

MAISON wiloh

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

How to Increase Parent Mobilization and Support Self-Organization

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This report synthesizes the learnings of the community mobilization research project, its design and unfolding, in detail, and documents any other relevant aspects to help Maison WILOH continue its work now that the project is completed.



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PROJECT GOALS

Discover how the Maison WILOH community can come together and increase the mobilization of its members.

Creating Meaningful Conversations

Bringing parents together around their shared challenge, where they can learn about each other and grow closer (focus groups).

Uncovering Barriers to Engagement

Explore unmet needs and individual perspectives in several areas on individual values, comfort with interdependency - decision-making, trust, being esteemed and listed to, influence etc. (confidential questionnaire)

Increasing Self-Organizationthe Capacity

Providing insights in a safe and constructive manner to enable parents to have a better collective understanding of their individual experiences; facilitating a process around emerging topics of interest (community event)



Ultimately this research project is in service of members of Maison WILOH's bigger goal, to increase the chances that their hope becomes reality.

TIMELINE & DELIVERABLES

2024

Learning about Maison WILOH

November to January

Getting to know one another, learning the context, exploring goals, meeting members of the organization/community.

Outcomes

⇒ Building A Working Relationship
⇒ Defining A Focus (topic) for the Project

2025

Contracting, Designing & Risk Assessment

January to February

Agreeing on a research question, designing detailed questions of inquiry, evaluating risks and designing procedures.

⇒ Getting the data we need
⇒ Protecting participants from harm
⇒ A Formal agreement

Ethics Review

February to April

This research project has to abide by the Canadian government's rules and regulations on research with human participants. Concordia University needs to assess the risks through its ethics committee and make some recommendations to maximize the well-being of participants. This lead to informed consent and voluntary participation, the consent form.

⇒ The university approves the research project; a third party risk assessment.

Data Gathering, Analysis

End of April, early May

Parents participate in focus groups and fill out the confidential questionnaire. The goal is to give a voice to all members of the organization. All interviews are confidential, and only information beneficial to the project is retained. Participants have the choice to withdraw at any time, or to amend the information they shared.

⇒ Standardized data allows for analysis
⇒ Preparation of Feedback Session

Community Event

May 8th

A presentation of findings to all parents involved in the project, reflecting back the learning to those with the knowledge to take action and move the project forward. The intervention is co-designed with the client to ensure the desired outcome is achieved. For this project, we chose to give the results of the research as part of the same event as the workshop component, but this could also be done separately.

⇒ Insights and energy is instilled
⇒ A clear direction is found
⇒ A transformative moment
⇒ Other deliverables can be attached to this step.

THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROJECT

The project started with regular meetings in coffee shops with Sofia and Veronica. The regularity of those meetings enabled us to build trust and establish a personal rapport, which was a crucial foundation for working together throughout the project. I frequently reflected on the purpose of our project, refining the meaning of our work as it took shape. While documenting progress, I restated the purpose of our project on six occasions, grounding my work in a clear intention, thereby maintaining a clear focus. A clear objective early on was to create activities that would invite (and contribute to) shifts in patterns of interactions, to instill energy into the community and the research project.

To solidify the project's scope and gain a deeper understanding of Maison WILOH, I met with seven parents, in addition to meeting Jacques and Gary (president and vice-president, respectively), which enabled me to identify some initial areas of inquiry, informing my data-gathering questions and procedures.

Because of the challenge of gathering everyone in one place, and also because of the challenging timeline, I settled on an all-in-one event containing a presentation of the results of the research and a workshop where participants could influence the topics of discussions, to enable them to work in small groups on their topics of choice. The group of 20 participants were divided into three subgroups, and two co-facilitators were recruited to help the other two groups.

I also came to understand in February that deep questions needed to be explored, including trust, inclusion, influence, power, decision-making, and differences in views of the future. In a nutshell, the very interdependence of the group as an entity, as well as individual social standing and reputation, could be put at risk if I were not careful in my work.

I proceeded to document how I would design safeguards into my design, such as framing activities to prepare participants to enter each moment with intention, an open mind (withholding judgment), and making space for all voices to be heard (as opposed to debating views and attacking others on their views). I also found resources for mental health support, and made participation voluntary for each activity (focus groups, confidential questionnaire and community event).

As I reflected on my design, I realized the importance of safeguarding relationships and to enable this project to be in service of strengthening relationships and of the community. Any form of expressed dissatisfaction was re-framed as an unmet need and would show vulnerability as opposed to putting others on the defensive. I wanted every aspect of the project to enable participants to feel as safe as possible, and ultimately to feel included, seen and heard.

I decided to design my own availability survey (rather than using existing tools to coordinate availabilities) to have a single online form gather availability for both the focus groups and the community event simultaneously. The survey I prepared also allowed me to keep their availability private, thereby preserving the participants' privacy.

PROTECTING PARTICIPANTS

Two other dimensions need to be explored on the topic of protecting participants. The first one is about focus groups, and the second one is about presenting the findings. While focus groups enabled shifting patterns of interactions, they also could, if ineffectively managed, simply reinforce established ways of doing things. For example, some of the groups proved challenging, and I had to ensure that turn-taking were respected.

Another challenge of the focus groups was ensuring that board members would have space to be seen as, and feel, as normal parents, not just board members at the table. If unprepared, participants could be pit against each others, on the one end parents describing negative aspects of their experience, while board members being put on the defensive to explain their choices or the efforts that they had deployed, or what I described using the metaphor of a lightning rod (board members being at risk to attract criticism).

This proved challenging on two occasions. I should have better prepared them to not be reactive in the face of negative perceptions or opinions expressed by other parents. The double role that board members played turned out to be more challenging for them, as opposed to the perceived power differential that I had feared would be problematic for other parents. Listening to negative experiences, perceptions, and opinions from other parents placed some board members in the position of defending their work and sharing their differing perspectives. I made efforts to manage each of those situations when they arose, but in hindsight, this is an area where I can improve by preparing participants better. Still, the honest conversations that emerged from these focus groups had begun the shift in patterns of interactions, and parents were enthusiastic; a new energy was being generated.



ANALYZING DATA, PRESENTING FINDINGS IN A COMPELLING FASHION

I settled on a very raw form to present the insights from the research, which guaranteed that all voices would be heard and reflected back in the most authentic way possible, and to refrain from marking my own perspective. This shifted the role of interpretation to the participants, creating an opportunity for them to form their own opinions on the data themselves, thereby increasing their autonomy and the authenticity of the exercise.

PREPARING THE FINAL WORKSHOP, CO-FACILITATORS, CLIENT, LOCATION AND SETUP

While preparing the community event, and with the "imagining Maison WILOH" visuals in hand, I realized that given the overwhelming amount of information my feedback presentation contained, I had to provide parents with a way to carry forward the findings, and I settled on providing each participant with a black and white copy of the results right after the presentation, to which I added a colour copy of a "suggested topics of discussion" sheet in colour, equipping each of them with a pen, a sharp marker and two different sizes of posts-its (one for personal notes, the other to share topics they each saw as necessary to move their organization forward).

