SOCIAL INNOVATION IN CANADA
Reflections on Past, Present and Future Directions

The Philanthropist and the McConnell Foundation

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Preface

THE HONOURABLE AHMED HUSSEN

As the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister charged with leading implementation of a Social Innovation and Social Finance (SI/SF) Strategy for Canada, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate those who have brought this timely collection together.

The book that you are holding is the result of an important collaboration between *The Philanthropist* journal and the McConnell Foundation. It grew out of a series of articles culminating in a product that brings together perspectives and examples of the diverse and growing social innovation ecosystem in Canada.

Like many leaders in the philanthropic and social innovation spaces, the Government of Canada believes in the importance of working together across sectors. A key tenet of social innovation is the importance of working together in new ways, drawing together the multiple assets and creativity of different actors and sectors to address pressing, persistent social, environmental and economic challenges.

Canada has recently embarked on the creation of Canada's first Social Innovation and Social Finance (SI/SF) Strategy and, as the world watches closely, Canada is setting out upon a bold new path to create an ecosystem to support social innovation and social finance, together with community-based organizations from coast, to coast, to coast.

The development of the SI/SF Strategy will fuel important progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals — the set of 17 targets to which our country has committed under the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Best of all, the Strategy will support social innovations across the country like those described in this collection, among others: developing novel solutions to persistent challenges; ensuring investment in R&D which includes the social sector; fostering collaboration and new alliances; prioritizing outcomes; seeing a long horizon; strengthening a culture of measurement, evaluation, and innovation in program and policy design and delivery.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce this collection to you to illustrate concrete examples of the types of social innovations that have the potential to flourish with the implementation of Canada's own SI/SF Strategy.

Social Innovation in Canada: Reflections on Past, Present and Future Directions

STEPHEN HUDDART
PRESIDENT and CEO
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As this book is being sent to press, Canada and the world are in a deepening crisis of historic proportions: a pandemic, a severe economic downturn, and beyond these, catastrophic climate change.

A virus that few had heard of in December had, by spring, spread to every country in the world, with dire and still mounting impact. If there is a silver lining here, it is in the varying speeds, levels of social solidarity, and ingenuity with which communities, organizations and nations have responded to the pandemic. In addition to providing clear indications of what it will take to address challenges like climate change, economic restructuring and racial justice, such measures have raised public trust in science, in fact-based journalism, and in compassionate leadership that prioritizes the wellbeing of society's most vulnerable. It has heightened the sense that solutions arise from all sectors of society working together.

Arguably not since World War II have we stood at the threshold of such a sweeping reordering of human affairs. For the social innovation movement, which thrives in the interstitial spaces between sectors – public, private and civil society, and across scales – from local to global – this is a moment of truth, when it is essential to accelerate the transition to a more just, sustainable, inclusive and resilient world.

As Minister Hussen notes in this book's preface, Canada's groundbreaking Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy gives us new tools with which to foster cross sectoral collaboration on society's most pressing issues and inequitable social relationships. To these we can now add a widely shared public expectation that we can and will move forward with transformative change.

This book, the result of work between 2017 and 2020, explores some of the possibilities, opportunities and challenges that the social innovation movement has faced and will continue to navigate in support of transformative systems change in Canada.

John Lorinc gets us started by discussing what is meant by the term social innovation, with examples at scales ranging from community to country. My chapter explores the evolution of social innovation in Canada between 2010 and 2017. Nabeel Ahmed and Stephen Couchman consider the roadblocks to innovation in the public sector against a backdrop of deep structural changes from the 1990's onward. In the following chapter, they show how social enterprises and new forms of collaboration such as collective impact are advancing systemic change. Then, Kristin Peu and Dan Breznitz examine the social innovation strategies and ecosystems of Canadian philanthropic foundations. Vinod Rajasekaran makes the case for strengthening Canada's "social R+D" capacity to drive inclusive growth. Next, the relationship between social justice and social innovation receives careful scrutiny from Marilyn Struthers. In the subsequent chapter, Laura Schnurr and I explore some of the intergenerational dynamics of the social innovation movement.

The final three chapters of the book take a place-based and cultural lens. Melanie Goodchild demonstrates how Indigenous social innovation is changing the rules of philanthropy. Nicolas Langelier illustrates the unique social innovation landscape of Quebec. In the final chapter, Paul McArthur and Laurence Miall consider social innovation in the United Way/Centraide movement before and during the COVID-19 crisis.

Social innovation's next chapter is up to all of us. It is time to run – not walk – into a new era, to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals over the next critical decade.

What are we talking about when we talk about social innovation?

JOHN LORINC

IN British Columbia, dozens of Lower Mainland fishers operating family-owned boats no longer have the size to sell to wholesalers. Instead, they band together to create a membership-driven club; subscribers can purchase fresh catch right off the dock. The result: sustainable food production, improved self-sufficiency for a traditional community, and experiential consumerism with a social benefit.

Across the world, in some remote regions of sub-Saharan Africa, low-income households use a new mobile banking app that allows them to lease inexpensive rooftop solar panels using a rent-to-own scheme. The result: reduced greenhouse gas emissions from generators, improved school participation by children who have light to do their homework, and the accumulation of equity in families with few assets.

Amidst the industrial precincts of New York City and Chicago, grassroots community organizations eye decommissioned elevated rail spurs and begin to envision them as potential new green spaces in these concrete jungles. These groups

raise funds locally for planning and design studies, which eventually create the political momentum needed to secure serious funding. The result: linear parks like the High Line and The 606 revitalize working class neighbourhoods and produce new public spaces frequented by locals and visitors alike.

Somewhere in between, in high-needs suburban communities, the Toronto Community Foundation underwrites a new type of after-school program, Beyond 3:30, that brings recent teachers' college grads and local non-profits right into the schools to provide non-traditional activities geared specifically to middle-school students. The result: improved nutritional practices and physical activity for the kids, and valuable experience for new teachers.

All these projects could plausibly be described as examples of social innovation: undertakings that don't neatly fit into conventional boxes, but deliver multiple social or environment benefits and even profits, all while holding out the potential for the sort of scalability that promises broader transformation.

Indeed, those working in the non-profit sector are more than familiar with the phrase. After all, "social innovation" seems to have attained the kind of ubiquity that "sustainable development" achieved after former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland released her era-defining report challenging nations to find ways to reconcile economic growth with environmental stewardship.

But while funders, policymakers and even companies with active corporate social responsibility (CSR) divisions are eager to describe the initiatives and institutions they support as socially

innovative, many of those who work in the non-profit world characterize this aspirational term as both nebulous and trendy: easy to spot with the benefit of hindsight, but tricky to operationalize and difficult to measure. "The challenge I see for this concept is that no one knows precisely what it means," muses World Wildlife Fund Canada President David Miller. "Honestly," adds James Tansey, executive director of the Centre for Social Innovation and Impact Investing at the University of British Columbia, "there's an endless debate about what's in and what's out."

The discussion, which has played out in recent years at numerous international conferences and in the pages of academic and philanthropic publications, is hardly a matter of definitional nit-picking. Most non-profits are now under intense pressure to cast their proposals and grants in the language of social innovation, which is to say outcomes, impact, deliverables, and even social enterprise subsidiaries. Moreover, following game-changing developments in the United States and the United Kingdom, provincial and federal governments in recent years have sought to hitch their policy wagons to a social innovation agenda that could encompass everything from tax incentives and dedicated funds to new legal structures designed to enable social investment. But for those familiar with such policy debates, the persistent lack of consensus has produced a mixed record – some movement on certain elements of a broad agenda, but also backsliding and stasis.

What's clear is that the answer to the question – what are we talking about when we talk about social innovation? – could re-shape the relationship between governments, private investors,

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and civil society for a generation to come. Which makes the case for finding common ground that much more compelling.

In Waterloo, in the years following Blackberry's near collapse, hundreds of former Research In Motion engineers and managers began setting up tiny tech outfits, most of them minimally financed, bootstrap businesses whose founders were driven by ideas that responded to some problem or friction they'd identified. Some had to do with optimizing a technological system, but many others had a more social focus – for example, a firm called D2L, which provides students and teachers with a novel way of sharing information about assignments, readings, tests, etc.

As in other tech hubs, like Boston and Silicon Valley, Waterloo's innovation scene encompasses a community of entrepreneurs driven more by a desire to solve problems than make megabucks; dense social networks of patient funders willing to invest in early stage firms, and fleet-footed companies that know how to make rapid course corrections and withstand the occasional mistake. They also tend to be global in outlook: more than anything, innovation-driven firms aim to scale.

In some respects, the start-up universe has some interesting similarities to the world of successful social innovation: a search for novel solutions to longstanding problems, funders with long horizons, and an outlook that prizes collaboration and new alliances over proposals that emerge entirely from within well-established institutions, be those governments or non-profits. "It's about doing things differently than were traditionally done in our sector," says Miller.

Okay, but surely that's easier said than done. Yet those who have closely examined successful examples of social innovation can identify clear patterns, such as projects or policies that require cross-sectoral collaborations that go beyond traditional funding or philanthropic arrangements. "If you're going to move the needle on homelessness, climate change, or reconciliation and you're just in your own vertical, think again," says Ken Gauthier, president of Urban Matters CCC, a Kelowna-based social enterprise.

Cherise Burda, the former director of the Pembina Institute's Ontario division, offers the example of how that organization, an Alberta-based environmental group, made a conscious choice to establish partnerships with the energy companies that often find themselves in the crosshairs of other ecology advocates. Pembina's approach was to negotiate research and even advocacy partnerships with multinationals like Royal Dutch Shell, on the understanding that the environmentalists wouldn't pull their punches or doctor their results.

In fact, such environmental-corporate engagement strategies have delivered game-changing results in the past, for example, in the 1990s, when a consortium of environmental NGOs led by Forest Ethics re-wrote the traditional advocacy playbook during a dramatic showdown over clear-cutting the Great Bear Rainforest. Led by one-time Greenpeace activist Tzeporah Berman, the group focused on consumers and high-visibility print publications like the Victoria's Secret catalogue.

The campaign, as Berman later explained to The Globe and Mail, sought to encourage large logging interests to adopt certified sustainable forest practices, which they could then promote

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to their customers and other shareholders. "We're pretty good at saying 'No, this is wrong, we oppose this,'" she told reporter Doug Saunders in 2011. "But identifying solutions that we can support is a very difficult thing." The result, a historic accord that protected tens of millions of hectares of old growth, stands as not only a great achievement in Canadian environmental politics, but, as importantly, an enduring case study in socially innovative advocacy.

The learning is that engagement with non-traditional allies is critical and a hallmark of this sort of work. Moreover, the participants in that drama succeeded in re-conceptualizing and reframing a well-established dynamic. For funders looking for evidence of social innovation in proposals, evidence of this kind of thinking is critical.

Tansey points to BC and UK organizations that re-wired the thinking about recidivism. Typically, about 85% of former prisoners return to jail for offences committed upon release. Drawing on prisoner per diems, these groups showed that it was more cost-effective to invest in programs that help ex-convicts re-establish themselves than on incarceration. They proposed that the funding for such programs come from savings to prison budgets. The innovation is that they established a virtuous circle, with a financial incentive for prevention strategy with social benefits.

The same logic underwrote one of the most innovative experiments in social policy to have emerged in Canada in recent years: Housing First, an idea pioneered in some US cities. In 2008, the federal government provided the Mental Health Commission of Canada with $110 million to run a multi-city pilot that examined how the outlays on the costs associated with homelessness – shelters, law enforcement, etc. – compare to the funding required to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals. Subsequent research showed that each dollar spent on such housing saved two dollars in downstream costs – both direct and indirect — associated with homelessness.

While these examples of social innovation reveal the crucial importance of finding new ways to unpack old problems, the question of finding fresh sources of funding or investment to underwrite such initiatives or other socially-minded, non-commercial activities increasingly dominates contemporary debates about how to use philanthropy policy to spur more and better social impact.

Toronto charity lawyer Linda Godel, a partner at Torkin Manes, points out that Canada is almost a decade behind the US and the UK when it comes to the introduction of new legal frameworks that create entities that operate in that limbo between charities and non-profits, on one hand, and private for-profit enterprises on the other. The UK government in 2014 also enacted measures allowing certain limited liability organizations to receive 30% tax breaks if they used their capital for social investments.

Besides the specifics of policy reform, the relationship between funding and innovation is complex, and some observers point out that more money can have unintended consequences. Gauthier notes that after former Alberta Premier Allison Redford launched a $1 billion social innovation fund, in the spring of 2014, the promise of a geyser of grants quickly attracted an army of consultants. The funds "took our eyes off the issues," he says.

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(Redford's short-lived successor Jim Prentice axed the fund eight months later as part of sweeping budget cuts.)

Certainly, in the world of entrepreneurial start-ups, seed funding is important but angel and venture investors also understand the importance of so-called "patient" capital: many successful tech firms have early backers who know better than to agitate for immediate revenues and profits; their investment horizons may stretch out as far as a decade. Indeed, tech investors prefer to underwrite firms led by innovation-minded founders who build companies by bootstrapping, experimentation, and making small course-corrections as they learn from mistakes. Geoff Kistruck, the Ron Binns Chair of Entrepreneur-ship at York University's Schulich School of Management, says: "If you want to spur innovation, you need to provide slack."

Rahul Bhardwaj, the former president of the Toronto Foundation, says as a funder, his group looked to back projects that were experimental and approached familiar issues in novel ways. While applicants were expected to measure a project's outcomes against a range of social impact metrics, such as obesity rates, Bhardwaj also looked for organizations that understood how to adapt their projects if they'd missed a target, or scale them if they'd hit on something that worked. "Sometimes you have to suspend the fetish for outcomes," he says. "You never know if what you're doing will work 25 or 50 years from now."

Godel, for her part, is optimistic about the prospect for more innovation in the non-profit world in the years to come. She, like others, points out that idealistic millennials are flocking to the non-profit sector, often with plans to set up their own non-profits or socially-minded businesses that aren't burdened by the tradi-tional or risk-averse ways of long-established charity boards.

As happens with large institutional backers of small start-ups, Bhardwaj says, policymakers would be well-advised to offer the next generation of social innovators a modest financial jump-start and a policy framework that provides them with the time to incubate their ideas. But if our governments truly want socially innovative ideas to surface, he adds, they should then "fade into the background."

Seven Years On and Seven Years Out: Revisiting "Patterns, Principles and Practices in Social Innovation"

STEPHEN HUDDART

"*This is an extraordinary time full of vital, transformative movements that could not be foreseen. It's also a nightmarish time. Full engagement requires the ability to perceive both.*"

– Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*

IN 2010, THE PHILANTHROPIST published several articles on social innovation, including one by me entitled "Patterns, Principles and Practices in Social Innovation." The article was a compilation of ideas, initiatives, and emerging trends in social innovation in Canada, written from my perspective as Chief Operating Officer of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. Three years earlier, the Foundation's CEO at the time, Tim Brodhead, set McConnell on a course to become a leading proponent and practitioner of social innovation, through the creation of Social Innovation Generation (SiG).

Would it be useful or interesting to revisit the paper seven years later? Perhaps, but rather than tally up what was right, wrong, or irrelevant about it, I propose to delve into critical changes in context and new challenges that have emerged over the past seven years, before proposing strategies for moving forward, principally through a resetting of the relationship between civil society and the public sector, along with participation in global networks.

Social innovation mindsets have evolved and spread since 2010, embracing complexity, scale, and systems perspectives. Where we once laboured to communicate and explain the term "social innovation," it is now in wide usage, even if its exact meaning is still debated. The Economist recently published a global social innovation index. New tools have emerged, including social innovation labs, which are proliferating globally, especially in the public sector. A growing number of social innovation leadership and training initiatives now exist, including Suncor Energy Foundation's Banff summer residency, as well as teaching and research programs at the University of Waterloo, Simon Fraser University, Queen's University, Mount Royal University, and the University of Toronto. They are joined by social enterprise incubators in schools across the country. Philanthropy, too, is evolving, with several new funder affinity groups, co-location efforts like Foundation House in Toronto, and growing participation in impact investing.

Most importantly, we have collectively deepened our capacity to address issues such as the future of our food supply, Indigenous reconciliation, and climate change.

While these are positive developments, social innovation is still the Cinderella of an innovation sisterhood that includes business, science, and technology innovation. Apart from progress among provinces — such as British Columbia's Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, Ontario's social enterprise strategy, or Saskatchewan's hub model, described later — universities, non-profits, and foundations have largely driven growth in social innovation. As Tim Draimin and Kelsey Spitz (2017) of SiG have pointed out, despite mention of social

innovation in the mandate letters of several ministers, the federal government has been slow to act.

While the value of innovation in business, science, and technology is widely championed and generously funded, considerably less attention is paid to applying innovation tools to the social systems that cost government more than $300 billion a year. This is not some neo-liberal wolf in sheep's clothing. Improving outcomes for vulnerable people; creating agile, responsive institutions; and unlocking capital that is currently absorbed by service delivery models that worsen problems they were intended to solve (as is the case with some incarceration practices, for example), are goals we can all support, and which social innovation is designed to achieve.

Another way to look at this is through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the 193 member countries of the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2015. Achieving them by 2030, as Canada has committed to doing, will take ingenuity, experimentation, and money.

Spending more on social research and development (R&D), and on scaling up viable solutions, is something that both government and philanthropy can support. Successfully shifting large systems requires trial and error – a climate in which we not only permit, but also expect, experimentation and mistakes. The fact that foundations are supposed to give money away without expectation of financial return confers upon them a valuable role in creating the conditions for social innovation to thrive – and even better, should they lose money on program-related investments, they are allowed to count such losses as grants.

Another way to improve our social infrastructure is to reshape the civic footprint of the health and education sectors. Hosting "centres for useful evidence," for example, as the UK does with its What Works Network, would ensure that stakeholders monitor research on critical issues, and translate it into lay language that is made available to policymakers, practitioners, the private sector, and the public. Universities, colleges, and hospitals can also generate social impact via responsible investment and social purchasing policies.

In a similar vein, introducing the means to sustain social innovation in social service organizations can improve outcomes and often reduce costs. The work of the service design agency InWithForward exemplifies this approach. It uses ethnography and social lab prototyping to challenge assumptions and disrupt the status quo, replacing stifling routines with active learning and innovation.

