



UDesign Justice Initiative

2025

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Co-Design Workshop #1

June 24th and June 26th 2025



Prepared by

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Photos by Cordelia Yip

UDesign Justice Initiative

Ethics Approved Study: REB25-0405

Executive Summary



The UDesign Justice Initiative is a transdisciplinary platform committed to reimagining how the built environment is shaped, centering equity, community knowledge, and justice in design and planning. We believe those most impacted by spatial injustice must lead the creation of solutions.

To bring this vision to life, we launched a series of co-design workshops to collaboratively develop a community-led framework for the UDesign Justice Initiative.

Our first in-person co-design workshop, *Building Relationships, Trust & Co-Creating a Shared Vision*, was held on June 24th, 2025, at the City Building Design Lab (CBDL) in Calgary. We also hosted an online workshop on June 26th, 2025, to ensure broader accessibility and invite participation from individuals across geographies and contexts. These sessions brought a diverse constellation of community members, design practitioners, grassroots organizations, researchers, and students into dialogue about the values, priorities, and structure of the UDesign Justice Initiative.

Workshop #1 focused on building trust, surfacing community priorities, and co-imagining the values, mission, principles, and focus areas that should guide this work. Through facilitated small group discussions and collective reflection, participants named experiences of exclusion, systemic barriers, and power imbalances in design and planning processes.



They also articulated clear aspirations: to center community, to dismantle extractive practices in research and design, and to create sustained, accountable, and reciprocal partnerships.

The co-design workshops were made possible through the University of Calgary's Institutes for Transdisciplinary Scholarship (ITS) Grant, which provided foundational funding to begin building relationships and forming transdisciplinary connections. The planning process started in March 2025 with the creation of a working group based in the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture (SAPL), supported by an external advisory group of community leaders, academics, representatives from community organizations, and collaborators from across disciplines.

This “What We Heard” report summarizes the key insights, priorities, tensions, and possibilities surfaced during both workshop sessions. It is not meant to finalize direction, but to serve as a generative foundation for continued co-creation. The ideas shared will directly shape the next phase of this work, including *Workshop #2: Co-Deciding the Framework and Next Steps*, taking place on August 14th and 19th, 2025.





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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE



The UDesign Justice Initiative was created to serve as a platform, hub, and think tank that brings together marginalized communities who have been historically underrepresented in shaping the built environment, alongside practitioners, advocates, and allies from across disciplines that influence it. Our goal is to create a shared space where we can collectively challenge spatial inequities, address systemic barriers in the built environment, and unify our voices to confront design injustices - ultimately working toward a just and equitable future for everyone to thrive.

From the outset, we were clear: this would not be an initiative developed in isolation within the University. Instead, we set out to build it from the ground up, inviting and empowering everyone with a stake in equity and justice in the built environment to shape its foundation. The purpose of our engagement process was to meaningfully involve communities, especially those historically excluded from planning and design, in defining the Initiative's direction, focus areas, principles, mission, and vision.





Rooted in principles of inclusion, equity, transparency, reciprocity, and accountability, our process sought to build trust, foster shared ownership, and gather diverse insights to co-create a transdisciplinary platform that reimagines how justice is pursued in the built environment. More than consultation, our approach centers on co-design, ensuring community voices not only inform but actively lead the shaping of more inclusive and equitable spatial futures.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



The engagement process for Workshop #1 of the UDesign Justice Initiative was intentionally designed to prioritize inclusion, relationship-building, and community leadership. Our aim was to create an accessible and affirming space that reflects the values of justice, reciprocity, and collaboration that underpin the initiative.

TEAM COMPOSITION AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

To ensure that our initiative was shaped by those most affected by spatial injustice, we identified members of the SAPL team who represent or are connected to historically disadvantaged communities. The team included Dr. Cecile Kotyk as the lead, along with undergraduate students Cordelia Yip, Zainab Ahmed, and Rein Gonzales, as well as master's student Zahra Khaniki, who played a crucial role in supporting logistics, design, facilitation, and notetaking.

We also hired a community facilitator, Beng ReyesOng, with strong connections to Asian communities to lead our outreach and engagement activities. Additionally, we established an external advisory group consisting of representatives from Black communities, disability advocacy group representative, government entities, and allied professions. This group provided strategic guidance, met bi-weekly to review the process, offered feedback, and supported relationship-building across different sectors.



8
MEETINGS

MEET THE TEAM



SAPL WORKING TEAM



Dr. Marie Cecile Kolyk
Assistant Professor,
Design Justice
Research Chair,
Housing Consultant
SAPL



Beng Reyes
Community builder



Zahra Khaniki
MEDes 1st Year
Masters Student
SAPL



Kein Gonzalez
2nd Year BDCI Student
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Zainab Ahmed
1st Year BDCI Student
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Cordelia Yip
1st Year Student
Faculty of Arts

ADVISORY TEAM



Dr. Evelyn Isomali
Professor, Canada
Research Chair in
Black and Racialized
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Josh Iason
Associate Dean of
Research
Associate Professor
SAPL



Dr. Victoria Fard
Associate Professor
Dept. of
Geography



Dr. Ajwong Wanda
Associate Professor
Social Work



Dr. John Cook
CEO AT Simon
House Recovery
Centre



Dr. Esther de Vos
Executive Director,
Research
BC Housing



Cindy Moran
Senior Researcher,
Technical Research
and Education
BC Housing



**KaeChelle Faith
Hamilton-Ankamreddy**
Policy Analyst
Network for the
Advancement of
Black Communities



PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Recruitment was guided by an intentional effort to engage participants across diverse racialized, marginalized, and non-marginalized communities. Participants included individuals from Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and Caucasian backgrounds, as well as people with lived experience of exclusion from decision-making in the built environment. We used a multi-pronged outreach strategy that included direct invitations, snowball sampling, and outreach through networks in design, health, planning, grassroots organizing, disability justice, community advocacy, and more.

To support participation from community members whose perspectives are often underrepresented, honoraria were offered - prioritized for racialized participants working in non-profit, community-based, or volunteer capacities. Given our limited budget, we had to make careful decisions about honoraria distribution based on financial need, community-based work, and historical undercompensation in institutional research spaces.





