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**Social Innovation: What is it
and why is it important to
understand it better**

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Une innovation sociale est une intervention initiée par des acteurs sociaux pour répondre à une aspiration, subvenir à un besoin, apporter une solution ou profiter d'une opportunité d'action afin de modifier des relations sociales, de transformer un cadre d'action ou de proposer de nouvelles orientations culturelles.

En se combinant, les innovations peuvent avoir à long terme une efficacité sociale qui dépasse le cadre du projet initial (entreprises, associations, etc.) et représenter un enjeu qui questionne les grands équilibres sociétaux. Elles deviennent alors une source de transformations sociales et peuvent contribuer à l'émergence de nouveaux modèles de développement.

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- Les membres de l'axe innovations sociales, développement et territoire s'intéressent à la régulation, aux arrangements organisationnels et institutionnels, aux pratiques et stratégies d'acteurs socio-économiques qui ont une conséquence sur le développement des collectivités et des territoires. Ils étudient les entreprises et les organisations (privées, publiques, coopératives et associatives) ainsi que leurs interrelations, les réseaux d'acteurs, les systèmes d'innovation, les modalités de gouvernance et les stratégies qui contribuent au développement durable des collectivités et des territoires.

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INTRODUCTION

This Report summarizes work on social innovation, focussing on the different intellectual traditions that analyse social innovation and reviewing certain major related themes in order to better understand what distinguishes social innovation as a process. After doing this, we will briefly describe a number of specific examples of social innovation in Canada, looking particularly at the process of development from the formulation of the original idea to a fully institutionalized example of social change.

The objective of the Report is to demonstrate the importance of social innovation to the present day in Ontario and, on this basis, to argue for the importance of better understanding the process of social innovation. Many authors have indicated a variety of factors which help to explain the growing importance of social innovation. For example, Murray, Mulgan and Caulier-Grice describe the present context for social innovation as ‘a period of transformative innovation’ (page 2). They go on to explain:

Sometimes clashing, sometimes coinciding, two themes give it its distinctive character. One comes from technology: the spread of networks and global infrastructures for information and social networking tools. The other comes from culture and values: the growing emphasis on the human dimension, on putting people first, giving democratic voice and starting with the individual and relationships rather than systems and structure. (p.8)

The economic transformation of modern societies to economies dominated by the service sector is one driver towards social innovation as successful transformations in service organizations often imply a level of co-production, involving consumers and employees along with employers (Mulgan 2006). Citizen mobilization and a desire for citizen participation in decision-making in all sectors of the society is also a factor behind the greater importance of social innovation; encouraging the self-organization of citizens and therefore producing new forms of participation. Technological advances form an integral part of these citizen engagement strategies and certainly the internet has both produced social innovation (Google, for example) and been a support to social innovation (self-help internet sources).

The persistence of ‘wicked problems’ in our societies, those social issues that have proved intractable to simple state policy solutions, are another driver of social

innovation. Solutions are seen to require new models of coordination, bringing together novel sets of social actors. Knowing more about the processes of social innovation and the forms of support for social innovation would help societies to act more effectively on these 'wicked' problems. As Mulgan argues, 'we are particularly interested in fields where there is the greatest gap between needs and current provision, which can often be gauged by how angry or dissatisfied people are' (Mulgan 2006, p.148).

Social innovation therefore responds to a number of deep seated social trends. Its importance is only coming to be understood – we hope that this Report will help to underline the importance of properly supporting social innovation.

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?

There are many definitions of social innovation but, for this Report, we will use the definition given by Geoff Mulgan: 'Social innovation refers to innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social' (Mulgan 2006).

In order to better understand the ways that social innovation has been understood, we will look at a number of the important authors writing on social innovation. The most important body of literature on this question in Canada has come from the work on the social economy from researchers in Quebec. There has been a huge body of research, both theoretical and empirical, and this literature will be one of those described (see 2.3 Social Economy).

Our organization of the major authors writing on social innovation has been influenced by the framework presented in Klein and Harrisson (2007, p.3), looking first at those authors who concentrate on social innovation as a response to social problems and social conditions and then looking at those authors who concentrate on social innovation in the context of democratic governance and development, both territorially and organizationally. These categories are very fluid ones and indeed both centres on social transformations, whether through social and economic or social and cultural interrelations.

Our intention in this literature is to develop an understanding of the main themes emerged from the writings on social innovation. Because of our belief in the need for enhanced support and promotion of social innovation, we will begin with the authors most directly writing on the practical implications of understanding social innovation. The title of Mulgan's centrally important text, **Social Innovation: What it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated**, makes this point clearly; understanding social innovation is a first step to trying to better support its development in society.

1.1. Geoff Mulgan and the Young Foundation

The work of Geoff Mulgan (see, for example, 2006, 2007 and Murray, Mulgan and Caulier-Grice 2008) has been extremely influential in the increased interest in social innovation in the English-speaking world. Mulgan's work, illustrated by his short definition of social innovation as 'new ideas that work' has been focussed on an effort to illustrate the importance of better understanding the process of social innovation and therefore of better supporting these processes. The work has been centered on social innovation as fuelled by the desire to solve social problems and to improve the living conditions of marginalized populations. He discusses the organizational form for social innovation; making the point that innovation often jumps from sector to sector and can be found in a wide variety of organizational forms. However, each sector does have some distinct patterns, drivers and inhibitors and understanding these is vital for anyone wanting to promote new ideas. In line with his interest in practical and concrete knowledge, Mulgan then discusses the patterns of social organization, social movements, politics, government, markets, academia, philanthropy and, finally, social software and open source methods illustrating both the opportunities and challenges of each of these sectors. The recent 'Work in Progress: How to innovate: The tools for social innovation' (Murray, Mulgan, Caulier-Grice 2008) lists 260 methods, processes and examples of systemic innovation, encouraging debate on additions and subtractions from the list.