I also prepared them by providing a schedule of the event that each received at the entrance. While we welcomed the participants, I created individual name tags for each of them and checked their names against a presence sheet.

Finally, I also provided Veronica and Sofia and my co-facilitators with a detailed "design" of the evening (also with the schedule, more details on some of the procedures used). To my co-facilitators, I also provided a detailed sheet outlining the workshop portion of the evening (a two-page document that provides guidelines for facilitating the activities, preparing participants, etc.).

Thankfully, we had visited the venue beforehand with Veronica, which made it possible to plan how to use the available space best. We used three separate rooms. The kitchen was used to break the ice and welcome participants, as well as to frame the evening's purpose. The learning centre was used for the presentation of research findings and the president's speech. Finally, the multi-function room was used for the workshop.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND TANGIBLE RESULTS

LESSONS ABOUT PLANNING, RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION

I have touched on some of the learnings in the previous section. Still, I recap them here briefly: it is essential to prepare participants when conducting group discussions, such as focus groups, to frame the activity as a moment of shared experience, where each individual's perspective is welcome, to withhold judgment, and to be curious about learning from others.

Still, an additional step here is to prepare participants with specific roles and responsibilities to the possibility that they might unintentionally feel attacked by criticism directed towards the organization as a whole. Even if some complaints were not directed at them personally, they were put on the defensive because they were unprepared to face these negative views so directly.

This is something I had previously observed on a different project. Being able to identify this need for preparation is a helpful learning moving forward. Individuals who are perceived to hold special roles or wield power within their organization can benefit from this support.

Planning, given the mandatory procedures that pertain to risk management at the university and the approval process, was extremely challenging. This created substantial delays, shifting the initial project plan by several months. This, in turn, created uncertainty about the research project for many participants I had met in December, and who wondered rightfully, what was going on.

INCLUSION, MEMBERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT, MOBILIZATION, SHARED MEANINGS AND PURPOSE

I began the evening of the community event by framing its purpose as a celebration of Maison WILOH's community, and as a learning experience where I hoped each participant would bring curiosity and openness to the experience, fostering a sense of unity around the parents' shared purpose. I reflected on how this project personally touched me, and that Maison WILOH was beautiful and inspiring; my wish was for Maison WILOH to be successful. Furthermore, I also expressed how being interdependent on each other to achieve their hopes and aspirations was challenging, but this was an opportunity to discover how this dream could become a reality.

A central topic of this project was the concept of inclusion. Not every parent felt like they belonged to Maison WILOH as an organization, and many were passive when it came to contributing to the project. This feeling of exclusion came from a different place for different parents, but the key to undo this was to create a moment were they felt heard and understood, and where I was able to reframe the challenge of collaboration not as something that should be avoided, but as a natural challenge that should be invited, and the only gateway to achieving greatness as a community. This invitation to view the challenges of collaboration differently, while simultaneously making them feel seen and heard, contributed to a significant shift for many parents.

I also used this moment to highlight the tremendous efforts of board members, who, as parents, volunteer their time and effort to this project, ensuring they also felt seen in their efforts and hard work. I reflected on how I, myself as a human being, "am perfectly imperfect" and that we all are, to make parents (including those taking a role as board members) see each other in the full spectrum of their shared humanity. This created a space for all parents to see their differences not as a barrier, but as an opportunity to learn about each other, unlocking a path to create a shared future.

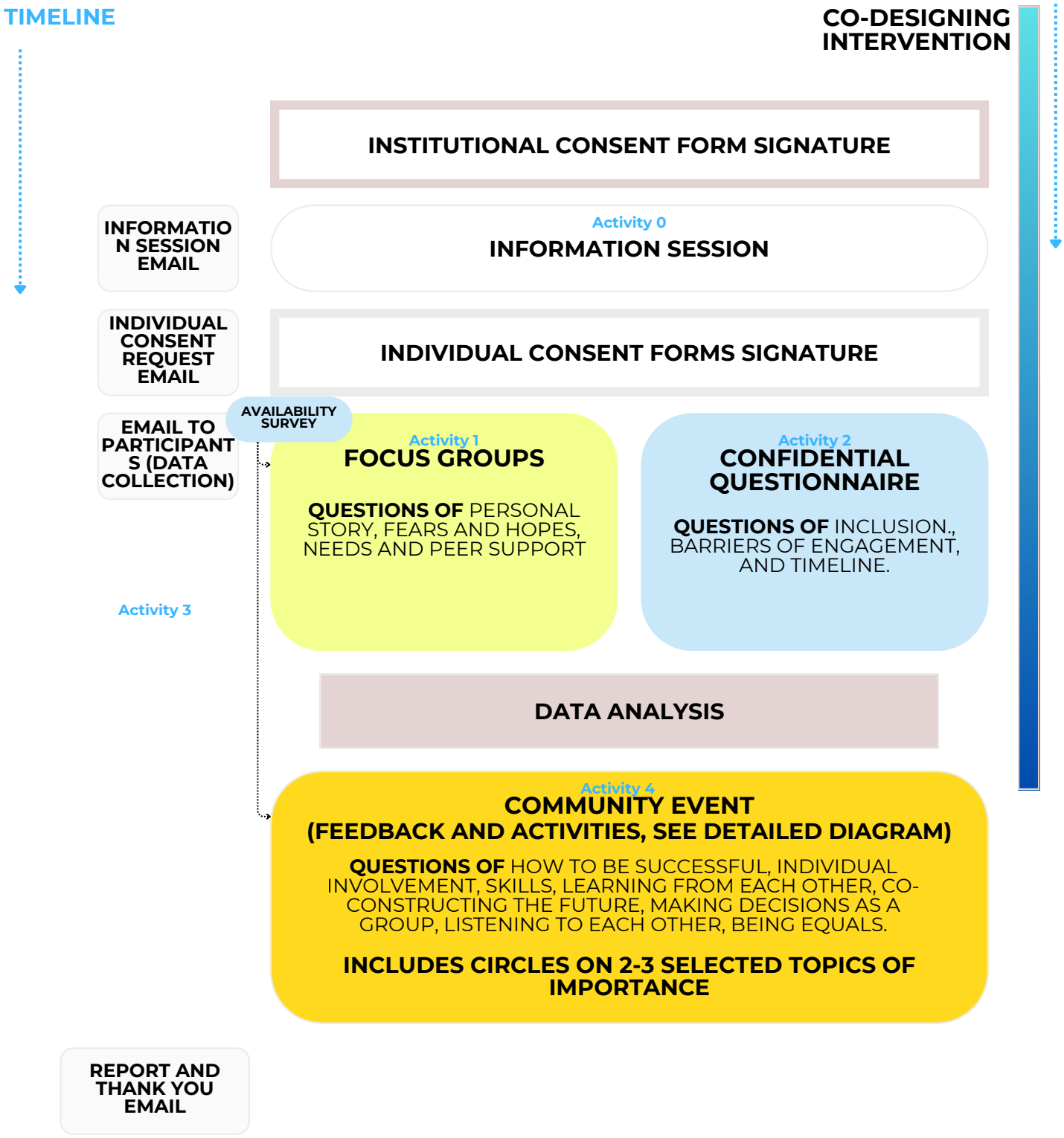
SHIFTS IN PATTERNS OF INTERACTIONS, INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS AND INTERACTIONS

Starting with the focus groups, I saw how interactions between parents opened conversations they never had. They got to know each other at a more personal level and started building the very fabric of the community they aspire to build together.