PROFILE OF WORKSHOP REGISTRANTS

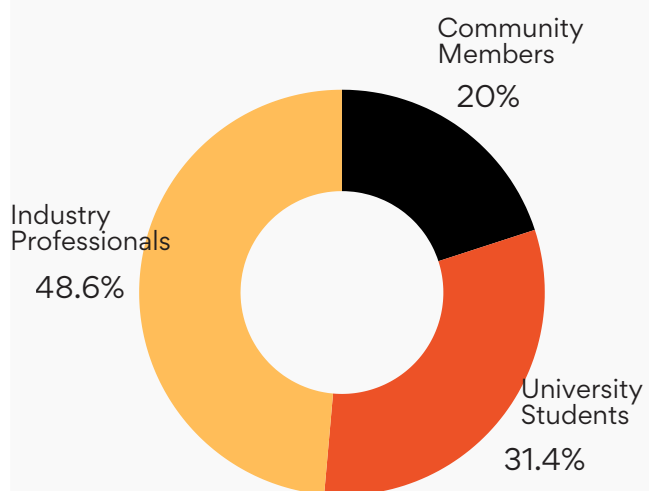
Professions Related to the Built Environment

■ Built Environment Profession
■ Other

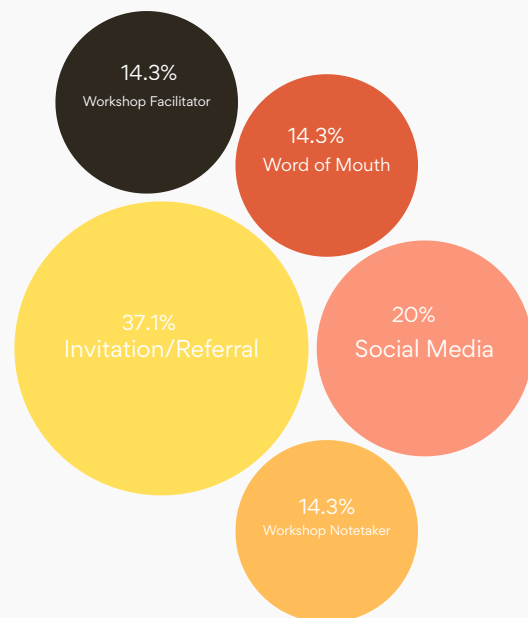
62.9%

37.1%

Demographics: Occupation



How Participants Heard About the Initiative





ETHICS APPROVAL

The UDesign Justice Initiative received ethics approval from the University of Calgary's Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (Certificate #: REB25-0405). All participants were provided with information sheets and signed consent forms, including media release forms, to ensure understanding of the purpose and documentation of the workshops.





Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, and Email
Dr. Marie-Cécile Koryk, Assistant Professor and Design Justice Research Chair, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture
mariececile.koryk@ucalgary.ca

Title of the Project:
Establishing a Design Justice Initiative: A Transdisciplinary Approach

Sponsor:
University of Calgary's Transdisciplinary Scholarship Initiating Grant

Hello,

My name is Dr. Cécile Koryk, and I am an Assistant Professor and Design Justice Research Chair at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture (SAPL) at the University of Calgary. I am currently launching a research initiative to establish a Design Justice Initiative (DJI).

Design has historically served as both a mirror and a mechanism of systemic inequality, shaping environments that often create and reinforce exclusion, displacement, and marginalization. But what if design could be reimagined as a vehicle for justice, equity, and collective liberation? This is the central question driving the creation of the **UDesign Justice Initiative** - an innovative, future-oriented, and transdisciplinary initiative situated within the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture at the University of Calgary. The UDI represents a pioneering approach to research, teaching, and practice that centers marginalized voices and reframes design as a means of advancing spatial justice and social transformation.


The Initiative will integrate research, advocacy, collaborative partnerships, and practical design strategies to empower communities and promote equity in the built environment. To bring the Design Justice Initiative to life, I am involving diverse partners in workshops to help envision its framework. This initiative marks the first step toward creating the UDI as a collaborative space where communities, academics, students, and industry professionals can work together to reimagine design processes focused on justice, equity, and inclusion.

The initiative seeks to involve a variety of stakeholders in workshops to co-develop the foundational aspects of the Initiative, addressing crucial questions such as:

- What should be the vision, mission, and focus areas of the UDI?
- What challenges and obstacles might arise in the establishment of the UDI?

Initial Contact Letter

Consent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, and Email
Dr. Marie-Cécile Koryk, Assistant Professor and Design Justice Research Chair, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture
mariececile.koryk@ucalgary.ca

Title of Project:
Establishing a Design Justice Initiative: A Transdisciplinary Approach

Sponsor:
University of Calgary's Transdisciplinary Scholarship Initiating Grant

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study (REB25-0405).

Participation is completely voluntary.

Purpose of the Study

The study has one main objective: to establish the Design Justice Initiative by engaging diverse collaborators in workshops to help envision the Initiative's framework. The vision for the UDI is in-function within SAPL, as a specialized initiative dedicated to tackling design injustice in the built environment, primarily aimed at amplifying the voices of marginalized communities in co-designing innovative solutions to complex societal challenges that impact them. The Initiative will integrate research, advocacy, collaborative partnerships, and practical design strategies to empower communities and promote equity in the built environment.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

As a collaborator, you will be asked to share your professional and lived knowledge through two in-person workshops and two online workshops (2 hours each). The first workshops will take place on June 24th, 2025 (in-person and June 26th online), and will be guided by pre-prepared questions with the flexibility to unfold conversationally. The second workshops will occur on Aug. 14th, 2025 (in-person) and Aug. 16th, 2025 (online), where you will be presented with findings from the first workshop and invited to provide your thoughts and concluding feedback. Handwritten notes will be taken during all workshops to fully capture the discussion, and photos and short video clips will be taken during the workshops that will be included in the final report, website, and social media platforms.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate altogether, or in any parts of the study without penalty. You may decline to answer any or all questions during the workshops.

WORKSHOP FORMAT AND ACCESSIBILITY

The in-person workshop was held at the City Building Design Lab (CBDL), a transit-accessible and physically accessible venue in downtown Calgary. The in-person session took place on June 24, 2025, and hosted 35 participants seated in small groups of six, each facilitated by a trained facilitator and supported by a notetaker.

Dr. Kotyk welcomed participants with gratitude and invited them to introduce themselves, creating a warm and relational atmosphere. She grounded the session with a brief presentation on the workshop's purpose and acknowledged the ongoing humanitarian crises in places such as Sudan, Iraq, and Palestine, situations that directly affect members of the team and some attendees. After the introductions, participants shared a meal from a local Filipino restaurant - pancit, spring rolls, salad, and dessert - to foster a sense of community.

Participants were provided with a printed participant handbook, which outlined the goals, values, and discussion questions for the evening. A facilitator guidebook was also provided to facilitators to help guide the conversations. Feedback was collected in multiple ways: participants could write in their handbooks, use sticky notes on shared boards, or simply speak and have their contributions recorded by the notetaker. This approach accommodated a range of communication preferences. The session concluded with group reflections and a collective sharing of key insights from each table.





The online session was held on June 26, 2025, for participants who were unable to attend in person and individuals located across Canada. This session welcomed 16 participants and was structured into breakout groups of eight. A digital whiteboard and a digitized version of the participant handbook were used to guide the conversation and capture insights. Facilitators and notetakers supported each breakout group to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully.





POST-WORKSHOP DEBRIEF AND REFLECTIONS

Following both sessions, the SAPL team, facilitators, and advisory group held a debrief to reflect on the process, share observations, and identify key takeaways. These conversations offered critical insights into how the initiative can continue to evolve in ways that are accountable to the communities it seeks to serve.

The engagement process for Workshop #1 exemplifies UDesign's commitment to centering community voices, fostering relationships across difference, and grounding design justice work in collective, reciprocal, and inclusive practices. It also offered students and emerging professionals a unique opportunity to build experience in co-design, facilitation, and community-engaged research. This foundation will continue to guide the work of UDesign Justice as it grows into a national hub for equity-driven design and spatial justice.