Challenge prizes, structured to integrate social, business, science, and technology innovation, as Grand Challenges Canada does for maternal and child health in the developing world, are another means of bringing about change at multiple scales.

To guide and coordinate this work, we need advisory platforms that span sectors, connecting diverse constituencies to enable long-term, systemic thinking — as the Public Policy Forum and SiG have begun to do with government and civil society participants in the nascent Social Innovation Accelerator Network.

Another way to effect a cultural shift in the way we collaborate is to convene people from across the systems we engage with for deeper thinking and co-creation, using such tools as the Art of Hosting, in natural settings conducive to reflection and imagination. We can begin to speak about a "philanthropy of place" developing in such settings as Hollyhock, the Banff Centre, Wasan Island, or Windhorse Farm. Indigenous innovation is also shaping these ways, in settings like Turtle Lodge.

It should be clear that civil society does not "own" social innovation. To attain the SDGs, it is time to scale social innovation itself. This means working with governments, including Indigenous peoples; the private sector; education and health care systems; the professions; farmers and our food system; and the media — both within Canada and at a global scale.

Social innovation's changed context

The following developments are reshaping social innovation's operating environment, and point to areas for further work:

Hard truths in a post-truth era

Two thousand years ago, Aeschylus observed that in war, the first casualty is truth. We now know that in the lead-up to both the Brexit vote and the election of Donald J. Trump in the United States, shadowy organizations used psychographic data, social media algorithms, outright lies, and political bombast to displace truth and rational discourse, with implications that become clearer by the day. What is not so clear is what war is being waged.

My 2010 paper correctly, but somewhat naively, stated "Anyone can get started with cloud computing by creating a free Google site and inviting others to collaborate." I also wrote, "A great deal of social innovation is technology-enabled,

[generating] enormous potential as well as occasional friction between old and new." Now that Google and Facebook make profitable use of the massive amounts of data that we freely offer up about ourselves, the hard question we have to ask is, "when 'free' comes at a cost to freedom, what are social innovators going to do about it?"

Even before recent events, there were critics who felt that social innovation was becoming synonymous with "social change lite," emphasizing process over outcomes, and bypassing serious, sustained work on social justice issues. The Young Foundation in the UK — one of social innovation's early champions — began to use the phrase "disruptive social innovation" to put a sharper edge on what was becoming a fuzzy concept applied to almost any incremental change.

Today we face two risks. One is that we fail to focus and organize, and thereby lose momentum in meeting the SDGs. Along with resisting those who would undermine efforts to address climate change, it is important to sustain multilateral approaches to solving global problems. This is where SIX — the Social Innovation Exchange — has a role to play, as the world's pre-eminent social innovation network. It convenes governments, businesses, academics, funders, practitioners, and intermediaries for networked learning, foresight, and collaboration. A question for us in Canada is whether to create a formal node(s) in the SIX network, particularly as we plan to sunset the current work of SiG at the end of 2017.

Another risk is that we duck our heads when it's time to speak up about public policy, for fear of contravening the arcane and undemocratic dictates of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). There is growing consensus that gov-

ernment should audit foundations and charities for financial integrity, and not for activities undertaken in pursuit of their missions. Given our responsibility for advancing the public benefit, perhaps government should hold us accountable for spending a minimum of 10% of our resources on policy advocacy, as opposed to the maximum 10% that is currently the case. As I hope will become clear, dealing with the political advocacy issue is only the beginning of what should be a broader reshaping of the relationship between government and civil society.

Winners, losers, and social innovation's dark side

My 2010 article predicted: "The combination of burgeoning IT capacity and fossil fuel shortages [that are] soon to resume, if peak oil theorists are right, foreshadows a re-localization of the economy. The term 'mass localism' describes an emerging state where complex challenges are addressed by people working in globally networked communities." Peak oil theorists may well be right, but not on the timeline I imagined. Thanks to natural gas fracking, we are awash in cheap hydrocarbons once again, and the hard-won Paris Accord is at risk of unravelling.

Meanwhile, that "burgeoning IT capacity" is being used by global corporations to displace local retailers, journalists, and taxi drivers, who are about to be joined by truck drivers sidelined by self-driving vehicles. Artificial intelligence and machine learning threaten to disrupt law, accounting, medicine, banking, and other professions once thought immune to automation. "Re-localized economies," and poorer, meaner-spirited ones at that, may well come about because of the untrammelled spread of disruptive technologies, trade wars, the building of walls, and the imposition of border taxes instead of a

managed transition via inclusive growth and networked social innovation.

Frances Westley, the J.W. McConnell chair in social innovation at the University of Waterloo, has noted[1] that participants in a social innovation program could not find one example where achieving a UN SDG would not create "losers," whose short-term interests would be thwarted. Any innovation can destroy people's attachments, and if we give insufficient attention to those who pay a price when we implement new policies, we become susceptible to the false blandishments of those who would lead us backwards to "simpler times."

In 2017 then, with an understanding that truth and technology can both be distorted to further narrow and even nefarious ends, social innovation has to become more intentional and strategic — one could say political — in the ways that it develops and shares narratives, deploys resources, and builds alliances. Further, in the era of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, social innovation shares a special responsibility with philanthropy, to respectfully engage in the patient, fundamental work of shifting cultures — beginning with decolonizing itself.

Here are three ways philanthropy can do this:

Focus on inclusive growth and networked social innovation

Inclusive growth "expands upon traditional economic growth models to include focus on the equity of health, human capital, environmental quality, social protection, and food security" (Hasmath, 2015, pp. 2-3) and is therefore a useful concept for social innovation's support of the SDGs. It is in this context that providing a universal guaranteed basic income is again in

vogue, and Canada is about to launch another serious effort to test it. The first time Canadians tested it, in Dauphin, Manitoba, from 1974-79, two groups showed lower labour force participation, as new mothers stayed home to look after their children, and teenagers in low-income households stayed in school instead of dropping out to support their families by taking low-end jobs. It seems clear that benefits accrue not only to society's most vulnerable but to society as a whole. Over the trial period, hospital visits dropped 8.5%, as did the number of mental illness-related consultations with health professionals (Forget, 2012)

The Metcalf Foundation (2017) recently published A Basic Income for Canadians: What would change?, which illustrates how nuanced a subject this is, and points out ways that stakeholders should tailor a "universal policy" to different situations.

Another promising direction lies in the networking of place-based innovation hubs, clusters, and accelerators. Whether by virtue of our immense geography or the diverse makeup of our society, Canada seems to excel at this sort of social systems innovation.

Hacking Health, which originated in Montreal in 2012, convenes health professionals and technology innovators to create solutions to front-line healthcare problems in about 60 cities worldwide. It has an impressive repository of success stories, and the team behind it will soon launch a complementary accelerator fund. Is it time to develop a parallel social service innovation network?

Another idea emanating from Montreal is Art Hives: free access community art studios.

However, that term hardly begins to describe what they do. In less than four years, Art Hives have sprung up in more than 100 places around the world. At the original location in Montreal's St. Henri neighbourhood, I've met an 80-year old woman living on social assistance and exhibiting her paintings for the first time in her life; joined a Mohawk singer conducting a 30-person chorus in the adjoining community garden; and watched a recently-immigrated Egyptian woman perform a "thank you" dance to the place and the people who helped her create a costume out of recycled materials that enabled her to relaunch her career as a belly dancer.

McConnell is currently working with the Lino and Mirella Saputo Foundation on the Maison de l'innovation sociale/Social Innovation House concept, which will operate as a mobile social innovation incubator linking people, places, and ideas across the city of Montreal and beyond, much as the 100-strong Impact Hub movement and UpSocial are doing at a global scale.

Networked initiatives like these, including the growing number of makerspaces and community laboratories, or "fab labs," are today's versions of the more than 2500 public libraries that Andrew Carnegie funded between 1883 and 1929, or the Women's Institutes that Abigail Hoodless founded in Ontario in 1898, and that now number more than 7000 around the world.

Such efforts illustrate the potential for networked mass localism to strengthen social inclusion and economic democracy as a counter to the deadening, destructive forces of exclusion, nationalism, resentment, and racism.

Taking a systems lens to this work is important to understanding both beneficial synergies and negative impacts. As the remarkable elephant curve depicts, while benefitting millions who have been helped out of poverty, globalization has also created a cohort of "losers" whose social aspirations were disrupted and whose resentment now fuels retrograde movements around the world.

Spread social innovation news we can use, and narratives of transformation

The Public Policy Forum's recent report, The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age, depicts a deepening crisis in Canadian journalism, reflecting global trends. In pointing out how the loss of "civic function journalism" puts democracy at risk, author Edward Greenspon (2017) recommends that government lift restrictions on philanthropic support for journalism. We could add that charities should be able to speak openly, hold governments to account, and advocate for policy change without arbitrary restrictions.

David Bornstein, who co-authors The New York Times' Fixes column, argues that, in addition to its watchdog role in keeping politicians honest, journalism can provide an additional public service through solutions journalism. Wikipedia defines this as:

> "An approach to news reporting that focuses on the responses to social issues as well as the problems themselves. Solutions stories, anchored in credible evidence, explain how and why responses are working, or not working. The goal of this journalistic approach is to present people with a truer, more complete view of these issues, helping to drive more effective citizenship."

Keeping with canine metaphors, Bornstein defines this as journalism's bloodhound role —

sniffing out and reporting on solutions. He is a co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), which is working with 80 news organizations to cross-pollinate discussions among communities tackling similar issues. SJN's new Solutions Story Tracker dubs itself "a rapidly expanding searchable database of rigorous reporting about responses to social problems produced by 320 news outlets featuring 100 countries."

To address the loss of local news coverage occasioned by the disappearance or merger of more than 160 community newspapers in 210 ridings across Canada since 2008, the Shattered Mirror report (Op. cit.) recommends that the national news agency, Canadian Press, create a non-profit Canadian Press Local to fill the gap in civic function journalism. What if, in doing so, it integrated networked solutions journalism capability?

Participate in Indigenous Reconciliation and Personal Renewal

The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report with 94 "calls to action" marks an historic opportunity for Indigenous peoples and all Canadians to reset a broken relationship. But while the report addresses the roles of education, healthcare, the arts, business, and government, it does not mention philanthropy and social innovation. Nevertheless, we must make a sustained commitment to overcoming centuries of colonization and the effects of cultural genocide. Hence the importance of The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action, proclaimed on May 31, 2015, and the 2015 and 2016 Indigenous Innovation summits convened by the National Association of Friendship Centres.

Moreover, this is a time when settler culture — and that includes social innovators — needs to step back to make room for, and learn from, Indigenous innovation. This includes social innovation labs (Winnipeg Boldness); impact investing funds (Raven Indigenous Impact Fund); new educational models (Dechinta); transformative social enterprises (Aki Energy); solutions to large-scale challenges like housing on reserves (ABSCAN); and restructured relationships (Canadians for a New Partnership, 4R's).

This is just the beginning, and from this beginning, there are profound lessons.

In Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations, Mohawk writer and teacher Leanne Simpson relates an Anishinaabe prophecy. She describes the Oshkimaadziig — people of all races who come together with Indigenous Nations to enter an era when spirituality transcends materialism — when "settler society [elects] to change its ways, to decolonize its relationships with the land and Indigenous Nations, and to join [. . .] in building a sustainable future based on mutual recognition, justice, and respect" (Simpson, 2008, p. 14).

At the 2015 Indigenous Innovation Summit, Anishinaabe Elder Dave Courchene called on 300 Indigenous and non-Indigenous social innovators to see that in our emerging learning and relationships, a different future could unfold during this and coming generations. At the same event, Senator Murray Sinclair said, "Innovation isn't always about creating new things. Innovation sometimes involves looking back at our old ways and bringing them forward to this new situation" (NAFC, 2015, p.5).

In an online essay about Indigenous wisdom and peacemaking, Al Etmanski (2016) wrote, "The sacred headwaters of social innovation lie in the hearts and minds of people who have no choice but to invent their way out of pain, suffering, misfortune, devastation and hardship." Indigenous wisdom and ceremony offer spiritual medicine and support to such people.

Everyone who struggles to advance peace and justice will almost certainly experience failure and defeat. They may discover that through ignorance or intent they have been complicit in something that causes harm. Such experiences can surface intense feelings of guilt, shame, and regret that, if not acknowledged, can feed anger and resistance to change. The Wellbeing Project is a global initiative designed to work with change leaders who have experienced such negative emotions. It helps them identify ways to transform these into processes of personal reconciliation, and renewed commitment.

Connecting and healing inner and outer this way is an Indigenous strength. In 2016, Manitoba Minister of Education and Training Ian Wishart, United Way CEO Connie Walker, and I were the honoured recipients of an Anishinaabe medicine song whose title was Abinoonjiiag (Children's Healing Song). As the song puts it: "The river we are paddling is the river within."

Four paths to new roles and relationship with government

Taken on their own, inclusive growth, networked social innovation, solutions journalism, and Indigenous reconciliation constitute but a partial set of approaches to social innovation needed between now and 2030. What is missing from this picture is broad engagement between civil society and government. Before outlining four paths to addressing this, let's look at what one government is doing.

The "Saskatchewan Model"
In 2010, Dale McFee, then Police Chief of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, watched in dismay as the city's crime statistics continued to mount, along with budgets for policing and incarceration. "It was clear that we were not going to arrest our way out of our problems," he recalled during a recent meeting we had in his Regina office.

Looking for an alternative, he came across Scotland's Hub Model, which integrates the efforts of police and community agencies — health, education, and social services — to integrate support to individuals and families with elevated risk factors that cannot be addressed by any agency on its own. Three years after adapting and introducing the model to Prince Albert in 2011, crimes against persons had dropped by 34%, and property crimes by 28%. Since then, the "Saskatchewan Model," based on the Scottish social innovation, has spread to 13 other municipalities and regions in the province, and to another 65 across Canada and the United States.

Today, McFee is the provincial deputy minister of corrections and policing (Ministry of Justice), and is overseeing a remarkable transformation in the way government functions. Working from a hypothesis common to many governments — that as few as 1% of recipients absorb up to a third of human service budgets, and the next 5-10% another third — McFee and his team are running numerous experiments to test different ways of doing things, pinpointing focus areas, and assessing the results using data and economic analysis.

For example, he believes that we need to reverse the trend to imprison people out of a misguided sense of wanting to punish wrongdoers. "It's not like young guys going to jail have a moderating effect on the seasoned criminals they meet there. It's the reverse — so in effect we're running trade schools to create criminals," he recounted in our conversation in Regina. "We need to employ qualified staff in facilities that focus on rehabilitation — not just the warehousing of offenders. Based on the evidence we've assembled, we've been able to repurpose a youth facility and operate it as a provincial training centre for low-risk adult offenders," McFee added, noting that a second such conversion is to be implemented in northern Saskatchewan.

McFee believes that from a systems perspective, the public sector needs to move from mere "outputs" to an "outcomes" focus. The ability to turn volumes of data into actionable insights opens up possibilities for rethinking the delivery of social services – moving from a reactive, transactional model to one that is proactive, data-informed, and transformational.

With information sharing protocols that protect privacy, and applying systems thinking, openness to experimentation, and continuous evaluation, McFee and his team are aiming to reduce expenditures on those two groups of high users while improving outcomes. And what would it take to accelerate this work? "First," McFee says, "we must see the current fiscal climate as an opportunity." Then he provides two answers: "Outcomes-based budgeting; and a platform to support experimentation and learning with community-based organizations."

Path #1 – Increase social R&D capacity

Vinod Rajasekaran has written a useful paper on social R&D, entitled Getting to Moonshot. For our purposes here, it is enough to make three points.

The first is that the federal government has made an express commitment to experimentation. The Prime Minister's mandate letter to Treasury Board President Scott Brison reads in part: "You should work with your colleagues to ensure that they are devoting a fixed percentage of program funds to experimenting with new approaches to existing problems and measuring the impact of their programs. I expect you to instill a strengthened culture of measurement, evaluation, and innovation in program and policy design and delivery."

The second is to note that numerous federal ministries are finding it expedient to go beyond the extensive consultations they've held across the country to engage selected civil society organizations as partners in deeper exploration and co-creation. There is a flurry of rapid, informal social R&D activity taking place. It is not particularly well documented or coordinated, but involves dozens and possibly hundreds of organizations working with policymakers on experimental approaches to issues like affordable housing, refugee settlement, Indigenous reconciliation, cultural industries accelerators, clean energy, smart cities, and more. Since innovation flourishes at the borders of existing systems, this is a welcome development.

It would be helpful to have some simple guidelines for such work, to allow agendas to be developed and experiments to be conducted according to an established protocol. In addition, there should be some loosening of federal and provincial spending rules, so that governments can participate in such activity without lengthy

waits for small amounts of funding, without relying on foundations and charities to provide it.

Path #2: Integrate philanthropic granting and impact investing in a social infrastructure bank

The OECD has observed, with respect to the SDGs, that public funds alone, and current methods of deploying them, are insufficient for transforming social systems.[2] In fields as diverse as education, healthcare, justice, Indigenous reconciliation, community infrastructure, open data, energy, and food security, the need to experiment, prototype, and invest in scaling up evidence-based innovation is restrained by current institutional arrangements.

By commingling capital from multiple sources, a social infrastructure bank could significantly increase Canada's capacity, not just for social innovation, but for what Grand Challenges Canada calls "integrated innovation" — social, scientific, technological, and financial innovation. One instrument the bank could use is a variation on the "capital stack," which combines different forms of capital from multiple sources to invest in a project. In a conventional capital stack, the investor who takes the most risk stands to make the greatest rate of return. An investor who takes this position in the stack makes it possible for another who has less risk tolerance to contribute to something they might not have considered supporting. Large infrastructure projects are often funded this way.

With a capacity to both grant and make program-related investments, philanthropic foundations can achieve considerable leverage in a similar manner, by creating the conditions for private and public funders to align efforts for social impact. McConnell has used this approach in a partnership to disseminate a model of owned housing on Indigenous reserves. First, we contracted with the Aboriginal Savings Corporation of Canada to document the success of a mortgage fund it operates with the Huron-Wendat First Nation, which has successfully financed more than 400 homes for band members. Next, we tested the replicability of the model with a $1.7 million demonstration fund that combined a grant and a zero-interest loan totalling $500,000 from the Foundation with matched funding from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), and a bank line of credit made on terms that reflected the Foundation and INAC's commitments. The fund provides capacity support and mortgage loans on four reserves, with promising results, and the partners are working with an investment bank and a federal agency to replicate the model at greater scale.