Focus groups provided a space for parents to share their experiences, express their suffering, and discuss some of their fears and doubts. This undid taboos that kept them from further engaging in the collective project of Maison WILOH. Sharing information from these collective experiences by combining answers from all focus groups and the confidential questionnaires created a collective learning moment where many parents were relieved to learn that others shared some of their fears and doubts. It enabled board members to truly understand the challenge to mobilization and parents' engagement, and it helped them see what they should do differently to be more successful as a collective.

Exiting the community event, while in the big circle, many parents shared how they felt heard and seen, and they felt more connected. It seems that all, in the end, felt more optimistic about the future. Some of the fears and doubts had already been alleviated, and the veil of uncertainty about what needed to be done and how each could contribute had begun to lift, giving way to optimism about the future. Collectively, they lived a true moment of community transformation, and I am really proud of what this project accomplished.

PROJECT DESIGN



Questions for Focus Groups

[3 to 4 participants per focus group]

(setting up, ordering etc 10min)

(script, questions, consent: 10 min)

Welcome to the focus group. The intention is to create a space for each of you to learn about each other, and to reflect on Maison WILOH, its future and what place you see yourself occupying before its construction.

As your participation is optional, you can still decide up to 3 days after this focus group to withdraw from the study. After that delay, the information you shared may already be part of a summary and it will be difficult for me to find what was contributed by whom. You can share as little or as much as you feel comfortable.
You are in control of what you share, and no one here is entitled to knowing things you are not comfortable disclosing or talking about.

For the purpose of gathering confidential information, a transcript of this conversation will be made to enable me to gather and analyze all contributions done today. It will be used to extract information in a anonymized way, that will not state who said what, and will not enable anyone to link you to your contributions today, other than the people present in the room. The recordings will be destroyed once the analysis has been completed and never shared with anyone else.

I will need to ask you not to repeat what others have said. You entrust each other that the words spoken today are for you to protect, as a wat to protect the space that you share, and honor the trust that you give to each other,

While engaging in this conversation, keep in mind that every person here has its own opinion and perspective, and that the purpose today is not to debate views, but rather to learn about each other in a rich and meaningful converstion,

I will ask questions, and at times I may direct the conversation or prompt you. This is to make this experience the most rich in learnings as possible.

Finally, if there are things that you do not feel comfortable discussing today, you will also have the opportunity to share your perspective through the confidential survey. You will receive an email with all the information to do that after the focus group.

Thank you. Now, moving on to the first question. You can answer turn by turn, and you can also ask clarifying questions to each other, and let yourselves be guided by your curiosity. Please avoid making quick judgments, as each person has their own lives, and we can't tell a book by its cover. Please monitor how much time you take as you talk, in order for us to explore all the prepared questions and to have each voice heard. Thank you.

Research questions for Focus Groups:

- Intro: Would you mind taking **a few minutes to talk about yourself**, **tell me your story**, living with your adult children and some of the challenges you have faced over the years? (5 min each - 20min)

- **(Vision) Imagine that Maison WILOH has been constructed** and that your adult children with special needs has/have moved in. Can you give me a a short story of what makes their experience a dream come true? // What stands out as being particularly important for your kid's wellbeing and happiness in terms of what Maison WILOH provides? How would you feel about that? (20min)

- **In what way is Maison WILOH important, from your perspective?** What would happen if it did not came to fruition? How would you feel about that? (10 min)

- **What is your hope for 2025, in terms of progress on the project?** (10 min)

- **What help do I need** to be able to help the project? (3 min each - 10 min)

- **What support do I need to free up time and energy to dedicate to Maison WILOH?** How could you support each other to free up time and energy to dedicate to Maison WILOH? (20 min)

- **Is there anything that we have not talked about** that you believe we should talk about? (10 min)

Thank you! I will follow-up with an email containing a link to the confidential questionnaire, it will be really helpful to explore other topics from the privacy of your home. Feel free to email me if you have questions or technical difficulties.

Setting the stage

Confidential Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn more about each parent of Maison WILOH, their experience with being a member. These are personal questions, and your responses will not be shared with anyone. A summary of findings will be prepared, aggregating all responses to make your unique contribution not linked to you, protecting your identity and relationships. The list of names of participants in this questionnaire will not be shared either. All responses to these questions will be part of a summarized document, and responses might be reframed as unmet needs or put in a constructive frame, as a way to foster connection and collaboration. We hope to make this an honest moment of reflection and sharing.

The intention is to understand the diverse views of Maison WILOH members to create opportunities for improvement, see how each parent can be supported and included in the project, meet individual needs and increase the feeling of belonging.

There are no right or wrong answers, and there are no tricks here: the intention is really to learn about you and to find a path forward as an organization that is more inclusive and where each member can better contribute to the project while being recognized for their efforts and accomplishments.

Ultimately, the intention here is to have every voice heard, as a way for Maison WILOH to learn from its members and for you to learn about others as well, while protecting your identity and opinions, to enable you to express yourself freely. Only the student researcher will have access to the responses and he is following a strict research protocols to protect all participants from any negative consequences from taking part in this project.

At the end of this survey, you will have the option to provide contact information if you would like to be contacted to clarify any points, but this is optional, and you do not have to provide this information if you don't want to.

Please make sure you have read and signed the individual consent form before filling out this questionnaire to better understand the project, and to provide your consent for informed participation. Thank you!

Questionnaire

1. Do you feel included in Maison WILOH? Have you had the chance to get to know others as much as you'd hoped? Do you feel like you have sufficient updates as to the progress, and how who is doing what? Is there enough transparency overall on the progress and what is going on?

2. If you are not active on a weekly/monthly basis yet, how could Maison WILOH help you become an more active member?

3. Do you know how you can contribute yourself today? What would be the ideal way to communicate to each other the progress and activities of Maison WILOH?

4. When you have an idea or contribution, is it considered? How? When you communicate to others, either to contribute or to request something, do you get sufficient amount of feedback and consideration? When you contribute, do you feel recognized?

5. How are decisions made? Do you feel you are able to contribute to decisions? When you don't agree with something, can you bring it up? Is it well received? How are disagreements resolved? If you had an experience of being in disagreement about Maison WILOH, how was it resolved, if ever?

6. Do you believe the project will be completed, that is credible? Do you trust in this project to invest your time and energy?

7. Are there aspects of the project that are not clear to you, or that make you hesitant to engage further? Can you expand on this?

8. What are the most significant barriers that makes it difficult to mobilize yourself for Maison WILOH, if any?

9. What do you believe the next steps in the project should be for Maison WILOH? What is the timeline you hope the project will be completed? What would be the impact of delays compared to your hope in your involvement in the project? What can be done to avoid delays from your perspective?

