Re-Code

Social Innovation in Post-secondary: Lessons Learned from Canada

@jwmcconnell @letsrecode @chadlubelsky
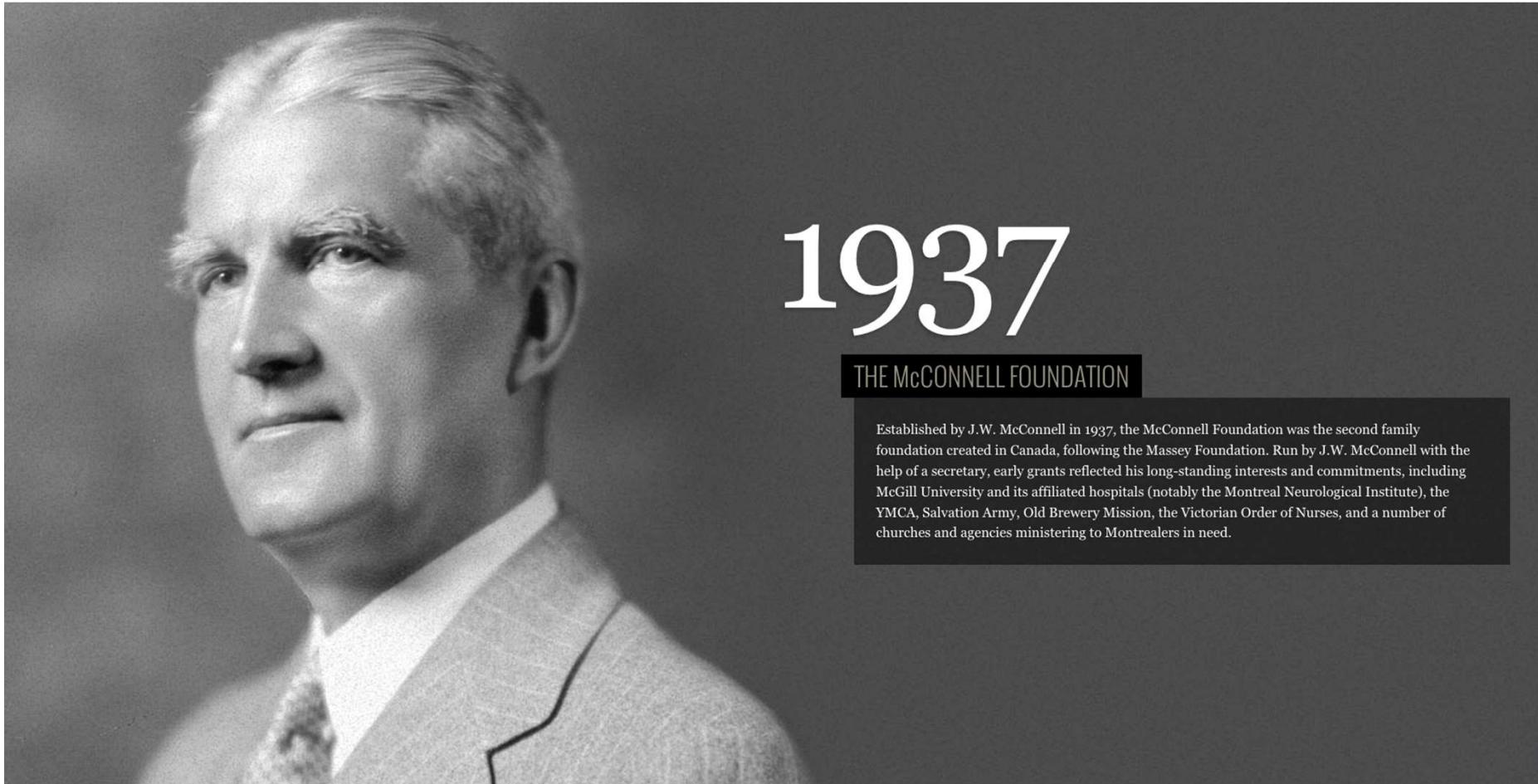
1937

THE McCONNELL FOUNDATION

Established by J.W. McConnell in 1937, the McConnell Foundation was the second family foundation created in Canada, following the Massey Foundation. Run by J.W. McConnell with the help of a secretary, early grants reflected his long-standing interests and commitments, including McGill University and its affiliated hospitals (notably the Montreal Neurological Institute), the YMCA, Salvation Army, Old Brewery Mission, the Victorian Order of Nurses, and a number of churches and agencies ministering to Montrealers in need.

McConnell
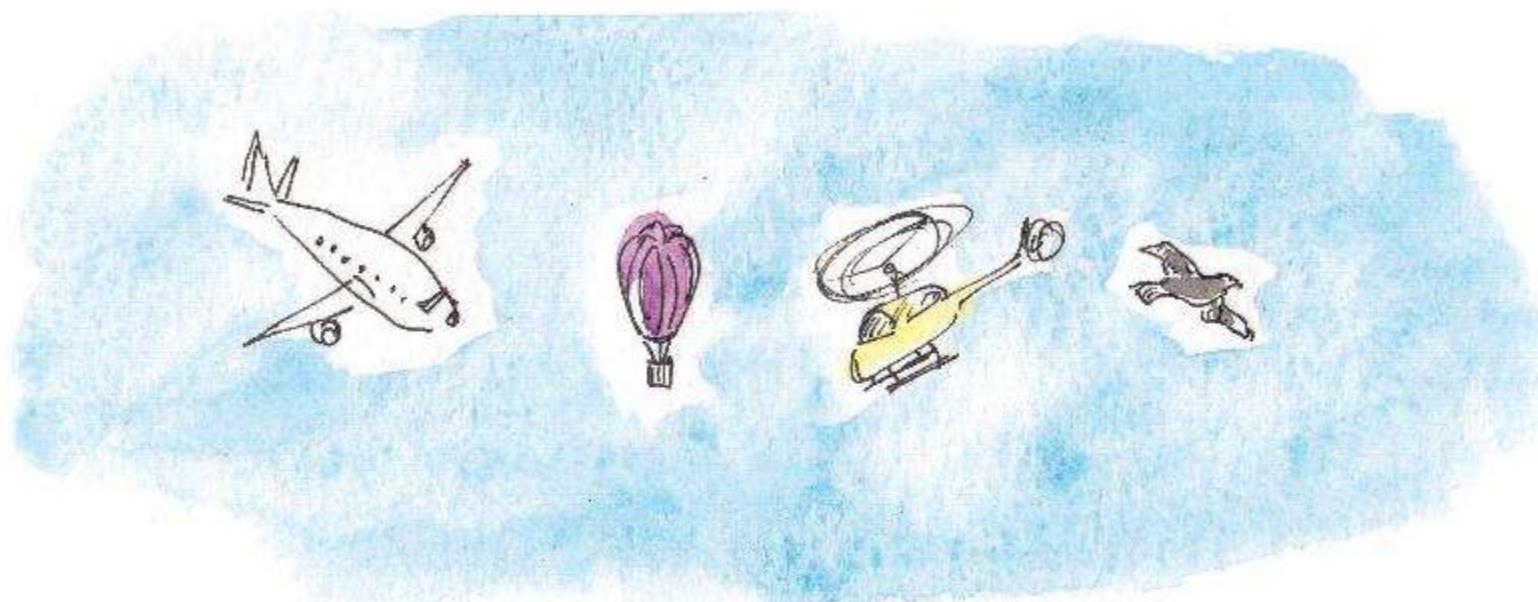
Social Innovation has a broad definition, and that's a good thing.