WHAT



WE

ASKED



Guided by the participant guidebook, attendees shared their lived experiences, professional insights, and community knowledge to co-develop a shared vision, mission, values, principles, and focus areas for the UDesign Justice Initiative. The guidebook's thematic prompts encouraged flexible engagement, through writing, speaking, or using sticky notes, and supported participants in naming priorities, identifying gaps, and envisioning more equitable built environments. Facilitators ensured inclusive dialogue and helped connect contributions to the initiative's broader goals.

Workshop #1 was structured around four main collaborative activities, each designed to co-create the building blocks of the Initiative's framework.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Co-Creating the **Vision: Imagine the Future**
2. Co-Creating the **Mission: What We Do, and How We Do It**
3. Co-Creating the **Guiding Principles: The Ethical Foundation**
4. Co-creating the **Focus Areas: Key Domains of Work**



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Workshop #1 was structured around four main collaborative activities, each designed to co-create the building blocks of the Initiative's framework.

1. Co-Creating the Vision – Imagine the Future

Participants were invited to envision the UDesign Justice Initiative five years into the future, imagining it as the best possible version of itself. Using sticky notes and a “Vision Web” format, they responded to prompts across several categories and posted their ideas on a flip chart.



1.2. Vision Web

Please use your sticky notes to respond to the following categories, and post your responses on the flip chart.



2. Co-Creating the Mission – What We Do and How We Do It

Participants explored the purpose of the Initiative, the communities and groups that must always be centered, and the kinds of impacts the Initiative should achieve.

- **2.1 Mission Mapping:** Participants mapped out desired impacts and strategies for achieving them.
- **2.2 Mission Draft Starter:** Small groups began drafting statements to capture the Initiative’s mission.

3. Co-Creating the Guiding Principles – The Ethical Foundation

This activity focused on identifying the values that should guide UDesign’s actions and relationships.

- **3.1 Naming Values:** Participants wrote values on sticky notes and posted them on the flip chart.
- **3.2 Turning Values into Principles:** Groups translated these values into actionable principles, discussed how collaborators should treat one another, and considered mechanisms for accountability.

CO-DESIGNING THE UDESIGN JUSTICE INITIATIVE

2. Co-Creating the MISSION: What We Do, and How We Do It
Time: 30 minutes

- What is the purpose of the UDesign Justice Initiative?
- What communities or groups should always be centered in our work?
- What kind of impact do we want to make, and how do we make it?

2.1. Mission Mapping

[Purpose] We exist to:

[Audiences/Communities] We work with:

[Methods/Actions] We do this by:

CO-DESIGNING THE UDESIGN JUSTICE INITIATIVE

3. Co-Creating the GUIDING PRINCIPLES: The Ethical Foundation
Time: 30 minutes

The principles should reflect values in action: not abstract ideals, but commitments to how the initiative behaves, builds relationships, and holds itself accountable.

- What values must guide everything the initiative does?
- How should we treat one another as collaborators?
- How should this initiative be held accountable, and by whom?

3.1. Naming Values
Please use your sticky notes to write down your ideas, and post your responses on the flip chart.

Name & Write Down Values

Examples (just for inspiration):

- Equity
- Transparency
- Reciprocity
- Care

4. Co-Creating the Focus Areas – Key Domains of Work

Participants brainstormed the Initiative's priority areas based on community needs, lived experiences, systemic gaps, and opportunities for intervention.

- **4.1 Possible Focus Areas:** Ideas were shared on sticky notes and posted to a flip chart.
- **4.2 Cluster and Name the Themes:** Similar ideas were grouped together and named.
- **4.3 Vote/Prioritize:** Participants voted on their top 3–5 focus areas, with each cluster/theme described in detail.

Through these four activities, participants shaped a shared vision, mission, guiding principles, and focus areas, laying the foundation for the UDesign Justice Initiative's next steps.

CO-DESIGNING THE UDESIGN JUSTICE INITIATIVE

4 • Co-Creating the FOCUS AREAS: Key Domains of Work

Time: 30 minutes

Focus areas are the key themes or domains that define what the UDesign Justice Initiative actually does. They help turn our commitments into action.

Let's think about where this initiative should focus its energy:

- What are the community needs and lived experiences?
- What are the systemic gaps in design and planning?
- Where is design most failing marginalized communities, and how could we intervene?
- What is this initiative uniquely positioned to do?

4.1. Possible Focus Areas

Brainstorm possible focus areas, write them on sticky notes and post them on the flip chart.




Examples (just for inspiration!):

- Design Education
- Policy Advocacy
- Decolonizing Design Practices
- Community Partnerships
- Spatial Justice Research
- Capacity Building

CO-DESIGNING THE UDESIGN JUSTICE INITIATIVE


4.2. Cluster and Name the Themes

- Cluster similar ideas on the flip chart.
- Name and describe each cluster/theme.

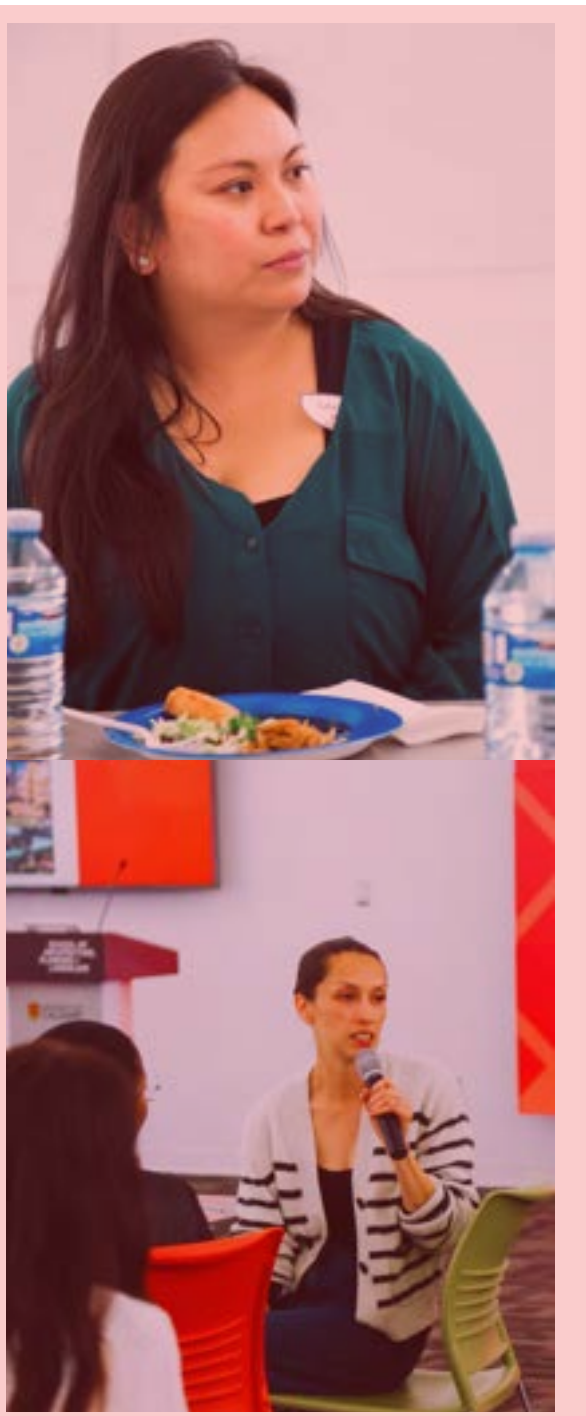


4.3. Vote/Prioritize

Vote or prioritize which ones should be top 3–5.