The Young Foundation has done considerable work (see, for example, Discovery, Argument and Action: How Civil Society responds to Changing Needs, Caulier-Grice, Mulgan, Vale 2008) on the role of civil society in social innovation and in the concrete ways the other sectors of society (particularly governments and the private sector) can support and sustain civil society's capacity for social innovation. The authors argue that civil society plays three major roles: meeting needs directly in a variety of ways; identifying needs, raising awareness and campaigning for change; and innovating to meet needs. The conclusion in relation to social innovation in civil society is mixed.

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in discovering new and innovative ways of meeting needs. There are, however, a number of challenges which limit the third sector ability to innovate. Although some foundations support innovative projects, the sector lacks knowledge about how best to invest and then scale up good innovations. Most approaches are ad hoc, driven by enthusiasts – and most innovative projects fail to achieve a wider impact.

We have discussed elsewhere what a more developed approach to innovation might be, and how funders and governments could more systematically focus on areas of particularly acute need, or where need is intensifying, and invest in a range of innovative solutions with a commitment to grow the successful ones. (p.54)

Mulgan sees social innovation as coming from all sectors of society and his central message is simple: that better understanding of social innovation is crucial for the successful development of knowledge societies.

1.2. Patsy Healey and social innovation in governance

Patsy Healey has been an important figure in the analysis of the transformational potential of mechanisms of urban governance and planning. As she writes (2004), 'There is always governance, the process of collective action, and it is always double-faced, both authoritative and generative... It is constraining, disciplining and stabilising. But it is also enabling, releasing of capacity and innovating. At issue in challenges to prevailing governance practices is the relative balance between the two forces and the equity of the distribution of the resultant opportunities and constraints' (2004, p.91). As with Mulgan, for Healey the improvement in the living conditions of the more marginalized sections of society is a principal criteria for judging the innovative nature of the collective action described. Healey's model for analysis looks at specific episodes of governance, governance processes and governance culture and underlines the importance of diversity, fluidity, transparency, inclusivity and a long timescale.

1.3. Frank Moulaert and the Social Polis Team

The Social Polis Team, led by Moulaert, looks at social innovation through the research perspective of territorial development (Moulaert and Nussbaumer 2008, Hillier, Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2004). Some of the sources of inspiration for their work include: the social transformations of the 1960's and the 1970s; the democratization of institutions, the presence of social movements that confronted oppressive social conventions and the emancipation of the patriarchal family. This inspiration is rooted in the failure of the neo-classical growth model where the link between society and territory was not fully respected in the content, and the process, of innovation in regional

and local development. The human dimension was not placed as the central concern despite the model of endogenous development and of territorial innovation. Socio-cultural dynamics were systematically neglected. The objective of the work of this team was to illuminate the theoretical and empirical interest of the concept of social innovation targeting, as fields of interest, regional and local public policies and the transformation of the structures and governance of local communities.

1.4. Lorenz and Lundvall

The central focus for the work *How Europe's Economies Learn*, by Lorenz and Lundvall is the growing recognition by policy makers of the increasing role of social innovation as a driver of economic growth. This recognition, in turn, necessitates a deeper appreciation of the process by which national economies 'learn' as a necessary prerequisite for the institutional reforms that will improve their innovative and competitive performance. The book presents an evolutionary framework designed to analyze the linkages between the capacity to innovate and national institutional arrangements in the sphere of labour markets, financial systems and education and training systems. The link between social innovation and social learning patterns is therefore central to economic development.

The volume is based squarely in the innovation systems approach and the contributors make a sharp distinction between three different approaches to innovation systems concept in the literature: one which sees the innovation systems as rooted in national R&D systems; a second which links the innovation system to the underlying dynamic of the production system; and a third which ties the innovation system to both the production system and the prevailing national institutions for developing and deploying human resources in the economy. They argue that this latter approach expands on earlier conceptions of the key elements comprising national innovation systems by including specific analyses of the institutional structure of national labour markets, linkages between those and the education and training system and the prevailing systems of corporate governance. This broader conception is essential for linking the role of the innovation system to the concept of a 'learning economy' – which recognizes the contribution of human resources and organizational capabilities to innovative capacity.

The conceptualization of innovation at a European scale implies an understanding of transversal or horizontal activities which go beyond more than one territory. The authors give particular importance to the education systems and their contribution to the learning economy. Governance is seen as multi-level with regional and international policy options.

1.5. Benoît Lévesque and CRISES

We have chosen to discuss the work of Benoît Lévesque and CRISES (Research Centre on Social Innovation) last in order to highlight its contribution to our understanding of the social economy in Quebec and the link between thinking about social innovation and the social economy. In describing the work done by Benoît Lévesque and CRISES it is important to underline the development of this work across time as the areas of focus have expanded, as have the interrelations between these areas.

Lévesque's work began towards the end of the 1980s, a period marked by his development of the idea of an alternative economy, described as the 'other' economy (Lévesque, Joyal and Chouinard, 1989). Interest focused on the associative dynamics which were the basis of Quebec's distinctive socio-institutional structures, both in terms of the important role played by cooperatives and by the Quebec credit union movement (often referred to as the Desjardins movement). The evaluation of the traditional economic structures indicated the extent of social problems such as poverty, marginalization and social exclusion, and for this reason, the focus became rethinking the economy in order to fight social exclusion (Lévesque, 1995). From this point on, industrial development, regional development, industrial organization and production, and network of enterprises have constituted the central objects of research (Lévesque, 1996, 2001a, b, 2007). The conceptual universe of social innovation has widened to include development projects, industrial projects, and neighbourhood based production systems (Lévesque; Fontan and Klein, 1996). This expanded research agenda in turn introduced numerous topics; regional economic development, the social economy, enterprise financing, development funds and financial institutions (Lévesque; Mendell and Van Kemenade, 1996). Additional research foci have included community development, the institutionalization of social policy, social services and services of proximity (Levesque and Vaillancourt, 1998) and the cooperative and social economies (Lévesque, 1999).

For Lévesque, the principal fields for the application of social innovation are those of economic and social development. The relevant actors think in terms of public, private and community enterprises with organizations and associations often working in partnership (Lévesque, 2001c). The diversity of the trajectories of social innovation raise questions of shared governance and institutionalized partnerships to ensure responsibility and accountability for services intended for the common good (Lévesque, 2004, 2006).

