

Realized through



thinking

outside

the

market

Resources and Strategies for Supporting Value- Driven Work

A design guide based on findings from Value Collective's participatory workshop, "Thinking Outside the Market."

What is Value Collective?

Value Collective (VC) is an initiative to support work that is **valuable, but not profitable**, using alter-economic thinking and practice.

We believe society's inadequate response to complex issues like climate change does not stem from a lack of interest, care, ideas, or solutions — it stems from a **lack of conditions that enable people to respond** even when they do care, have ideas, and want to enact solutions. The financialization of basic needs marginalizes all activities that do not generate an income.

Recognizing that many activities essential to collective wellbeing cannot or should not be realized through the market, our initiative consists in **possibilizing value-driven work** by developing support structures for people to realize their projects and ideas away from financial pressures. These offerings are made available through our Residency Program.

Value Collective is based at the repurposed convent, la Cité-des-Hospitalières, in Tiohtià:ke, or Montreal.

Contents

Introduction	1
Workshop summary	2
Resources and strategies	3
Conclusion	8

Residencies

Value Collective Residents make up a network of value-driven workers who share access to common resources and receive support from the Value Collective Development Crew (VCDC).

The following pages present an analysis of findings gathered from a participatory workshop hosted by VCDC at la Cité-des-Hospitalières on June 15, 2022.

In this workshop, 20 people from different backgrounds and practices were invited to reflect on the types of work that bring them purpose but no money, and the resources they need to better make them happen.

This document was created to help guide the development of Value Collective's Residency Program. In making it public, our hope is that it may also contribute to emerging discourse around alter-economies and the importance of supporting value-driven workers.

Glossary

Value-driven work:

Differentiated from work undertaken primarily to earn an income, value-driven work is intrinsically-motivated, and creates non-financial value.

Non-financial value: Social value, cultural value, ecological value, spiritual value, or anything else that contributes to the commons.



A presentation contextualized the event within an overarching movement to definancialize our systems and cultures. Following that, two activities, “Future Diary” and “Toolkit Building,” invited participants to imagine a year free from financial pressures and the work they might undertake given free time and support. Participants noted on post-its the resources they would need for that year to be a success, which were then mapped and clustered around 10 themes.

Toolkit Building

Prompt: Imagine you have one year to do the work of your choice, free from financial pressures. What will you need or want for this year to be a success?

Goal of activity: Building the basis for the Residency Program from the perspective of prospective Residents.

Goal of analysis: Translating the needs expressed in the activity into a list of potential resources and ideas on how to implement them.

[*Digitized transcript »*](#)



Resources are categorized as either *immaterial* or *material*.

Each theme also include *ideas for implementation*, or potential means of providing that particular resource.

Immaterial resources

Community

People who understand and complement

Frameworks for collaboration, exchange and help

Celebration of one another

Mentorship and guidance

Professional resources

Empowerment

Feelings of empowerment

Empowering factors

Time

Access to knowledge

Material resources

Materials

Tools

Supplies

Food

Digital infrastructure

Money

Transport

Space

Spatial qualities

Types of space

Secure housing

External experiences

Platforms

Certifications

Community

The need for community is the first dominant theme that emerged from this activity. While the term ‘community’ can be broad and unspecific, we subdivided this area into subsections that can help us be more targeted on how we address this need. In a nutshell, this section addresses the barriers that comes with being or feeling alone, without a platform, and considers how this prevents people from engaging in value-driven activities.

People who understand and complement

Community can be understood as the fundamental need to be among peers who share common values and worldviews.

These peers bring a variety of backgrounds, expertise, experience and knowledge in order to help one another arrive at a place they cannot access alone.

Ideas for implementation

- Opening day: all residents get to meet one another and get a sense of the cohort they belong in
- Regular open discussions among residents, facilitated by VCDC
- “Lunch & Learn” events

(See post-its “A network of like-minded people”, “Like-minded people”, “Like minded-people to support”, “Like-minded people to discuss my ideas with”, “Surrounded by creative solution-minded people”, “Listeners”, “Writing Circle”, “Social Networks”.)

Frameworks for collaboration, exchange and help

We identify here the need to have opportunities to get ideas and ambitions out into a sphere where others can pick up on them, reinforce them, and enrich them.

This exchange can happen organically by virtue of physical proximity, but should also be facilitated intentionally.