10. Are there expectations that you feel are put onto you to contribute that you are not sure you are prepared to contribute (for example, that you would need to follow a short training)? Are there tasks you know you will not be able or willing to do? Why?

11. Is there anything else you have not had the chance to talk about that you would like to share?

Évènement Communautaire du 8 Mai

Maison WILOH's May 8th Community Event Schedule





Bienvenue
6:30pm Welcome

6:40pm Agenda



Tour Guidé
6:45pm Guided tour

Un mot du président
6:55pm Words from Jacques

Contexte du projet de recherche
7:00pm Context of the project
by Veronica, Sofia and Frédéric Olivier from Concordia University

Début de l'atelier
7:05pm Start of the Workshop



Déscente vers le centre d'apprentissage
Transition to the learning centre



Présentation des résultats
7:15pm Presentation of the results

Réflexion sur les résultats
7:35pm Reflection on the results

Discussion en groupes
8:10pm Group Discussions





Discussion en groupes
8:50pm Plenary Session

Activité de fermeture
9:00pm Closing Activity

Fin de la soirée
(9:15pm End of the evening)

COMMUNITY EVENT DETAILED - MAY 8 AGENDA

6:30PM	**WELCOMING PARTICIPANTS**	10 MIN
6:40PM	**AGENDA FOR THE EVENING**	5MIN
6:45PM	**WORD FROM VERONICA AND DEBBIE (VENUE DIRECTOR)** **A GUIDED TOUR OF THE VENUE**	10MIN
6:55PM	**A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT, JACQUES**	5MIN
7:05PM	**BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT AND ITS PROCESS. BY MYSELF AND MY CONTACT CLIENTS**	5MIN
7:10PM	**ICE BREAKER**: FIND SOMEONE YOU HAVENT TALK THAT MUCH WITH, AND SHARE YOUR HOPES FOR TODAY.	5MIN
7:15PM	**A FEEDBACK PRESENTATION**	
7:35PM	**A PROCESS TO SELECT TOPICS OF IMPORTANCE**: 1-2-4 PROCESS WILL BE USED TO DO SENSE-MAKING OF THE DATA. FIRST, PARENTS WILL REFLECT ON THE RESULTS, AND ANSWER: "WHAT STOOD OUT TO ME THAT SURPRISED ME?" AND "WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO MOVE FORWARD AS A COMMUNITY?" THEN SHARE IN PAIRS, THAN IN QUADS EACH QUAD PROPOSES TOPICS TO BE VOTED ON (POST-ITS)	20MIN
7:55PM	**BREAK 10MIN**	
8:05PM	PARENTS VOTE ON THEIR TOP 2 TOPICS OF INTEREST (NUMBERS ATTRIBUTED - WRITE ON POST-ITS). VOTES ARE COUNTED; THE TOP 2-3 IS SELECTED FOR THE CIRCLES.	5MIN
	PEERSPIRIT CIRCLES	
8:10PM	**SPIRIT CIRCLE #1 (TOPIC 1)** **SPIRIT CIRCLE #2 (TOPIC 2)** **SPIRIT CIRCLE #3 (TOPIC 3)**	40MIN
8:50PM	**PLENARY SESSION**, A REPRESENTATIVE, HELPED BY THE FACILITATOR (OR THE FACILITATOR DIRECTLY, IF THIS IS THE CHOICE OF THE GROUP) WILL BRING BACK LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE GROUP DISCUSSION FOR ALL TO LEARN. THE FACILITATOR WILL HAND OVER THE NOTES TAKEN DURING THE CIRCLE (POSSIBILITY TO USE A FLIP CHART STAND).	10MIN
9:00PM	**CLOSING LARGE CIRCLE** (EACH PARENT SHARE HOW THEY ARE LEAVING THE WORKSHOP IN A FEW WORDS). CLOSING WORD (REFLECTING ON WHAT WE DID, AND HOW WE DID IT, SKILLS WE PRACTICED); THANK YOU STATEMENT TO SOFIA AND VERONICA, TO ALL PARENTS AND BOARD MEMBERS.	15MIN
9:15PM		

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION SUMMARIZING ANONYMIZED DATA FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY BY FREDERIC; 20 MIN

ANONYMOUS EVALUATION SURVEY ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Intentional Layouts

Bienvenue
Welcome



Free movement, not being assigned a seat, or not being compelled to chose one, enable people to meet naturally. The presence of food is a natural way to uplift the mood and ensure nobody has unmet hunger, preparing them for what's to come.

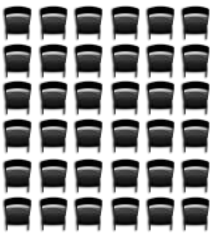


Tour Guidé
Guided tour



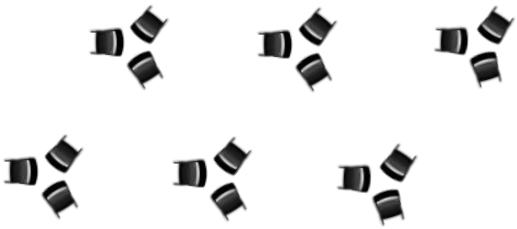
Movement helps self-regulate and ground the body.

Présentation des résultats
Presentation of the results

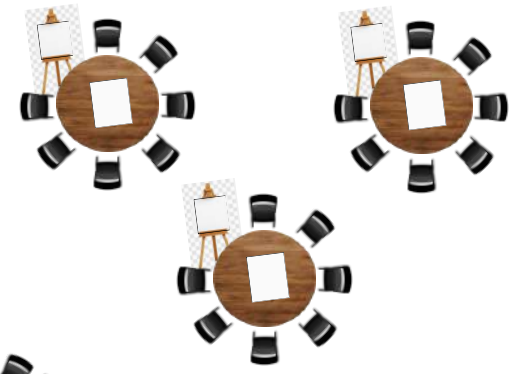


Auditorium format. Every chair points the front stage, enabling one-way communication from the presenter to the audience members.

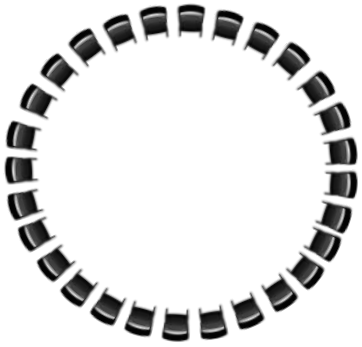
Réflexion sur les résultats
Reflection on the results



Discussion en groupes
Group Discussions



Activité de fermeture
Closing Activity



Process To Select Topics and Facilitate Spirit Circles

- **A process to select topics of importance**: “1-2-4 Process” (1 stands for individual reflection, 2 stands for working in pairs, and 4 stands for 2 pairs merging to a group of four) will be used to do sense-making of the data (note: we ended up skipping the groups of 4).
- **First, parents will reflect on the results**, and answer:
  - “What stood out to me that surprised me?” and
  - **“What do we need to do to move forward as a community?”**
- We ask participants to write on individual post-its individual answers to the second question
- Then moving on by pairs, discussing the answers (5min)
- and then in groups of four (5min).
- Once groups of four are complete, each parent will share their topics posts-its.
- **[we collect the post-its answering question “What do we need to do to move forward as a community”]**
- [During the break, we will group them by topics, and number them].