Before developing our synthesis of the major themes from the literature on social innovation, we want to briefly describe a number of concepts that are related to social innovation, but distinct from it. We include these descriptions in order to highlight similarities and differences with the concept of social innovation.

2. RELATED CONCEPTS - THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

2.1. Creativity

Individual creativity is often associated with psychological perspectives, and interest in social-cultural and cognitive foundations of action. Although often associated with innate characteristics, creativity is greatly determined by factors external to the individual. Structures of agency, professional values, the social climate, intellectual traditions and cultural beliefs orient or constrain the individual's creativity. If we think of a matrix combining innovation and creativity, we can think of the innovation axis as including initiation, development, implementation, testing and adoption and the creativity axis linking testing with illumination, incubation and insight.

The explanations for creativity at the individual level have both collective and territorial implications. In order to establish a base from which to begin to think about creative governance, Klein and al. (2009) develop the link between social cohesion and creativity. Linking social cohesion to creativity establishes a number of conceptual bridges, making it possible to talk of social creativity. This concept emerges in urban analysis when social cohesion is threatened by the new economy and the new cleavages it creates (metropolitanization, dual labour markets, and exclusion). At the same time, the new economy offers opportunities which are different from those of the 'Fordist' period and thus raises issues of reconversion of regions and territories (Fontan, Klein, Tremblay, 2005).

2.2. Social Capital and Social Entrepreneurship

According to Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2008), the concept of social capital expresses the quality of social relations within a community or an organization. On the individual level, social capital designates the sum of advantages gained from a network of relationships over a long period of time, or through belonging to a group. Distinct from the individual dimension and taking account of the economic, cultural and symbolic dimensions, social capital is an attribute of the structure of relations between social

actors. Three characteristics define social capital: networks, norms, and trust - this last characteristic is transformed from a personal level to a societal one through the application of norms of reciprocity and civic engagement.

Manoury (2002) proposes the concept of social entrepreneurship to address the issue of the professionalization of social capital. Through this angle, the competencies of entrepreneurs, or of social enterprises, constitute a tool of social innovation. The specific characteristics of social enterprises are linked to those of the professionalized social entrepreneur. The social entrepreneur's professionalism is built and consolidated through training and therefore organizational specificities of the social enterprise are crucial.

Yong (1990) establishes a distinction between innovation and invention as applied in social work, focusing not on the product but on the process or the method of its production. This distinction is based on an analysis of the change process. An invention is a new idea, a new service or production, the best method of production or the most efficient organization. Innovation is an invention put into practice.

2.3. Social Economy

The social economy is a factor, and an engine, of social innovation (Bouchard, 2007). The social economy is an engine of social innovation which enhances the solving and the prevention of social problems by modifying social relations and reversing social norms. In the new context of institutional governance, the social economy is a real tool to mitigate the failures of markets, the political challenges, and the difficulties of welfare states in fighting poverty and exclusion. A definition of the social economy that has been widely adopted in Quebec is the following:

As a whole, the social economy refers to the set of activities and organizations stemming from collective entrepreneurship, organized around the following principles and operating rules: 1) the purpose of a social economy is to serve its members or the community rather than to simply make profits; 2) it operates at arm's length from the state; 3) it promotes a democratic management process involving all users and/or workers through its statutes and the way it does business; 4) it defends the

primacy of individuals and work over capital in the distribution of its surplus and its revenues; 5) it bases its activities on the principles of participation and individual and collective empowerment. The social economy therefore encompasses all cooperative and mutual movements and associations. The social economy can be developed in all sectors that meet the needs of the people and the community. (Cited in Mendell, 2008)

Mendell (2008) describes the success of the social economy in Quebec as resting on three pillars; the enterprises, public policy and leadership. The central structure is the *Chantier* of the social economy, as an integrated institutional architecture including collective tools (finance, research, training, business services). Particular examples of social innovation within the social economy include instruments of solidarity, finance, social enterprises in the culture/arts sector and research partnerships (Mendell 2008).

The concept of the solidarity based economy as elaborated by Laville (1994) is similar to that of the social economy, in bringing together enterprises, associations and the state and in giving importance to the principles of equity and public action.

2.4. Community Development and the territorialized dimension of social innovation

When the analysis is territorially situated, the concept of community opens up a number of perspectives linked to social innovation. In a social logic, territorial development becomes an entry point for socially constructed links within a territorial framework. Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2008) propose an analysis that includes the social dynamic in territorial development.

Social innovation has territorial expressions that can be framed within economic, sociological, political, and cultural boundaries. The territorialized dimension of innovation plays an important role in development as it becomes possible to institutionalize an existing social innovation as a desired territorial innovation. The intentionality of the actors is therefore linked to the results of social innovation incorporated in existing territorial communities.

Looking at the territorial expression of social innovation from a bottom-up perspective introduces the concept of the popular economy and the social region. Actors in the popular economy adopt strategies for the preservation of traditional values through

practices of reciprocity. In this way, the importance of the gift economy, the survival of the practices of reciprocity, celebration and reciprocal values, village communities and the extended family (the last social support for reciprocal practices), constitute determinants of the popular economy.

The social region appears as a counter-weight to the economic region and to the market region, particularly as the base of community development. According to Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2008), regional development must get to the level of the community, seen as the level of human and social organisation where development can take place in all its dimensions. In the social region, market relations are taken into account in the same way as other types of interactions, depending on their contribution to the well-being and to the wealth of the population.

This local orientation also links to the work done by Laville and his collaborators on social innovation (2005). Their analysis of social innovation looks at the ways in which the overall inadequacy of the response to social needs has led to different kinds of locally based activities and local services. These services are the origin for the development, in Europe, of enterprises that contribute both to social cohesion and to employment creation. Whether in the economic field, the state or the market, the increase in the creation of services of proximity is a reality. Those using the services, as well as the institutions themselves, become actors in the democratization and the decentralization of the administration of the services. Governance is transformed by the imagining of an alternative economy through socio-economic innovation.