WHAT WE HEARD



VERBATIM REPORT

The verbatim report compiles all documented quotes and comments from our sessions and serves as the foundation for our analysis. It captures direct participant contributions, gathered through notetaker records, sticky notes, and responses in the participant guidebooks. All quotes and comments are organized by workshop activity and corresponding sub-questions.

To ensure accuracy and completeness, we made certain that every participant's contribution was captured and preserved. This comprehensive record reflects the richness and diversity of perspectives shared during the sessions.

668 comments

The full report can be viewed on our website:
<https://udesignjusticeinitiative.vercel.app/>



METHODOLOGY: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

We used a structured, multi-step process to analyze the workshop data. Each participant's quote or note, whether from sticky notes, guidebooks, or notetakers' records, was labelled, tagged, and assigned to a specific theme. These themes were then organized into related sub-themes, which were further grouped into broader thematic categories.

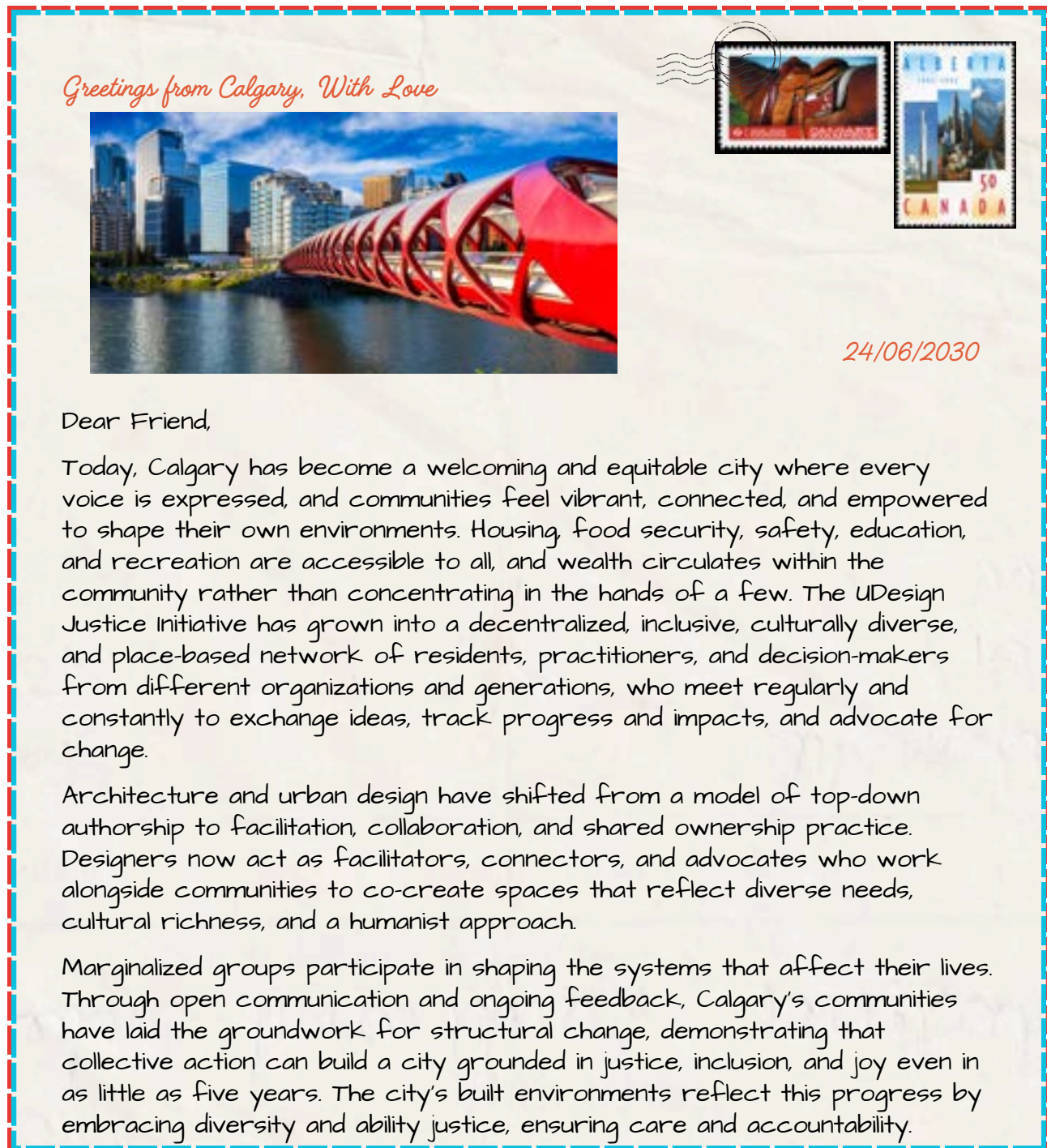
The resulting themes and sub-themes are presented in the tables within each section of this report. For each question, we developed concise summary sentences to capture the essence of the participants' insights. These appear at the beginning of each section in quotation marks.



PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

1. The VISION: Imagine the Future

1.1. POSTCARD FROM THE FUTURE



1.2. VISION WEB: What Is It?

“A vibrant and inclusive “third space,” a knowledge hub, advocacy platform, decision-making forum, and catalyst for change, grounded in collaboration, community consultation, and care, and shaped by the power of lived experiences and shared stories.”

CORE THEMES

SUB-THEMES

THEME DESCRIPTION

Knowledge Hub

- Creating knowledge
- Connecting students-organizations
- Knowledge resource
- Sharing knowledge
- Students' education
- Training/learning network

A hub for researching, generating, sharing, and testing ideas that connect students and organizations through learning networks, training opportunities, and national platforms, informing both academic and real-world practice.

Change Engine

- Future-oriented thinking
- Adaptive design
- Challenging dominant systems
- Challenging systemic inequities
- Challenging the norms
- Embedded systems
- Equity lens
- Framing justice
- Perspective shifting
- Responsive
- Shift narrative
- Systemic barriers

A responsive platform for shifting narratives and challenging the embedded and systemic inequities in current practice, through an equity and diversity-driven lens, which is responsive and future-oriented.

Advocacy Platform

- Marginalized communities advocacy
- Justice advocacy
- Grassroots advocacy
- People's needs
- Value people

A platform for justice advocacy and grassroots action that centers the needs of marginalized communities and values every individual.