- At the return of the break:
- Parents vote anonymously using post-its on their top 2 topics of interest for the following activity.
- The planned process here is to use posts-its to enable anonymous voting. We will distribute post-its and pens, and once people have written down their choices, we will subsequently gather all post-its and compile the votes.
- Subsequently, **the selected 2-3 topics will be the subject of the PeerSpirit Circles**
- Participants are invited to join the circles (if possible, even number of participants, 5 to 7 per group).

- A large sheet of paper will be used with a marker to identify any needed future action, or support the group discussion and shared understandings through visual facilitation.
- In each circle, the facilitator will write the intention of the circle. For ex: “We gather to… ex: brainstorm ideas for our fundraising campaign”
- The facilitator enunciates the codes of conduct:
  - we honour confidentiality
  - we listen with curiosity and compassion withholding judgment
  - we ask for what we need and offer what we can
  - we practice pauses in action to recentre and focus
  - An object is passed between participants to enable turn to speak.

- Proceed with individual check-ins; each individual answers “How do you arrive to this circle (in a few words)?”.
- Facilitator writes down key ideas/contributions from group members.
  - If more fluid: we then open the circle for a pop-corn style conversation with turn to speak, facilitated by a facilitator
- If questions or action items arise, those questions are written/actions down too.
- This serves as a memory of this moment in the circle.

- Back to a plenary session, the facilitator will bring back learnings and outcomes from the group discussion for all to learn.
- The facilitator shares the notes taken during the circle on the flip chart.

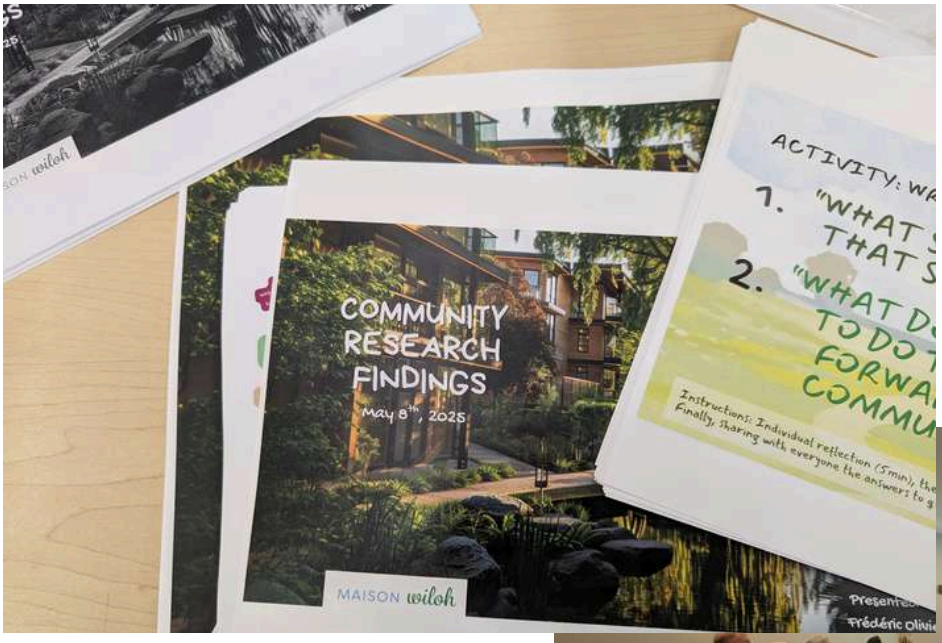
- **Moving on to the closure activity** [Rearranging the room in large circle]
- Each participants express how they are leaving the workshop in a few words.
- Closing large circle and closing word from Fred, thank you statement to Sofia and Veronica, to all parents and board members, and co-facilitators Naomi and Rebekah

An Inspiring Location



Veronica had the vision that using a grassroot project that has been successfully built would help parents of Maison WILOH imagine what is possible, and allow themselves to dream a future where Maison WILOH has been successfully constructed.

By using multiple rooms of the location, as well as having a brief tour of the location (*West Island Cancer Wellness Centre*). We were able to share the dream with all parents and set the stage for the community event. The location was provided for free, thanks to Debbie Magwood, director of the centre.



Printouts distributed during the workshop.



Presentation of the research findings.



IMAGINING MAISON WILOH





What better way to move forward than to have a compelling goal that we are able to see and talk about in more detail?

While working on the presentation of the research findings, one discovery that became evident for me was how some parents had been missing visual support for what Maison WILOH might look like.

Inviting parents to participate in this exercise of imagination was then built-in the community events findings presentation as a way to foster a positive frame for the experience, which did not intend to remain stuck in the issues of the past and the present, but to move forward as a community.

With Sofia, I then explored what area of the project would be interesting to illustrate in support of this exercise. This was a relatively small effort that greatly increased the appeal of the presentation, and gave life to this beautiful project that is Maison WILOH.

MATERIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP



HQCME LOT DE 9 NOTES ADHÉSIVES LIGNÉES, 10,2 X 15,2 CM, 9 COULEURS PASTEL, GRANDS BLOCS ADHÉSIFS COLORÉS



RHAWOM LOT DE 16 BLOCS DE NOTES ADHÉSIVES 7,6 X 7,6 CM, 12 COULEURS ASSORTIES, BLOC-NOTES COLORÉ



QUARTET BLOC DE 50 FEUILLES DE CHEVALET PAPIER JOURNAL, 61 X 91,4 CM

AVERY MULTI PURPOSE LABELS 1X3





DEEGTRAN LOT DE 50 STYLOS À BILLE RÉTRACTABLES SANS BAVURE - POINTE MOYENNE - ENCRE NOIRE DE 1 MM



SHUTTLE ART LOT DE 24 MARQUEURS PERMANENTS NOIRS, POINTE FINE



2X 12 HIGHLIGHTERS TO ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TO HIGHLIGHT FINDINGS ON BLACK AND WHITE COPIES



SHARPIE LOT DE 4 MARQUEURS À POINTE OGIVE COULEURS ASSORTIES

PRINTS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY EVENT



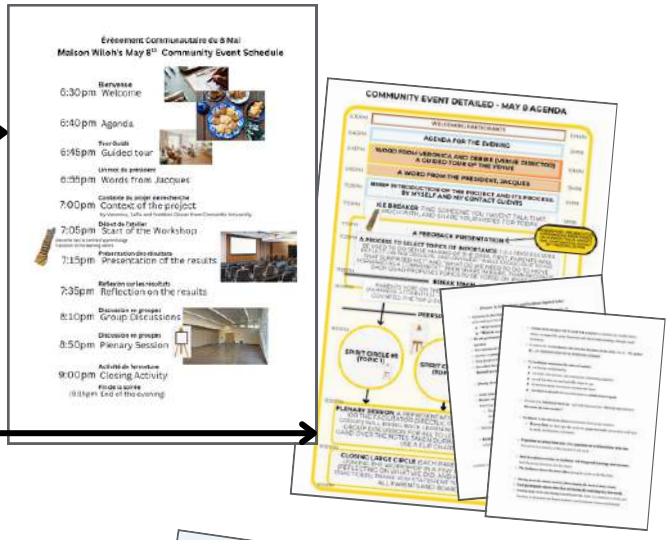
1 COLOR COPY OF 8 VISIONS DOCUMENT, 11X17