Ideas for implementation

- Regular open discussions among residents, facilitated by VCDC
- Regular check-ins with VCDC
- Communal dinners
- Collective work for time credits

(See post-its, “Support from community”, “Like-minded people to support”, “A community of creatives that can collaborate with each other”, “Team of passionate intervention workers”, “Readers”, “People to give feedback”, “A partner”, “Collaborators”, “Community / team / collaborators”, “Teams”).

Celebration of one another

With community comes the presence of mutual excitement for one another, an overarching energy that people feed off from in order to keep going forward, even when things become challenging. Ideally, a healthy community provides motivation and other psychological factors that contribute to a sense of purpose and self-worth. This is reminiscent of intensive educational programs or field trips where a sense collective purpose forms tight bonds between students, providing a pulse that maintains energy levels high. Celebrations, rituals or a moments of release (like a closing ceremony, awards or a party) reinforce this feeling.

Ideas for implementation

- Opening day: residents are collectively welcomed to the program and hyped
- Emphasize idea of ‘cohort’, that residents are “in this together” to help and sustain one another
- Individual arrival and departure ceremonies (tokens given)
- Communal dinners, parties

(See post-its “Hype people”, “Other motivated people”, “People who believe in me”)

Mentorship and guidance

This is a more targeted need that falls within this category. Peers might be available to support periodically, even collaborate, but mentorship is a specific task. A mentor ideally provides a wealth of knowledge and prior experience as well as empathy and care, in order to help the mentee find their bearings where bearings need to be found. This is a more personal and sustained relationship. Within VC residents, mentors might be found in fellow residents or could be brought in from the outside.

Ideas for implementation

- VCDC headhunts mentors on case-by-case basis
- Web Page listing Mentor call-outs
- Mentorship facilitated by complementary currency
- Mentorship requests disclosed as a possibility to new residents (i.e. “You may be asked to mentor another resident”).

(See post-its “Help (mentors)”, “Mentorship”, “Mentors in the trades that don’t discriminate”, “Ideas from people with prior experience to jumpstart my own ideas”)

Professional resources

Similar to the previous point, professional resources are punctual forms of assistance mostly relating to technical needs. The point here isn’t necessarily overarching guidance, but to help on a given subject that the resident has themselves identified.

Ideas for implementation

- Web page listing expert call-outs
- VCDC headhunts experts on case-by-case basis
- Professional services facilitated by complementary currency

(See post-its “Marketing/comms experts”, “Bike maintenance (bike mechanics)”, “Outreach coordinator”, “Folks who are good at promoting things”, “People who can teach using climbing gear”.)

While still in its early stages, Value Collective is and will continue to be a heterogeneous entity, shaped by the many voices that compose it. That is why a collective activity such as the one outlined in this report is an essential step in defining the organisation's foundational principles. The brute data that emerged provides an important set of pragmatic considerations for VC's operations, but most importantly offers insight into the landscape of alter-economic activity and the tools needed to bolster it.

Indeed, this document offers at once a transcript of this hard data (see the linked Miro map), as well as broader, analytical reflections on the implications of these results. For instance, many participants mentioned the need for interpersonal support and networks, which points to an underlying need for stronger communities and social infrastructures; the need for workspace highlights larger implications about the management, exclusivity and financialized nature of real estate; the need for time implies wider considerations of how socio-cultural rhythms impact our ability to answer our needs and desires; and so forth.

We believe that more studies and exercises of this sort are necessary to shift cultural value systems and economic ideals. It is by putting unconventional economic actors (i.e. value-driven workers) in the spotlight and contextualizing them within broader themes of economic transformation, ecological transition, and social justice, that we can spur the movement towards more caring, mutualistic, less extractive and more cooperative cultures.

frailer

+

skills/
experts

COMMS

marketing/

folks
who are
at
good
promoting
things

Residency name

Center for Homeless

SUMMER

- Setting up the space
- build manuals and protocols.
- talk with neighboring shop business

Residency name

JARDIN
CARTIER ~~GRAND~~

Housing

- RESEARCHED AG URBAN AG.
- MEETING OTHER URBAN AG ACT
- STRATEGY ME WITH THE ME

Thanks to our partners for possibilitizing our work!

[La Cité-des-Hospitalières](#) »

[Entremise](#) »

[The CMHC's Housing Supply Challenge](#) »

[Concordia University's Next-Generation Cities Institute](#) »