Decision-Making Platform

- Approving body
- Consultation
- Decision principles
- Design guidelines
- Design quality
- Ethical practice
- Influence decisions
- Addressing policy barriers

An approving body and consultation platform that promotes inclusive design and influences policy decisions while addressing systemic barriers.

Community Consultation & Care

- Care & support
- Connect stakeholders
- Connecting people
- Giving voice
- Service provision

A caring and supportive space for communities that connects stakeholders, practitioners, provides services, and gives voice to the communities.

Third Space

- Gathering hub
- Common/shared space
- Cultural common
- Dialogue space
- Non-consumerist
- Public space

A public, common, non-consumerist third space for gathering, dialogue, community building, and cultural events.

Collaboration Hub

- Transdisciplinary
- A collaborative
- A community
- Collaborative approach
- Community project
- Connecting pieces
- Consult with community
- Cross-group collaboration
- Diversity in capacity
- Justice through interaction

An egalitarian project, where diverse disciplines and communities collaborate and solve problems together.

Inclusive Platform

- Accessibility & socioeconomic inclusion
- Accessible
- Community accessibility
- Decentralized decision making
- Inclusive housing
- Inclusive process
- Inclusive space
- Participation
- Participation & ownership
- Safe, non-judgmental space
- Welcoming

A physically and socially welcoming and accessible space, which is an open, decentralized, and non-judgmental environment, where everyone is invited.

Narrating Experiences

- Storytelling
- Deep empathy
- Inspiration

Centring lived experiences and personal narratives, to inspire understanding and action.

WHO DOES IT SERVE?

The UDesign Justice Initiative exists to center and serve those historically excluded from shaping the built environment, including:

- **Physically Marginalized Communities:** People with disabilities, mobility challenges, and diverse physical needs.
- **Socially Disadvantaged and Underrepresented Groups:** Individuals with limited access to resources, those with low visibility or voice, isolated communities, young people in the foster system, and others often left out of decision-making.
- **Racialized Communities:** Including Indigenous Peoples, Black communities, and other racialized groups.
- **Immigrant and Newcomer Communities:** Including refugees, asylum seekers, and recent migrants.
- **Neurodivergent Individuals:** Those with diverse cognitive and neurological experiences.
- **Students:** Across educational levels and disciplines.
- **Multi-Generational Communities:** Recognizing the value of intergenerational knowledge and collaboration.
- **Care Providers:** Formal and informal caregivers whose perspectives shape inclusive environments.
- **All People and Diverse Communities:** Embracing the richness of multiple identities and experiences.
- **Nature and All Living Beings:** Affirming our responsibility to care for the environment and non-human life as integral to just design.

WHAT DOES IT CHANGE?

The UDesign Justice Initiative seeks to transform the built environment and the systems that shape it by:

- **Design Practice:** Reimagining how design is done by challenging outdated codes, adopting inclusive and iterative processes, and embedding innovation, ethics, and long-term thinking into every stage - designing with communities, not just for them.
- **Education & Awareness:** Raising public understanding of design's role in justice, shifting mindsets, and promoting critical thinking through accessible education, storytelling, and knowledge sharing.
- **Inclusive Spaces:** Creating environments that are physically, socially, and culturally accessible; addressing racial bias, affordability barriers, and intergenerational needs; and ensuring spaces honour Indigenous Peoples, disabled communities, and all marginalized groups with dignity and care.
- **Lifestyle & Belonging:** Strengthening community connections, fostering social integration, and enhancing emotional well-being by addressing isolation and cultivating collective belonging, trust, and safety in shared spaces.
- **Narrative & Perception:** Reframe dominant narratives about place by centering lived experience and elevating diverse voices. Challenge the stories that define “who belongs” in certain spaces, and cultivate new ones that reflect the histories, perspectives, and aspirations of marginalized communities.
- **Policy & Governance:** Influence policy by reducing systemic barriers, embedding long-term equity commitments, and incorporating community-driven decision-making into housing, budgeting, and planning frameworks.

- **Power/Institutional Structure:** Challenging power dynamics requires designers, developers, and other institutions to rethink their roles, not as design owners, but as facilitators, by redistributing influence among stakeholders. This also means being vigilant about who holds decision-making power.
- **Urban Form/City Design:** Advocate for neighbourhoods and cityscapes that are adaptable, compact, vibrant, and community-oriented. Move away from expansionist growth patterns and toward inclusive and resilient infrastructure that prioritizes social cohesion and environmental stewardship.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

It is a hub that feels:

- Accessible
- Adaptable
- Agency
- Aspirational
- Belonging
- Caring
- Changing
- Comfortable
- Compassionate
- Constantly improving
- Curiosity
- Empathic
- Empowering
- Enthusiasm
- Exciting
- Exhaustion of activism
- Fitting
- Flexible to happenings
- Flexible to people
- Good
- Grounded
- Inspiring
- Intersectional
- Joyful
- Kind
- Liberating
- Like touching grass
- Loving
- Not for profit
- Pragmatic
- Purposeful
- Radical
- Respecting
- Responsive
- Revolutionary
- Safe
- Sense of belonging
- Soft
- Source of inspiration
- Harmonious
- Healing
- Hearing voices
- Helpful
- Hopeful
- Human
- Inclusive

- System thinking
- Transformative
- Unbiased
- Uncontained
- Understanding
- Valued
- Visionary
- Voice
- Warm
- Welcoming

2. The MISSION: What We Do, and How We Do It

2.1. MISSION MAPPING: Purpose (We exist to...)

“We exist to be *Inclusive, Supportive*, and take *Action* through *Research* and *Education*.”

PURPOSE

Be Inclusive

SUB-THEMES

- Accessible for all
- Feel welcomed
- Include marginalized groups
- Include impacted communities
- Engaging with diverse groups
- Be inclusive
- Amplify community voices
- Bringing excluded voices
- Bring people together
- Solve challenges together
- Advocate for the unheard

Be Supportive

- Remove burden
- Help
- Liberating
- Share perspectives
- Connect
- Empower
- Empower others
- Live a comfortable life
- Connect communities
- Representing communities
- Empower the unheard

Action-Oriented

- Change design practice
- Climate-responsive design
- Decolonize design
- Create equitable cities
- Approve design
- Remove barriers
- Challenge frameworks
- Challenge systems
- Activate communities
- Challenge dominant design paradigms



Research

- Rethink the design justice concept
- Create inclusive places
- Challenge oppressive systems
- Create change
- Decolonize design systems
- Taking actions
- Challenge narrative
- Promote actions
- Measure decisions
- Develop equitable spaces
- Expand transportation options

Educate

- Critical research
- Study communities
- Research inclusive processes
- Prepare and test methods
- Gathering information
- Measure decisions
- Inform policies

- Improve education
- Inspire

Audiences/Communities (We work with...)

“We work with *Everyone*, from *Marginalized and Excluded Groups* to *Built Environment professionals* and *other collaborators*.”