(USED AS WALL DECORATION IN THE WORKSHOP ROOM)

1 BLACK AND WHITE COPY OF THE **GUEST LIST TO WELCOME GUESTS**

25 COLOUR COPIES OF COMMUNITY EVENT SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS

6 COLOUR COPIES OF DETAILED EVENT DESIGN FOR CO-FACILITATORS AND 4 COPIES OF THE WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDELINES



4 COLOUR COPIES OF DETAILED FINDINGS PRESENTATION (20 PAGES)

... AND 23 BLACK AND WHITE COPIES OF DETAILED FINDINGS PRESENTATION (ALSO 20 PAGES)



25 COLOUR COPIES POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSIONS

THAT EMERGED FROM ANALYZING FINDINGS



Possible topics of discussion

What do we need to talk about to move forward as a community?

Once parents have been presented the results of the research project, they were able to reflect individually on **the question "What do we need to talk about to move forward as a community?"**. These topics were offered as possibilities to inspire this reflection process, an aggregate of many of the feedback shared by parents during the survey and focus groups.

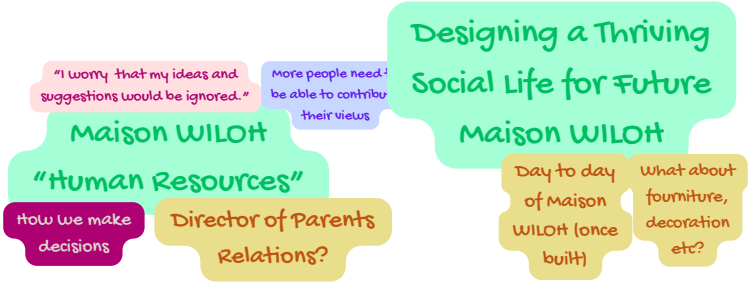












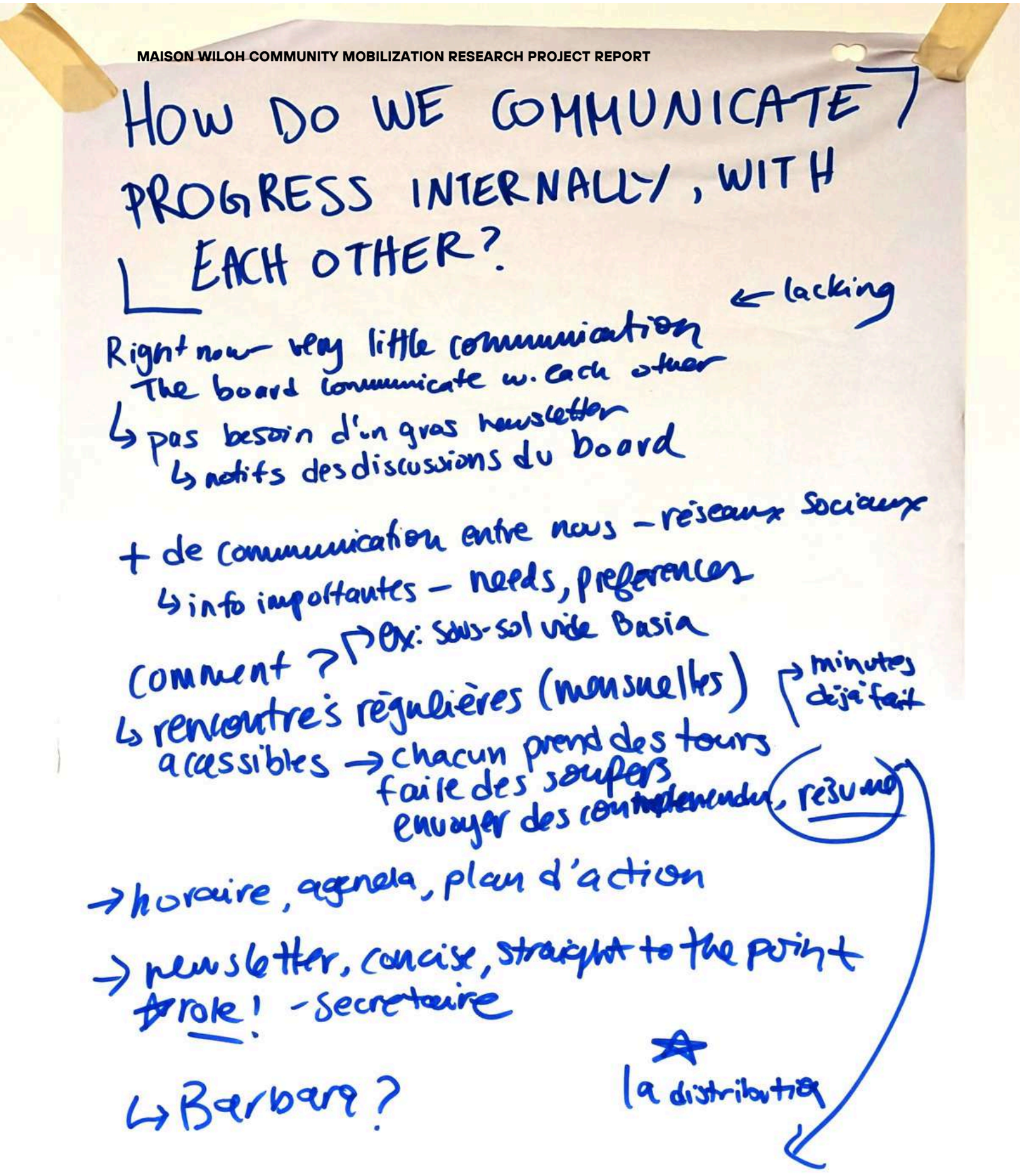
WHAT DO WE NEED TO MOVE FORWARD AS A COMMUNITY?

