we design initiatives that promote youth leadership and family support, fostering resilient communities where everyone can thrive.



Supporting Our Work

Each member of our team is committed to the principles of collaboration, resident empowerment, and adaptability that define NYCH's approach to community development. Through regular coordination meetings, cross-pillar collaboration, and a shared commitment to our mission, our team works together to create vibrant, equitable communities across northwest Toronto.

Our team composition allows us to remain responsive to emerging needs while maintaining a strong focus on our strategic goals. With the collective expertise and dedication of our team, and through our close collaboration with the Youth and Family team, NYCH is well-equipped to continue driving positive change and supporting the communities we serve.



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