3. MAJOR THEMES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION

Having described the work of a number of major authors that have written on social innovation and, in addition, briefly describing some related but distinct concepts, it is now possible to outline what we see as the major themes in the study of social innovation. This list allows us to link this more theoretical examination of social innovation with our empirical case studies that illustrate these major themes. The themes are as follows:

1. Social innovation is most often not the creation of an entirely new idea but rather the reorganization of existing elements. For this reason, it often emerges from putting different sectors together. In this report, we will include a number of examples that emerged from putting together social and economic sectors, either on a territorial basis or on the level of an individual organization or coalition where social actors are placed together with those concerned with employment creation. Our examples cover a variety of sectors but the important element is the bringing together of different perspectives and different ways of acting – the juxtaposition of these different perspectives can generate social innovation.
2. Social innovation occurs in all sectors of society. Murray, Mulgan and Caulier-Grice describe the social economy as including parts of the state, the market, the grant economy and the household and argue for the importance of the cross-border relations of the four sectors in supporting and encouraging social innovation. As our definition makes clear, diffusion of social innovation takes place primarily through organizations with social aims, but the practices of other sectors are important as are the relations between the sectors. Social innovation works against the dichotomizing of the non-profit sector and the for-profit sector – the central issue is that of the innovation and its translation into real social change. For example, the on-line journal www.innovation deals with social innovation in the public sector. See also Vincent Lemieux (2004) on innovation in social policy.
3. Social innovation stems from a perception of an unmet social need and a desire to meet that need and therefore work towards an improvement in social conditions. Values are therefore an intrinsic part of social innovation and the motivating values can be very varied; increasing democratic participation, reducing poverty, improving the conditions of the disabled, creating more environmentally and socially

sustainable cities, increasing the capacity of cancer survivors to mutually support each other, etc.

4. Social innovation is a process and a large number of socially innovative ideas never make it beyond the early stages. The steps in the innovation process have been described in a variety of somewhat different ways. Two complementary but slightly different descriptions of the social innovation process are: 1) diagnosis, design, development, sustaining innovations, scaling diffusing and connecting, and, finally, systemic innovation (Murray, Mulgan and Caulier-Grice, p.15); and 2) generating ideas by understanding needs and identifying potential solutions, developing /prototyping and piloting ideas, assessing then scaling up and diffusing the good ones, learning and evolving (Mulgan 2007, pp 21-25). Institutionalization of the innovation is an essential part of the complex social innovation process.
5. The question of trust is central to social innovation. Working across sectors and involving new partnerships works best when trust is well established. This is often described in terms of the pleasure people had in working together in projects of social innovation.
6. Social innovation involves the wish to do things differently, to think in terms of transformations to institutions and to social practices, *'faire autrement'* (Chambon *et al.*, 1982).
7. Social innovation is socially and spatially embedded. As our examples will indicate, many social innovations result in the reconfiguration of social-spatial relations, in new ways of locating social activities in space.
8. Social innovation requires learning and institutional capacity to learn. 'Learning regions' and 'learning institutions' are therefore critical elements in the social innovation process. As Paquet puts it: 'the production and distribution of these latter forms of knowledge (know-how and know-who) have been more problematic; they depend a great deal on social cohesion and trust, on much trespassing and cross-fertilization among disciplines and on the development of networks capable of serving as two-way communication links between tacit and codified, private and shared knowledge, between passive efficiency-achieved learning and creative-destructive Schumpeterian learning' (Paquet, 1999, p.14).

9. The creation of social innovations has been analyzed in two different, but complementary, ways; the role of a single individual (Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank and micro financing, Robert Owen of cooperative organizing) and the consequence of social movements (feminism, environmentalism). Those two perspectives are complementary, as Mulgan states: 'Both call attention to the resentment, passion and commitment that make social change possible' (Mulgan 2006. p.149). In Mulgan 2007, organizations are added as a third lens to understand the creation of social innovation (Mulgan 2007, pp.16-17).

4. CASE STUDIES

In order to illustrate the processes, and the importance, of social innovation in the Canadian context, we chose to illustrate a limited number of case studies. The descriptions attempt to briefly highlight the context of the creation of the social innovation, its objectives, the process of innovation and the degree of institutionalization.

Our intention is to look at a very limited number of case studies in order to illustrate our major themes rather than to suggest in any way that the case studies represent a survey of the field of Canadian social innovation. Indeed the examples chosen were related to the research interests of the two authors of the report; Klein having worked extensively on social innovation in Montreal (Fontan, Klein and Tremblay 2005, 2008) and Andrew on women's urban safety and immigrant integration at the community level (Whitzman, Shaw, Andrew and Travers 2009, Andrew 2008, Agrawal, Andrew and Biles 2009). These we felt illustrated the major themes and were perhaps less well known within the field of social innovation in Ontario. Given the rationale for the case studies, we have also included very brief descriptions of three other Canadian social innovations, one of which relates to citizen engagement and the other two which are important actors within the Toronto and Ontario field of social innovation; the Centre for Social Innovation and the MARS discovery District. These last two are extremely well known within the field of social innovation in Ontario and for this reason we will end this report with brief descriptions of these two important players.

Our case studies are basically of two types: those at an organizational and/or enterprise level and those at an urban and/or community level. Our specific examples are as follows:

- Examples at an organizational and/or enterprise level
- Examples at an urban and/or community level
- Other important examples.

4.1. At an organizational and/or enterprise level

➤ *Collective Kitchen of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve*

In addition to, and beyond, food security, the Collective Kitchen of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (CKHM) is focussed on socio-professional integration. This community organisation welcomes and accompanies different groups of collective kitchens (to be described later in this section). It has diversified its activities to include an enterprise offering employment to clients who are poorly qualified for professional reintegration. It responds to both the social problem of food security and to the difficult process of reintegrating employment. This example addresses the ‘wicked problem’ of the effects of poverty on residents of a very poor neighbourhood and the project has had an impact across the whole Montreal area.