The only commonly understood characteristics of "Social Innovation" are that it is unconventional and that it creates impact. While this broad definition might fail to conjure a clean image of what social innovation is, it does free the social innovator to focus on intended impact and pursue solutions in whatever form suits the context.

"My question is: Are we making an impact?"

Social Innovation

It's Canadian nature

RDSP
world's first savings plan for people with disabilities

Great Bear Rainforest
world's first large scale integrated conservation initiative

JUMP Math
non-hierachical confidence based learning

Palliative Care
improved quality of life for people with life limiting illness

Multi-national UN Force
peace keeping

Medicare
universal healthcare

Roots of Empathy
emotional literacy

Women's Institute
first global women's advocacy network

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This is a living document. Comments are encouraged

SiG

social innovation
generation
de l'innovation sociale

How innovation happens?
Traditional: *From margins* → *mainstream*

Early Majority

Early Adopters

Late Majority

Innovators

Laggards

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION BELL CURVE
(By Everett Rogers, Ref. - "Diffusion of Innovations")

Shifting beyond the 'charity' mindset

NEED│INADEQUATE│BURDEN	→	OPPORTUNE│STRENGTH│CHANGE
SYMPTOMS	→	SOLUTIONS
FUNDRAISING	→	FINANCING
PROJECTS	→	PLATFORMS
NECESSITY	→	EMPATHY + LOVE + NECESSITY
INCREMENTAL CHANGE	→	SYSTEMS CHANGE
MIN COSTS	→	TRUE COSTS
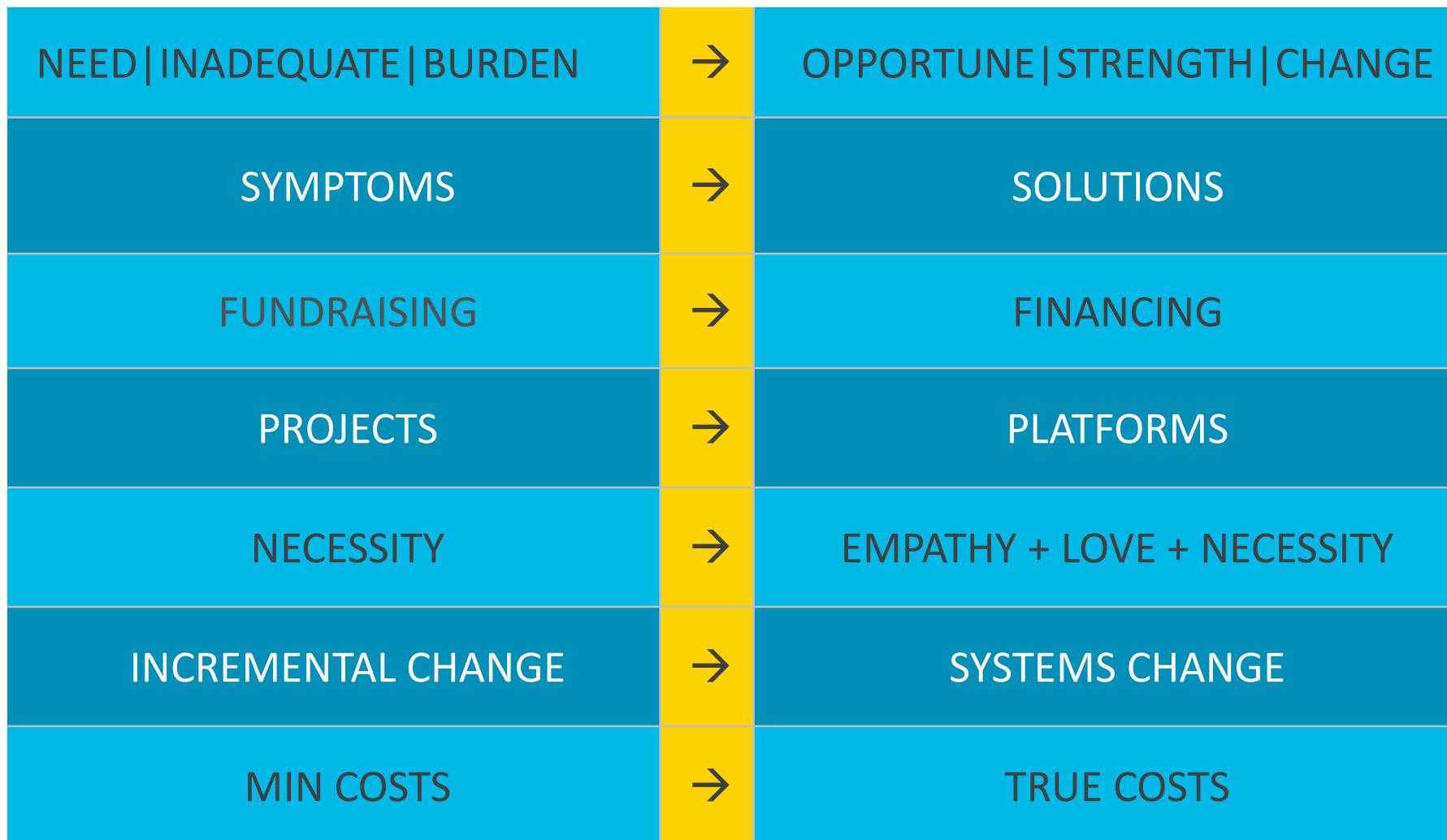
I think what connects the challenge for business, the challenge for government and the challenge for communities now, is both simple and difficult.