Social impact bonds also use private and philanthropic funds to reduce risk for government. Their use is limited in Canada but may be about to expand. The 2016 Manitoba budget, for example, expresses that government's intent to explore their use to improve outcomes for families. Loan guarantee funds (as McConnell and partners are currently developing with Desjardins Credit Union in Quebec); community bonds (Centre for Social Innovation); community development corporations (like New Dawn in Nova Scotia, a model that the Edmonton Community Foundation is adopting); cooperative land trusts (through the Vancity financial cooperative); and pooled granting funds (such as the Clean Economy Fund led by the Ivey Foundation) are a few of the many new ideas emerging in this space.

A social infrastructure bank could expand upon and integrate such activity with the national innovation agenda. With government spending

$300 billion annually on social services, and foundations holding $75 billion in endowed assets, should we not be talking about what is possible when social sector creativity, civic energy — and capital — are applied to solving complex challenges?

Path #3: Create centres for useful evidence linked to social innovation labs

To advance social innovation we need to translate research findings into language we can all understand, and then openly disseminate it, as the UK Cabinet Office does with the What Works Centres. Sharing evidence this way would inform policy and program innovation and make better use of public and charitable funding. It would also drive private investment and entrepreneurship.

However, it is important to not allow the "evidence tail" to wag the "social innovation dog." Sarah Schulman's work at InWithForward demonstrates that evidence-based decision making is not a substitute for open social innovation and deep ethnographic work that challenges the assumptions, behaviours and structures of social institutions. Kudoz, a social enterprise that offers a catalogue of free experiences, from volunteering in a pet store to visiting City Hall, to anyone who is bored, stuck, or just curious, was created out of compassion, deep listening, and imagination, not rigorous evidence. Eventually, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are necessary. Innovating within the constraints of existing institutions, without calling into question the rules of the institutions themselves, calls to mind the metaphor of rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

MaRS Solutions Lab serves as a beacon in the social lab domain. Meanwhile, public sector labs

are proliferating — there are some 22 in the federal government — and Alberta's CoLab is an outstanding example at the provincial level. When I asked its Director, Alex Ryan, what single thing he would do to extend its capacity and impact he answered: open it up to community partners. In a useful blog post describing CoLab's work he also notes:

• Culture shifts faster through collaborative project work than through a culture change initiative.

• The way to accelerate policy development is to engage more perspectives and more complexity.

• The best place to put a cross-ministry design team is in a line ministry.

Path #4: Bridge sectors with learning platforms and public challenges

Innoweave, an initiative with numerous private, public, and philanthropic partners, is primarily focused on bringing the tools and practices of social innovation to civil society organizations. Given the pressing need for public sector innovation, and the opportunity to accelerate social innovation through cross-sector collaboration, we are exploring the question: "What if Innoweave faced both the public sector and civil society simultaneously, with additional modules to support cross-sector collaboration?" We are in the formative stages of a potential partnership with a proposed federal initiative called Talent Cloud, which would test (at pilot scale) how government employees can work on discrete, time-limited projects across government and across sectors. If implemented, the first demonstration project would apply the talent cloud approach to developing civil

society, public sector, and private sector capacity to collaboratively use data.

Another type of cross-sector collaboration is the challenge platform, of which Grand Challenges Canada is an outstanding example. It is globally recognized for incubating and scaling innovations in maternal and child health, and estimates that it will have saved between 500,000 and 1.5 million lives by 2030. Why not bring this outstanding success home, to address critical health, housing, and education needs in Indigenous communities?

McConnell has partnered with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the National Association of Friendship Centres on the Indigenous Innovation Demonstration Fund. In addition to awarding grants, the fund provided capacity-building support through Innoweave. Adding peer support, expert feedback, and coaching to public challenges contributes to a vibrant culture of innovation that can advance bold policy goals with the energy and ingenuity of civil society.

And the private sector? With large cash reserves, the need for social license, and an appreciation for the fact that the world's next great fortunes will be made in the solutions economy, a growing number of enlightened global corporate leaders are turning their attention to the space where sectors meet. Canadians are well represented in the senior ranks of such corporations, but there is room for improvement within Canada. As the CEO of a leading tech company with a strong social mission lamented during a meeting[3] that convened civil society, public sector, and private companies working in the cultural industries sector, his company attracts wide interest from around the world but remarkably little from within Canada. However, with

changes in the geopolitical landscape, we may be about to repatriate a cohort of global change leaders.

The opportunity to exponentially augment Canada's innovation capacity is within reach, and social innovation should be conferring economic advantage, while addressing significant challenges.

Concluding thoughts

In 2004, urbanist and economist Jane Jacobs published Dark Age Ahead, with gloomy forecasts around the erosion of community and family life; declining relevance and quality of higher education; less science and technology in the public interest; increasingly retrogressive taxation; a lack of government responsiveness to citizens' needs; and worsening self-regulation by the professions. Somehow, she missed climate change and mass migrations of people fleeing conflict.

If some aspects of our situation today appear to validate her predictions, in other respects, we are acquiring extraordinary capacity to bring about positive, adaptive change, some of which is clustered under the ideas and practices of social innovation, social entrepreneurship, impact investing and the solutions economy, and systems change.

In Canada and around the world, this work is evolving rapidly and becoming increasingly networked. We have arrived at a threshold moment, when the work must be taken to another level of impact, durability, and scale. To bring this about we have much to do within civil society, but more than this, we need to collaborate with government and the private sector in the greater public interest.

As I finished writing this reflection I was preparing to take part in a global meeting about social innovation's next decade. When I arrived at London's Heathrow Airport, the immigration agent asked me about the purpose of my visit. "To attend a conference," I answered. "And what's it about?" he asked. "The next ten years of social innovation — how to make the world a better place," I responded. "You mean if we don't end it first," he said without smiling.

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1 Personal communication, January 2017

2 Development Co-operation Report: The Sustainable Development Goals as Business Opportunities; OECD (2016).

3 The meeting was held under "Chatham House Rules" — no attribution to individuals.

Resistance to Innovation in the Social Sector, from 1992 to 2017

NABEEL AHMED and STEPHEN COUCHMAN

IN JUNE 2013, Alastair Wilson of the UK's School for Social Entrepreneurs visited Toronto and convinced an audience of nearly 50 people to squeeze into a somewhat airless room at 7am to attend his provocatively titled talk, *Down With Meritocracy!* It described the disillusionment with an idea that had been let down by its champions.

Has innovation for social change also been let down by those who have championed it?

A silver jubilee ago the late Robert Couchman of the Donner Canadian Foundation gave a remarkably prescient speech about innovation in the social sector. His speech, subsequently published in *The Philanthropist* as *The Politics of Resistance to Change in Innovative Programming*, explored the nature of resistance to innovation and systemic change within the education, health, and social services sectors, despite billions of dollars invested by Canadian foundations and other philanthropists. "The various systems eagerly absorbed the money, often launched stunningly effective projects and, in the end, failed to integrate the

results into the core services of the system or agency," noted Couchman.

At the time, Couchman described a sector facing significant challenges. He saw philanthropic funding as critical in experimenting in original approaches which would lead to some failures but also significant systems change. We can, he said at the time, "depart from our current course," and encourage systemic change or continue to "tinker." Alas, he quoted Terry Sullivan, a member of the Premier's Council on Health, Wellbeing and Social Justice, Ontario is "littered with the remains of innovative social programs."

With input from 11 leaders in the sector who took the time to review and reflect on Couchman's 1992 article, this piece and a subsequent one will explore how the sector has evolved in the past 25 years.[1] Some, like Patrick Johnston of Borealis Advisors, had the benefit of working in the sector back in 1992 and have watched the patterns since then, while others were still in grade school at the time. Spread out across the country, they are working on themes as diverse as K-12 math literacy, Indigenous and immigrant unemployment, open data and digital transformation, and the shift to a low-carbon economy. Kofi Hope, for example, founded the Careers Education Empowerment (CEE) Centre for Young Black Professionals in Toronto; Shaun Loney launched the skills training, retrofitting social enterprise Building Urban Industries for Local Development (BUILD) in Winnipeg; and Katherine van Kooy (President and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations) and Sara Lyons (Vice President at Community Foundations of Canada) support local and national collaboration amongst non-profits in Calgary and Ottawa, respectively.

Though times are quite different than they were, much remains the same and we are once again at an important juncture. This time, the sector is not so much facing crisis as it is emerging from hiding. Taking risks, innovating, and affecting systems change, are as elusive as ever.

Many of the leaders we spoke with reflected that things had not changed that much, after all; Aaron Good of Innoweave called it a "scarily relevant assessment" and Hope remarked that "you could change the date and publish it again." However, sector leaders also expressed a much more optimistic view of the way forward. If anything, several said that the appetite for innovation has only grown over the years. We broke the responses we received into two themes: 1) the persistent challenges of introducing and scaling innovative approaches, and 2) emerging levers for systemic change that have succeeded or show promise.

This article focuses on the first theme by discussing the challenges of funding and disseminating new creative and impactful approaches that leaders identified. In Part II, we will share the key shifts that leaders point to as necessary for the way forward, such as smaller, nimbler organizations, increased access to data and networks, and a greater focus on leveraging technology to achieve positive social outcomes.

Context is important to help us understand the dynamics described in *The Politics of Resistance to Change*. Couchman and others were part of the transformation of the social sector through the middle of the 20th century as it grew from faith-based charity work, volunteer efforts, and social movements to big professionalized systems and public welfare institutions like universal healthcare, Children's Aid Societies, Family Services, and YMCAs.

By the early 1990s, however, cracks were emerging. As the economy changed and government debt increased, the public money that had supported this growth was no longer readily available and philanthropic foundations seemed reluctant to take the risks involved in funding innovation (Scott, 2003). In addition, large institutions had begun to exhibit bureaucratic inertia and frequent failures; for those on the front lines, the need for rethinking was clear (Broadbent, 1999). Couchman identified and decried a deep systemic resistance to the necessary transformations, identifying both "medieval bureaucrats… with frugal vision and constipated creativity" as well as challenges faced by young professionals questioning orthodoxy. Ultimately, his article called for a paradigm shift with more funding to protect creative programs, which in some respects has indeed taken place.

But has the introduction of innovative programs really led to systemic change in large institutions over the past 25 years? Within the nature of large institutions is a DNA that is resistant to change. Today, the system still stands frayed, often ineffective after a quarter century of "tinkering." As Hope said, "Most people who work in the system know the system isn't built for real transformation."

Ironically, several leaders suggested that the obsession with innovation itself is a culprit. Their dissatisfaction is not merely with buzz-words (a topic for another day), but a feeling that action has not followed all the talk about innovation.

Lyons echoed Couchman, noting that people can talk about innovation but not provide the necessary support systems and space for it. Anil Patel of Grantbook gave an example of this,

noting that the concept of agile development, which is predicated on rapid prototyping and iteration, is largely alien to a risk-averse sector. Johnston further identified the tendency for innovation expertise to be seen as something vested with other individuals and in other organizations, not something "in house."

The more damaging tendency, however, is making innovation an end in itself: being infatuated by the search for the latest shiny new thing while neglecting programs that work. Furthermore, says Good, we often only realize the real value of an innovation once it has been scaled. He pointed out that, in the short term, innovation can be costly and destructive. However, few funders make the necessary long-term investments to scale and sustain.

An example is the case of mentoring programs. In 2012, researchers conducted a study of former youth in care who had completed high school and carried on to post-secondary studies (Couchman & Thomas, 2014). At the time, approximately 5% of youth transitioning from care in Canada continued to college, university, or apprenticeship programs compared to the national average of 55%. When asked what had led them to continue with their educations, among several factors, all the youth identified a caring adult who supported them at a critical juncture in their lives. A mentor. The impact of mentoring has been proven in numerous studies (Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001; Crisp, 2010). Yet it is not a particularly innovative approach – the concept can be traced back to Homer's Odyssey. However, in recent years, organizations that deliver mentoring programs have been under ongoing pressure to demonstrate innovation, according to sector leaders. Why?

At the same time, innovative ideas and projects often find it difficult to scale their impact, even if they initially showed success. Playwright and mathematician John Mighton experienced this when he came up with a "guided discovery" approach to numeracy in the late 1990s. The JUMP Math curriculum, piloted in several Ontario primary schools, resulted in students gaining multiple grade levels over short periods of time. It also reduced the traditional wide bell curve in test scores to an extremely tight distribution. Despite early successes it was difficult at first for JUMP to gain traction in the broader Canadian education system. However, with support from organizations such as Ashoka and the McConnell Foundation, jurisdictions in the US and elsewhere internationally have adopted the curriculum and the program has grown to reach more than 150,000 students in Canada.

Good notes that the drive to fund innovation, although well intended, has left many organizations "spinning on experimentation" – stuck either coming up with "innovative" projects or struggling to raise funds for existing work. However, funders should by no means abandon experimentation. Government, which provides most funding for social programs, remains risk adverse. Philanthropic organizations should continue to offer the risk capital and, if anything, increase efforts in this area. Patel observed that a mere fraction of Canadian foundations act like the venture capitalists Couchman had hoped for. As Thomas Hughes pointed out, it wasn't just the invention of electricity that revolutionized the world, but also the development of large-scale power grids by "system builders." (Ventresca, 2011)

One of the best current examples of commitment to scale in Canada is the philanthropic investment in Community Food Centres Canada. Though the Community Food Centre model had proved its value at The Stop in Toronto, it took the leadership of then-Executive Director Nick Saul, coupled with significant philanthropic investment led by the Sprott Foundation, and –most importantly – the willing participation of a network of small existing community organizations, to expand the movement nationally. A successful pilot project launched two more Community Food Centres in Ontario in 2012. That same year, the team founded Community Food Centres Canada to drive dissemination. There are now eight Community Food Centres in Canada and 100 affiliates, all of which have committed to working from CFCC's shared good food principles. If this were 1992, the approach might have been to expand one organization with central control. In 2016, the same system-changing outcomes are being achieved through collaboration on the part of numerous nimble partners which benefit from shared evaluation, communication, and program resources while ensuring that local programs are tailored and responsive.

As we look to the future, interviewees identified two critical factors in successfully growing innovation for systemic change: planting the seeds and evaluating them carefully. Innovation has many points of failure, and the only way to protect it is to get agreement all the way through the line and stay the course.

Individuals are often heavily invested in the status quo, sometimes literally – as Mighton remarked (quoting Sinclair Lewis), it's hard to convince someone when their livelihood depends on not believing. This investment is not merely self-serving, however - it's built upon an intrinsic belief in the prevailing system. Who

wants to be told that their life work may be causing harm to innocent people? Mighton reminded us that doctors didn't appreciate being told that they were actually killing their patients by not washing their hands. Ignaz Semmelweis raged for years in a seemingly futile battle, ultimately being put into an asylum. His work symbolizes the backlash against new knowledge, immortalized as the Semmelweis Reflex (Ginnivan, 2014). His story also illustrates another challenge to innovation, that there is little reward for taking risks. In a fiercely competitive and increasingly precarious non-profit job market, no one wants to risk their job or organization.

Those who are sufficiently empowered run up against institutional barriers, often unable to effect change outside their silo. Organizations are restricted by funding requirements; funders are restricted by fiduciary duty. Johnston summed it up: "Risk aversion is the enemy of innovation [and] is baked into the way in which we currently define and regulate what is and can take place in the non-profit space." Vested interests and performance measures are just as pressing for organizations as they are for individuals, except the stakes are even higher. Even if a pilot does well, many of the sector leaders interviewed noted that organizations can be reluctant to take innovation further at the risk of impacting core programs.

Maytree's Elizabeth McIsaac spoke about the challenge of getting buy-in across the organization and building the culture of the long trajectory, as few have a deep understanding of change and the ability to look beyond three-year strategic plans. Patel made a striking comment on the culture of the social sector (emphasis original): "We have a cultural immunity to changing the

way we *think* about doing work." This is doubly true in government, which remains a core funder of social services and initiatives. With power centralized in the executive – which is often in permanent campaign mode – every decision must consider the optics. Modern democracies consistently yield to the quick win and ribbon-cutting photo op. Hope further linked this to "the unrelenting march of neo-liberalism which constantly asks for the dollar value without understanding that value."

Ultimately, innovation needs to fit in the system – in Mighton's words, "the responsibility of the innovator is not just to innovate but also prepare the way for the innovation." An innovation that disrupts the system can succeed, and people may be more supportive if we recognize that they may be invested in the system for historically good reasons and in good faith. An unfamiliar perspective or new information may change their view.

Andre Vallillee of the Metcalf Foundation, among others, guessed that the key is to develop self-interest across a range of stakeholders; to create the space for collaboration. Even if you can hit upon the holy grail of getting stakeholders to commit to a long-term partnership, it can be hard to keep them engaged. It is thus understandably difficult and rare to sustain a long-term campaign of change amidst shifting sands, political priorities, and turnover.

The prevailing evaluation paradigm also hampers innovation. Funders will often attempt to apply a predetermined model that tries to measure results before it is possible to understand what is happening, and which is unable to adapt to a changing environment. Leaders note that there is rarely recognition of the time and full

cost of achieving outcomes. As a result, measurement is excessively skewed towards short-term outputs and evaluation fixated on quantitative measures and financial proxies, which results in an ocean of data but limited deep learning.

Which snowflake caused the avalanche? Though long-term causal relationships remain elusive, one of the improvements over the last 25 years is the availability of evaluation tools and technology, which allows for the cost-effective collection and analysis of information. Michael Lenczner of Powered by Data highlighted how it has become much easier to track outputs of programs – across the sector, we are beginning to see increased ability to track alumni, former program participants, and "scrape big data." Though by no means a perfect science, evaluation is invaluable in ongoing refinement to programs and as a rationale for scaling. In the absence of reliable information, however, it is no surprise that few funders report any information on impact and effectiveness, let alone hold themselves accountable on measuring outcomes.