The conditions in which this project emerged are those of a precarious socioeconomic environment with a declining population. Many female single parents with low levels of education, a high density environment, stark contrasts with other districts in terms of services and housing costs are only some of the problems encountered. The population is in majority young and with low levels of formal education (lacking high school graduation). In addition to social isolation there is a high rate of unemployment and a built form typical of poor neighbourhoods. This formerly francophone area within the metropolitan territory is becoming cosmopolitan owing to the multi-ethnic migration into the neighbourhood.

The creation of the CKHM took place during a period of rapid expansion of food aid organisations in Quebec, as part of initiating local strategies to fight poverty. The project is centered on the idea of empowerment, based on the active involvement of the members. The diversification of activities and the increase in clients led to the creation of a catering service and a school/shelter which increases participation in a socially oriented food cluster.

The networking done by the CKHM functions along regional and sectoral lines of collaboration, through which other parallel training is provided. CKHM is a member of the “Collectif des entreprises d’insertion du Québec” bringing together actors and partners of the social economy. Its regional status is illustrated by its participation in “Tourisme Montréal” focus groups.

The objective of collective kitchens is to break social isolation within marginalized neighbourhoods by bringing people together to do low cost cooking and a variety of types of cooking and this to increase both food security and self-worth. The participation of persons with disabilities and the elderly is a long term objective. In addition, the aim is to improve the quality of life through healthy food, socialising with others, developing a relational network and improving self-esteem. The concern for effective management of the family budget leads to working with young mothers. To sum up, this is an innovative project which has created bridges between individuals and between organizations, and has rebuilt the mutual aid and solidarity of the community by proposing collective responses to individual difficulties.

➤ ***The Angus “Technopole”***

One can describe the Angus “Technopole” as simply an industrial park but, by doing so, the innovative nature of its development is not recognised. This project was developed around employment creation, sustainable development and the social economy.

The conditions for the creation of the Technopole come from a context of breaking with traditional approaches to territorial development. The aim was to revitalize the Angus site, a declining industrial area, by focussing on the principles of community economic development. The objective was to favour cooperative development for employment creation. The Technopole contributes to employment creation, improves quality of life, and limits the marginalization of certain groups. The following dimensions summarize the setting up of this innovation: decline of the railway and the re-conversion of an old industrial site; elaboration of a concept and a strategy; services offered based on mobilizing institutional and community resources (Fontan, Klein and Tremblay, 2004; 2005; 2008).

In terms of an innovative sustainable development, the project aims at developing a coherent policy around transportation, construction and housing management. The employees have work spaces in ecological buildings. They also have a bistro, a terrace, a cafeteria, two lunch counters and a catering service. A centre with 80 places for young children is available. Places for bicycles are also available in each building, as is a service, at no cost, for employees to borrow bicycles. The Jean-Duceppe Park is nearby with extensive facilities. The public transport system has been improved with new bus lines and, as well, with systems of car sharing and car pooling.

The work is done in partnership with a union foundation («Fondation de la Confédération des syndicats nationaux»). This entire process is part of an innovation dynamic, where synergy is brought to bear; the local work force works in harmony with external resources which aid learning, and cooperation is built between different networks of companies, within the socio-community economy, and between research and training centres.

There are about 50 companies within the Angus site, which in April 2009 employed about 1000 persons. This has had an impact on the territorialization of activities in space through the mixed use environment (work, housing and leisure). If successful, this anchoring of mixed-use activities will increase the Technopole's attractiveness to other companies for the creation of enterprises, employment creation, and the improvement of local living conditions.

This local initiative constitutes a social innovation, with effects that are first of all territorial, in which the social dimension remains fundamental and in which the economic impact is clear owing to the utilisation of resources for industrial development. Its development has required the collaboration of the City of Montreal and fiscal incentives have been offered by the provincial government. An institutional partnership includes private organizations, those of civil society, of the community and of the union. Support was also necessary from financial institutions. The example of the Angus Technopole speaks to public, private, and civil actors, as constituting a way to building a plural economy (Klein, Fontan and Tremblay, 2004; 2005; 2008).

➤ ***Ottawa – Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI)***

LASI is a coalition of the executive-directors of the major immigrant serving agencies in Ottawa. It includes the Catholic Immigration Centre, Immigrant Women Services, Jewish Family Services, Lebanese and Arab Social Services Association, Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization and the Economic and Social Centre of Ottawa Carleton (CESOC).

The LASI partnership created a fertile ground for a number of social innovations including LASI World Skills and the Multicultural Liaison Officer Program.

In addition to creating a fertile ground for transformative innovations, the LASI partnership can itself be considered a social innovation. Bringing together the executive-

directors of the major immigrant serving agencies on a regular basis is a social innovation in creating a space for collaboration between agencies that in many other communities work in competition. The collaboration has been successful in part because of the fact that the meetings have been enjoyable.

The turning point for the group's evolution to its current level of cohesion and social and political influence was when they decided to work together to focus on advocacy as well as exchanging information on on-going and new activities.

As mentioned earlier, LASI has created social innovations, including LASI World Skills, established in 1997. LASI World Skills describes itself as a connector, linking skilled new Canadians with employers looking for those skills, while in the process promoting social inclusion and diversity. According to the organization's website, "*LASI World Skills is a recognized leader in responding to the needs of the local labour market while promoting the skills and talents of New Canadians. Our vision is to build a welcoming community that meets its full potential.*"

One of LASI World Skills "sector-specific support" projects is geared towards teachers; the Internationally Educated Teacher (IET) project. Among the services the IET project provides to foreign-trained teachers in the Ottawa region are one-on-one support, counseling, information about teaching in Ottawa's public school boards, and information about alternative teaching opportunities. The project provides information on how to become a teacher in Ontario or, alternatively, pursue a related career that would make use of their skills – as private school teachers, educational assistants, multicultural liaison officers, ESL or FSL teachers, tutors, translators, etc.