We know our societies have to radically change.

We know we can't go back to where we were before.

Geoff Mulgan
Chief Executive, NESTA
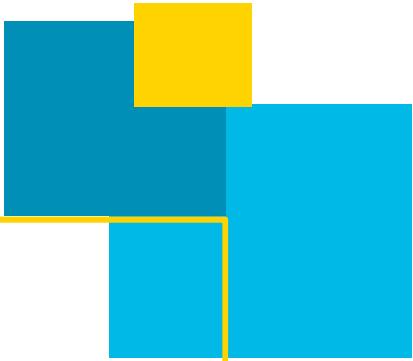
"We can't impose our will on a system.

We can listen to what the system tells us, and discover how its properties and our values can work **together** to bring forth something much better than could ever be produced by our will alone."

— Donella H. Meadows, *Dancing With Systems*

Definitions of Social Innovation

Any initiative (product, process, program, projects or platform) that challenges and, overtime, contributes to changing the defining routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced. Successful social innovations have durability, scale and transformative impact – **Frances Westley**

New ideas that meet unmet needs

– **Geoff Mulgan**

Seeing things differently and imagining that which could be. It is about asking questions of ourselves and our institutions and wondering whether we can do better
– **BC Social Innovation Council**

SOCIAL INNOVATION

New ideas that resolve existing social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges for the benefit of people and planet
– **Centre for Social Innovation**

Innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means...simultaneously meet social needs & create new social relationships and collaborations

Social innovation is both a destination — the resolution of complex social & environmental challenges — and a journey — devising new approaches that engage all stakeholders, leveraging their competencies and creativity to design novel solutions
– **Tim Brodhead**

The process of designing, developing and growing new ideas that work to meet pressing unmet needs
– **Social Innovation Exchange**

Culture shift: it can happen…

Back then, education taught men to run the world and women to run the house.

LAUNDRY QUIZ TUES.

Homework Assignment:
1. Stew 6 tomat...
2. Practice tw...
3. Continue work o...

You've come a long way, baby.

VIRGINIA SLIMS

With rich Virginia flavor women like.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

C/O the Atlantic

17 mg. tar, 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Nov.'75

Culture shift: it can happen…

It is not a smooth road…

Social innovation

All ~~truth~~ passes through three stages:

First, it is *ridiculed*

Second, it is **violently** opposed

Third, it is accepted as <u>self-evident</u>

— Arthur Schopenhauer

Solution Innovation Spectrum

MICRO
SMALL SCALE/COMMUNITY KAIZEN/INCREMENTAL

MESO
MID SCALE CROSS-SECTOR

MACRO
WHOLE SYSTEM CHANGE TRI-SECTOR DISRUPTIVE

JANE'S WALK | LOCAL SOCENT | FOOD BANKS — LOCAL HUBS | S.O.D.C — C-BONDS | JUMP MATH — SVX — ENP-AB | PATHWAYS FOR EDUCATION — COUNTER-PARTS | SEF ALBERTA — VENTURE FUND | CENTRE FOR NATURAL CARE | RDSP — MICRO-FINANCE | CIVIC ACTION LAB — THRIVE BY 5

SOCIAL INNOVATIONS GROUPED ALONG THE SPECTRUM
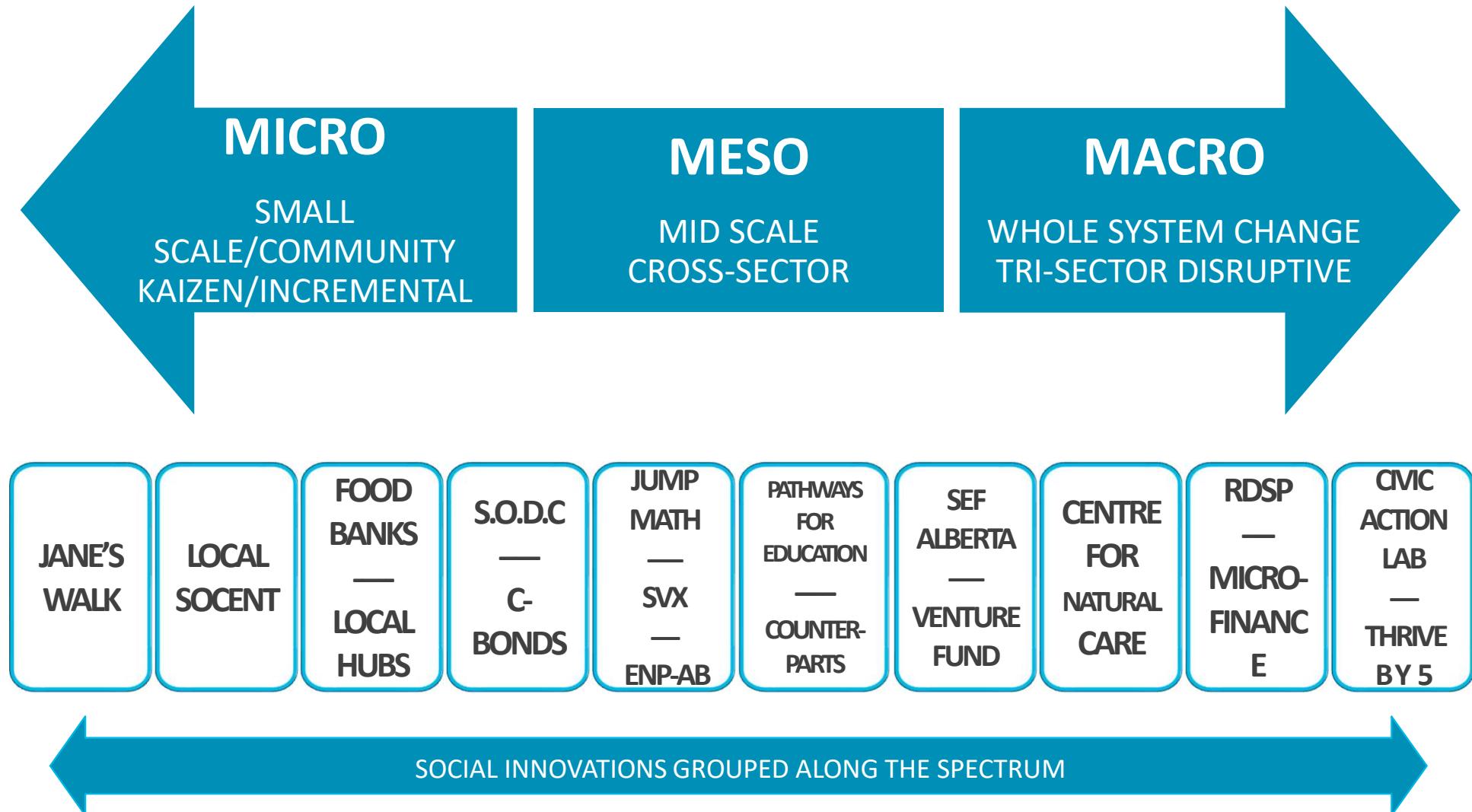
Six Patterns to Spread Your Social Innovation

