MIND THE GAP:
ACCELERATING SOCIAL INNOVATION
AND R&D FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH.

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SiG Fellow
SCHOOLS

TEACHERS

PROJECTS COORDINATORS

UNIVERSITIES

MENTORS

BUSINESSES

AT-RISK YOUTH

WORKING 10 TO 30 HOURS PER WEEK

YOUTH FUSION'S PROJECTS
Why is Social Innovation and R&D Vital for the Future?

Complex Challenges
- Youth unemployment
- Preventable chronic disease
- Aging
- Financial inclusion

Audacious Questions
- What might Blockchain do for social wellbeing?
- How might crowdfunding grow the pie?
- What incentives might be required for sharing data?

Urgency

$300 billion and rising in social spend (Canada)

Impetus for an innovation strategy fit for 21st century

Ad hoc response to crises
The Oblique Nature of Complex Problems

G20 countries have unsustainable social spends.

Canada spends circa $300 billion on social wellbeing.

Canada’s social impact sector is the 2nd largest in the world.

It also contributes $108 Billion or 8.1% of GDP - larger than Canada’s automotive sector.

BUT - the relationship between GDP and wellbeing is oblique.
### Social Innovation for the 21st Century

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<th>Services</th>
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<td>Volunteer Management</td>
<td>Digital Skills</td>
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<td>Board Governance</td>
<td>Systems Thinking</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>R&amp;D and Innovation Capacity</td>
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<td>Financial Transparency &amp; Accountability</td>
<td>Open data &amp; Share by default</td>
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<td>Staff Management</td>
<td>Continuous cross-sector exchange and learning</td>
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The Widening Innovation Gap

There is a widening social progress gap as problem complexity grows by leaps and bounds, but innovation capacity and investment stagnates.

Solutions are not developing at the same pace as our challenges.

There are one-off projects without continuous social innovation capacity.

There is a need for capacity and resources so organizations advancing wellbeing can generate breakthroughs via R&D and innovation.
What is the Right-sized Model for Social Innovation?

- Secret corporate labs
- Capacity-building
- Issue Area / Technical Assistance
- Government R&D
- Prize / Challenge Approach
- Cross-Government Labs
- R&D and Delivery in the same place
- Shared social innovation environments
A Cross-Sector Platform for Social R&D and Innovation?
The Ambition: Social R&D @ SiG

This multi-stakeholder exploration incubated by SiG is advancing the collective vision of an innovation-savvy social impact sector.

Working primarily with funders, practitioners, and policymakers, it explores ways to help enhance R&D and innovation capacity, connectivity, and enabling conditions in Canada's social impact sector so...

vulnerable people access and develop the best possible solutions.
How do we do it?

Over the next year, this exploration aims to support the following:

- **HABITS**: highlight innovation habits and identify ways for funders and grantees to better activate, empower, and build innovation capacity

- **ACCESS**: prototyping a practical use-case that allows for innovations searchability and connectivity among organizations working in similar spheres in order to incentivize re-use, not re-invention

- **INTEGRATION**: helping to shape an integrated Canadian innovation strategy that recognizes, supports, and is optimized for social sector R&D and innovation, no longer siloed around STEM and business innovation.
Social R&D Declaration of Action

In 2015, an emerging cross-sector alliance of thinkers, practitioners, funders, activists, and advocates came together to explore how R&D and innovation become central to social impact sector’s way of working. The result? A Declaration of Action. Today, these organizations, among others are stewards of this exploration.
Outputs of the Exploration

The Social R&D exploration aims to produce the following outputs:

- **Research**: Case study collection of R&D and innovation habits and patterns in social impact sector
- **Convening**: Diverse and distributed individuals and institutions capable of collaborating to enhance R&D and innovation capacity
- **Policy**: Set of policy recommendations to government for an inclusive and integrated approach to supporting social R&D
- **Digital platform**: Searchable online innovations library prototype
- **Data**: on R&D case studies and through the innovations library
What Conditions Drive Innovation for Social Impact?

SiG is curating a collection of short case studies that highlight 15 innovation-driven Canadian organizations, in order to: highlight the conditions that drive continuous innovation, and offer recommendations to funders to strengthen innovation capacity.
We can judge our progress by the courage of our questions.

- Carl Sagan
Questions for an Audacious Social Innovation Strategy

What are the economic benefits of a strong social innovation and R&D node?

How might intangible outcomes be incorporated in the innovation strategy?

How might we design-in an obsolescence management model for the strategy?

What are the conditions that drive innovation for social progress?

What if the social innovation strategy was guided by practitioners more so than policymakers?

What if we empowered a social innovation node that is distributed and networked?

How might we make it easy and worthwhile for changemakers to continuously learn, experiment, and share?

What type of stewardship group is necessary to guide this?
“We used to look up at the sky and wonder about our place in the stars, now we just look down and worry about our place in the dirt.”

Cooper, in the film ‘Interstellar’
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#SocialRD and @SiGeneration

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