As Canadian entrepreneur and philanthropist Reza Satchu [2] has said on many occasions, "Any idiot can make a decision based on perfect information" (White, 2011). If anything, the challenges in making effective decisions with limited and incomplete information are greater in the social sector than they are in business. The commitment to scaling and sustaining innovative programs requires boldness, vision, and a willingness to take risks based on short pilots.

Actual success is incredibly difficult to predict, however. Hope reminded us of the lasting impact of the Fresh Arts program, for example. In the wake of the May 1992 race riots on

Yonge Street (which took place less than a week after Couchman's speech, curiously enough), the NDP government of the time made new investments in youth employment. Fresh Arts paired young artists with professional mentors and dedicated resources, leading to artists like Kardinal Offishall and a new generation of hip-hop music in Toronto (NOW Magazine, 2011) that now brings in, at conservative estimates, hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues (Toronto Music Advisory Council, 2016). Today we might not consider this innovative enough, says Hope. The outputs are unlikely to grab funder attention. But there are few better examples of youth programs that worked, proving Johnston's words that "an over-emphasis on demonstrable impact may serve to thwart innovation where real and sustainable change may take many years to demonstrate."

There are, of course, many more examples of how highly effective innovations have failed to take hold or have required enormous time and resources to penetrate entrenched systems. The fundamentals of human behaviour and the nature of large institutions that Couchman described have not changed significantly in the last 25 years. Despite the rhetoric of "innovation," many philanthropic organizations are as responsible for this as the institutions that they support. The need for sustained, risk-tolerant funding, the imperatives for "deliberate vision" and "relentless incrementalism," and the constant negotiation of shifting evaluative paradigms remain as relevant today as in 1992.

Yet much also has changed. Charity, business, and government are no longer as distinct as they used to be; new technology-enabled organizations can often operate more nimbly and effectively than larger mainstays; new generations of

sector professionals and philanthropists are bringing different attitudes around risk, and in particular, attitudes around funding outcomes are shifting. In Part II of this review we will look at how and why the sector is achieving systemic change through these dynamics, and the promise of the journey forward

The authors would like to thank the following individuals for taking the time to review the original 1992 article and provide reflections and input toward the themes for this piece: Shaun Loney, Aaron Good, Katherine van Kooy, Sara Lyons, Elizabeth McIsaac, Andre Valillee, Anil Patel, Patrick Johnston, Michael Lenczner, Kofi Hope, John Mighton

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1 Stephen Couchman, who has carried on the family tradition of philanthropy, suggested that we consult with other sector leaders and provided many of the connections. Nabeel Ahmed conducted most of the interviews and synthesized the feedback.

2 Not one of our interviewees.

Innovation on the Rise: Achieving Systemic Change

NABEEL AHMED and STEPHEN COUCHMAN

T HE CHALLENGE WITH understanding systemic change is that it is like describing a lake in which you are currently swimming. In Part I of this reflection on Robert Couchman's 1992 article in *The Philanthropist*, titled *The Politics of Resistance to Change in Innovative Programming*, we asked 11 leaders in the sector to comment on the current environment for innovation and systems change. A couple thought that the piece had just been written. Others noted that, in the past 25 years, philanthropic organizations have contributed to the failure of innovation by constantly demanding something new but then not supporting long term investments in approaches that worked.

Part I ended on an optimistic note with examples of current innovations that appear to be contributing to systemic change. In Part II, we expand on ways in which innovative, systemic change has impacted, and continues to impact, the social sector: new tools, a broader range of actors, ideas, and business models, funding evolutions, and a real shift from fragmentation to collaboration. Couchman predicted few, if any,

of these in 1992. We cannot say that we have a better view of the way ahead than he did 25 years ago, but we can at least describe the trajectory of the swim.

Underpinning much of the systemic change in the sector over the past 25 years has been the role of technology, which has facilitated efficiency through ease of communication and access to timely information. This has enabled new ways of operating, fundraising, measurement, and even structuring and scale of organizations. So, a small non-profit like Not Far From the Tree can bring together more than 1000 volunteers to pick more than 113,000 pounds of surplus fruit and vegetables from homes across Toronto, despite a barebones staff. Nimble non-profits can quickly implement innovative approaches at the local level, and retain their ability to identify and respond to local needs even as they grow their operations and/or open-source their systems, easing collaboration and dissemination.

Anil Patel from Grantbook pointed to new ways of operating iteratively and identified the effective use of technology as a million-dollar question. In Canada, Patel led the way in using new tools for better data collection, evaluation, and transparency through Timeraiser, a charity that connects emerging artists with young professionals in exchange for volunteer time instead of money. Timeraiser tracks and reports key metrics in real-time on its website through a Google Doc that anyone can view at any time; a simple, cheap yet rare solution in the social sector (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2015; Van Ymeren, 2015). The likes of Grantbook and Powered by Data take this work a step further with data strategies, approaches that could barely have been conceived in 1992 when information processing was much costlier.

Philanthropic Foundations Canada's *Emerging Data Practices For the Philanthropic Sector* report (2015) highlights some of the new solutions being used.

Another fundamental shift has been in the cast of socially-focused work over the last few decades, with a vastly expanded and interconnected universe of actors. Sara Lyons at Community Foundations of Canada pointed to the outdated nature of the government-charity-funder trifecta in Couchman's original article; now the private sector is not just a bit-part player but major driver of social initiatives, and both non-profits and businesses actively engage with the policy world. In contrast to Couchman's focus on the internal conversations taking place within the government bureaucracy, Lyons noted that societal shifts have driven social change in several recent examples linked to queer rights, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, disability rights, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

A new generation of changemakers and philanthropists that is open to innovative ideas and approaches accompanies, if not drives, this institutional shift. CEE Centre for Young Black Professional's Kofi Hope saw promise in the willingness of newer non-profits to engage with corporations. In addition, Aaron Good from Innoweave and Katherine van Kooy of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations identified that while this new generation brings a lot of positive impetus for change, it doesn't necessarily come from a tradition of frontline service and so has a different understanding of social issues (for both good and bad).

Social enterprise is, of course, one of the most obvious innovations to have taken root over the

last two and a half decades, although it is not a new concept. Couchman would surely argue that many of his peers would fit the definition of "social entrepreneur" if it had existed in 1992. Yet a mapping of Canadian social enterprises conducted in the early 2000s by a new start-up called Social Capital Partners resulted in only a handful of organizations across Canada. Today they are ubiquitous and the once well-defined boundary between profit and charity is now packed with a rich ecosystem of hybrid models. The recent Canadian Social Enterprise Sector Survey conducted by Mount Royal University and Simon Fraser University identified more than 7000 social enterprises reporting approximately $1.2 billion in revenues.

A need for scaling good ideas, growing openness to the idea of profit, and weariness with funder constraints are three reasons for the shift towards social enterprise identified by Shaun Loney of Winnipeg's Social Enterprise Centre (SEC) in his recent book *An Army of Problem-Solvers*. Over the past 10 years, the SEC has spun out 12 unique social enterprises linked to home insulation, water retrofits, geothermal projects on five Manitoba First Nations, farming in remote communities, an ethical temp agency, and even a bedbug remediation business. From the perspective of philanthropic contribution to social enterprise, Loney is quick to note that developing and running social enterprises is a team sport. SEC has benefited greatly over the last several years through an Ashoka fellowship, which has expanded the organization's network, reach, and program replication with social enterprises such as Toronto's Building Up, taking its lead from SEC. If all goes well, it will also play a role in federal, provincial, and municipal policy change.

Van Kooy added that the growth of social enterprise and venture philanthropy brings a new approach and skillset to the sector that is especially useful as direct social service delivery is increasingly orphaned. However, corporations and a "business-first" mentality also bring a public relations mindset that values quick and flashy wins. In addition, she noted, social work will always need some form of funding and cannot be sustained entirely through the market. Maytree's Elizabeth McIsaac agreed, saying that while social entrepreneurship can provide financial independence that spurs innovation, it should be seen as a complement, not a panacea; we can't find a business model for every problem. Investments are still needed for ventures where there is no hope of direct financial return.

As the sector has evolved, so too has the role, and types, of funders. While a service-delivery, transactional model persists in government funding, Good highlighted an increasing focus on outcomes, and recognition of the full cost of achieving success. Funders are more interested in the kind of change that a grantee was able to create (or the outcome) rather than just measuring what the grantee did with the money (the outputs)[1]. Van Kooy also described how government has moved to the business of purchasing mission-aligned outcomes, which albeit continues a dependency relationship.

Foundations and private funders have stepped up to fill the gaps. Patrick Johnston of Borealis noted both the rapid expansion of the community foundation movement as well as the broader set of tools used by all foundations. The growth in community foundations is one trend Couchman did not predict. According to Community Foundations of Canada tracking, in 1992 Canada had 28 community foundations

with collective assets worth $500 million (Moreno & Plewes, 2007). In 2016, they numbered 191 with $4.8 billion in assets (Community Foundations of Canada, 2016). As a result, community foundations now reach 85% of Canadian communities, with a 187% increase in annual granting compared to 26 years ago. Their contribution to innovation is an entirely unique topic and deserves to be profiled on its own.

Beyond providing new funding opportunities, community foundations and the rest of the philanthropic community have carved out roles in stakeholder and community convening, networking, donor education, and outcome measurement. One example of this changing role is *Vital Signs*, the annual report of community health indicators, which has grown from a modest pilot at Toronto Community Foundation in 2001. Initially developed and supported by the Maytree and Laidlaw Foundations with support from the Atkinson Foundation and the *Toronto Star*, *Vital Signs* is now a major initiative and brand undertaken in communities across Canada and around the world. A Canadian social innovation success story if ever there was one.

Collaboration was a recurring theme brought up by sector leaders. Once again, Couchman would likely have argued that working together towards a common goal is by no means new; the sector has been doing this organically for generations. Old-timers will also remember many clumsy experiments of grants given and received based on forced collaboration. In this sense, though the term is relatively recent, co-creation has been in the works for a long time.

As Andre Vallillee of Metcalf Foundation noted, there seems to be a promising trend towards shared vision and intentional systems

transformation. Funder networks – such as the Funders Alliance for Children Youth and Families, which brought together a wide range of funders around work in early childhood education, championed by Fraser Mustard – have become much more common. Rarely today do you see an issue or initiative in which a funder will "go it alone." Many of these relationships are unstructured. However, groups such as the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network, Food Funders Alliance, and The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada provide a network structure that supports learning, co-funding, and shared risk-taking: all essential elements for innovation and systems change.

At the same time, industry associations such as the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and the Ontario Nonprofit Network have built strong connective tissue and emerged as real advocates for their members. It is equally fascinating to witness the spread of the network-building and information-sharing bugs in sub-sectors for specific purposes. For example, caterToronto is a network of more than two dozen community-based caterers from low-income neighbourhoods, providing economic opportunities and bolstering micro-entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the Homeless Hub is a community-led initiative that marshals research to support evidence-based action, acting almost like a What Works centre (described as "centres for useful evidence," by Huddart, 2017).

Collective impact is another specialized tri-sector approach to collaboration that has grown in popularity and demonstrated impact. McIsaac shared the history of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), which developed in 2003 when immigrant employment

emerged as a thorny issue despite a rare moment of intergovernmental consensus. After a meeting at the Manulife office, Maytree and the Toronto City Summit Alliance (now known as Civic Action) helped the private sector realize the genuine value for businesses that could be unlocked through a sustained effort to address systemic issues. C-level executives, especially from the financial sector, provided leadership and made initial investments into specialized programming. This was combined with extensive industry and government convening to build bureaucratic buy-in, creating appetite for policy change and a willingness to take risks.

Much of this new wave of collaboration is "supercharged" by open data, in the words of Michael Lenczner of Powered by Data. Not only does open data enable greater information sharing, it transforms collaboration from being an invite-only exercise to an opportunity open to anyone interested in participating.

By many accounts, the innovation ecosystem is richer and more diverse than it was 25 years ago. Since Couchman's piece, technology has made collaboration cheaper and easier, providing access to information and improving evaluation. Network organizations have increased learning opportunities and distributed risk; small, nimble organizations have sprung up, testing innovative approaches, and increasing systems resilience. Co-creation and social enterprise, if not new concepts, are embedded in the community psyche and the spaces between business, charity, and government, once as clearly defined as the Berlin Wall, have populated rapidly In other words, it is a good time to be an innovator.

At the same time, as discussed in Part I, humans have not changed that much since the

1990s. Many of the long-term issues that created resistance to innovation still exist. Individuals are hesitant to risk their careers, and the institutions they run, in a competitive market. Organizations are reluctant to take successful innovation past the pilot phase for fear of impact on sacred programing and the loss of core funding. For the most part, funders do not make the long-term and fulsome investments required to bring many innovations to scale and evaluate their effectiveness while contributing to essential operations. And this focus on the shiny and new has led to deteriorating support for approaches that are no longer considered innovative enough, although they may continue to work extremely well.

It's been some time since we could consider the wheel an innovation, but we still use it.

What can we expect moving forward? As history continues to demonstrate, the unexpected will likely be the greatest driver of innovation and systems change. Events, many of them unfortunately negative, will force us into innovations that would not have been considered months earlier. Large institutions, from universities and symphonies, to media outlets and social services agencies, will innovate, or see their place taken by many smaller, nimble entities and self-organizing groups. Systems will become more resilient as organizations embrace risk and fail forward, learning, sharing, and adapting as they go.

And what can the philanthropic community do to promote and support innovation?

Couchman would likely have the same answer to that question as we have today: Jump in and start swimming. The water is fine.

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1 For a simple explanation of the difference, see this blog post by Joanna Fritz (2016); for a fuller treatment, see Robert Penna's *The Nonprofit Outcomes Toolbox* (2011).

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Unpacking the Social Innovation Strategies of Canadian Foundations

KRISTEN PUE and DAN BREZNITZ

S OCIAL INNOVATION HAS BECOME a popular policy buzzword globally, prompting strategies across all levels of government, as well as in business and philanthropy. Unfortunately, as many of us interested in philanthropy have noted (Lorinc 2017; McGoey 2015; Pue et al. 2015; Policy Research Initiative 2010), it is not clear why, how, and what actors are doing when they claim to do social innovation.

We wanted to understand how social innovation is being practiced in Canada; to do that, we spent a year studying the social innovation activities of Canadian philanthropic foundations. Foundations are a good window into social innovation activities because they are simultaneously incentive-setters and incentive-takers: like other charities they must conform to Canada Revenue Agency rules, while at the same time they work with charities and set funding conditions for them. As such, the social innovation behaviours of foundations can offer insight into what actors that seek to do social innovation need, and what actors that seek to fund social innovation consider. We interviewed

38 staff and board members from 18 Canadian philanthropic foundations operating in all regions of Canada and working on an array of issue areas – from early childhood education to financial inclusion in Africa, Indigenous sustainable development, foster care, arts and culture, and refugee protection. Our aim was to understand what foundations mean when they use the term social innovation and how, if at all, they are acting to promote it. This piece summarizes a few key points from our full report (Pue and Breznitz 2017).

To start, Canada has its own approach to social innovation. Although the foundations that we studied are involved in international social innovation networks, our interviewees rarely mentioned British social innovation magnates like Geoff Mulgan, or their US counterparts, such as Michael D. Mumford. The Canadian approach – the social innovation model developed by resilience theorists at the University of Waterloo – is rhetorically ubiquitous amongst Canadian foundation staff. This approach has at least two advantages. First, it emphasizes collaboration instead of the narrative of heroic entrepreneurs. Second, it stresses the immitigable nature of uncertainty and the need to be adaptable. However, our interviews revealed that foundations have struggled to put the concepts of the resilience approach into practice.

It is no surprise that social innovation is a contentious word in the world of Canadian philanthropy. While some foundations use the term – for them, the case for the term's usefulness is obvious – others do not, either because they think it is a signal for harmful developments in the sector or because they simply have no use for it. Some foundation staff and board members worry that terms like social

innovation are inaccessible and might prevent foundations from funding the most deserving organizations. There is also a good deal of confusion about how the sector should understand the term social innovation – which is consistent with the feelings of other actors, as Lorinc illuminated (2017). Despite hesitations about the term social innovation, it is clear that foundations want to promote characteristics like risk-taking, experimentation, and impact maximization, which are often associated with social innovation.

That brings us to the third finding: despite concerns and confusion about social innovation, foundations are already deploying tactics and strategies to promote it. The foundations that we studied are using 14 different devices to promote social innovation. We call these "social innovation tactics," or SITs. The SITs draw on the three kinds of resources that foundations have at their disposal: financial assets, staff capacity, and legitimacy. In the report, we explore all 14 SITs and provide case studies. Basically, they are:

1 Funding entrepreneurial individuals: an example is the Metcalf Foundation's Innovation Fellowship Program. The logic of this SIT is that foundations can use their financial resources to provide the enabling conditions for creative individuals to do social innovation.

2 Providing training to entrepreneurial individuals, for instance in the Gordon Foundation's Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship. This tactic assumes that creative individuals need certain skills to be able to do social innovation.

3 Offering early financing to charities and social enterprises; an example here is the

Vancouver Foundation's Field of Interest "Develop" and "Test" grants. An intervention of this kind assumes that a barrier to social innovation is the difficulty that new organizations have in accessing finance, especially to develop an idea or test it.

4 Providing capacity-building support to aid charities and social enterprises in implementing a new idea, for instance through the Vancouver Foundation's "Develop" cohort. The logic here is that social innovation attempts may fail because new or small organizations lack the skills to fully implement an idea.

5 Offering financing to new or small charities and social enterprises so that they can scale up existing programs, as with the Edmonton Community Foundation's impact investment. This tactic is based on an idea that new ideas may fail to achieve impact because they are unable to grow due to lack of available financing.

6 Capacity-building support to new or small charities and social enterprises so that they can scale up existing programs – for example, Innoweave's "scaling for impact" modules. This SIT assumes that new ideas may fail to achieve impact because they are unable to grow due to lack of organizational capacity.

7 Training in social innovation methodologies. The Bombardier Foundation's Philagora programming aims to do exactly that. Foundations use this tactic to fill a perceived skills gap. Social innovation methodologies refer to tools and procedures that a non-profit (or other organization) needs to do social innovation.

8 Social innovation challenges: competitions in which a foundation offers a prize for the best

"disruptive" or "innovative" solution to a specific social or environmental program, such as the MasterCard Foundation's Innovation Competition. The logic here is that foundations can lead the social innovation process by directing funds to pervasive social challenges.