1. Think and Act Like a Movement
2. Create a Container for Your Content
3. Set the Table for Allies, Adversaries and Strangers
4. Mobilize Your Economic Power
5. Advocate with Empathy
6. 'Who' is More Important than 'How'

From:

Al Etmanski, *IMPACT: SIX PATTERNS TO SPREAD YOUR SOCIAL INNOVATION* (2015).

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# Lesson 1

We were supply driven, not demand driven
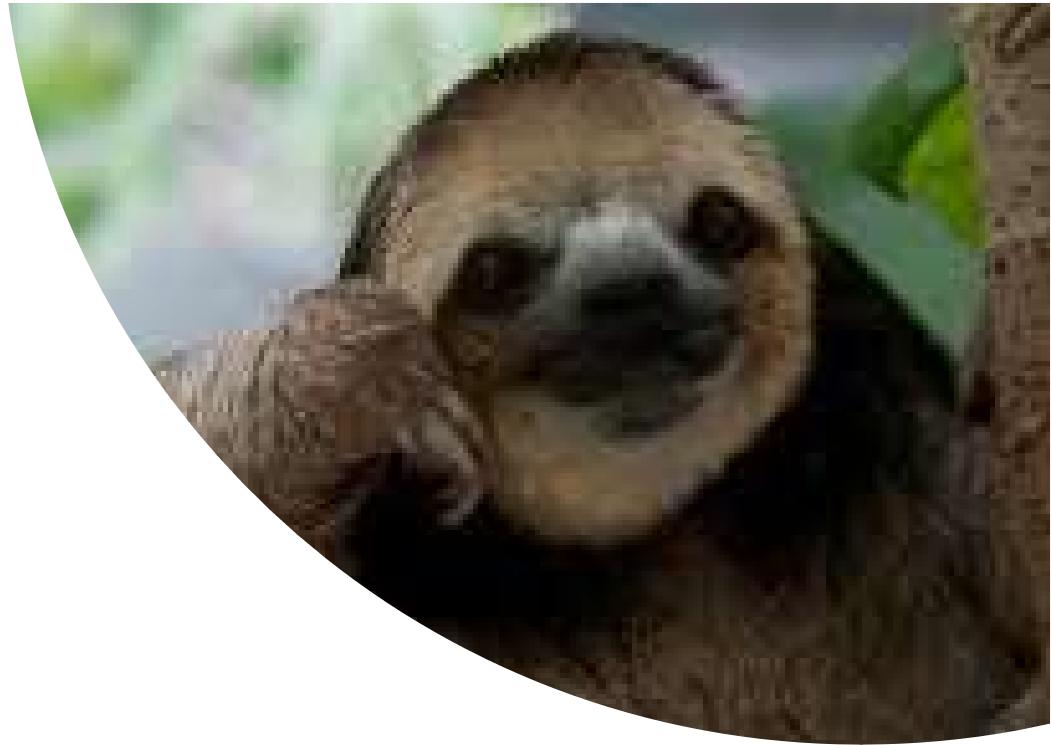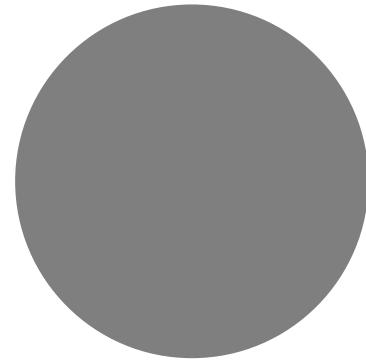
**McConnell**

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Lesson 2

Walk before you can run

McConnell
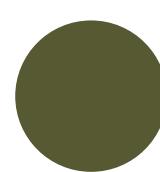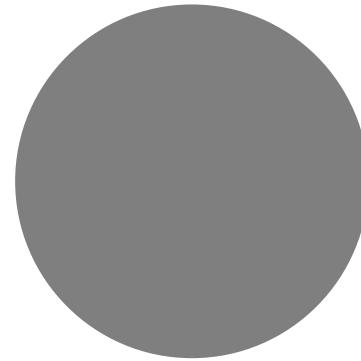
Lesson 3
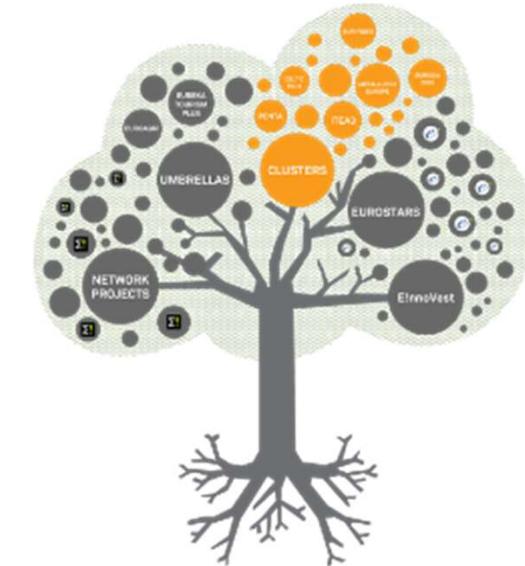
Amplify and cluster breakthroughs