AUDIENCE

Marginalized/Excluded Groups

SUB-CATEGORIES

- Immigrants
- Newcomers
- Racialized communities
- Disabilities
- Marginalized communities
- Historically marginalized
- Marginalized people
- Communities historically excluded
- Indigenous nations
- QSLGBTQ communities
- All those impacted by colonization



Built Environment Professionals

- Historically marginalized communities
 - Queer youth
 - Indigenous communities
 - Black communities
 - Other racialized communities
 - People with lived experiences
 - Communities that are often not heard from
 - Newcomers
 - Communities on the Calgary equity index, lacking sources
 - Stakeholders, with a focus on those who are typically underrepresented
 - Unhoused
 - Anyone who is not heard
-
- Architectural background
 - School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture
 - Other labs
 - Building community
 - City planners
 - Policy makers
 - Professionals
 - Other universities

Everyone
Marginalized & Excluded Groups
Built Environment Professionals
Other Professionals

While these core themes help guide the principles of who we work with, some other reflections remind us of the complexity in defining our audience. Participants mentioned that “defining can make it exclusive,” acknowledging that “you can’t include everybody all the time” and “centring some means marginalizing others by definition”.

These insights raise important questions around the shifting nature of the audience: “People will be coming and going,” and “does the target demographic shift on a project basis?” These comments suggest a need to remain adaptive, thoughtful, and possibly take a community-centred approach grounded in context rather than rigid definitions.

Methods/Actions (We do this by...)

“We do this by Engaging with Communities, prioritizing Education, fostering Inclusion, thinking Critically, Empowering others, and remaining Flexible in our approach.”

METHODS AND ACTIONS

SUB-THEMES

Being Inclusive

- Involving different backgrounds
- Embracing diversity
- Hearing all voices
- Bringing attention to differences
- Not unintentionally exclude by including some
- Not just academic backgrounds
- Anti-tokenism
- Inclusive methodologies
- Work together
- Accessible communication
- Anti-racism & inclusion lens
- Creating platforms for voices
- Diversity
- Welcoming space
- Inclusive programming
- Expanding connections
- Culturally appropriate engagement
- Building community

Engaging with Communities

- Community-based approach
- Being supportive
- Working with communities
- Listening to communities
- Narrating stories
- Inviting to share ideas
- Asking: how can we help you?



- Co-design
- Involving folks in the process
- Feedback loop with communities
- Bottom-up decisions
- Process-oriented design
- Localized justice
- Co-creating methodologies
- Listening
- Community-led design
- Storytelling
- Stakeholders
- Community members
- Centring communities rather than funders
- Relationship building
- Hearing stories
- Relationship building
- Creating connections
- Understanding all the perspectives

Education

- Teaching & curricula
- Workshops & events
- Educating decolonial practices
- Educating the next generation
- Educating students for future practice
- Educating & mentoring

Being Critical

- Have tangible impact measurement
- Critical approach
- Make it tangible
- Thinking of diverse exclusions
- Rethinking community outreach
- Justice language
- Narratives power
- Challenging building conventions
- Dubious of the systems
- Defining marginalized communities
- Critical research & pedagogy
- Grounded theory
- Systemic change

Empowering

- Empower under-represented voices
- Opening barriers
- Give agency

Being Flexible

- Leave room for change
- Testing different methods
- Malleable
- Learn from mistakes & move forward

Others

- Being resilient
- Creativity

2.2. MISSION DRAFT STARTER

“The UDesign Justice Initiative is a platform that directly addresses community issues through design.

It exists for all the diverse and underrepresented communities.

It challenges the dominant design methodologies, narratives, processes, and systems in academia and practice and tests new ideas.

It does these actions by centring community-led processes, decolonizing practices, understanding the narratives, and amplifying the voices of marginalized populations.

The initiative seeks to reframe how we understand oppressions and exclusions, and co-create more equitable, just, and inclusive spaces and policies.”



3. The GUIDING PRINCIPLES: The Ethical Foundation

3.1. NAMING VALUES

"Our values are rooted in *Accountability*, *Compassion*, and *Ethical Practice*; we are committed to being *Engaging and Inclusive*, *Welcoming* diverse voices and practicing *Reciprocity*, being *Flexible* and *Innovative*, and approaching our work with *Long-Term Thinking* and ongoing *Reflexivity*."

VALUES

Accountability

SUB-THEMES

- Accountable for harms
- Accountability to the community
- Accountable for making systems
- Accountable for our actions
- Accountable through feedback loops
- Commitment to accountability
- Data-driven
- Impact on communities
- Information accuracy
- Responsibility
- Self-accountability
- Accountable for biases

Compassion

- Active listening
- Care
- Dignity
- Empathy
- Grace
- Hospitality
- Joy
- Kindness & compassion
- Love
- Speak to hearts
- Speaking with heart
- Strength-based
- Understanding
- Vulnerability

Ethical Practice

- Authenticity
- Cautious of communication
- Cautious of the language
- Clarity
- Clear & accessible communication
- Compromise
- Consensus
- Consent
- Data accuracy
- Easy to understand
- Equality
- Grounded
- Honesty
- Humility
- Integrity
- Justice
- Make sure to stay true
- Not for profit
- Openness
- Respect
- Restoration
- Sincerity
- Staying true to values
- Transparency
- Trust

Engaging & Inclusive

- Accessibility as a baseline
- Access
- Approaching differences
- Collaborative
- Collective motivation
- Collective ownership
- Community autonomy
- Community-appropriate mixed-use
- Community-driven
- Community-focused
- Embed lived experiences & community voices





Welcoming & Reciprocity

- Including people in every part
- Inclusive & belonging
- Intentional engagement
- Knowledge sharing
- Lived experiences
- Meeting people where they are at
- Mixed-use
- Not missing unheard voices
- Open access resources
- Process-oriented design
- Solidarity
- Stewardship

- Accessible
- Building connections
- Inspirational
- Meaningful connection
- Prioritizing relationships
- Reciprocity
- Safe
- Sense of tolerance
- Tolerance
- Welcoming

Flexibility

- Adaptable
- Be flexible
- Challenge status quos
- Change
- Modular design

Innovation

- Creative
- Curiosity
- Ingenuity
- Innovative
- Innovative communication
- Open source

Long-Term Thinking

- Intergenerational responsibility
- Continuity
- Investment loop
- Longevity
- Long-term investment

Reflexivity

- Acknowledge privilege
- Cultural intersectionality
- Evaluation
- Feedback loop
- Learning from mistakes
- Recognizing different perspectives
- Self-reflection
- Understanding different approaches
- Welcome discomfort

Others

- Just sustainability
- Transformative

3.2. TURN VALUES INTO PRINCIPLES

“We believe that collaboration, care, solidarity, and collective accountability are foundational to creating a safe and inclusive space: one where everyone has a seat at the table, where human-centred approaches drive social justice, and where mistakes are met with empathy and learning.”

“We are committed to respect, transparency, inclusivity and fostering belonging, and centring humanity in all decisions. Through collaboration, innovation, open communication, and continuous reflection, we aim to care for one another’s needs, acknowledge our vulnerabilities, co-developing equitable entry points, and create spaces where learning and growth are shared responsibilities.”