Three favourable conditions paved the way for the creation and future development of the Internationally Educated Teacher initiative: a community consultation held by the Ontario government, which led to a partnership between LASI and the City of Ottawa's People Services Department and a relation of trust with the then General Manager, Dick Stewart; the introduction of new stream of funding within the settlement programming package and, finally, Mayor Charelli's Task Force on Employment, which provided opportunities for LASI to engage major employers in the city and to build an understanding that immigration was a solution to Ottawa's demographic challenges and to impending skills shortages in certain sectors. This formed the bases for multi-stakeholder partnership between LASI World Skills, the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Public School Board to pursue provincial resources to prepare a selected group of internationally trained teachers for Ottawa schools. The partners engaged the Ontario

College of Teachers, the Ontario Teachers Federation, and Queens University to establish a pilot 3-year program (2002-2005) with MTCU funding, called the *Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Education* (ATAPTIE). The successful completion of the ATAPTIE program led to a B.Ed from Queens University to 74 immigrant teachers across Ontario, a licence to teach in Ontario and, after some time, teaching positions for 90 percent of the participants – most of them with the public school board.

This innovation was in part institutionalized through the creation of a five-year Ontario-wide program launched with the Ontario College of Teachers as the lead, with joint funding by the federal and provincial governments. This program was branded under the name “Teach in Ontario” program (2004-2008).

➤ ***Ottawa - Multicultural Liaison Officers***

The Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) Program was created by the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) in 1991 to meet the unmet needs of a growing population of immigrant and refugee students in Ottawa. It became apparent that the work being done in schools went beyond the traditional settlement work and included facilitation, cross-cultural communication and negotiation, community development, youth support and outreach. Thus the Multicultural Liaison Officers Program was created to be a specialized comprehensive program that, on the one hand, facilitates a smooth integration of immigrant students and their families into the school system and, on the other, provides support to the school administration to resolve the myriad of challenges that emerge throughout the integration of immigrant students.

The MLO Program sought to improve the situation by placing settlement and integration and community development professionals from diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds (similar to those of the students) in schools to assist teachers, students and their parents in meeting their unmet needs. MLOs facilitate interactions between students, parents and teachers, while connecting them to outside settlement and integration service providers. As such, the MLOs serve as social connectors and community builders. The first target community/language was Somali. The program later grew to serve more than 20 ethnic/linguistic communities in the school system.

OCISO continued to innovate with this program. Later developments include two MLO projects that touch on issues of inclusion and participation: Step Ahead Project, an

innovative summer camp for immigrant youth combining English as a second language (ESL) with sports skills development training and Diversity Action Teams (DAT) Training Project, in which the MLO program facilitates civic participation training for parents and school staff to increase the civic participation of immigrant and minority ethnic parents in Ottawa schools.

The MLO program has been successfully institutionalized, becoming a national program under the name of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS). Following the success of the MLO Program and based on its model, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) launched school-based settlement programs in other cities. SWIS now has approximately 225 settlement workers working in 40 schools across the country.

4.2. At an urban and/or community level

➤ *Montreal - Tohu and St-Michel district*

Tohu is a not-for profit organization that uses the visibility and attractive force of circus arts in order to raise public consciousness about environmental issues and economic development. It works for the inclusion of marginalised communities. It is part of the current movement of rehabilitating old industrial sites and doing this in ways that produce benefits for the entire community.

The project of the School of Circus Arts (École du Cirque) is targeted to youth at risk, particularly school drop-outs. Creating jobs in the service sector is a response to the 'wicked problem' of the interrelations of unemployment, school drop-out, and mental health issues of marginalized youth. This lies behind the strategy of focusing on marginalised youth in order to favour their social inclusion.

Tohu emerged in this context of marginality wanting to promote the arts and create a space that would bring together training, creation, production and diffusion as a meeting space for community exchange. This project was inspired by the words 'tohu-bohu' which evoke the creative chaos of ideas and gestures, the disorder that comes before renewal and/or the constant noise of urban centres. All these converged through a search for a balance amongst all the opposing but complementary elements with which the organization identifies.

Supported by the prestige of the Cirque du Soleil, the Tohu built links and developed partnerships with the provincial government, the City of Montréal, the stakeholders from the community, from institutional players and from the social economy network. It has created partnerships with private sector companies that share similar values, notably from the cultural sector.

The project attempts to encourage the participation of the population. The residents see their quality of life improved by the positive impact of the Cirque du Soleil and the National Circus Arts School.

Targeting art and culture, Tohu innovates in the way it attempts to create urban vitality. The territorial embeddedness depends more on the functional outputs of the project and less on residential space. The focus is culture associated with innovation and with the dynamic transformation of artistic products. Tohu is characterized by the diversity of its mission and of its specific actions.

As a result of the investment of 73 million dollars, Tohu brings together a concentration of companies, of artists and of circus arts. It encompasses an international headquarters with associated structures, a residence for artists and performance studios. A public building contains a theatre, exhibition halls, a reception area and administrative offices that permit the permanent diffusion of circus arts.

The innovation touches not only the activities taking place but also the physical environment. The project's design reflects a concern for environmental quality, concretized by the use of renewable energy for heating and cooling buildings and the use of recycled materials in construction.

A cultural pole in the Master Plan for the City of Montreal, Tohu wants to have public appropriation of the environmental activities. This will require sustained funding and political support to allow the project to serve as a model. Successes include diffusion of existing circus activities, support to the artistic sector, the creation of new shows, the creation of new elements within the circus groups, public education, proper training for students by ensuring access to specialised studios, cultural and environmental programs and, finally, strengthening social solidarity through exhibitions and youth forums.

➤ ***The Economic and Social Organization of South-West Montreal (Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest - RESO)***

The creation of social innovation in the case of the Economic and Social Organization of South-West Montreal district, known as RESO, relates to the establishment of a community development corporation working for the economic and social revitalisation of the South-West District of Montreal. This innovation focuses on training and employment.