9 Funding established charitable organizations to try new approaches. For example, the Donner Canadian Foundation recently funded the Ecology Action Centre to try a new approach on community-supported fishing in Atlantic Canada. The idea behind this SIT is that non-profits may not do social innovation because financing is not available to try new things.

10 Funding for research, including what is sometimes called "social R&D" (research and development). There are three kinds of social innovation supporting research: basic research about a social problem, "systems sensing" research, and applied public policy research. This tactic assumes that social innovation is partially about advancing human knowledge.

11 Identifying a desired social change and disbursing grants to achieve that change. Good examples are the Coast Fund's work on sustainable Indigenous development and Maytree's recent adoption of a human rights approach to combatting poverty. The basis of this SIT is that foundations have a unique position in society that allows them to coordinate social change efforts amongst various players.

12 Running a project in-house with the eventual aim of that project becoming an independent, self-sustaining organization. For example, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council began as a Maytree project. The idea here is that foundations have the

capacity to absorb greater levels of risk than other organizations, which allows them to experiment with new ideas directly.

13 Convening multi-stakeholder discussions on intractable social problems, as with the Energy Futures Lab. This tactic is rooted in the notion that social innovation often results from new collaboration; as such, foundations can use their influence to spur discussions amongst groups that might not otherwise cooperate.

14 Using cohorts to strengthen communities of practice, as with the Lawson Foundation's cohort on outdoor and unstructured play. This tactic assumes that social innovation is more likely to occur when experts from across an area of practice come together to consider solutions to an ongoing problem.

The foundations we studied didn't stick to a single SIT: they used multiple tactics, sometimes simultaneously, in their work. So, we thought about the different ways that SITs could be combined in social innovation strategies. Canadian foundations are using at least five social innovation strategies: leading systemic change; promoting the social innovation ecosystem; being there early; supporting creativity; and facilitating institutional innovation. In the report, we describe the strategies and their corresponding SITs.

We found that foundations are conflicted about social innovation and unsure of what the term means. And yet they are acting to promote it in a variety of ways. That is encouraging, but it does pose a problem: until we have a clearer idea of what social innovation is and its purposes it is impossible to evaluate which tactics and strategies are the most effective and under which circumstances.

So where do we go from here? An important starting point, we think, is not to overstate the value of social innovation. Many often describe social innovation as something "profound," as a signal for a movement that disrupts and sends ripples across the entire society. This might be a worthy aspiration, but it provides little practical basis for advice about how philanthropic actors can adopt their routines and policies to become more innovative. The framework that is developed also needs to acknowledge and provide space for the different types of social innovation that exist. And it should bear in mind the specific utility of social innovation. Like all innovation, social innovation can be useful for certain purposes and in certain contexts but should not be viewed as a panacea.

Perhaps more importantly, social innovation research lacks a theory of innovation. There exist plenty of theories in the field of social innovation, but *innovation* figures as the centre of analysis in none of them. Social innovation theories are generally about understanding something else about our society – frequently, new modes of governance and state-market relations – but give little attention to the meaning of innovation or its use as a conceptual tool. We propose to put innovation at the centre of the analysis, which means beginning with the term innovation. Accordingly, we define innovation as *the purposive actualization of novelty in a social setting*. This definition is academic, but it simply means that innovation is about the interaction of five dimensions: novelty, an agent, purposiveness, value creation, and adoption. In the report, and in another paper that we are now writing, we illustrate how these five dimensions can lead to a clearer sense of the different kinds of social innovation that exist. Once these are clarified, we can assess the effectiveness of social

innovation tools and to identify best practices. But in the meantime, practitioners should focus their attention on the policy levers that Canada's government and philanthropic actors can develop to routinize social innovation – in its many variants – just as we have routinized economic innovation.

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Want to Drive Inclusive Growth in Canada? Strengthen the Social Sector's R&D Prowess

VINOD RAJASEKARAN

L ET ME BEGIN WITH a story that recently moved me. It's the story of Emily. She lives in Edmonton. She is curious and creative but also a tad shy. Emily lives with a developmental disability and has found it challenging to engage with the community. We often don't create the intentional conditions in our neighbourhoods to build relationships with people like Emily.

Backed by ongoing frontline research at Skills Society, the CommuniTEA Infusion experiment is changing that.

Skills Society describes CommuniTEA as "a mobile tea house" that travels to neighbourhoods around Edmonton every year — creating a "pop-up" town square "where people come together, get to know each other, and strengthen connections." [1] People with disabilities, like Emily, are leading this experiment and taking the role of community-builders in Edmonton communities. Close to 30 neighbourhoods hosted CommuniTEA events last year.

The urge to make things better has driven human progress. From continuous innovations in automobile safety and global positioning satellites to life-saving drugs and personal telecommunications, gains from organizations with the capacity to make things better are all around us.

But you know this. You've participated in runs and other events that raise money for research and development (R&D) to generate innovations in cancer detection and treatment. We understand that in addition to *delivering* cancer screening services, there is value in organizations *developing* innovations in screening: organizations pursuing both *delivery* and *development* is a good thing.

Imagine if alongside *delivering* services to adults with developmental disabilities, agencies like Skills Society were also *developing* innovations in services and supports? Imagine if alongside *delivering* humanitarian aid, the Canadian Red Cross set up an entire mobile field platform for *developing* innovations in humanitarian relief processes with beneficiaries? Imagine if alongside *delivering* settlement support to newcomers, YMCA Canada was continuously *developing* innovations to newcomer settlement experience?

As Hunsley (2017), senior fellow at the Pearson Centre for Progressive Policy, noted in a recent blog post, "the social side – income security, human rights, immigration, heritage and culture, labour market programs, social services – is dealing with massive societal problems, and the R&D investment is minuscule."

Given the importance of the social sector, how does it fit into Canada's innovation agenda?

Let's take a look at Canada's innovation ecosystem. From the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) to Export Development Canada (EDC), from centres of excellence to Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credits, the focus has been on GDP growth. Investment has mostly been directed at companies that are both commercially- and STEM-oriented (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

On the other hand, Canada spends close to $300 billion on social outcomes and Canadians' wellbeing (OECD, 2017). While our social sector, consisting of approximately 180,000 organizations, represents 8.1% of the GDP – larger than the automotive or manufacturing industries[2] – it remains one of the least supported sectors in terms of access to R&D infrastructure, talent, and capital.

Simply put, despite its ongoing demonstrated value to Canadians, the social sector remains locked out of Canada's R&D system, making continuous development of innovative frontline solutions challenging – and inclusive growth near impossible.

Program designers have assumed that innovation-triggered productivity gains and the impact of technology on economic growth would ultimately generate shared well-being for you, for me, and for people like Emily.

Modern experience in the G7 countries has shown this is no longer true. As a result, thinking about the characteristics of innovation is changing. As Canada faces increasingly complex social, ecological, and economic challenges, many parts of the innovation ecosystem must support innovators and innovations that

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advance environmental, social, and economic wellbeing. In other words, our innovation ecosystem must become more inclusive.

Inclusive innovation pursues both the *process* and *social impact* of innovation. It is a culture of innovation that values all of Canada's innovators and orients towards impacts that directly align with an inclusive growth vision. This means that Canada's goals for economic and social impact are not mutually exclusive. This agenda could fuel innovation that enables Canadians, particularly underserved populations, to participate and create the products and the services needed to enhance the quality of life for future generations. Navdeep Bains, minister of innovation, science and economic development, and Jean-Yves Duclos, minister of families, children and social development, have expressed commitments to an inclusive growth future in which everyone can participate to their full potential. Indeed, the federal government recently announced it will co-create a Social Innovation and Social Finance strategy.

An integral component of an inclusive innovation ecosystem is an approach to R&D that is inclusive of the social sector.

The use of R&D in Canada's social sector

While STEM-oriented and commercially-oriented R&D remain important to GDP growth, addressing modern challenges — from lack of affordable housing to Indigenous communities' access to quality education and mental health — to advance social wellbeing and bridge inequality is a prerequisite to achieving inclusive growth.

"Social R&D" can be thought of as the art and science of applying research and experimental processes on the frontline to generate new insights and innovations that transform products, services, and, ultimately, lives.

The recent Social Innovation Generation (SiG) report *Getting to Moonshot: Inspiring R&D practices in Canada's social impact sector* (Rajasekaran, 2016) presents close to 50 inspiring R&D practices from across Canada. It is an initial collection that offers insight into diverse R&D methods; how capacities are built; how organizations structure their R&D functions; and how to find resources for R&D and foster the organizational culture needed to sustain it.

For example, the social enterprise organization InWithForward conducted R&D into how adults with cognitive disabilities learn, leading to the implementation of an innovative start-up in Vancouver called Kudoz, an online adult learning exchange hosting hundreds of learning experiences. This has helped to create a more inclusive, stronger community.

Youth Fusion in Montreal is seeing success in lowering high school dropout rates across Quebec by involving more than 20,000 youth-at-risk in meaningful school projects that foster learning and social integration — a practice supported by continuous experimentation.

On the streets, in First Nations communities, in shelters, in prisons, and schools across four provinces, Exeko works to better understand exclusion dynamics, to research and develop new practices that build a positive cycle of social, cultural, and intellectual inclusion and create new practice of systemic change.

Skills Society's Citizen Action Lab in Edmonton researches and develops new ways to connect people with disabilities to meaningful citizenship roles and employment opportunities where they live. This has led to people with disabilities experiencing participatory citizenship, improved quality of life, and enhanced community involvement. In addition, over the past four years, 55 people with disabilities in Edmonton found new jobs or meaningful engaged citizen-ship opportunities, and some have developed small businesses.

These compelling frontline experimental prac-tices demonstrate how R&D is accelerating the closing of gaps in youth employment, lifelong learning, citizenship, and volunteerism. Although not yet mainstream, these four organi-zations show that investment in R&D practices, capability, and culture yields advancement in wellbeing outcomes that ultimately drive greater social impact.

Federal support for social R&D

Social R&D is smarter, cheaper, and more effec-tive in the long term to inform the development of government programs and policies. Last fall, The Economist Intelligence Unit released a global index survey of how 45 countries take up social innovation. It identified Canada as a global leader – ranking our country third overall.[3]

Yet the *Getting to Moonshot* report found that public R&D funding remains inaccessible for charities and non-profit organizations. Such organizations have largely had to self-fund or use a patchwork combination of philanthropic donors. This has yielded insufficient capacity, inadequate R&D infrastructure, and ultimately,

slower progress in driving inclusive growth. And until there is a change, it will continue to do so.

Some government funded programs have begun to sense the demand for social R&D and are working to optimize entry for social mission organizations. One such example is Mitacs. In February 2015, Mitacs, a national organization that has designed and delivered research and training programs in Canada for 15 years, opened its R&D funding to non-profits, including social welfare and charitable organizations. Working with 60 universities, thousands of companies, and both federal and provincial gov-ernments, Mitacs's mission is to build partner-ships that support industrial and *social innovation* in Canada. Since it broadened eligibility, approximately 15% of Mitacs-supported R&D projects are in the social sciences and humani-ties fields. There is more work to be done to expand the program in a way that empowers non-profits to set agendas, share ambition, and shape research.

How might Canada's R&D system be inclusive of the social sector?

While there are sparks like Mitacs, weak and intermittent R&D spending by the Canadian social sector continues to yield weak results for Canada's inclusive growth agenda.

If Canada is serious about pursuing inclusive growth, its challenge is to make R&D for the social sector more accessible, visible, main-stream, systematic, and attractive across the country. This means government moving beyond simply funding innovation projects to strategically investing in social R&D infrastruc-ture: a suite of supports in advisory services, capital, talent, connectivity, and infrastructure –

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similar to its investment in commercial R&D infrastructure. The following three bottlenecks and recommendations were developed based on engaging with close to 150 social R&D practitioners across Canada, and evidence from SiG's *Getting to Moonshot* report. They're a good place to start.

1. Ineligible to apply and cumbersome navigation

Bottleneck:
Non-profit and charitable organizations are ineligible to apply for most federal government R&D funding and advisory services – both programs that support R&D through direct expenditure as well as programs matched or funded through the federal granting councils and agencies. As such, Canada's approximately 180,000 social mission organizations are unable to proactively develop new innovations, conduct research and experiments, and transform interventions – ultimately resulting in slower progress toward inclusive growth across the country.

Ways forward:
• Commission an in-depth review of all R&D programs and supports across federal entities, and assess how they align with the needs of the non-profit and charitable sector.

• Broaden eligibility for funding, infrastructure, and advisory services offered through direct expenditure and as matched funding, or funded through granting councils and agencies, to include non-profits and charities.

• Generate an online directory of all federal R&D funding available with an easy-to-access navigation portal that would help with initial self-assessments and direct social mission organizations to appropriate assistance and programs.

2. Insufficient risk capital and tailored advisory support

Bottleneck:
Non-profit and charitable organizations, like businesses, require right-sized risk capital for research and experimentation, yet the majority of the organizations are unable to access the funding needed to realize their potential. There is also a lack of advisory and technical assistance services tailored for the non-profit and charitable sector to support the pursuit of R&D. Such services would quickly connect social mission organizations to infrastructure, methodology expertise, and funding options, among other things.

Ways forward:
• The federal government can fill an important gap by facilitating access to technical assistance, shared infrastructure, and advisory services by funding the start-up of social R&D clusters, similar to clusters for commercial R&D.

• Contribute to setting up an arms-length multi-sector and multi-department social R&D fund that aggregates, reviews, and disburses philanthropic, private, and public capital for high-impact research and experimentation. The fund would structure deals in a way that minimizes risk to public capital, including building on the growing Canadian experience with prevention and pay-for-success finance, like social impact bonds, that fund innovation. A social finance fund would manage the R&D fund and it would be subject to appropriate governance structure.[4]

3. Insufficient social sector knowledge and outreach mechanisms

Bottleneck:

Federal government R&D program design, assessment and delivery staff need to improve their awareness and knowledge of Canada's non-profit and charitable sector, and, in particular, of the social R&D taking place in, and social innovations produced by, it. SiG's *Getting to Moonshot* report is a critical initial resource. Using it as a catalyst for cross-sector dialogue and action can help to yield greater connectivity, understanding, and more effective service implementation. The report could also help departments think about partnership opportunities to meet their own program experimentation imperatives.

Ways forward:

- Work closely with sector organizations such as SiG, Imagine Canada, MaRS Centre for Impact Investing, Community Foundations of Canada, Impact Hub Ottawa, Centre for Social Innovation, The JW McConnell Family Foundation, Philanthropic Foundations of Canada, as well as social R&D practitioners to develop campaigns and strategies to better market and advertise federal and federally-supported R&D funding to non-profits and charities.

- Strengthen the federal government's knowledge and integration of social innovation and create arms-length capacity to develop Social R&D metrics, benchmarks, and data infrastructure, and assess the effectiveness of programs for conducting social R&D to enable performance evaluation and guide improvements and pivots.

Concluding thoughts

The social sector is an innovation sector. We can make measurable advancements in peoples' lives within our generation if we strengthen support for research and development on the frontline.

Canadian social mission organizations are already *delivering* services and *developing* innovations that transform services. Skills Society, Kudoz, Exeko, and Youth Fusion are cases in point.

As Canada advances an inclusive growth agenda, and co-creates a Social Innovation and Social Finance strategy, now's the time to strategically invest in R&D more intentionally across Canada's social sector. This fast-emerging organizational practice allows us to accelerate the generation of new, and continuously improve existing, social innovations that enhance the lives of people like Emily.

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At odds or an opportunity? Exploring the tension between the social justice and social innovation narratives

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I<small>N</small> 2013, <small>THE TEAM AT</small> Ryerson University's Faculty of Community Service invited me to join them as the inaugural John C. Eaton Chair of Social Innovation. The faculty has deep social justice roots and it created the position just as Ryerson became Canada's first Ashoka Changemaker Campus. I stepped into a maelstrom of academic tension linked to two ways of thinking about social change: social justice and social innovation had become competing narratives at the university. Despite years of social justice work, I found myself understood as a posterchild for neoliberalism.

I have always understood social innovation to be an adaptive rather than a competing practice. Over more than a decade of financing large provincial projects at the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), I helped to fund many organizational transitions: more entrepreneurial ways of resourcing; a sharper focus on social outcome; new approaches, or the development of networks, that create the opportunity for whole system change. Neither funder nor civic organization advanced these shifts to conform

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to a political agenda, but rather to learn and adapt to current political and funding realities and to use the new capacity for connection created by the internet.

To ease my own confusion at Ryerson, and because I know polarization often disguises something interesting shifting at the tension point, I went exploring. I generated conversations with colleagues and students. Then, others working in the social sector facing the same issue began to find me, and the conversation expanded. These were not easy discussions; people often noted a sense of hurt or betrayal. And, as always in sector conversations, it is hard to infer the big picture of practice shift in a social movement from the particular work in which we are engaged – a bit like peering at the small view of the world through the wrong end of a telescope.

Fundamentally, how we organize for social change evolves over time. In the long frame of civic organizing for public benefit in Canada, are the differences between social justice and social innovation really irreconcilable? Or, as I have come to understand it, is the tension a signal of the emergence of something different? Perhaps innovating social justice organizations and social innovation organizations that have taken up equity and inclusion are the harbingers of a new terrain. Maybe these are the examples we should be highlighting as social change practice shifts.

As an organizer who had spent decades doing social justice work, social innovation arrived on my horizon about 2003 while I was working as a funder at OTF. This was several years after social justice-inspired protest helped to defeat the "common sense revolution" of the

neoliberal Harris government in Ontario (Clark, 2008). It was the first year of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, with its focus on cross-sector solutions to global problems (Phillis et al, 2008), and a few years before research from Imagine Canada (Hall et al: 2005) enabled us to think about the Canadian social sector in a broader global context.

At OTF, we could see that non-profit organizations that had survived draconian cuts to core funding were beginning to function in new ways. A few years later we noticed that OTF's system of portfolio management by sector no longer made sense. Arts and sports organizations were taking on youth homelessness, social services were becoming more entrepreneurial and moving into collaboration with unusual partners, and business was offering more viable financial contributions. Social innovation wasn't really a "thing" yet. It felt like a huge sea change in how social change work was financed, and unusual partnerships became a new normal.