“We recognize that design is a vulnerable act and mistakes are part of the journey, but we hold ourselves and each other accountable, and we create a safe and welcoming space for learning, growing, and co-creating more responsibly. As a collective hub, we are committed to equitable design, clear and open dialogue, and designing with communities, ensuring everyone is heard and included. We bridge real-world experience and learning to create positive change without placing burdens on those we serve.

Grounded in humility and social justice, our approach centers humanity, care, and shared leadership in all aspects of engagement.”



4. The FOCUS AREAS: Key Domains of Work

"Our focus areas include *Education, Research, and Advocacy*, grounded in *Community Engagement, Lived Experiences, and the Needs of Communities and Marginalized Groups*, by building *Awareness*, sharing *Knowledge and Information*, and *Funding*, to advance *Practice, Policy, and Accessibility*.

CORE VALUES

Education

Policy

Accessibility

Community Engagement

Community Needs

Lived Experiences

SUB-THEMES

- Curriculum
- Capacity building
- Practice-based
- Design education
- Advisory education

- Policy
- Policy advocacy
- Informing policy
- Approving body

- Accessibility
- Accessible language

- Community partnership
- Studying lived experiences
- Capacity building
- Urban vibrancy
- Storytelling
- Intentional engagement
- Building allyship

- Community needs
- Responsiveness

- Studying lived experiences
- Lived experiences
- Narrating lived experiences

Advocacy

- Advocacy
- Equity in design
- Right to housing

Marginalized Groups

- Marginalized groups
- Reparative design
- Indigenous land
- Underrepresented groups

Practice

- Practice
- Practice + academia
- Adaptive sustainable design
- Infrom practice
- Change practice norms

Knowledge & Information

- Knowledge sharing
- Advising
- Data resource
- Non physical space
- Mobilizing research
- Learning hub
- Consultation

Research

- Research history
- Research context
- Iterative
- Mapping ecosystems
- Research shared challenges
- Research causes
- Program sustainability
- Applied research
- Research outreach
- Social value measurement

Others

- Intersectionality
- Network
- Relationships
- Design



Marginalized
GroupsFunding
Advocacy
Research
Knowledge Information
Accessibility
Education
Community Engagement
Lived Experiences
Community Needs
OtherPolicy
Practice

CONCLUSION

The first co-design workshop for the UDesign Justice Initiative marked a powerful beginning. Participants from diverse backgrounds: community members with lived experience, students, professionals, and advocates, came together to imagine a future in which Calgary's built environment reflects justice, inclusion, and care. Guided by the participant guidebook and collaborative prompts, they co-developed a preliminary vision, mission, guiding principles, and focus areas for the initiative. Central themes included resisting tokenistic engagement by centring the voices of those most impacted by spatial inequities, reimagining design practice to be inclusive and iterative, and building trust through transparent, reciprocal relationships. Participants articulated a shared desire to create a "third space" - a knowledge hub, advocacy platform, and change engine - that brings together marginalized communities with practitioners and allies to confront systemic barriers and spatial inequities.

The workshop also surfaced concrete domains for action: transforming design practice, expanding education and awareness, creating inclusive spaces, strengthening community belonging, shifting public narratives, embedding equity into policy and governance, redistributing power, and rethinking urban form. These insights lay the groundwork for the next phase of engagement.

The second workshop will refine the framework, identify partnerships and funding strategies, and map a path forward. By grounding its work in co-design and relational accountability, UDesign Justice Initiative is poised to become a transdisciplinary platform that not only identifies injustices but mobilizes collective expertise and imagination to build a more equitable built environment.

FOLLOW US

WEBSITE



QR CODE:



Link:

<https://udesignjusticeinitiative.vercel.app>

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



QR CODE:



Link:

<https://udesign-justice-initiative.carrd.co>

THANK YOU FROM OUR TEAM



From Left: Zahra Khaniki, Beng ReyesOng, Zainab Ahmed, Dr. Cecile Kotyk, Cordelia Yip, Rein Gonzales

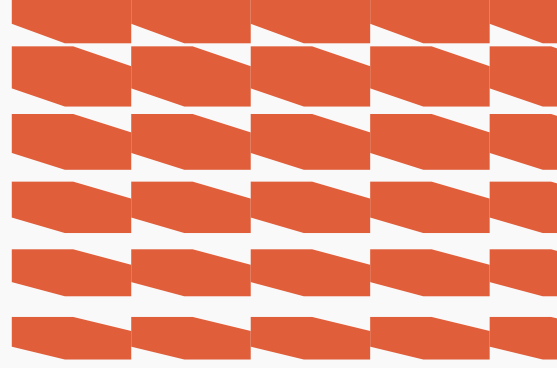


For More Information:

✉ mariececile.kotyk@ucalgary.ca





🌐 <https://udesignjusticeinitiative.vercel.app/>





Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

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City, ST 12345

WHAT WE HEARD

The audience increased by 5% last month, with the majority falling in the 25 to 34 age range, evenly divided between males and females.

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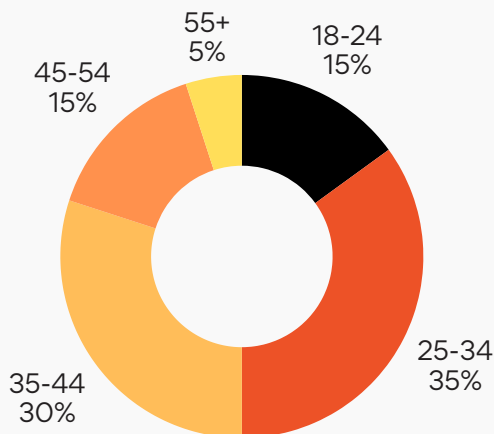
Gender

■ Female ■ Male

55%

45%

Age



Interests

Entrepreneurship

SME Growth

E-commerce

Digital Marketing

Product Development

Engagement Process

Purpose



Impressions

120,000



Engagements

12,500



Followers

+10% 25,480



Engagements

+15% 60,320



Conversions

850



Website Traffic

+22% 8,760

The purpose of our engagement was to meaningfully involve communities, especially those historically excluded from design and planning processes, in shaping the direction, focus areas, principles, mission, and vision to develop a framework for the UDesign Justice Initiative.

Rooted in principles of inclusion, equity, transparency, reciprocity, and accountability, we sought to build trust with communities, gather insights, and foster shared ownership over the development of a transdisciplinary platform that reimagines how justice is pursued in the built environment.

Rather than extracting knowledge or feedback, our approach was grounded in co-design and a transdisciplinary approach to ensure that community voices not only inform but actively lead the shaping of more inclusive and equitable spatial futures.

WHAT WE ASKED

The audience increased by 5% last month, with the majority falling in the 25 to 34 age range, evenly divided between males and females.

Be part of UDesign Justice Initiative. You can join us from anywhere, when you sign up for our second online workshop on Aug. 19th.