The concern for social inclusion stems from the specific context: the economic revitalization of a neighbourhood in decline. The principal difficulties for the neighbourhood came from the closing of the Lachine canal and the subsequent decline in industrial employment owing to the closing of factories. As the population decreased, the community reacted to this decline and began to organize in order to improve their social and economic conditions.

To do this, they created a 'table' bringing together the community organizations and this group then developed an 'Economic Program for Pointe Saint-Charles'. Stakeholders organized, including private enterprises, community organizations, unions and the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

Employment and training were central. By supporting community organisations and social economy enterprises, the aim was to create and maintain long term employment in the production of goods and services for social and collective benefits, to offer activities to the unemployed that would lead to employment and to offer professional development activities to the community sector.

Starting with pilot projects, the socio-economic redevelopment is supported by the creation of new fiscal tools. These include an investment fund with a capital of five million dollars to ensure territorial development and other funds for the social economy and for local initiatives. A local action plan for economic development and employment was elaborated for an initial period of three years in collaboration with local actors. This was a new way to act as this plan included two other plans, one focussing on economic development and the other, on labour force development.

RESO's activities have produced new social relations that remain based on a territorial sense of belonging. However, the territorial embeddedness, or the institutionalisation of the territorialized action of RESO, requires external financial support and human and

political resources because the outputs of the project go beyond the neighbourhood boundaries.

The residents remain very proud of their collective effort and of the concrete resources that have been produced. The capacity to transfer the learnings of this experience is possible owing to its contribution to the preservation of employment, to the consolidation of the industrial base and to the attraction of small and medium enterprises. RESO has initiated training projects within companies, linked large and small enterprises, supported community entrepreneurship, and established arrangements for training and management depending on the needs of particular enterprises.

➤ *Women's Safety Audits*

Women's safety audits can be defined as 'a process which brings individuals together to walk through a physical environment, evaluate how safe it seems to them, identify ways to make the space safer and organize to bring about these changes' (WACAV 1995, p.1). As a tool, it was developed by Toronto's Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Women and Children (METRAC 1989) and, since this time, it has been used extensively as a planning tool in Canada and across the world.

It emerged as a way of countering the feelings of insecurity in urban environments and of finding concrete means to improve these urban environments. The idea of women's safety audits is to encourage those who use a particular area within an urban environment to identify those factors that create situations and feelings of insecurity. By focussing on women, and on particularly vulnerable groups of women (elderly, disabled, visible minority), the urban environment can be made more secure for all. Based on the identification of elements that create feelings of insecurity, recommendations are made for increasing the use of public space by improvements to aspects of the built environment and by changing community behaviours and local government policies (UN Habitat and WICI, 2008, p.ii). The innovation is to use the expertise of the users of urban space and to build upon their recommendations for improving the security and liveability of urban environments.

Women's safety audits have taken place in a wide variety of locations across Canada and also across the world. As a social innovation, it is perhaps the Canadian example that has been the most often copied internationally. As mentioned earlier, the safety audit was

invented in Toronto by METRAC and was taken up in a very important way by the City of Montreal. The City had at that time a unit within the City government called Femmes et Ville and this unit was extremely active in the carrying out of safety audits. The information and resources produced in Toronto and Montreal allowed women's safety audits to spread to numerous communities. Women in Cities International, a Canadian-based NGO, is currently adapting safety audits in four communities across Canada in partnership with community-based groups to four different communities of women; immigrant women in Peel, Aboriginal women in Regina, elderly women in Gatineau and disabled women in Montreal (see www.femmesetvilles.org).

The process of institutionalization has been uneven and the joint report by UN Habitat and Women in Cities International recently highlighted the importance of the follow up to the recommendations. This question also highlights the link between women's safety audits and the issue of civic participation in local governance. Women's safety audits are based on the idea that those who use urban spaces are the experts in understanding that space, and that their recommendations will be considered by the relevant authorities, particularly local governments. The process of consideration by local governments is therefore a crucial step in the successful improvement of the safety and social inclusion of the community and one factor in this is the extent of women's civic engagement within that municipality. The question of institutionalization in this case is more related to political will and this in turn is related to the channels of participation in local politics. There are examples where safety audits have led to clear improvements in the physical and social urban environment but there are also examples where the recommendations have not been implemented.

4.3. Other important examples

➤ *Institut du Nouveau Monde*

There are so many other examples of social innovation in Canada that would have been fascinating to discuss. The scope is extremely wide: as well as innovation within organizations and/or enterprises and within cities and communities, there are also totally different forms of social innovation that focus on broader levels and on processes of democratic governance. One such example is a social innovation to structure and animate public democratic debate. The 'Institut du Nouveau Monde' (see www.inm@com) has as its objective to encourage citizen engagement and renew public

debate in Quebec. Mulgan's analysis of the origins of social innovation fit nicely here – there is a mixture of resentment and anger from parts of the public about what is seen as the lack of transparency, and the lack of ideas, of the political elites but also huge positive energy around having one's voice heard.

The Institute describes its impact in the following ways: new ideas and influence on public debate and on decision-makers; renewal of democracy and the pleasure of participation; contributing to social and economic innovation in Quebec; new intercultural dialogue; bridging to the Aboriginal Peoples and to the francophone communities of America and finally youth voice and youth leadership. This example exemplifies many of the traits of social innovation; resentment, passion and commitment, giving voice, new social needs and new needs for ideas, new partners and the enjoyment and pleasure of participation.

➤ ***Centre for Social Innovation***

As mentioned earlier, the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto is well known within the Toronto and Ontario fields of social innovation. It describes itself as 'a dynamic space in downtown Toronto, Canada. Our mission is to spark and support new ideas that are tackling the social, environmental, economic and cultural challenges we face today. "We're creating the spaces that social innovation needs to thrive and we're contributing a few of our own ideas along the way" (www.socialinnovation.ca). As the description suggests, the Centre brings people together, creates discussion, provides information about new events and publications and has been one of the founders of SIX, the Social Innovation eXchange, which is a global network helping to build the field of social innovation.