Social justice organizing in Canada, on the other hand, has deep historical roots in an earlier era of big government built through the 1960s and '70s. Citizen organizing in this frame was influential in creating the national agenda of equity and inclusion that now differentiates us from our neighbours to the south. It was also influential in the immense growth of third-party non-profit-government partnerships to deliver social services to support individuals, mitigate harm, and promote inclusion through the 1970s and '80s. Many of these organizations suffered from financial cuts or constraints in the 1990s and the decades that followed (Elson, 2011).

In the long view, we might see that in postcolonial Canada we have moved through different

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eras of civic engagement, each based on a distinct set of assumptions leading to different strategies and ways of organizing for social benefit: charity, labour organizing, social justice, and now, social innovation. In pre-colonial days, Indigenous colleagues describe rich traditions of sharing as a way of providing for those in need (including colonial settlers). At least five eras, each shaped by the politics of the day and a particular set of assumptions about the relationships between the social sector, government, and commerce describe citizen efforts to organize for public good.

While this is certainly a broad historical sweep, my intention is to highlight the long view of shift points in civic organizing. New patterns of social change practice evolve and, when they do, they do not displace the former, but rather coexist in an increasingly engaged landscape of social democracy. The equation is additive, each era increasing the complexity and offering new frameworks and organizing practices that shape how we work. The constant in Canada is that we organize for public benefit as part of our DNA, creating a culture that produces the second largest civic organizing structure on the globe (Hall et al, 2005).

Both social justice and social innovation theorists speak of periodic eras or shift times. Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the early text of the social justice movement, describes social history as a series of epochs, "characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubt, values and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites." The main story of this present epoch is that of "domination — which implies its opposite, the theme of liberation, as the objective to be achieved" (2005, p.101). This powerful framework built the capacity for

power analysis and grassroots action from the new wave of feminism in the late '50s to the increasingly diverse representations of intersectionality today.

Freire also taught many of us to think in an either/or binary about our practices: good guys and bad guys, fear of tainted money from corporations, of profit motivation, and a tendency to political correctness. A moral compass and an enclave of like-minded colleagues are important in social organizing, helping us stay strong and see the forest for the trees. They can also, over time, lead social organizers to adhere to a set of frameworks that prevent exploration of new types of work. Young social justice activists are beginning to call out their colleagues on this issue (Lee, 2017a;2017b). They are part of the largest demographic shift in leadership that the social sector has experienced in recent decades (McIsaac et al, 2013).

I was first introduced to the idea of dichotomy as a way of thinking as a young woman studying the origins of the social justice movement in the 1990s. I appreciated the certainty – humanization and dehumanization – and how the political opposites of liberation and oppression led to patterns of practice: the good fight for liberation, resistance to oppression, and public processes of demonstration and mitigation. It was only much later in the LGBTQ movement and my own coming of age that I began to see how black and white categorizations disguise a wealth of experience and potential in the space between. Dichotomous thinking may bring a temporary hard-edged moral clarity to our thinking, but the beauty, the invention, the prize is hidden in the space between. Imagine social justice practice that fosters invention, or social innovation practice that advances equity. In

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reality, between social justice and social innovation, cross-over examples abound in the constantly mobile patterns of civic organizing practice in this country.

Maayan Ziv is a cross-over organizer. A young person living with disability, she has been working on the traditional social justice terrain of accessibility from inside one of Ryerson's social innovation zones. She has developed a highly successful app that enables people with disabilities to crowd source information about access to public buildings. In a video in the Rideau Hall Foundation's My Giving Moment series, she speaks about applying social innovation thinking to a social justice problem traditionally approached on campus with advocacy and protest.

"There have been barriers for centuries," she says. "There has been a certain kind of repetitive approach to how we . . . solve these problems, but [there is something] in the nature of creating a conversation and just literally doing it. There is a lot you can do without fighting – that pushing against. Accessibility is traditionally associated with an institutional tone and we want to move away from this. [It] can be sexy, and it can be fun, it needs to be fun, and if it isn't then we won't see the engagement that we need to see. With a different tone we are able to inspire people to be a part of what we've started."

Another example is Adil Dhalla, executive director of the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) in Toronto. He is deliberately experimenting in the middle place. He brings CSI's focus on innovation to crafting events and processes that support the emergence of a more collaborative and inclusive Toronto. From educational events on being an ally to the Toronto for

Everyone festival, Dhalla blends the intentions of social justice and the practices of social innovation.

Meanwhile, UNICEF Canada, recognized for its global efforts toward equity for children, is using social innovation labs and design methodology to collaboratively develop measures of wellbeing for Canadian children (UNICEF, 2017).

In my conversations at Ryerson and in the sector I came to see "this or that" conversations about social innovation and social justice often set the two in opposition and limit the potential for exploration of the space in between. One of the contributions of social innovation theory to social change organizing is the focus on systems theory and complexity, processes that watch for the patterns rather than the detail, and deliberately promote the engagement of difference. When we create conversations that respectfully explore similarities and differences in how citizens are organizing for social benefit, and factor in the impact of political shifts on our organizing environments, it becomes possible to see the creative and emergent practices at the juncture of the tension.

The tension between social justice and social innovation organizers fits Glenda Eoyang's profile of a "sticky issue": one that is too complex to solve and hangs around for a long time (Eoyang & Holladay, 2013). Eoyang is founder of the Human Systems Dynamics Institute and she suggests that to move constructively through this kind of issue, we need to look for patterns: "similarities, difference and connections that have meaning across space and time" (HSD Institute). This allows us to home in on the relationship between components and spot the patterns that hold a social system in stasis.

Scott Kelso and David Engstrøm's work on complementary pairs takes this idea a little further. Taking inspiration from quantum physics, which requires us to understand a wave and a particle as potentially the same, they suggest a complementary, rather than mutually exclusive and contradictory, naming of similarities and differences. As Freire taught us to see aspects of our social world in opposing frames, the authors suggest that we can find a new understanding by seeing them as pairs in relationship to one another. Indicated by a tilde (~), suggesting not equivalence or opposition, but relationship, we can learn to see the relationship between two aspects of very different social organizing practices (Kelso & Engstrøm, 2006). Simply put, imagine two images: an open and then a closed door. Together, the two tell us much more about the capacity and function of a door than either image alone.

To understand complex systems, like movements of citizens organizing for public good, the authors suggest: "The dynamics of complementary pairs is where the action is" (Ibid, p. 8). In social justice terms oppression~liberation invites us to a deeper conversation about what liberation tells us about oppression. Social justice~social innovation could tell us more about emerging social organizing practice. Complementary conversation, the authors suggest "breathes life back into the dichotomy by representing opposing tendencies… as a dynamic which can be tilted in either direction" (ibid: p. xv). In this tilting, what might we see emerging at the juncture of two practices for social change?

Dimensions of complementarity between social justice and social innovation

I first tried out the social justice~social innovation framework in conversation with members

of Studio Y, a program for young systems change leaders at the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, after conflict arose in their work. Following many similar conversations, I present some thematic pairs here, with a very brief explanation, to invite readers to try this framework. Borrowing from social innovation practice, I have used an asset frame (rather than a critical frame) to be inclusive and to keep the conversation from becoming pejorative. Try it your way and see what happens. This list is not exhaustive. If it triggers other pairs for exploration, the conversation is working, and I encourage you to keep the discussion going. This is a process and we will learn by doing.

Age and stage: established and entrenched ~ new and fluid

One obvious dimension of difference is the long history of social justice work and the relatively short story of social innovation practice. The rich theory-building of the social justice movement and often profound analysis of power relations offers more rigour in thought than social innovators have had time to muster. Young social justice leaders have mentors, teachers, and a history. Conversely, social innovation is new, and with just a couple of decades of existence, is still inventing itself. It also spans an incredibly large sphere of influence and a multitude of definitions. Leadership is primarily held by young people who have grown up in the fluid and global world of internet relations, less bound by institutional allegiance, political correctness, and traditions of social good production. Deeply committed to social and ecological goals, they often prefer to mentor one another.

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Call to action: equity, justice, and inclusion ~ social problem solving

Social justice employs a well-honed frame on equity and justice as the goal of practice. Social innovators, on the other hand, prize solution-finding for social problems. They are less concerned with measures of equity and more focused on the production and experimental prototyping of new interventions. The scale of their work is far-reaching and often not bound by traditional organizational relationships. The product may serve social inclusion but without the deeper analysis. A social justice critique is that they can also inadvertently do harm, perhaps reinforcing an existing system of injustice while demonstrating improvement in the lives of a few.

Practice paradigm: resistance ~ invention

A social innovation lab is not a helpful pattern of practice in a response to the current repressive politics in the United States. There we see a highly effective resurgence of resistance politics. On the other hand, a design-centred approach is creating an innovation revolution in some traditional health and social service processes, such as infection and disease control and harm reduction. Many social entrepreneurs experimenting with innovative approaches do, in fact, improve lives. Two processes with different purposes are not mutually exclusive. They can be tangential. Where do social justice actions and services open space for innovation? How does a deeper assessment of justice in innovation foster a deeper understanding of impact?

Thinking model: critical thinking ~ asset-based thinking

Freire's description of critical pedagogy recognizes the connections between individuals' experience of "social problems" and the social/political contexts in which they live (Freire, 2005). This style of thinking has created a deeply skeptical approach to systems of power. Social innovation thinkers, on the other hand, tend to take more of an asset-based and opportunistic frame. Cooperrider's appreciative inquiry process is about the "co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them" (AI Commons). It aims to locate and amplify what is working in a system rather than identifying problems or needs as flaws to be resisted or corrected. As a system of thinking, appreciative inquiry tends to generate hope and opportunity, and less critical analysis.

Result orientation: access to justice and equity ~ improved social outcome

Depending on where you sit on the social justice spectrum of liberal or radical reform, the outcome of social justice work can range from social service to support equity to outright restructuring. Never a pure divide, this pair is often used inside social justice work as a touchstone to strategy in keeping with the broad goals of a social movement. Social innovators tend to aim for tangible measures of improved social outcome.

Relations of power: influencing government ~ partnering with business

The social justice movement began in an era of big government and it holds tightly to this ideal. In Canada, social change organizers saw government as an ally and financial partner in the '70s and early '80s in building a pluralist and inclusive society. Alternatively, we also saw public resistance to wrong-headed policy or leadership as a key practice for influence. Social innovation

on the other hand, was born in an era of tightening government financial contributions to civil society and its champions have much lower expectations of government as ally, sometimes skipping that conversation altogether. A young social innovation academic studying social finance recently pointed out that he has never known a period not characterized by government fiscal restraint. It was out of this acceptance of a different relationship with government that we saw the genesis of social finance as a solution to the lack of capital for social good (Canadian Task Force on Social Finance, 2010).

Approach to language: nuanced and power aware ~ loose and constantly changing

Language in social innovation is ambiguous and fluid. It is also highly inclusionary – if you are in the room. Social justice organizers, on the other hand, have made a science of precision in language. This has brought enormous clarity to social movements and issue identification, but it is also limiting. I recently sat in a university committee meeting where the topic was the climbing rate of student suicide attempts. Social solutions did not make the agenda, we rather spoke about "madness" as a politicized concept – rich discussions, but the meeting ended without a plan. In switching frames to a social innovation lab context, the conversations may have yielded a dozen strategies to prototype, but less insight into the nuances of power.

Who is at the table: intentional inclusion ~ whoever shows up

Social justice has promoted specific kinds of inclusion, creating avenues and practices for marginal voice and participation. The price can be enclaves of like-thinkers bound by a web of

political correctness that privilege tight networks of those who have worked together before and can claim solidarity. This view of relationships can enable deep thinking and ensure fast turn-out in response to social issues, such as a public march, but it can also foster a narrow sorting of public actors as "good guys" and "bad guys." Social innovation activities, on the other hand, are often criticized, even inside social innovation circles, for fostering mainstream participation, activity located in white and middle-class enclaves. They tend to be characterized by loose and informal networks – often the source of synergy, but without the opportunity for a deeper social analysis or conversation about power and privilege.

Partnership: trusted allies ~ generative relationships

One of my most thoughtful conversations during this process was about trust in social organizing and a fear of being co-opted: a strategy, meant to create change, ends up serving the status quo. In the long frame of social organizing it is hard to predict impact and there is always the risk of unintended consequence. One of the ways we mitigate that risk is through our choice of partnerships. Who do we take money from, whose network do we leverage, how far into our circle do we bring the opposition? In the current fiscal climate, partnerships are the leverage points for capital. Social innovation organizers are adept at resource relationships with dominant systems players (governments or corporations), which can see them seduced into relationships of privilege that co-opt strategy. Where social justice seeks allies with common values, sometimes going to great lengths to articulate commonality, social innovation practices are often deliberate about creating working relationships amongst

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very different types of organizations or individuals. This strategy fosters a deliberate exchange to generate new – sometimes called "generative" – relationships (Lane & Maxwell, 1995; Zimmerman & Hayday, 2003).

The "so what?": working between two narratives in a shift time

The organizers of Spark Canadian Social Innovation Exchange invited me to workshop this way of engaging in the social justice/social innovation conversation at their 2017 event. Conference planners were deliberate about including social justice organizers and highlighting voices of diverse young activists, a disruption in the usual patterns of social innovation meet-ups. I had the opportunity to co-facilitate with Nadia Duguay of the Montreal-based organization Exeko, which routinely uses theatre in its social justice training work. So we did theatre: arbitrarily dividing participants into social justice or social innovation groups, regardless of their real organizing affiliation, and invited them to voice critique of the other. And they did, heckling back and forth in a hysterically funny display, the laughter and anonymity revealing critique, but also releasing tension and softening rancour. Then, in small groups, participants went deeper, selecting one of the complementary pairs to provide structure to the conversation and begin to imagine what hybrid practice might offer.

As I worked to the deadline for this paper, I paused to coach on a change project focused on social housing and space for making art. Well beyond the conceptual stage, the project is engaging political interest at a time of public housing failure in Toronto. Organizers are not preoccupied with social movement identity. Their focus is on an idea and the people who will benefit. As the conversation unfolded, I could hear elements of both justice and innovation practice and noticed that often the shift points required in their work came at the junctures. How could a laser clear focus on vision and a value proposition help to ethically manage the interests of unusual financial partners? They noted that focus on equity requires genuine and ongoing engagement in the work, and that community-building is about weaving together existing networks. They had overlooked critical relationships at the margins of their network in the rush to meet funder requirements – relationships that held them accountable to their purpose.

This coaching session brought me back to the uncomfortable tension between narratives at Ryerson. I realize that conscious fluency in both, attained through many (often difficult) conversations, now makes my work stronger. I wish this also for the many others who engaged with me in similar difficult moments in their work. This is a generative moment with the potential to build social organizing practice that has stronger impact than when we work from either narrative alone. What if we could convene conversations around the country looking at our experience of what is the same and different between social justice and social innovation? What if we could loosen our organizing assumptions a little and make room for something we cannot imagine from our current state of play – a little more invention in social justice, a little more justice in social innovation? What if this is already happening and we just need to notice it and then amplify the process?

I want to acknowledge the many people who have had conversations with me on the topic of the intersection between social justice and social innovation over the last

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At odds or an opportunity? Exploring the tension between the social justice and social innovation narratives

MARILYN STRUTHERS

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A Co-Creation Story: Reflections on Social Innovation's Coming-of-Age Moment

STEPHEN HUDDART and LAURA SCHNURR

THREE EVENTS OVER the course of one week in November 2017 shone a light on the past, present, and future of social innovation in Canada.

At the Social Innovation Generation (SiG) Sunset event, 500 people gathered at MaRS in Toronto to celebrate the end of SiG. Originating in Tim Brodhead's realization that philanthropy's toolkit was inadequate to addressing the complex challenges of our era, the 10-year SiG partnership was instrumental in introducing social innovation to Canada. [1]

SiG had a difficult birth and, like all beginnings, contained seeds of what was to follow. It had a hard time explaining just what social innovation is and is not. In particular, making it clear that while social enterprise is an important field in its own right, and a complement to shifting the economic centre of gravity towards greater inclusion and sustainability, it does not constitute the entirety of social innovation. At its inception, SiG attracted criticism from some who felt that it wasn't paying adequate regard to the social

change work that they had been carrying out in the trenches for decades. Initially, SiG partners had a hard time finding direction and momentum. In a twist on the title of the seminal social innovation text, *Getting to Maybe*,[2] SiG insiders joked that they could write a follow-up volume entitled *Getting to Maybe Not*. It was the addition of a fifth element, a national office led by Tim Draimin, founder and former head of Tides Canada Foundation, that proved catalytic.

One takeaway from that 2017 evening at MaRS: SiG succeeded in getting social innovation "into the water supply," as Al Etmanski used to put it. Another was a book titled *Social Innovation Generation: Fostering a Canadian Ecosystem for Systems Change*.[3]

Meanwhile, across town at the Regent Park Community Centre, the Canadian Social Innovation Exchange (now known as Social Innovation Canada) hosted Spark, a lively three-day gathering of 250 social innovators, community activists, philanthropists, and movement leaders. The feeling in plenaries and workshops was of social innovation in the making – meeting new people, surfacing bold ideas, exploring possibility, and occasionally being pointedly reminded not to come across as smug or elitist. As one young Indigenous activist put it, social innovation should not be "colonialism with a smile."

The third event was The Future of Good. At this invitation-only event co-designed by three co-founders of Impact Hub Ottawa, the focus was on social innovation's frontiers – the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social R&D, the relationship with public sector innovation, behavioural economics, outcomes finance, and social narratives for cultural transformation.

If that week mapped some of social innovation's trajectory, an announcement in June 2017 signalled that the social innovation ecosystem was about to get a lot larger. Following the Prime Minister's mandate letter, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos appointed 17 members to a diverse steering group mandated to co-create recommendations for a Canadian social innovation and social finance strategy.[4]

Co-creation: an invitation to shape the future together

When Minister Duclos announced that government was going to co-create the Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy (SISFS) with leaders from the social innovation and social finance fields, some questioned whether this was going to be just another advisory process that would present a report to government only to see it languish in obscurity.

Au contraire.