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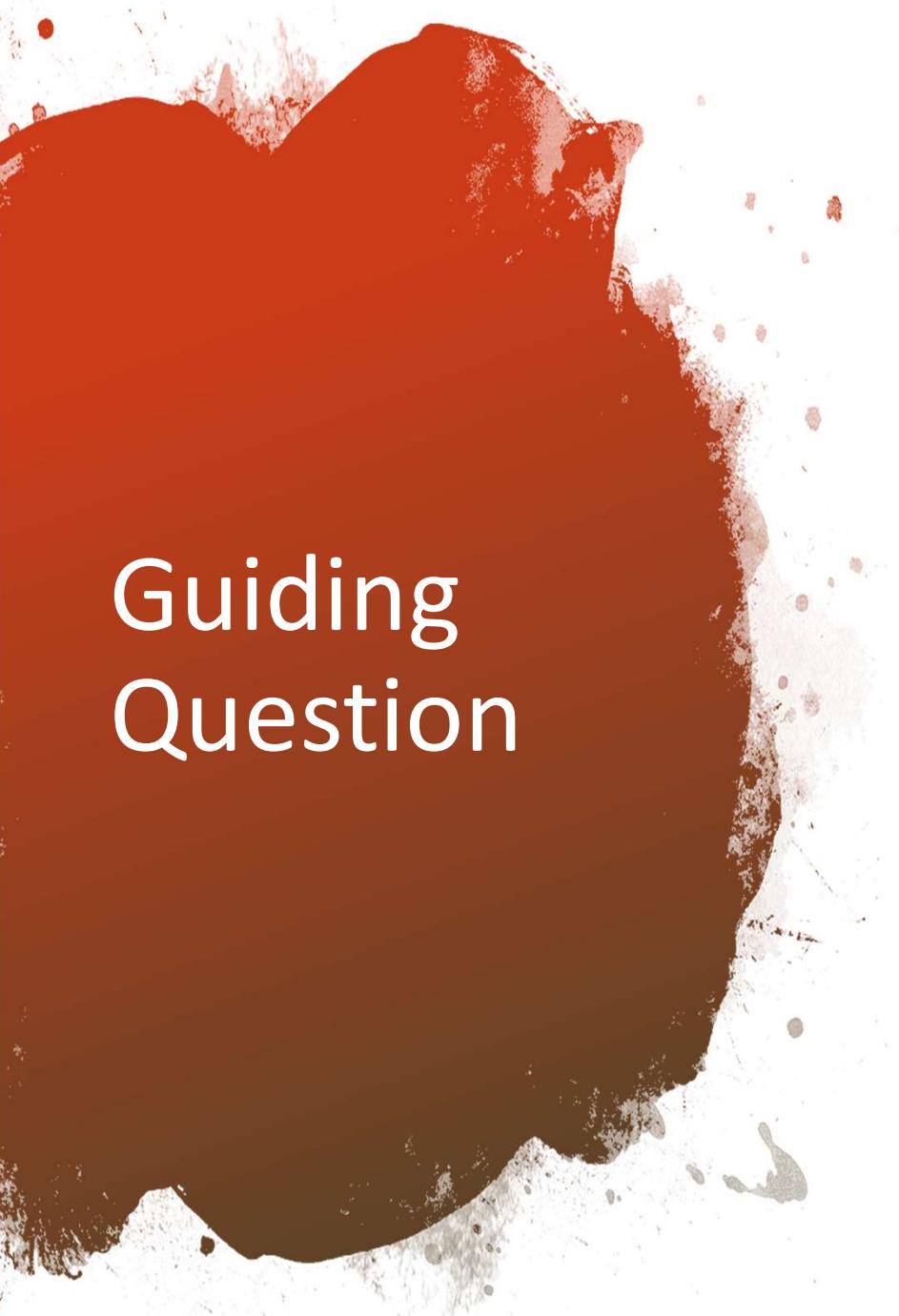
Guiding Question

- "How can advanced educational institutions unlock and maximize their capacities to build the social infrastructure of Canadian communities?"

What do we mean by Social Infrastructure?

- Defined as organizational arrangements and deliberate investments in society's systems, relationships and structures that enable society to create a resilient, just, equitable and sustainable world.

Examples of Social Infrastructure Initiatives

- Social innovation centres, incubators, accelerators and labs
- Problem-solving multi-sector collaborations, partnerships and platforms
- Social entrepreneurial and experiential learning programs for students
- Social finance, hiring and procurement
- Social purpose real estate