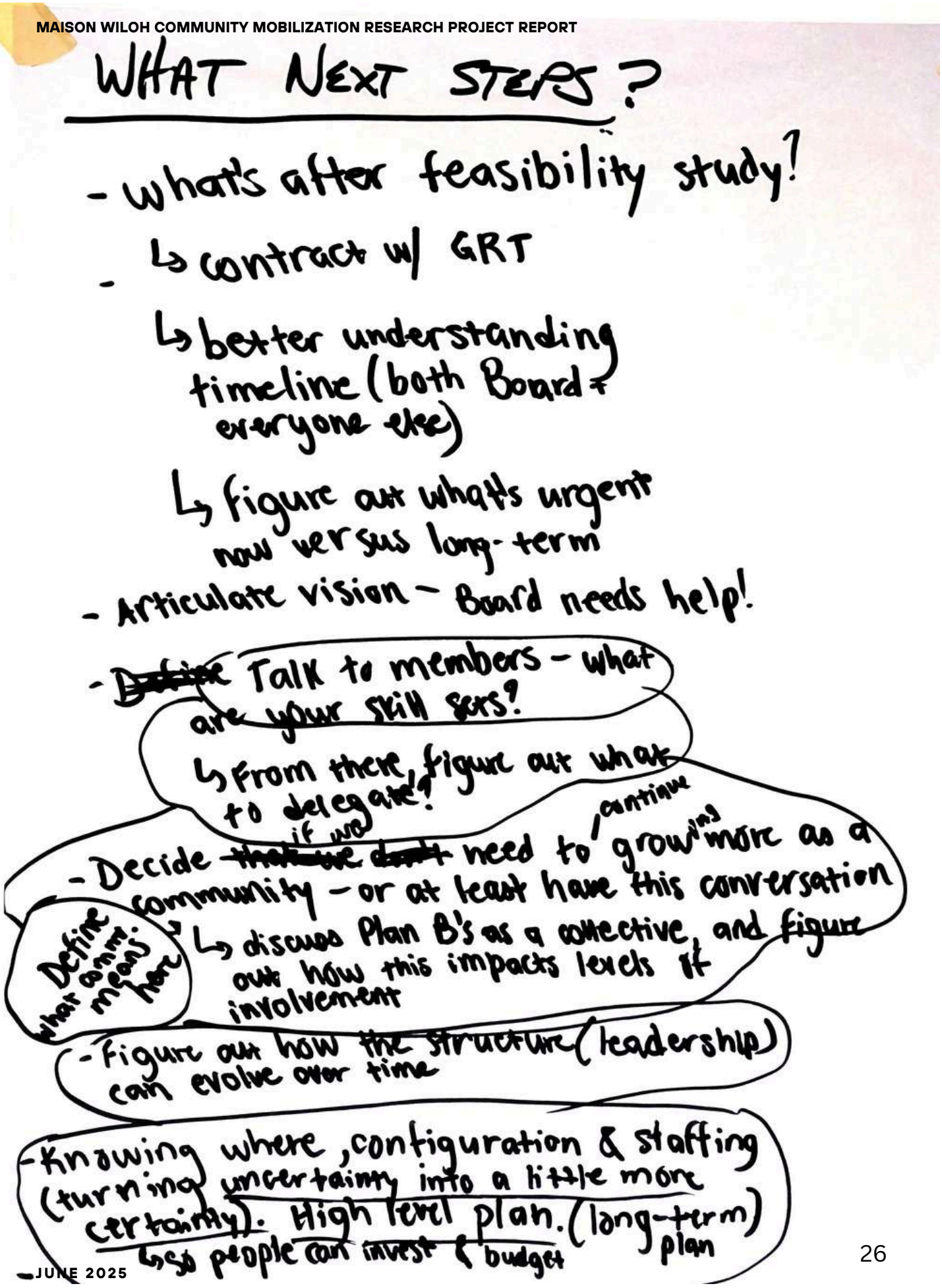
THESE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION WERE PROPOSED BY PARENTS DURING THE COMMUNITY EVENT