At the first SISFS meeting, Duclos told us to be bold—not to hold back for fear of asking too much or of upsetting the status quo in government. We like to think that we gave him what he asked for.

Over the course of a year, the Steering Group held five multi-day meetings and innumerable conference calls, formed several subgroups on specific pillars of activity, and ran a large-scale engagement process consisting of two online engagement platforms and more than 50 in-person consultations across the country.

The final report, *Inclusive Innovation: New Ideas and New Partnerships for Stronger Communities*, makes 12 recommendations:

1 Create federal framework legislation to anchor commitment and long-term policy action supporting social innovation and social finance;

2 Establish a permanent multi-sector Social Innovation Council;

3 Create a permanent government Office for Social Innovation;

4 Improve social purpose organizations' access to federal innovation, business development, and skills training programs;

5 Establish a cross-sector Social Innovation Ecosystem Program to address gaps in early-stage support, capacity building, and impact measurement;

6 Create a Social Finance Fund to accelerate the development of social finance ecosystems across Canada;

7 Ensure federal funding practices support and enable social innovation by focusing more on outcomes and less on process and outputs;

8 Incorporate social procurement guidelines, tools, and training into the Government's focus on a cohesive sustainable procurement plan;

9 Address the legal and regulatory issues impeding charities and non-profits from engaging in social innovation, social finance, and social enterprise;

10 Initiate a series of controlled regulatory experiments, or "sandboxes," to explore and experiment with new regulatory models;

11 Establish a Social Innovation Evidence Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative; and

12 Conduct a national social innovation and social finance awareness campaign.

The report was released on August 31 and the government's initial response appeared on November 21 in its Fall Economic Statement, when it announced an investment of $805 million over 10 years to develop the Canadian social finance market. This includes $755 million for a Social Finance Fund and a $50 million granting stream to boost investment readiness.

For philanthropic foundations – long accustomed to annually granting 3.5% of their endowments, and more recently challenged to get involved in impact investments that generate social and environmental benefits as well financial returns – the Social Finance Fund offers a powerful new tool for leveraging their donations and investments with capital from the public and private sectors. For community organizations that have struggled to cover core costs while competing for grants and government contributions, it opens opportunities to use repayable capital for establishing social enterprises. It also provides capital for community-driven social impact bonds such as the recently announced Indigenous doulas pilot – Manitoba's first social impact bond – which is raising $3 million in private investment for a program aimed at reducing the number of children in care.

For universities and colleges, there is untapped capacity to leverage diverse assets – financial, physical, relational, research, and educational – to strengthen communities. For example, the University of Winnipeg's Community Renewal Corporation is investing in local development

through social purpose real estate and a food services social enterprise. The Social Finance Fund offers new investment capital to complement impact investing by university endowments, enabling these institutions to play a more active role in shaping better outcomes and opportunities for students and their communities.

There is much more — and much more to accomplish before the fund becomes operational, but it is a landmark achievement for social finance advocates and practitioners, and one that had been a long time coming (the first major call came in 2010 from the Canadian Task Force on Social Finance). It also positions Canada as a global leader, joining several countries that have established such funds or are in the process of doing so — including the UK, Portugal, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the European Union.

The budget also included the establishment of a permanent Advisory Committee for the Charitable Sector, which the government will house at the Canada Revenue Agency. This was in response to the recommendations of the Consultation Panel on the Political Activities of Charities, as well as the Steering Group. The government has indicated that it is exploring the remaining recommendations and further announcements are expected in early 2019.

It took political will to deliver on this effort, beginning with the Prime Minister's 2015 mandate letter to Minister Duclos. The process was time consuming and required patience, diplomacy, and confidence that the government would act on its recommendations. While ultimately successful, there is work to do to make this kind of cross-sector collaboration easier. There should be little doubt about its importance to future policy innovation and social progress.

It is worth highlighting that a pair of personnel exchanges, only partially planned, helped to catalyze the work of the Steering Committee. Co-author Laura Schnurr, a policy analyst with the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) social innovation division that would lead the co-creation process, joined the McConnell Foundation on a one-year secondment, just before work got underway. At the same time, Brittany Fritsch, manager of public policy at Imagine Canada, joined the ESDC innovation team. Separately and together, they helped to overcome the translational difficulties that can occur with such an initiative.

The result is a bold investment in our collective capacity to transform today's challenges into opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth, in line with the SDGs, and involving all sectors of society. It sets the stage for further work on developing and funding solutions, at the speed and scale required at this critical time.

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1 The SiG partners were the PLAN Institute, led by Al Etmanski and Vicki Cammack; The University of Waterloo, where Frances Westley held the McConnel Chair in Social Innovation (Now WI-SIR); MaRS Discovery District, led by Ilse Treurnicht and Allyson Hewitt; and the McConnell Foundation.

2 Getting to Maybe, Frances Wesley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Patton, Vintage Canada, 2007

3 For a free copy, send a stamped self-addressed 11x14 envelope to Ana Sofia Hibon, McConnell Foundation, 1002 Sherbrooke St. W. Montreal H3A 3L6

4 As a member of the committee, Stephen Huddart found the experience as demanding as it was rewarding.

Reparations and Reconciliation: Embracing Indigenous Social Innovation and Changing the Rules of Philanthropy

MELANIE GOODCHILD

I started thinking more critically about philanthropy's potential as I prepared my keynote address for this year's Canadian Environmental Grantmaker's Network (CEGN) annual conference. The theme of my talk was "decolonizing philanthropy." In 2015-16, I was a fellow in the International Women's Forum (IWF) and my mentor was an IWF member and philanthropist from New York City. We had many opportunities to talk about fundraising during our visits together. She was generous with her money, her time, and her wisdom, and I began to wonder how we could take philanthropy in Canada to a new level. To do so, we would have to understand philanthropy's underlying structure and to what degree it serves, or harms, Indigenous peoples.

As AnishinaabeKwe (an Ojibway woman) I have dedicated my entire career to improving the quality of life for Indigenous peoples. Our life chances, social conditions, and living standards have improved, however they still do not come close to those enjoyed by non-Indigenous peoples. I studied sociology because I wanted to

understand the dynamics of society and what drivers led us to the place we are at in Canada. As a youth activist, I fought for equality and against racism in Thunder Bay, where I went to high school. Later, I spent seven years with Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), a political territorial organization (PTO) representing 49 First Nations, including 32 remote, fly-in reserves. These communities face what social innovators call "wicked problems," with deep roots in colonialism. These issues are highly resistant to resolution through any of the existing modes of problem-solving.[1]

A suicide epidemic is a wicked problem. I worked on youth suicide prevention for five of my seven years at NAN. In 2018, APTN reported that data revealed close to 600 suicides in these northern Ontario communities since the mid-1980s. A third of these deaths are young people, between the ages of 15-20. The most common method is hanging.[2] My uncle hung himself when I was 11 years old. Colonialism in Canada has provided a history of heartache.

Solving wicked problems can be a matter of life and death for Indigenous peoples. I found in social innovation – when I participated in the Getting to Maybe: Social Innovation Residency at the Banff Centre in 2015 – an insightful way to see, comprehend, and potentially transform the systems that continue to produce undesirable, and often deadly, outcomes for our communities.

If "social innovation"[3] is about large-scale, transformative change that disrupts the status quo and addresses inequitable power dynamics, and "reconciliation" is about, as Reconciliation Canada suggests, creating a vibrant, inclusive

Canada where all peoples achieve their full potential and shared prosperity,[4] then perhaps changing the rules of philanthropy is good place to start.

For Indigenous peoples, most wicked problems are bound up in a history of colonization and genocide. The layered traumas caused by dehumanizing policies and practices, such as the Indian Act and Indian Residential Schools, manifest in high rates of suicide, addiction, violence, morbidity, and mortality. Ongoing issues of inequity linked to poverty, water quality, sanitation, housing, child welfare, unemployment, incarceration, and education levels are as prevalent today in many places as they were during my youth. I still keep a copy of *People to People, Nation to Nation*, a book of highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), on my bookshelf. It was a beacon of hope as a young activist, outlining opinions and proposed solutions to the many "complex issues" raised by the 16-point mandate set out by the government of Canada in August of 1991. The commissioners presented an integrated agenda for change.

RCAP was the seed that planted reconciliation in Canada. University of Manitoba professor Kiera Ladner argues that reconciliation is a process, an action, something that must be continually created and maintained. RCAP said that reconciliation is about finding a way to live together in a mutually agreeable, mutually beneficial manner. In this way, reconciliation begins, not ends, with acknowledging the past and saying, "I'm sorry." Further, reconciliation cannot happen without a transformation of consciousness by settler society.[5] The commissioners argued that Canada, as a nation, was a test case for a grand notion – that dissimilar

peoples can share lands, resources, power, and dreams while respecting and sustaining their differences. Their main guiding question was, what are the foundations of a fair and honourable relationship between the "Aboriginal" and "non-Aboriginal" people of Canada? RCAP acknowledged that assimilation policies had done a great deal of damage, leaving a legacy of brokenness affecting Indigenous individuals, families, and communities. The damage has been equally serious to the spirit of Canada, to the spirit of its generosity. But the damage is not beyond repair, they argued. "Repair" is also a significant concept in decolonizing philanthropy.

Edgar Villanueva, of the Lumbee Tribe, has written eloquently about this in his groundbreaking 2018 book, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance.* Villanueva asks an important question: what if money could heal us? A main premise of his argument in favour of decolonizing wealth and philanthropy is that money itself is inherently value neutral. It is human beings who have used money wrongfully. "European white imperialism spent centuries marching around the world, using whatever means necessary to amass and consolidate resources and wealth," he writes.[6] To add insult to injury, now Indigenous peoples must apply for access to that wealth through loans or grants. "Repair" is step seven in Villanueva's "seven steps to healing" for the philanthropic sector.

Indigenous people are largely left out of philanthropy. Internationally, direct funding to Indigenous peoples represents a tiny fraction of giving, according to International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP).[7] While Indigenous issues cut across most program areas, a key finding from Foundation Center in 2015 shows

that, globally, funders tend to support Indigenous communities through environmental, human rights and international affairs programs. Few funders have a dedicated program for Indigenous peoples. However, some funders have created wide program areas that can incorporate intersecting issues, such as climate change, food sovereignty, and Indigenous communities.

The University of Toronto recently announced it received its largest-ever donation, a $100-million gift to further the school's research on artificial intelligence, biomedicine, and how new technologies can disrupt and enrich lives.[8] The donation, from the Gerald Schwartz and Heather Reisman Foundation, will in part go to a new 750,000 square foot complex in downtown Toronto called the Schwartz Reisman Innovation Centre, designed to help spark Canadian innovation and examine how technology shapes people's lives.

What if someone created an endowment or fund for Indigenous social innovation with that level of support, to be governed by Indigenous peoples? That would be a powerful act of reconciliation given that Indigenous peoples' lack of access to capital – some of the very capital that generates income for foundations and corporations – is due to colonization that included theft of lands and resources. Many similar landmark gifts have been announced over the past few years – much of it from wealth made on the backs of Native people across Turtle Island. As Villanueva says, "Our peoples and our lands were exploited, over generations, over centuries, and ongoing. Yet despite our role in creating that wealth, white supremacy continues to deny us access to it."[9]

Instead, he argues, we are demeaned for our lack of resources and called lazy. We must

jump through hoops and prove ourselves worthy to get a piece of it in the form of loans or grants. As the founder of an Indigenous, non-profit start-up called Turtle Island Institute (TII), a social innovation "think and do tank," I do jump through hoops. TII offers Indigenous and non-Indigenous changemakers a suite of land- and culture-based methodologies and tools, based in Indigenous epistemologies, to support transformative social change. Complex systems thinking, resilience, and social innovation are part of my PhD program at the University of Waterloo and my work as a research associate with the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience. While I was initially strongly drawn to social innovation during the Banff Centre residency, I needed to understand if bringing social innovation into my life would risk further colonizing of my mind. While social innovation has a Euro-centric foundation, it is also a practice of holistic thinking and Anishinaabeg are natural systems thinkers. Our culture is based on a profound understanding of the interconnected web of life.

I was hesitant to start TII because I knew it would inevitably involve fundraising to support operational costs. We are now exploring the Tides Canada platform for that reason. As Tim Brodhead, who is a member of TII's board of directors, pointed out in 2013 article in *The Philanthropist* titled "Innovation: Austerity's Grandchild,"[10] foundations and corporate donors prefer project funding, with its defined objectives and limited timeframes. As a result, leaders at community organizations are starved for the core funding that maintains their staff and allows them to focus on their missions rather than opportunistically chase after elusive funding.

I knew that I would inevitably face the question posed of many non-profits, "What is your sustainability model?" Or, "After this grant runs out, how will you continue your work?" Vu Le of Nonprofit AF says this last question is "irritating" and "obnoxious." He wrote a wonderful witty response in an article titled, "Standardized answers to the Sustainability Question."[11] The short answer: we will stop bothering you and we will bother somebody else.

A potential solution to this cycle of fundraising is to follow Villanueva's advice regarding reparations: "The commitment to repair should come from the side with the wealth and the power it confers."[12] If a collection of donors got together and created a new fund for Indigenous social innovation, perhaps that would shift the system to a more equitable and stable equilibrium. And they should market that fund to, and in, our communities. Come to us!

There is the federal government's new Social Finance Fund, which is largely focused on repayable loans to social enterprises. The National Aboriginal Capitals Corporations Association is set to launch an Indigenous Growth Fund that will support entrepreneurs. I am thinking instead of a no-strings-attached fund designed to make reparations for the layers of trauma we have endured, to help level the playing field. Decolonizing wealth, says Villanueva, is using money as medicine. "Decolonizing wealth is, at its essence, about closing the racial wealth gap,"[13] he writes. No strings attached. "Reparations are the ultimate way to build power in exploited communities. They are the ultimate way to use money as medicine."[14]

It is encouraging that more funders in Canada have begun to engage with Indigenous communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Report of 2015 helped catalyze this shift. That June, Canada's leading philanthropic organizations declared solidarity and support for stronger, positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. A group of Canada's philanthropic organizations released a Declaration of Action committing to continuing positive action on reconciliation. As of 2018, more than 100 charities, non-profits, foundations, and community foundations around the country have signed the document.

Now, philanthropy can "take a giant leap forward"[15] towards reparations. According to International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP), funders employ a wide variety of strategies to support Indigenous peoples, including direct giving, working through intermediaries, long-term investments, and supporting Indigenous control of philanthropic resources. The IFIP released its *Funding Indigenous Peoples: Strategies for Support* report with GrantCraft in 2015. The Christensen Fund supports the Kivulini Trust, an Indigenous-led group that re-grants to local Indigenous groups in Kenya and Ethiopia. What is key in this model is that Indigenous-led philanthropies base their ethos and strategies on traditional views of reciprocity, in which giving is an exchange between equal parties. The IFIP points out that this way of working promotes a power dynamic different from the standard grantor-recipient relationship.[xvi] This model, what IFIP calls an "empowerment approach" – one based on the right of Indigenous peoples to determine the nature and use of resources that come into their communities – is worth exploring in Canada.

Donors in Canada have increasingly begun to think critically about their role in supporting and partnering with Indigenous communities to tackle big issues. Some have targeted support for Indigenous-led change efforts through program strategies, such as the McConnell Reconciliation Initiative. McConnell is expanding proposal criteria to include unconventional project areas, such as social innovation. Additionally, the Suncor Energy Foundation focuses its efforts on three main areas: Indigenous peoples, community resilience, and energy future. Both funders currently include reconciliation as an integral part of their institutional thematic issues, thereby acknowledging Indigenous communities as a population group affected by many intersecting issues. Both support the ongoing efforts of TII. While extremely grateful for this support, I hope I live to see the day when I am not asking powerful, rich, white people for a hand-out, a social reproduction of colonialism; but instead I am in a relationship of mutual support and gift-giving with Indigenous-led funds and funders. As Villanueva says, reparations are due.

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Six Stories of Social Innovation in Quebec

NICOLAS LANGELIER

L IKE ANY ECOSYSTEM worthy of the name, social innovation in Quebec is rich and diverse. This article offers a glimpse into six organizations that have developed new models that bring hope to those working in the sector.

Maison de l'innovation sociale

When you talk with the team at the Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS), the expression "valley of the dead" often comes up. This is the crucial growth phase of a social enterprise, between its initial financing and the time when it generates enough revenue to survive. It is the stage of a project's life cycle to which MIS dedicates much of its efforts and programs, and which fulfils its mission to promote the emergence of social innovations and create optimal conditions for promising and uncommon collaborations.

"Unlike other models that primarily focus on acceleration or scaling up social innovation projects, MIS gets involved very early and builds the first bridges on their journey," explains Violaine Des Rosiers, co-executive director at MIS. "This

is an asset for foundations and impact investors, who see in MIS programs a way to de-risk their investments upstream and develop new financial products with social and environmental returns, while building the capacities of their beneficiaries."

The MIS launched its first activities last year. It was born from a partnership between major stakeholders in Quebec's social innovation ecosystem — the Fondation Mirella et Lino Saputo and the McConnell Foundation, which are its main donors, as well as Esplanade, HEC Montréal, Concordia University and the CIRODD research institute. Despite being so young, it is already becoming an internation- ally recognized organization.

MIS is currently focusing on four programs: Incubateur civique, an incubator that promotes prototyping and maturing ideas for social and environmental impact projects; Innovateurs sociaux en résidence, a residency program that immerses teams of social innovators in local development organizations, public institutions, and businesses; Tangram, a free digital platform for social innovators and aspiring social entre- preneurs; and Villes d'avenir, a program that welcomes social research and development activities in urban centres.

MIS also produces Raccords, a free digital news- letter that it publishes every two months, filled with content on various social innovation topics.

"MIS' activities are complementary," says Patrick Dubé, co-executive director. "Its specificity is in its desire to reveal the potential synergy between the unusual suspects and the ecosystem to boost the expected positive impact." By connecting project leaders to various ecosystem stakeholders and levers, and by better capturing ideas that

target both social and environmental impact, MIS has the ambition to establish itself as a structuring link in Quebec's chain of social innovation.

Fillactive

Fillactive quite literally started out as an accident. At age 22, elite cyclist Claudine Labelle was struck by a car during training and sustained a severe head injury. She had to give up her dreams of becoming an Olympian. Forced to rethink her entire existence, she chose to focus on raising girls' awareness about the benefits of physical activity.

