



AANDC Case Study 3: Namerind Housing Corporation's Sustainable Social Enterprise

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NAMERIND HOUSING CORPORATION'S SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

BACKGROUND

Established in 1977, Namerind Housing Corporation is a community-based non-profit organization that owns and operates over 275 affordable homes for First Nations and Métis people in Regina. While Namerind was originally founded with funding from the federal government to operate subsidized housing, Namerind has since developed a new business model. It has diversified its revenue streams in order to generate revenue through social enterprise in support of the continued provision of affordable housing. "At Namerind, we're not only concerned with providing affordable housing for our community," said Michael Laliberte, Board Chair of Namerind Housing Corporation, "We're also focused on providing opportunities for economic development and the sustainability of our organization."

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Robert Byers, Namerind's Chief Executive Officer explains, "To truly serve our community in the best way possible we have become a self-sustaining organization. We have diversified our revenue streams to include our rental units, our Patient's Lodge, a warehouse that serves as a hub for our contractors and trades, a grounds management service and a mall and pharmacy. We are always looking for new opportunities to invest in Regina while providing affordable housing to the community we serve."

Resting Place Lodge

To that end, Resting Place Lodge, Namerind Housing Corporation's first social enterprise, opened in 2007 to provide temporary, affordable rental units to Aboriginal people undergoing medical treatment in Regina. Consisting of eight fully furnished one-bedroom suites, the lodge also provides affordable accommodations for family members and caregivers, offering a supportive environment close to medical amenities during what is often a difficult time. Lodge accommodations include Internet, phone, parking and fully equipped kitchens so that families can share meals together in an affordable way while away from home. A private courtyard also offers a respite where patients and family members can relax.

The revenues generated by Resting Place Lodge allow for the employment of a cleaner and a live-in manager and offset maintenance expenses, while financial surpluses are streamlined back into Namerind's affordable housing program.

"A home away from home, Resting Place Lodge has been integral to the community, as previously there had been little affordable, temporary accommodation for people coming to Regina for medical reasons," explains Byers. The lodge has provided shelter and support to over 5,000 families since it first opened and now hosts patients and families from across Canada.

Winnipeg Street Pharmacy

In 2009 Namerind purchased a retail mall offering services from a range of vendors, including a community medical clinic employing seven doctors and two nurse practitioners. When the mall was first purchased, there was unused space beside the clinic, and in 2011, Namerind saw the opportunity to transform this space into a pharmacy. Named the Winnipeg Street Pharmacy it operates under the PharmaChoice banner.

As a part of Namerind's sustainability strategy, the Winnipeg Street Pharmacy is a means to an end. The pharmacy not only provides needed health services to the surrounding community, but also ties into the existing medical clinic, linking complimentary services. It employs a full-time and part-time pharmacist and staff, with all profits reinvested back into Namerind's affordable housing projects. "This project is one of many ways that Namerind has diversified in order to provide affordable housing in Regina within a self-sustained model," champions Byers.

Warehouse

Namerind has also acquired a centrally located warehouse, which has been a tremendous resource to the organization as it has allowed them to develop a variety of corporate and community partnerships. In providing needed storage space to local tradespeople and small businesses, Namerind has helped to support local enterprise while providing increased work opportunities to independent contractors and trades. Much of this work has been with Namerind itself, due to the extensive renovation and repair work undertaken on Namerind's existing affordable housing portfolio. Michael Laliberte proudly explains, "Our contractors are passionate about providing top quality housing. This partnership represents for us another way in which we can support our community while creating opportunities for local employment."

GroundsGuys

Namerind Housing has also increased their holdings of multi-unit dwellings, allowing for greater operational efficiency, including in grounds management. To this end, in 2013, Namerind purchased and now operates a franchise of GroundsGuys. The GroundsGuys are a residential and commercial landscaping service providing grounds maintenance not only to Namerind properties, but also to the broader community, creating a further revenue stream, which is reinvested into affordable housing.

ALIGNING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING

While Namerind has successfully established social enterprise revenue-generating projects to finance and expand their affordable housing mandate, it has been the strong relationships they have established with community partners that have solidified their success.

Namerind Housing has developed an ongoing partnership with Oxford House Society Regina, in which Namerind provides and maintains three transitional houses for sixteen individuals working through addictions-related issues.

In 2013, Namerind announced a new partnership with Kids First Regina, who provide support for parenting, nutrition, education, employment and other skills for family success in affordable homes purchased, owned and renovated by Namerind.

Raising Hope, Moving Families Forward is Namerind's most recent partnership with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services and Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority. In this partnership, Namerind purchased and renovated a ten-unit apartment building, which now provides a supportive, healthy living environment for young mothers who are recovering from addictions and for their children.

Says Byers, "People across Canada are talking about new ways to deliver affordable housing and create sustainable organizations, and for us partnerships are an important part of fostering long-term social enterprise."

THE WAY FORWARD

Namerind Housing Corporation is continuously looking for ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness, all with the goal of meeting the evolving housing needs of the community they serve. For example, beginning in 2010, Namerind announced the second largest solar project in the history of Saskatchewan when solar photovoltaic (Pv) and solar thermal panels were installed on all its multi-unit dwellings as well as their office and retail mall. "With the use of this technology, we are not only adding cost-efficient, clean power back into the grid, we are also making a long-term investment in the sustainability of our properties," said Byers.

Namerind Housing Corporation has evolved to become not only a source of affordable housing, but a source for ideas, training and economic opportunity for the broader Regina community. Robert Byers adds, "It is our goal to be financially self-sustaining, and we work towards our future with new projects and ideas each day."



*The **Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA)** is the national voice for the full range of affordable housing and homelessness issues and solutions across Canada. We have over 275 members who collectively house and shelter hundreds of thousands of Canadians, and provide housing support to many more. CHRA provides a home for the housing sector and for all who believe that every Canadian should have a decent, adequate and affordable place to call home.*

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