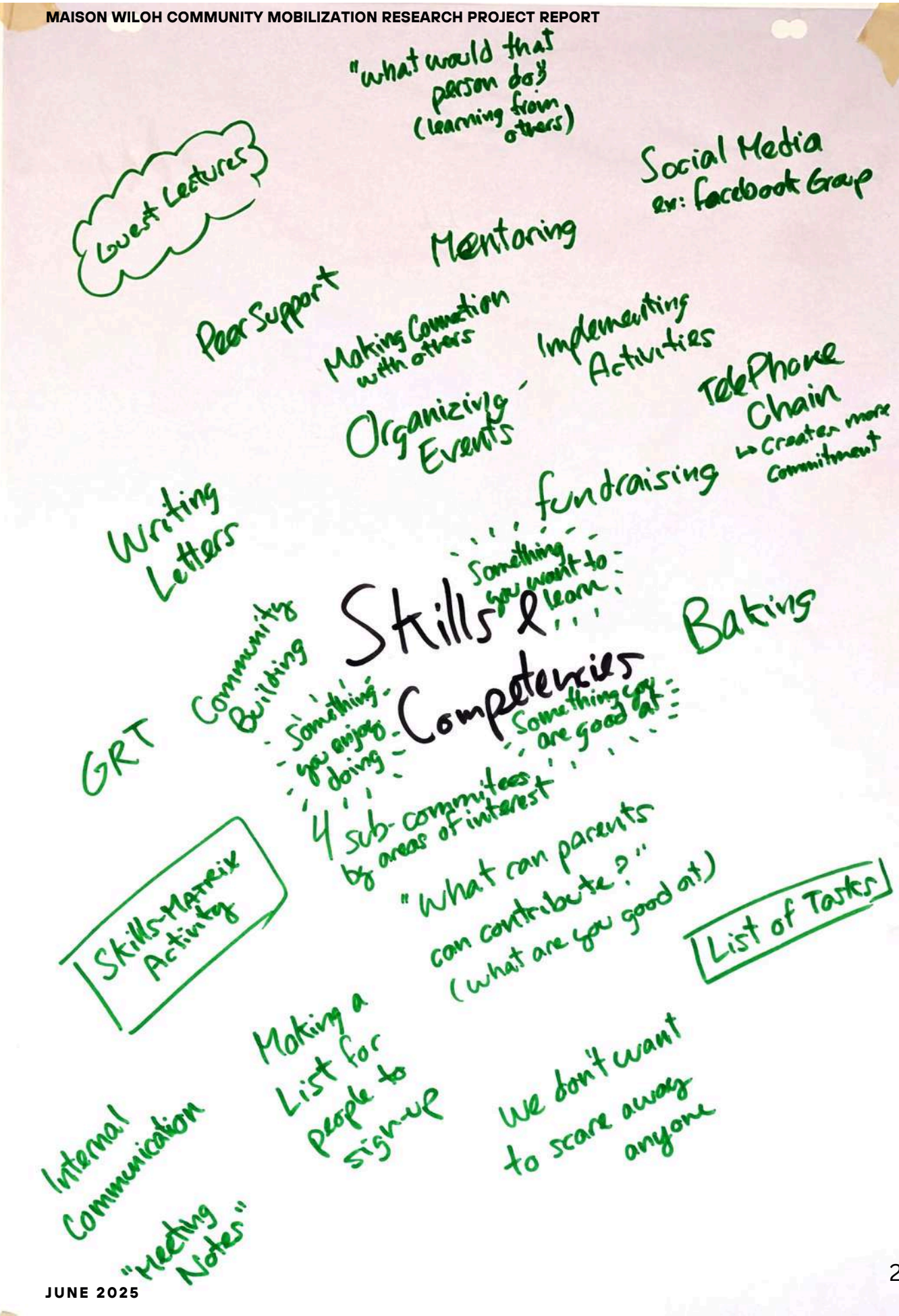


- Identifying key elements to success
- "Uncertainty" of the ability to succeed stopping some wanting to invest time.
- **Board of directors need to better articulate help requirements**
- Can we afford Maison WILOH? More defined fundraising goals and budget plans
- **Build relationships**
  - with educational institutions to bring knowledge to our project
  - with donors, foundations, share who you know
  - (strong) with internal and external stakeholders
  - To create strong links with experts (construction, accounting, business, human resources, technology)
  - internships for students, and
- Each share our connections, big or small, to bring more support into our project
- Bring someone/people who have accomplished a similar project to bring hope and possibilities
- Create a compelling story - the heroes journey to spread/share our story
- Organized activities you want to be part of at Maison WILOH
- A vision to make us stronger together
- To make sure people feel welcome
- **Parents skillsets need to be explored/ documented**
- **Parents need to understand better how they can help / Parents do not know how to help.**
- **Trust we all have the ability to help in some way**
- That everyone expresses the wish to contribute
- Welcome different feelings and apprehensions, and different needs: stand together, more involved and support each other
- How do we ensure the "right" experience of staff and keep the staff engaged?
- **Offer a support system/group meetings to be there for one another, building a stronger community**
- Create more opportunities for open discussions about worries or dissatisfaction about the project in order to address those concerns regularly
- **Discuss strategies and things to do to move forward / Brainstorming strategies session**
- **More information about the status of the project - more regular updates**
- Have more certainty that the project will be built, to be able envision the future
- Create internship opportunities for students
- Use social media to communicate with parents
- A place to meet
- Discuss next steps and work collectively to contribute within our capabilities as we build this safe and nurturing home ❤️
- **An open discussion about hopes and fears**
- Share our skill sets and connect with people who are able to guide and move forward
- Prepare a cooperation group to volunteer future activites
- Define a list of specific tasks with the talents of each other

↓ THE FOLLOWING 3 PAGES CONTAIN THE FACILITATOR'S NOTES MADE DURING THE 3 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS ↓


HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE / PROGRESS INTERNALLY, WITH EACH OTHER?
← lacking
Right now very little communication
The board communicate w. each other
↳ pas besoin d'un gros newsletter
↳ notifs des discussions du board
+ de communication entre nous - réseaux sociaux
↳ info importantes - needs, preferences
comment ? ex: sous-sol vide Basia
↳ rencontres régulières (mensuelles) → minutes déjà fait
accessibles → chacun prend des tours
faire des soupers
envoyer des courriels, résumé
→ horaire, agenda, plan d'action
→ newsletter, concise, straight to the point
★ role ! - secretaire
↳ Barbara ?
★ la distribution


WHAT NEXT STEPS?
- What's after feasibility study!
↳ contract w/ GRT
↳ better understanding timeline (both Board + everyone else)
↳ figure out whats urgent now versus long-term
- Articulate vision - Board needs help!
- Talk to members - what are your skill sets?
↳ From there, figure out what to delegate!
- Decide if we need to continue to grow as a community - or at least have this conversation more
↳ discuss Plan B's as a collective, and figure out how this impacts levels of involvement
Define what commit means here
- figure out how the structure (leadership) can evolve over time
- Knowing where, configuration & staffing (turning uncertainty into a little more certainty). High level plan. (long-term plan)
↳ so people can invest & budget


"what would that person do?" (learning from others)
Guest Lectures
Social Media ex: facebook Grap
Mentoring
Peer Support
Making Connection with others
Implementing Activities
Organizing Events
TelePhone Chain → creates more commitment
fundraising
Writing Letters
Something you want to learn
Skills & Competencies
Baking
GRT
Community Building
Something you enjoy doing
Something you are good at
4 sub-committees by areas of interest
"what can parents can contribute? (what are you good at)
Skills-Matrix Activity
List of Tasks
Making a List for people to sign-up
We don't want to scare away anyone
Internal Communication
"Meeting Notes"

COMING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY

At the centre of this project is the notion of interdependence: while working together as a community enables parents to share resources, it also effectively impacts their individual need for autonomy in decision-making. Most parents are considering different alternatives (in part to shield themselves from relying on a solution they may not be able to influence or shape sufficiently), and Maison WILOH is likely the best option for their adult children with special needs.

As an organization, **Maison WILOH was looking to understand what might be driving members not to be fully mobilized.** Engaging in this research project was a way to give a voice to all members, to explore whether something can be done to increase inclusivity, and to better align with the needs of parents.

Maison WILOH cannot exist without the support of its members, and at the same time, the project cannot be exactly how each member imagines it could be. The challenge, or perhaps better reframed as **the invitation, is to discover how, as a community, parents can co-create a future that satisfies their needs, and the ones of their adult-children with special needs.**

The research activity revealed that not every parent felt included for multiple and unique reasons. Some were unable to attend events organized by Maison WILOH (due to the chosen time or location), while others were unsure if they could contribute their skills because of the project's scale, which appeared intimidating to some parents.

Other parents were not sure their voices were truly being heard in the community, or they harboured doubts and fear that they dared not speak, preferring the safety of not involving themselves too much, rather than taking unnecessary risks. The need for greater transparency was also repeatedly voiced.

Other parents had not had enough information or regular updates to understand with clarity where the project stood, what the big milestones ahead were, and what steps were needed to reach each of these milestones.

Making it permissible to express doubts, fears, and a need for more clarity, and to find connection with others who share those feelings, brought people together, while uncertainty was reduced for many.

The community event made it clear that peer support is also necessary, fostering a sense of community around the need to support one another. This is the first step needed to bring this community together.

As the value of the community increases and people form deeper connections with one another, trust in the project and a sense of being a valuable member will naturally increase, mobilizing members by **delivering immediate and tangible value for their involvement**.

Even though the project is still not in its construction phase, the **felt experience that each parent is heard, valued and has influence over the project drastically changes the potential mobilization.**

Thank you for your time, engagement and for trusting me with this project.

Together, let's unleash your

Human Potential

VOTRE POTENTIEL HUMAIN

Let's stay in touch, e-mail us at **fred@human-potential.ca**



Consulting Services in
Organization Development

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Hi, my name is **Frédéric Olivier, a consultant helping organizations face their challenges, reach** their **goals, renew** themselves**, refine their purpose, and improve** their **effectiveness**. I completed a BA in Human Relations at Concordia University (with distinction, in 2023), a Master's in Human Systems Intervention (in 2025), and worked for 5 years as a consultant, agile coach, helping organizations face a changing landscape.

I have coached organizations to improve their effectiveness and helped large teams self-organize around clear goals, working for 15 organizations over the years. It became apparent to me that **each organization and situation is unique, requiring adapted approaches**.

By **engaging people from all levels** of your organization, we can **co-create solutions** that satisfy the most important needs without ignoring problems that might be less easy to talk about.

Like Bees producing honey, the greatest achievements are the result of outstanding collaborative efforts.

To achieve it, I can work with you and those impacted, structuring a process that involves people according to principles of

- **humanism** (respect of individuals, empowerment and well being)
- **collaboration** (partnership, inclusivity and systems thinking)
- **continuous improvement** (learning, innovation and adaptability)

Do you need help with an organizational challenge? Contact Frederic today



Together, let's unleash your
Human Potential
VOTRE POTENTIEL HUMAIN