In the first years, Labelle's mission led her to speak at school conferences. Though she was successful, she recognized a greater need. School sports were simply not adapted for girls, leading one in two to drop out of sports during puberty. This gave rise to the first Fillactive program.

Today, more than 10 years later, "Fillactive is positioned as a complete, flexible offer" to help schools keep their students active, explains Marie-Claude Gauthier-Fredette, the organiza- tion's head of marketing and communication. "We are there to equip them."

Activities take place primarily in an extra- curricular setting, during lunch and at the end of the day. With impressive results. The organization estimates that, during the past year alone, 285 schools in Quebec and Ontario have partnered with Fillactive to get more than 12,000 young women moving.

The organization has developed solid tools to attract corporate donations, which are now its

primary source of revenue. This is rounded out with school contributions and government support.

"We have really been growing," says Gauthier-Fredette, noting the program also has indirect benefits, such as increased feelings of belonging at school. "We are getting girls to be active for life."

La Cantine pour tous

You may be surprised to learn that Canada is the only G7 member that does not have a universal school lunch program. Meanwhile, one in six children does not get enough nutritious food, according to UNICEF. While some provinces have initiatives to address this issue, their effectiveness is inconsistent.

At the other end of life, the number of senior citizens continues to rise, putting increasing pressure on social services. They too experience great disparity in the availability and quality of food. "Food doesn't seem to be a government priority in Canada," says Valérie Lafontaine, development officer for La Cantine pour tous.

The organization decided to tackle this issue. The result of a collective that was founded in 2010, the social economy project brings together a group of organizations that are already involved in food security: popular restaurants, collective kitchens, community centres, and non-profits that distribute meals and snacks to schools, senior centres, and job integration companies, among others.

La Cantine pour tous' actions — and impact — are based on the principle of mutualization. The idea is to pool the resources of member

organizations, which are complementary and rarely used to their full potential. For example, an organization that has a delivery truck but only uses it a few hours a day could rent it out to other organizations. The owners of the truck receive additional revenues that they can then reinvest in their mission, and the renters can expand their services. It's a win-win situation. The same concept can be applied to the use of kitchens, equipment and storage spaces.

La Cantine pour tous connects these various stakeholders, and their resources. As an intermediary, it works with organizations to expand the clientele they serve, thereby increasing their impact on the population's food security. "There is a real advantage for organizations to join us," says Lafontaine.

La Cantine has just launched a meal program that it offers in primary schools in a range of socioeconomic settings, allowing parents to pay what they can. The model is ready to be scaled out to other Canadian provinces.

Changing the world with real estate: Le Monastère des Augustines, Maison Mère, and Bâtiment 7

Social real estate developments are a growing trend throughout Canada. Quebec is home to several organizations that, each in their own way, are developing innovative projects. These are three such organizations.

Religious communities were among the first to support community life in modern Quebec. From the time of New France up to the 1960s, they were in charge of social services such as health care and education. But with interest in religion declining among Quebecers, today,

many groups are attempting to offer a new legacy to the people of Quebec.

Such is the case of the Augustines of the Mercy of Jesus. In 1639, they established the first hospital north of Mexico, in Quebec City. Over the next three centuries, they would open 11 others in French-speaking Canada. But in the early 2000s, faced with a considerable decline in congregants, the sisters decided to offer contemporary, secular services to the public in their convent and 12 others, in pursuit of their mission to heal bodies and minds. Thus was founded the organization Le Monastère des Augustines, a centre for renewal and wellness.

"Our project is the only one of its kind," says Isabelle Houde, head of communications, engagement, and social innovation. The organization opened four years ago and offers accommodation, a restaurant, an archive centre and museum reserve, a holistic health and cultural activities program (yoga, retreats, meditation, conferences, workshops, etc.), and a range of massage therapy and relaxation treatments, as well as event room rentals for companies and organizations, respite stays for caregivers, and renewal for health and social services workers.

This is all offered in the heritage building, which is located in the core of Vieux-Québec and has a long history as a place of care. "There is something special about that place," says Houde. "People feel good and relaxed as soon as they step foot through the door."

With a mix of revenue-generating activities, fundraisers, and grants, the organization is self-sustaining. The Augustines are thrilled. The dream they have held since the start of the century has come true.

A similar problem was being tackled elsewhere during the same period, in another community and another city. In Baie-Saint-Paul, in the Charlevoix region, the congregation of the Petites Franciscaines de Marie decided to give up its large property — a 16,000-square metre building and three hectares of land, equal to 18 football fields — to start an inspiring project. In 2017, the municipality, hoping to prevent the enormous building from becoming an empty space in the downtown core, purchased the treasured heritage site.

After consultations that spanned several months and involved more than 90 contributors, stakeholders drew up a project that would soon become the driver of the region's economic development. They named the former convent Maison Mère (mother house), a name chosen via a public contest and a nod to its former occupants and its future ambitions. The firm of Pierre Thibault, a renowned Quebec architect, was picked to modernize the heritage building while preserving its character-defining elements.

Working with some of the region's top talent, creating new opportunities, and focusing on complementarity and the spirit of cooperation — these are the pillars upon which the Maison Mère team chose to rely, with an emphasis on youth. The building now houses 13 organizations whose missions align with at least one of six major themes: agri-food, culture, education, entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and housing. Residents include a continuing education organization, an environ-mental consultation group, a co-op café, a co-working space, a bakery, and a youth hostel. There is also a museum and rooms available to rent.

All of this creates "great synergy between these organizations housed under one roof," says Gabrielle Leblanc, executive director of Maison Mère, highlighting that these organizations and facilities already employ 82 people. As the third year of operation kicks off, Leblanc is excited about what is to come. "It's going well, even if the challenge remains great. We are in line with our mission and able to bring together the different strengths of our community."

Another type of heritage — industrial — also needs preserving.

That's the bet made by Bâtiment 7, a self-managed organization that underwent a long grassroots battle to take back a former Canadian National building located in the working-class district of Pointe-Saint-Charles, in southwest Montreal. That battle began in the early 2000s and only ended in 2017, when the immense building coveted by real estate developers in the gentrifying area was transferred to Bâtiment 7. Its goal: to offer everyone, particularly the neighbourhood's marginalized populations, access to services, space for production, and places to gather, which are all sorely lacking.

Since then, 17 projects have been set up in the building. It now boasts a grocery store, an art school, and a metal workshop, to name a few. Cooperation and self-management are core principles of the initiative – and coordinator Judith Cayer says these do not always go so smoothly. "This is the only self-management structure with 200 people in Quebec," she says. "We invented our own structure, taking inspiration from what has been done in other places, but adapting it to our reality." The team has since consolidated various projects and secured grants to keep the organization running. The

grocery store alone is a huge success, providing fresh, quality products to a population that has long been deprived of them.

The model is already attracting the attention of other social innovators. "We get three or four requests to visit a week, and we even have to turn some down," explains the coordinator, noting that researchers from Simon Fraser University recently visited.

And this is all while the organization remains in the first of three planned development phases. Major projects are in the works, including an early childhood daycare centre and a small farm. "There is still so much to do," says Cayer.

Is Social Innovation a Useful Tool in a Crisis? Lessons From COVID-19

PAUL McARTHUR and LAURENCE MIALL

As we were striving to understand how the United Way-Centraide (UWC) movement has leveraged social innovation methods and tools to achieve more impact, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus quickly became the most significant global pandemic in more than a century. In Canada, the health and financial impacts of the crisis have stressed the social sector's ability to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and forced organizations to rapidly adapt to new information, emerging needs, and operating models.

The effects of the COVID-19 crisis have been both devastating and unequal: the pandemic hit marginalized communities hardest and it has further entrenched societal inequities. Despite this, there is a silver lining: the unprecedented learning opportunity before us as we work to not only respond, but build back a better, more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable society.

Our peers have argued that social innovation is key to unlocking pathways for such a transition to happen. Yet, as Christian Seelos and Johanna

Mair caution in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, innovation may not be the "holy grail;" many social changes can come about from growing and improving existing operations, and in some cases, this may be the most effective strategy for impact.

In reflecting on a series of discussions with UWC staff before and during the crisis, an important question surfaced: can we really innovate during a crisis, or are we simply adapting and drawing on the innovation, talent, culture, and systems that were already built before?

Our preliminary research suggests that we can accelerate social innovation tools developed in "normal" times in times of crisis. The following sections explore this idea.

Innovation before COVID-19

More than a century after initial community-based fundraising efforts in Toronto and Montreal, UWC has scaled its reach to 5,000 communities across Canada, served through a network of 79 local offices that mobilize more than $540 million annually to address poverty, create opportunity, and foster social inclusion. In recent years, United Way and Centraide branches have applied social innovation practices in specific circumstances and geographies to improve their services and programs. Two examples from UWC illustrate how it has supported several noteworthy social innovation projects.

The Social Impact Lab, launched by the United Way of Calgary and Area, uses design thinking to try to address social issues. Design thinking aims to resolve problems using a process that starts with observation and moves on

to work with a series of prototypes. For example, the Social Impact Lab's Inspire program brings together a cohort of seven or eight social service agencies from the area every three months. For 12 weeks, they work in teams to find a creative solution to a shared problem while a facilitator guides them from problem analysis to prototype testing.

Next door in British Columbia, the Social Purpose Institute, spearheaded by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, works with businesses to help them find their social purpose and put it into practice. One program, Social Purpose Innovators, lets businesses find and delineate their social purpose – the societal reason the business exists. A second program, Social Purpose Implementers, helps businesses create a plan to bring their social purpose to life and put it into practice, in a realistic fashion. A third, still to be launched, will enable businesses to concretely implement their purpose.

In Quebec, meanwhile, Centraide of Greater Montreal launched the *Projet Impact Collectif* (PIC) in 2016, with support from nine foundations (including the one we work for, McConnell). Le PIC allocated $23 million over six years to develop creative and effective solutions to address poverty and inequality in 17 neighbourhoods. The many PIC projects share a commitment to the collective impact approach, unifying disparate local activities into a more coherent whole, and equipping residents to face the challenges they see around them.

"When citizens are well supported and given the right tools, they can share their vision, create in a collaborative way, and find effective solutions to social problems," says Myriam Bérubé, director of experimental projects and

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learning for Centraide. In part, the innovation of Le PIC is that community collective impact consultation groups (*tables de quartiers*) determine what projects to fund, rather than these decisions being the sole preserve of Centraide.

First response to COVID-19

The initial phase of the COVID-19 crisis – from mid-March to mid-May – tested the strengths and limitations of the UWC networks like no prior event. We interviewed Dan Clement, president and CEO of United Way, and Lili-Anna Pereša, president and executive director of Centraide of Greater Montreal, in early June, when the infection numbers in Canada were starting to subside. The insights they shared painted a unique portrait of social innovation's limitations and contributions.

In the pandemic's earliest phase, the national UWC network faced new and unanticipated logistical challenges. These had little to do with social innovation specifically but did bring into clear focus the extent to which a crisis suddenly elevates the importance of data, technology, and communication. COVID-19 represented a global crisis playing out at local scale in all regions of the country at the same time. It revealed the strength and importance of local leadership and coordinated local action. At the national level, particularly for the federal government, the need for platforms that support and enable local and regional action became apparent. The crisis required UWC to combine its traditional strength as a local community movement while also acting as a shared platform for provincial and national coordinated action.

The UWC's partnership with the federal government early in the crisis through the New Horizons for Seniors program is an example of this. Within weeks, more than 900 community-based programs were supporting isolated seniors from Newfoundland to Yukon. Later, the federal government partnered with UWC, the Canadian Red Cross, and Community Foundations of Canada to launch the $350M Emergency Community Response Fund.

It soon became clear to Clement and Pereša that United Way and Centraide would need to improve their communication across municipal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. All past crises had been local: forest fires in BC; flooding in Manitoba, Alberta, and Quebec; or serious winter storms in Ontario and the Maritimes in 2013. The COVID-19 crisis, while local in its effects, required a national response.

"COVID-19 was an economic and social shock," says Clement. "We knew there would have to be a coordinated response to resource mobilization. This 'muscle' had been very strong locally, but now we had to build it at a national level. We were able to find instances of local innovation and scale these up to the national platform, in French and English, to help identify and respond to needs such as food security, hygiene, seniors' isolation, community needs for transportation, delivery services, and more."

Sharing learning across different nodes of the network became imperative, but sometimes learning fell short of demands. Pereša said it was initially almost impossible to forecast where personal protective equipment (PPE) was most needed. It is now clear that the priority should have been high-risk communities, such as Montréal-Nord, that have higher levels of poverty, crowded living conditions, and numerous

low-paid frontline service workers, including those employed in seniors' homes, which were hot spots for infection in April and May.

There were other instances where innovative tools developed before COVID-19's onset suddenly acquired greater utility. For example, the emergency number 211, which is the primary way a resident can obtain information about local health, human, and social service organizations. During the COVID-19 crisis in Montreal, the open data model adopted by 211 meant that everyone in the Centraide of Greater Montreal network could access the self-reported needs of thousands of callers. This helped inform a response that was continually adapting to new realities on the ground. (The value of 211 has been recognized by federal and provincial governments with new funding to help expand it across all regions of Canada via the UWC network.)

Using 211 data, Centraide built Radar, an online mapping tool to provide a socio-demographic profile of Greater Montreal area neighbourhoods, cities, and towns. During COVID-19, Radar evolved and became another critical information tool. It tracked, for example, neighbourhood-level facilities to address food insecurity and which community agencies were operative. It also helped Centraide communicate where new funds could be effectively deployed. This aided in channeling government funding and grants from the philanthropic community and private donations from individuals and corporations.

Beyond service delivery, Centraide came to recognize its role in both assessing community needs and sharing information. "Everyone came to us first for information," says Pereša.

"Initially we were reacting to demands. There was no ability to be proactive. We didn't think the emergency would last so long. We had to learn it was a marathon, not a sprint."

Because Centraide could not hire additional staff to keep up with these demands, they adapted new forms of collaboration. "We had to find creative ways to meet needs," says Pereša. For example, city workers replaced volunteers at the main food bank, Moisson Montreal, and Uber drivers delivered 3,000 meals to confined seniors.

Elsewhere in the network, as the pandemic continued to amplify long-standing local problems, teams adapted with social innovation. In Calgary, the Social Impact Lab kicked off a five-day "Disrupt-ATHON" on July 18, with a focus on highlighting the innovative approaches local citizens were taking to address food insecurity. Fifteen teams submitted various ideas to disrupt Calgary's food system, including a farmer-owned meat processing cooperative; a hydroponic, vertical crop cultivation system; and a lunch program for students who were going hungry because of school closures. Social Impact Lab planned to take the idea that resonated most with area residents – determined by a vote – and help implement it.

At United Way of the Lower Mainland, the work of the Social Purpose Institute, previously all conducted in person, shifted to online delivery. Many of the cohort of nearly 30 businesses in the innovation program rapidly adapted to find ways to serve urgent new needs. The tech company Traction on Demand, for example, worked with the provincial government and two other companies to build a supply chain platform to speed up the sourcing and

distribution of vital healthcare supplies. They designed an open-source application, called Traction Thrive Critical Care Management, to view, track, and allocate healthcare personnel, PPE and ventilator availability in real-time. Other businesses in the Social Purpose Institute also shifted their definition, and delivery, of their social purpose, including a tourism company that realized its most important offering wasn't travel or sightseeing, per se, but rather, bringing people together in shared, transformative experiences.

Panning back to the national level, COVID-19 required the Ottawa office to undergo a major shift and increase capacity. "We had to activate our leadership network," says Clement. "Our community investment professionals and our resource development professionals – they all had to be responding rapidly and connecting with each other and sharing insights. We had members of the entire network on calls, sharing information every two weeks. We had never before held town halls and webinars in French and English at two-week intervals, non-stop. It was all part of the activation of our network."

Lessons to apply in the future

Not surprisingly, for a health and economic crisis without precedent in terms of its rapidity, scale, and scope, COVID-19 was a harsh but informative experience for the UWC network. Clement and Pereša are in broad agreement on the lessons they've learned for the future.

Advance preparation is key: In hindsight, the network should have been activated a month prior to the severe onset of COVID-19 in March. This lesson has great implications for

anticipating the possibility of a resurgence of COVID-19 this fall.

Speed over perfection: Formulating the "perfect" response strategy was not possible. Time and realities on the ground wouldn't permit it. UWC was better off trying to respond in real time, seeing results, and refining strategy on an ongoing basis.

Flexible funding: A crisis requires increased levels of flexibility for allocating resources. UWC and most of its funders understood this. Flexibility enabled UWC to speed up its ability to respond to unanticipated demands.

More open and current data: Open source, open data were built-in advantages for UWC through 211 and RADAR. However, the broader social sector's data deficit hampered its response and often failed to show how community needs such as infrastructure and human resources are funded, and where more support was required.

Transparency and rapid communication: Everyone wants to know where their money is going and why. Hence, UWC has been reporting in real time how it is deploying its funding, which it sees as critical for maintaining trust. Frequent and rapid communication cycles are also vital for supporting cohesion internally at UWC and with external stakeholders.

"COVID-19 is a massive accelerator of the trends we already saw: the digital transformation, automation of transactions, acceleration of digital philanthropy, and major shifts in the workplace, particularly to remote working," says Clement.

These lessons will surely be put to the test, and complemented by considerable new learnings, as the pandemic continues to unfold. The social sector, on the frontlines of this crisis, still struggles for the public visibility enjoyed by other responders, including health care workers and teachers. Nevertheless, it's clear that Canadians will continue to depend more than ever on the sector to respond to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic and any subsequent infection spikes.

This book, a compilation of articles by diverse authors published by *The Philanthropist* between 2017 and 2020, explores some of the possibilities, achievements and challenges that the social innovation movement has faced and will continue to navigate in support of social change in Canada. As Minister Ahmed Hussen notes in the book's preface, Canada's groundbreaking Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy gives us the tools with which to carry out cross sectoral collaboration on society's most pressing issues and inequitable social relationships. Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the dangers of the status quo – and inspired widespread desire for bold new ways of seeing and healing our world – the time has come to move forward with transformative, systemic change.

McConnell

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