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hashtag#spatialequity hashtag#urbanplanning hashtag#design
hashtag#architecture hashtag#healthequity hashtag#spatialjustice
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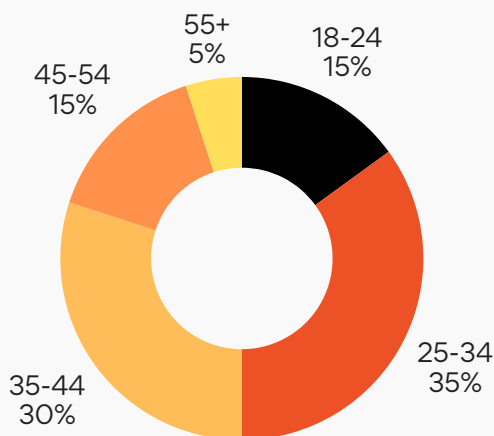
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workshop on Aug. 19th

Gender



Age



Interests



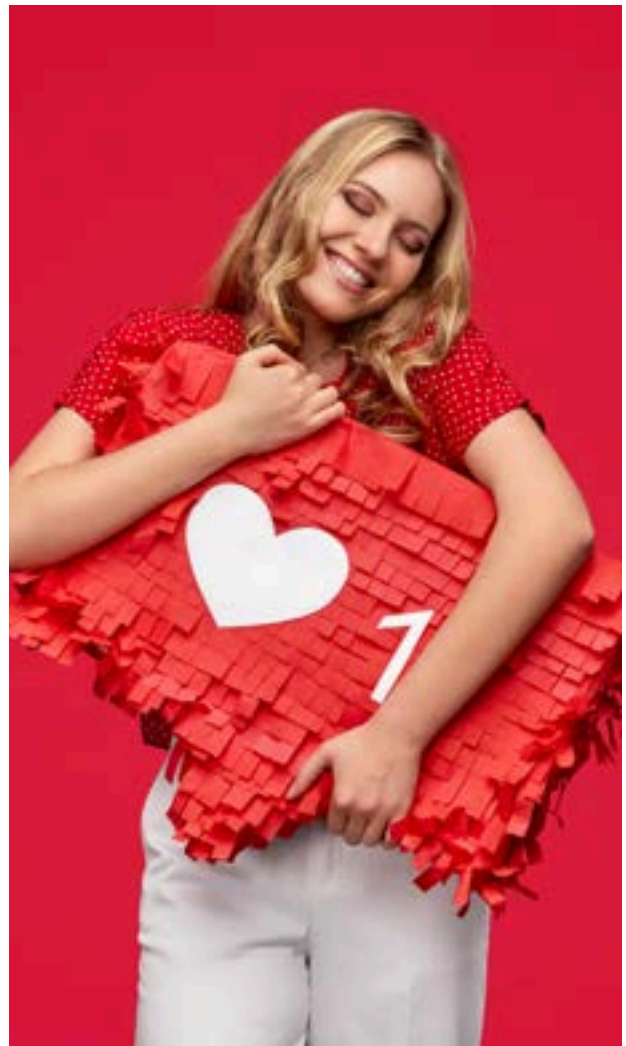
Active Times

Monday	10 AM - 12 PM
Wednesday	2 PM - 4 PM
Friday	11 AM - 1 PM

Location

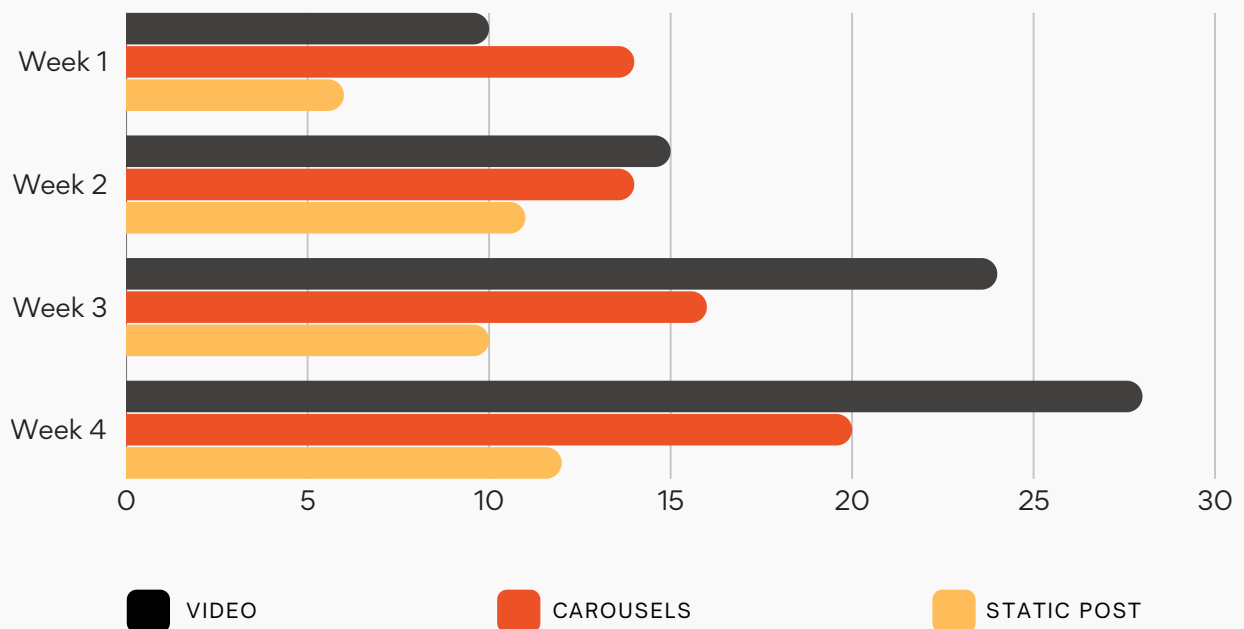
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20%	15%	10%
Fauget	Fauget	
10%	45%	

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Engagement Metrics

Video content outperformed other formats on all platforms, boasting an average view rate of 25%. Additionally, carousels and product shots were driving significant engagement rates.



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Targets

Objectives for the Next Period

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Next Quartal

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Followers

25,480

Impressions

120,000

Website Traffic

8,760

Engagements

60,320

Conversions

850

Strategies

> Content Strategy

Develop a content calendar with a mix of educational, entertaining, and promotional posts.

Increase the use of video content to drive engagement, including tutorials, product showcases, and behind-the-scenes looks.

Feature more customer success stories to highlight the impact of our services.

> Engagement Strategy

Respond to all comments and messages within 24 hours.

Run interactive polls, quizzes, and Q&A sessions to encourage audience interaction.

Create a hashtag campaign to encourage user-generated content and build community.

> Advertising Strategy

Allocate budget for targeted social media ads focusing on small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Promote top-performing content to reach a wider audience.

Use retargeting ads to convert website visitors into customers.

> Partnerships

Partner with local business influencers and micro-influencers who have a strong following in the SME community.

Collaborate with complementary brands for cross-promotions and joint campaigns.

Use retargeting ads to convert website visitors into customers.

Conclusion



Summary

Our social media reach saw remarkable expansion, with a 15% rise in followers and a 20% surge in engagements. Notably, our top-performing posts, like our startup narrative and customer success tales, garnered substantial interaction. Furthermore, the "Empowering Local Businesses" initiative led to significant conversions and a 25% upsurge in website traffic.

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