

These days if you attend any nonprofit gathering, it doesn't take long before the phrases "social innovation" and "social finance" pop up. However, as you listen to the conversations, you begin to wonder whether everyone is talking about the same thing. Are social innovation and social finance something new or just the latest fads?

In this issue of *The Philanthropist*, we explore the concept of social innovation and the ways people are putting it into practice in Canada. While there may not be general agreement on a formal definition of social innovation, in conversations people talk about big change, taking the work to the next level, systems change, and transformation. They agree that social innovation involves deep reflection on the mission of organizations, collaboration, risk taking, working with new partners, and new ways of financing the work. So the term social innovation becomes a way of talking about how to have more impact in addressing big social and environmental issues. We hope this issue will expand those conversations.

The issue opens with two overview articles, the first from **Mark Goldenberg**, who reviews the state of social innovation in Canada and suggests a role for government, and the other, from **Stephen Huddart**, who explores various dimensions of the field and provides many interesting examples of practice. **Juan-Luis Klein**, **Jean-Marc Fontan**, **Denis Harrisson**, and **Benoît Lévesque** discuss the Québec model of social innovation, while Judith Maxwell talks of the need for a major repositioning in the nonprofit sector and links organizational resilience to collaboration. Also in this issue, **Geraldine Cahill** provides a reference tool to help understand the vocabulary of social innovation and social finance.

We then look at seven examples of people working in the field of social innovation:

- **Clay Shirky** speaks in a video on how Ushahidi helped map violence during elections in Kenya through a "social media" platform that is now being used in many parts of the world.
- **Ian Bird** and **Paul Jurbala** describe how Sport Matters Group is exploring new forms of (un)organization.

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- **Diana Denton** and **Tracey Robertson** discuss Capacity Waterloo's regional approach to creating an environment for social innovation.
 - **Bob Thomson** provides an overview of the growth of Fair Trade.
 - **Gabriel Bran Lopez** explains how Youth Fusion puts graduate students to work in programs for high school students at underperforming schools.
 - **Anne Makhoul** and **Eric Leviten-Reid** examine how Collaborative Community Initiatives are combining strategic action with systems-wide change to address poverty.
 - **John Cawley**, **Arti Freeman**, and **Violetta Ilkiw** explore roles for funders in supporting social innovation with youth.

We then turn to social finance, where a SiG video, *Re-imagine Money* (under "Video Presentations"), introduces some broad concepts. **Nino Antadze** and **Frances Westley** explore social innovation and how to fund it, while **Nora Sobolov** discusses why nonprofits should care about social finance and describes the Community Forward Fund that will provide more financial options for nonprofits. **Peter Deitz** of socialfinance.ca takes issue with the points of view on social enterprise expressed in "Point/Counterpoint" in the last issue of *The Philanthropist*, while **Edward Jackson** provides an overview on ways of financing the nonprofit sector.

We are also pleased to include two special features in this issue. First is a significant proposal from **Donovan Waters**, Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, concerning changes to Canadian Charity Law. Second is a video presentation (see Lankin under "Video Presentations") to the Imagine Advisory Council by **Frances Lankin**, who has experienced sector-government relations both as a politician and as former president and CEO of the United Way.

We also have our regular columns:

- **Archana Sridhar** discusses how nonprofits can make more effective use of "Social Media."
- We welcome **Susan Manwaring** whose first "What's the Law" column discusses social financing.
- **Bob Wyatt** and I square off on the issue of charitable gaming in "Point/Counterpoint."
- **Lindsey Vodarek** looks at collaboration in "What the Numbers Say."
- Click the "Book Review" button for reviews by **Catherine Leviten-Reid** and **Linda Mollenhauer**.

o **Leviten-Reid** reviews *Les arrangements institutionnels entre l'État québécois et les entreprises d'économie sociale en aide domestique : Une analyse sociopolitique de l'économie sociale dans les services de soutien à domicile* by Yves Vaillancourt and Christian Jetté (with the assistance of Philippe Leclerc).

o **Mollenhauer** reviews *Letters to (not always of) Joy* by Bob Wyatt.

One of the great things that has happened with this issue is that people have written to us with ideas for articles. Our wish is for that to continue and grow. We also want to give special thanks to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation for inviting us to participate in their social innovation lab and for collaboration on this issue. We would love to hear from you about your ideas and experiences in social innovation – or anything else that is on your mind.

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