➤ ***MARS Discovery District***

Our final example of social innovation, in this case extremely well known in Ontario, is the MARS Discovery District, 'both a physical complex and...the hub for an extended virtual community' (<http://www.marsdd.com>). MARS was created to bring together the communities of science, business and capital in order to try to better commercialize Canadian innovation. In addition to bringing together science and technology, industry and capital, the MARS web site also describes links to the cultural industries of Toronto and to the multicultural nature of the City. Once again, we are simply giving a very brief description of MARS, recognizing its importance as a hub of social innovation but

recognizing the limits of this report, which focused the case studies on areas felt to be less well known to the Ontario government and which were related to the specific research areas of the authors of the report.

Both the Centre for Social Innovation and the MARS Discovery District illustrate our major themes; including the reorganization of existing elements, the inclusion of all sectors of society, the perception of unmet social needs, the challenges of institutionalization, the importance of trust, the wish to do things differently, the social and spatial embeddedness, the importance of social learning and the role of organizations, movements and individuals.

CONCLUSION

Our principal objective in this paper, by illustrating the importance and wide-spread nature of social innovation, is to emphasize the important role for governments to support and facilitate the institutionalization of social innovation. After completing the first draft of this report these conclusions were strongly supported by the report published in September 2009 by the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN): *Social Innovation in Canada: An Update*, by Goldenberg et al. Their Key Findings indicated:

Social innovation is alive and well in Canada, but Canada is lagging behind other countries on some fronts.

- Canada has a long and proud history of social innovation reaching back many decades and involving non-profits, government, and, increasingly, profits.
- However, we are lagging behind some jurisdictions in certain areas. These limitations will work to our economic disadvantage because social innovation is about more than “feeling good.” (p.30)

We have referred to this study because its conclusions so clearly parallel those of our study. Their recommendations included developing an overall strategy for social innovation in Canada, increased research on social innovation, more work on understanding the social return on investment (SROI), more sharing of effective practices of social innovation and of knowledge transfer strategies that have been used effectively by social innovators. This resonates with our decision to highlight Canadian case studies in order to make better known a range of exciting social innovations that have emerged in Canada. The report also reiterates our theme of the importance of effective government policy, as the authors stated that “everybody interviewed felt that government has a major role in setting the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and in providing specific funding support. Another central message concerned the need for government to lead by example.”(p.27)

The intent of our Conclusion is to draw out, from the material we have surveyed, some practical guidelines that would direct the work of governments interested in innovative public policy and innovative societies. As the Update Report underlines, the government role in social innovation is crucial, as a facilitator, a model and a funder.

The challenge for governments is to build capacity to take calculated, smart risks and to give sustained support to those projects that they choose to support. The challenges associated with this strategy can be understood in relation to the factors we have underlined from the literature and from our case studies.

The first challenge is related to the origins of social innovation. As underlined by Mulgan and others, social innovation arises from public dissatisfaction with existing conditions and with concern about the gap between conditions of privilege and conditions of want. This challenge is made even more complex by the fact that social innovation is marked by messy processes and the coming together of different sectors with different ideas and different vocabularies. All of this means that the origins of social innovation are messy, complex, often conflictual and always political. In this context, governments can play an important role in supporting collaboration between the sectors and therefore in helping social learning to occur in ways that allow for the development of strong, and positive, links between sectors.

The literature on social innovation and our case studies clearly demonstrate the need for institutionalization. It is clear that many good ideas disappear because the initiators of the innovation do not have the appropriate skill set, time or resources to institutionalize the innovation. This is where smart, calculated risk-taking is necessary on the part of governments, alone or in collaboration with intermediary organizations. There is a wealth of intermediary institutions and a necessary part of government policy is about taking decisions about what parts of the social innovation process should be done in collaboration through intermediary organizations and which parts should be done within government. It may be that choosing the projects to be supported is a decision best done at a distance from government but that evaluation can be done by governments. Or it may be that technical assistance is seen to be a role for government and capacity building can be best done by intermediary organizations. These are decisions that need to be taken by governments and they require considerable knowledge about the intermediary organizations that exist and the particular strengths of each.

The lessons from the literature and case studies are clear; there must be a commitment to support and this commitment needs to be for a certain period of time. Short project funding is totally counterproductive to the absolutely necessary process of institutionalizing social innovation. Early risky investments can often deliver substantial social returns over the long term in areas of large government expenditure, such as crime, ill-health or community breakdown. The investment cycle therefore needs to be

lengthened and needs to encompass a better understanding of the social return on investment. Government support needs to be sustained and it needs to go beyond financial support to include capacity building, partnerships and possibly transfer to other operating agencies. Governments need to develop a capacity for learning, for being able to 'scale-up' policy innovations and develop effective knowledge translation processes to broadly disseminate social innovation. The Montreal case studies are eloquent descriptions of innovative beginnings that will need sustained funding. The Ottawa originated SWIS program of settlement workers in school has been demonstrated to be good public policy and good investment by the public sector to ensure successful integration at an early age. It was successful in being institutionalized.

An additional challenge comes from the fact that social innovation is often inter-sectoral or cross-sectoral and very often multi-level. All governments are struggling to deal more effectively with horizontal and vertical policy integration and social innovation typically raises these kinds of challenges. The *Tohu St-Michel* project illustrates this nicely by combining economic development, training, cultural policy with urban planning and poverty reduction – and involving multiple levels of the public sector. Ensuring one source of public financing on an on-going basis is a horizontal and vertical coordination challenge yet this kind of support is essential if the innovation is to be institutionalized. There is no simple solution to complexity but there are steps that can be taken. Creating single reporting relationships can facilitate the work of grass-roots organizations and developing more imaginative evaluation frameworks that include capacity building and sustained collaboration as legitimate outputs can establish a base for more creative horizontal and vertical coordination.

In conclusion, support for social innovation is smart public policy. It can produce major public savings through better public policy producing better social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes on the ground. It does require committed governments with horizontal and vertical policy capacity in the field of innovation. The case studies we have described, and the theoretical literature supporting these case studies, does indicate the importance of good public policy for sustaining, institutionalizing and therefore benefiting from, social innovation.

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