How Advanced Education is Responding

Social innovation and entrepreneurship projects

Pilot projects in mobilizing assets within and beyond core mandate

Instruction

Education Physical

Social
Infrastructure

Financial Relational

Research
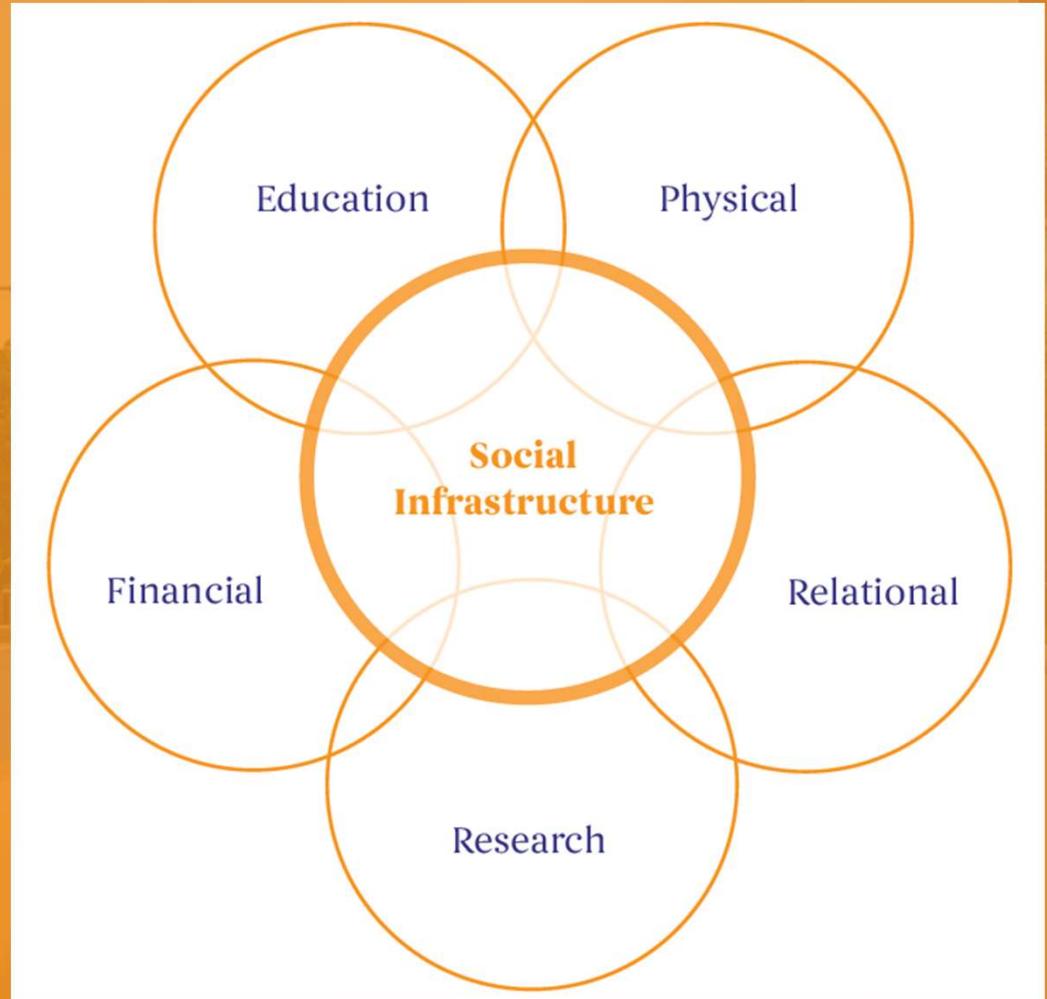
Eco-System Building

Partnering with sector organizations / networks

- Colleges and Institutes Canada

- Universities Canada

- Ashoka

- Canadian Association of University Business Officers

- Regional Universities

- C20+

Thank you!
Gracias!
Gràcies!
Merci!

@jwmcconnell @letsrecode @chadlubelsky

HOW CAN WE COLLABORATE TO NURTURE AN ECOSYSTEM WHERE SOCIAL INNOVATION THRIVES?

The Rainforest Recipe

THE RAINFOREST RECIPE

ASSETS: *HARDWARE*

CULTURE: *SOFTWARE*

+ People

+ Professional

+ Physical

+ Policy

Dissipate Social Friction

Generate Social Friction

Keystones:

+ Extra-Rational Motivations

+ Social Trust

+ Rules of the Rainforest

+ Interpretation of Rules
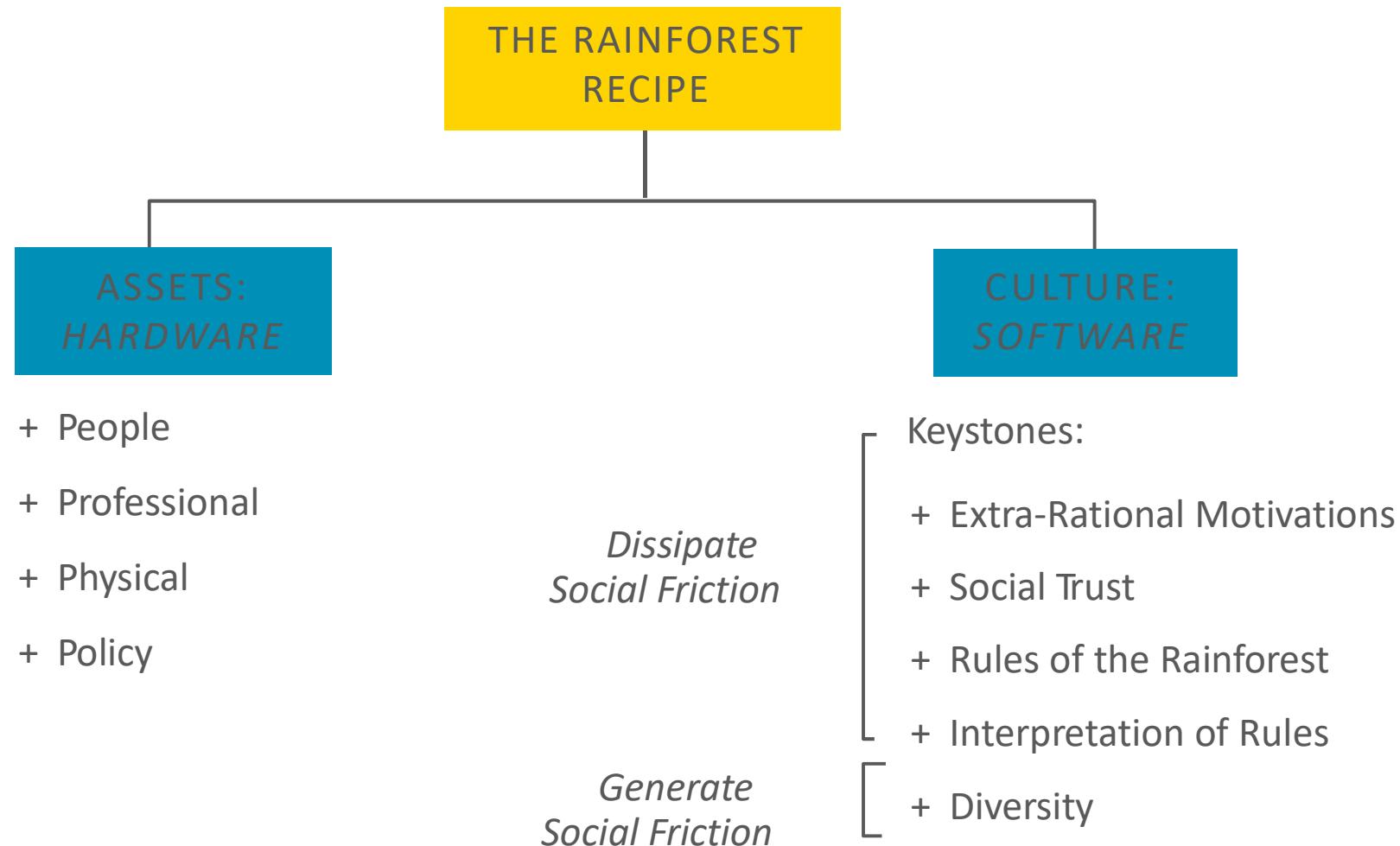
+ Diversity

CANADIAN APPROACH TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

(1) Social innovation is the bridge between vulnerability and resilience.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

