

Chloe Marrache • Economics & Decision Science, Duke University
Hart Leadership Program — Laidlaw Scholars Program | Community Partner: LEAP Pecaut Centre for Social Impact, Toronto

The Guiding Question



LEAP Pecaut Centre for Social Impact is a hybrid social-impact intermediary that catalyzes systems-level change by selecting, resourcing, and scaling high-potential ventures toward four-to-tenfold growth in reach and depth of impact. They deploy capital, but also strategic advisory and collaborative infrastructure across a coordinated ecosystem.

How can impact-driven capital deployment be more effectively grounded in community knowledge to enable equitable, sustainable scaling of social ventures?

The question sits at the intersection of economics and decision science and a growing conviction, built across earlier work in venture research and early-stage capital, that top-down analysis alone cannot account for whose ideas take root and whose futures are made possible. Rigorous financial modeling can tell you what a venture is worth; it says far less about whether a community trusts the people deploying that capital.

Positionality

Working at the intersection of capital, strategy, and communities not my own raises real questions of power and representation. I came in committed to amplifying community voices rather than speaking for them, and to treating LEAP's own principle of "leading without authority" as a working discipline.

The frameworks I built and projects I worked on inform how national partners reach organizations like Keepers of the Circle, which supports Indigenous women's access to skilled trades; WoodGreen's Homeward Bound, a four-year pathway from homelessness to economic stability for mothers; and The Forum, a 40,000-member national network of women entrepreneurs.

The Work: Scope & Deliverables

GOAL: Contribute at least one research-based recommendation, strategic framework, or impact-measurement tool adopted by a LEAP initiative within six weeks, grounded in ten or more stakeholder conversations synthesized into decision-useful memos and presentations.

- National Scaling Partners**
Ecosystem map and partner-archetype framework for the Prosperity Initiative, mapping national organizations against three partner archetypes and three determinants of women's economic progress.
- OCAT ↔ Core Drivers of Scale**
Full alignment of LEAP's 31-question capacity-assessment tool to its Core Drivers of Scale framework, identifying structural gaps and redundancies.
- Leadership Lab Landscape**
Comparative analysis of the Co-Lab program against 24 peer leadership accelerators nationally.
- TEO Convening Findings**
Synthesis of cohort survey data into a findings deck and venture-grounded action plan for the Equal Opportunity initiative's annual convening.
- Foundation Prospect Briefs**
Funder-readiness profiles for Metcalf, Atkinson & Lawson ahead of an upcoming fundraising roadshow.

National scaling partners mapped to archetypes and social issue determinants

National Scaling Partner	Scholarship			Social Issue Determinant		
	System Enabler	Capital Catalyst	Knowledge Multiplier	Skills Development	Quality Employment	Business Growth
Colleges & Institutes Canada	✓			+	+	-
Business & Higher Education Roundtable	✓			+	+	-
Peoples Skills	✓				+	+
Future Skills Centre	✓				+	+
Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub	✓		✓	-	+	+
BCE - Women Entrepreneurs		✓			-	+
Women's Enterprise Organization of Canada	✓			-	+	+
Homeward Bound Capital Code Home		✓			+	+
Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce			✓	✓	+	+
Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce			✓	✓	+	+
Tamarack Institute			✓	✓	+	+
United Way Connection Canada	✓			+	+	+

OCAT questions mapped to Core Drivers
peer programs benchmarked
stakeholder conversations synthesized

Method

Each deliverable followed the same discipline: pair independent research and strategic analysis with direct engagement (Ex: interviews, site visits, practitioner conversations), so recommendations were accountable to the people and organizations they were meant to serve, not only to the frameworks used to produce them.

In the Kitchen, Not the Chef

Venture engagement is rarely straightforward: emails go unanswered for weeks, calls are rescheduled without explanation. The standing counsel among LEAP staff is not to read this as disengagement, but rather that the leaders on the other end are operating at the edge of their organizational capacity, holding together programs, staff, and grant cycles with teams that are almost always undersized relative to their mandate.

Leading Without Authority

LEAP can be in the kitchen, but it cannot be the chef. The team sees clearly what a venture needs to change (board composition, governance structure, organizational culture), but intervening directly would substitute LEAP's judgment for the venture's own, undermining the very leadership capacity the partnership is meant to build. Change has to be invited, and owned, by the organization itself.

Restraint, I came to understand, is a discipline in its own right, one that almost never appears on a deliverable, and is learned only by getting it wrong first.

Archetype Map

Partner	System Enabler	Capital Catalyst	Knowledge Multiplier	Skills Development	Quality Employment	Business Growth
Colleges & Institutes Canada	✓			+	+	-
Business & Higher Education Roundtable	✓			+	+	-
Peoples Skills	✓				+	+
Future Skills Centre	✓				+	+
Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub	✓		✓	-	+	+
BCE - Women Entrepreneurs		✓			-	+
Women's Enterprise Organization of Canada	✓			-	+	+
Homeward Bound Capital Code Home		✓			+	+
Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce			✓	✓	+	+
Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce			✓	✓	+	+
Tamarack Institute			✓	✓	+	+
United Way Connection Canada	✓			+	+	+

Where Candor Clarified the Work

What clarified the model most was hearing coworkers speak openly about friction, not only about wins. Watching people navigate cancelled calls and shifting funder priorities with patience, and name that difficulty candidly rather than smoothing over it, built more genuine respect for the work than any analysis could.

Analysis vs. Accountability

I can describe the ecosystem with precision, such as which organizations have lost federal funding, which are scaling a single program rather than an entire model. However, that description is not the same as sitting across from a woman who came through Homeward Bound. Rigorous strategy, I came to believe, requires both registers at once: the analytical distance that makes a framework useful, and the proximity that keeps it honest.

What the Summer Sharpened

Where the Work Landed

- The archetype map now structures how the Prosperity Initiative recruits and evaluates national partners.
- The OCAT-Core Drivers alignment is being incorporated into how LEAP assesses venture readiness going forward.
- The foundation briefs are already informing live fundraising conversations with Metcalf, Atkinson & Lawson Foundations.



On Trust and Distance

The team made sure I was never navigating a new city alone. Shared dinners, afternoons watching the World Cup, unplanned days touring Toronto together reinforced something I now think is inseparable from the analytical work: trust is built the same way, whether between a funder and a community, or a team and the student it took in for six weeks. There was a dynamic of warmth, energy, and joy to the team that transformed hard work into something you actually love to do. Having this sort of family-like company among coworkers is certainly what I'll search for in every room I walk into from here.

An Unfinished Question

I came in asking how capital could be made more accountable to the communities it is meant to serve. I am leaving with a version of that question I trust more, because it has been tested against interviews, site visits, and the discipline of watching LEAP choose restraint over intervention again and again. Whether that same discipline survives inside a career built around decisive recommendation is the question I do not yet have an answer to.

What tensions arise between financial sustainability and community accountability and how does an organization navigate them without resolving one at the expense of the other?