Vulnerability
Key source of diversity that could be lost.

Resilience
Balancing healthy environment, vibrant economy, social justice.
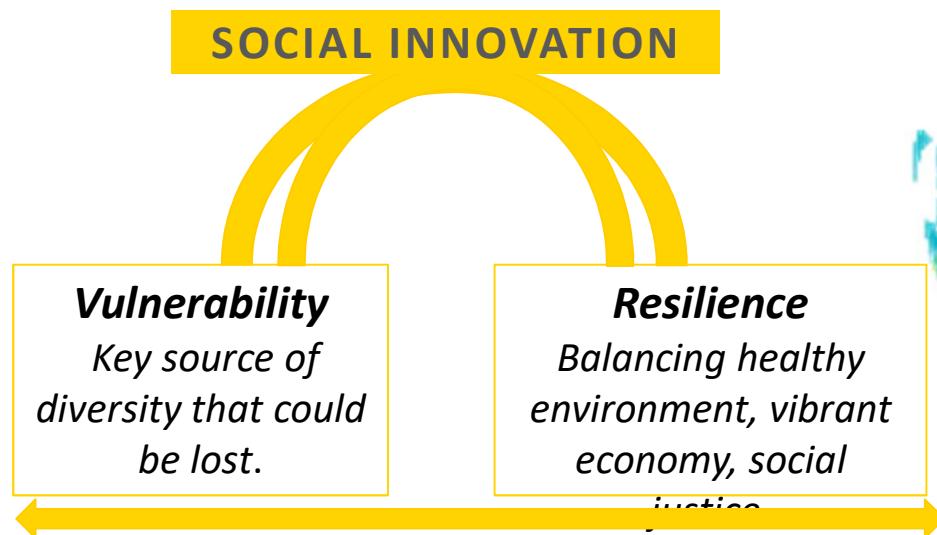
(2) Innovation emerges from our experience with adversity and…

IF *ADVERSITY* IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION…

***CARING* IS THE OTHER PARENT**

3) Informed by values of fairness, inclusion and respect for the commons

(4) Anchored by millennia of Aboriginal resilience and creativity

(5) Enhanced by ingenuity of French and English settlers and our diverse citizenry

(6) Governments respected as critical partners

Nurturing an ecosystem for social innovation

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is the human face of systems thinking – Peter Senge

MINDSET

Silicon Valley is not a place; it's a mindset. The Valley's ecosystem is fueled by culture, connectivity, and creativity – Victor W. Hwang

BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social innovations not only emerge from relationships, but also thrive and endure in relationships – Al Etmanski

LEADERSHIP

Whatever your vision or passion for the future...take the road less travelled by way of systems entrepreneurship because, as Robert Frost said, we will look back years from now and know "that has made all the difference" – Hamoon Ekhtiari

Call to action: build a social innovation network

VALUE PROPOSITION

A platform for:
- Collaborating with new partners (and unusual suspects)
- Experimentation and iteration
- Strategy development
- Raising the profile of the field
- Attracting new resources for tackling complex problems
- Reducing the costs of innovation
- Enhancing reciprocity and social capital
- Leaping by learning and sharing knowledge/insight
- Spreading successful social innovations
- Unlocking new value
- Accessing peer mentors

Next steps?

]

HOW IS YOUR ORGANIZATION TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION?

- Are there social innovation tools and approaches that could strengthen your impact?
- What are you doing well? What are your assets, your strengths?
- What educational and support resources does Alberta boast that could help your work?
- Are there additional financial resources to be tapped by shifting financial thinking?
- Are there potential partners who could assist your impact strategies?

The Rainforest Canvas

Leaders:

- Who has the reputation, resources and commitment to lead new initiatives?
- Who will champion new initiatives within their own organizations?
- How can leaders and champions be more inclusive?

Stakeholders:

- Who are the entrepreneurs?
- Who are the service providers?
- Who are the inventors?
- Who are the capital providers?
- Who are the support organizations?
- What is the role of government?
- Who are the other key participants in the innovation ecosystems?

Frameworks:

- What is the regulatory environment for innovation?
- What legal/bureaucratic barriers stand in the way of entrepreneurship?
- What widespread social norms surround the innovation ecosystem?

Resources:

- What resources are available to aspiring entrepreneurs (knowledge, mentorship, cloud hosting, etc.)?
- What sources of capital are there in the marketplace?
- How does this capital flow and interact with growing businesses?
- What is the volume and quality of talent in the labor pool?
- What are the main sources of innovative ideas/discoveries/inventions?
- What resources are available to service and support organizations that interact with entrepreneurs (workforce training, etc.)?

Activities:

- What are people already doing to stimulate innovation/entrepreneurship?
- How are these people collaborating with each other?
- What activities drive participation in the community?
- What events create 'buzz' and generate interest?

Engagement:

- Where, when and how do stakeholders interact?
- How do ideas, talent and capital come together?
- What are the lines of communication between partners?
- How do members of the community collaborate with each other?
- How does the community engage external or global partners?
- How does the community encourage recruit new constituents?
- How do young people get involved?
- What forums exist that allow the breakdown of social and professional hierarchies?

Role Models:

- Who are the local entrepreneurs that have built successful companies?
- Who are the local entrepreneurs that haven't yet been successful and what can we learn from their failures?
- What regions have similar attributes and resources?
- What organizations have shared visions/values?
- Are there other regions with successful innovation ecosystems that we could learn from or emulate?

Infrastructure, Capability & Community:

- What is the density and quality of service providers (law, IP, consulting, real estate, etc.)?
- What boundary spanning organizations exist?
- What is the local level of serial entrepreneurship?
- What is the density and quality of physical infrastructure (airports, internet connections, etc.)?
- What are the core sectors of the local economy?
- What are the strongest regional comparative advantages?

Culture:

- Where do people come from?
- What are their value systems?
- What are their motivations (money, reputation, lifestyle, self expression, etc.)?
- What are the 'amenities of place'?
- How do we create and maintain a sense of urgency?
- What kind of innovative social networks exist already?
- How do people deal with uncertainty, risk or randomness?
- How is failure perceived?
- Do people build for perfection or iteration?

Keystone Individuals & Institutions

Critical players without whom an ecosystem collapses. They are critical conveners of connection and relationships that enable transformative collaborations. They play immutable roles in the success of systems changing innovation, including:

(1) Integrative: "comfortable reaching across boundaries to bring people together...have the ability to convene people who might otherwise be strangers and encourage the best of their collaborative instincts to overcome natural distrust...”

(1) Influential: "have the ability to convince people to do things that they otherwise would never do. But they never use force or coercion. They appeal to people's long-term interests and non-economic motivations, helping them rise above the easy temptations to seek short-term advantage…”

(1) Influential: "Keystones have the ability to make things happen, not just create a lot of heat and noise. They foster real economic transactions that create a systemic effect, not just get a few people excited for a short time. Although they do not know exactly what the final detailed results will be, they have a clear vision of the potential value they are creating through their actions...

From Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitt, The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley (2012)

Emergent Roles

KEYSTONE SPECIES

Critical players without whom an ecosystem collapses.

(1) **Integrative**: human bridges connecting people to larger contiguous systems;
(2) **Impactful**: making things happen;
(3) **Influential**: focusing others on long-term interests and time horizons.

From Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitt, The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley *(2012)*

ECOSYSTEM ENGINEERS

Create and modify the (policy, cultural, physical, resource, authority) environment on which other actors rely, often in unpremeditated ways.

From Matthew Mars, Judith Bronstein, Robert Lusch, "Organizational Dynamics" (2012) 41.

The missing piece? A network as the 'keystone'

"The traits of a keystone – the abilities to bring disparate people together, to exercise persuasion over them, and to give them a common agenda for mutual benefit.

Like a honeybee connecting ecosystems that are miles apart, the power of a keystone is that she makes the whole so much greater than the sum of its parts."

– Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitt, The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley *(2012)*

Keystone Individuals & Institutions

"Keystones can help people strive for higher aspirations, whether that means building a world-changing company, or saving people's lives. They often know how to appeal to deep human instincts, such as social pressure, to twist arms or create a bandwagon effect. They help establish and validate the cultural norms of a community because they have garnered enough respect to do so."

From Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitt, The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley *(2012)*

Culture is the Elusive Key to Building Dynamic Ecosystems

"People learn culture not from top-down instruction, but through actual practice, role modeling, peer-to-peer interaction with diverse partners, feedback mechanisms that penalize bad behaviour and making social contracts explicit."

"Public attempts to foster innovation that do not focus on changing human behavior are doomed to fail. To build Rainforests, we must transform culture."

– Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitt, The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley *(2012) p.11*

Failure

FAILURE IS KEY TO INNOVATION

Being honest and transparent about failure enables a culture of innovation, where learning forward can happen through rapid prototyping:

Learning what works and what doesn't work quickly, iterating, and understanding the impact (positive and negative) before scaling an initiative or idea.

'Safe-fail' experiments enable feedback loops for collaboration, ongoing learning and iteration and development evaluation.

Antithesis of 'big bets' approach that channels funding into 'great ideas.'

"To the surprise of some, the teaching case placed considerable emphasis on the first two years of the initiative, when it was not certain that success was possible, or that the initiative itself would continue. It was a period of confusion, doubt and conflict.

So why dwell on it?

…Intelligent failure, as Ashley Good of Fail Forward referred to it at a workshop following the roundtable, requires honesty and humility – as well as patience and generosity towards ourselves and others as we learn failure's lessons."

– Stephen Huddart, "Reflections on the 2014 Evaluation Roundtable"

What is systems change?

"By systems change we mean the largest frame on social innovation - cultivating transformation in the entrenched institutions - beliefs, rules and routines - that hold our most intractable social problems in place. In order for social change efforts to transform systems, they must cross boundaries - across issue area, geography, mindset, culture and scale."

SYSTEMS CHANGE INVOLVES FOUR STEPS

1

Recognizing current institutional dynamics, including identification of institutional arrangements, rules of the game, and supporting practices.

2

Recognizing and illuminating critical elements in that system.

3

Making available, promoting, incubating alternatives to the existing systems:
A cascade of incremental innovations from the periphery <u>or</u> a transformative innovation in a system critical component.

4

Implementing alternatives and re-stitching the 'system' elements into a new working arrangement, which often requires substantial collateral and complementary infrastructures.

Gratefully borrowed from: Marc Ventresca & the ICAEW in association with The Point People, "Keywords: building a language of systems change" (2015)

Nomenclature of systems change

SYSTEMS CHANGE CURATOR

Systems change curation is a vanguard activity for the 21st century. There is a mismatch between the demands of sustaining an individual organization and the goal of advancing profound systems change.

A systems change curator is a 'knowmad' who convenes existing and diverse groups into *ecosystems* that act as new possibility space – framing interesting issues and empowering change in new ways. She is a squire that transcends the boundaries of institutions, organizations and ideologies…

- ◆ **Connecting**: placing her faith in relationships;
- ◆ **Illuminating**: translating, with insight to frame profound questions;
- ◆ **Holding the space**: confident/disciplined to wait for insight & embrace emergence;
- ◆ **Creating impact**: making things happen.

She can assist in 'sensing' a path through the unknown territory we find ourselves in, deepening collaboration and working in ways beyond the organizational to shift culture to achieve impact.

Source: *The Third Inflection Point – a series of retreats from 2013-2015 on systems change.*