Mission Innovation and Moonshot Philanthropy in the UK: Becoming The Experimenting Society

Summary & Primer

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Introduction

This report summary is a snapshot-in-time of the start-up of one country's experiment in mission innovation, mission government and moonshot philanthropy. Hopefully there are takeaways from the UK's experience that could inform Canada's approach for adopting intentional societal innovation more successfully and systematically. The report was commissioned by Prof. Sandra Lapointe.

In July 2024 the United Kingdom's national election brought the Labour Party led by Keir Starmer to power as Prime Minister, with a majority government. The election platform of the new government focused on "change" with five prominent "mission" commitments. These missions are positioned as long-term, strategic objectives rather than traditional manifesto promises. They emphasized that they would guide governance beyond a single parliamentary term.

The missions build on historic ways that political parties have developed party platforms and pitched themselves to the electorate. What's different about today's Britain is that the 2024 election followed a dizzying array of changes: 14 years of tumultuous Conservative Party rule with 5 different prime ministers, Brexit and Britain's departure from the European Union, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the social, economic and cultural shock of the global COVID pandemic, and over a decade of deep austerity. The resulting societal crevices created an appetite for the 5 missions (as currently framed): 1. Reforming the National Health Service, 2. Catalyzing economic growth, 3. Making Britain a clean energy leader, 4. Revamping the education system, and 5. Ensuring safe streets and communities.

Will mission government remain a central feature of the UK government? Will they achieve their goals? These are questions whose answers will only be revealed over time. But one easily visible issue is: How can an historically top-down institution like the UK government entertain reshaping government at the same time as its plans assume — in addition to a "whole-of-government approach"[1]— linking arms with other levels of government and other sectors like business, unions and civil society to achieve the missions?

More fundamentally: Is Britain an "experimenting society" and to what degree can interested institutions contribute to creating an enabling context and national ecosystem for mission innovation to succeed? These questions informed parallel UK research on the much less visible role of philanthropy. How could it become an adjunct or even catalyst for ambitious mission projects and programs to succeed?

The report therefore focuses on mission innovation and moonshot philanthropy and their potential intersection. For a longer analysis, including numerous links and summaries of adjacent concepts, topics and fields, please request it from Tim Draimin.

[1] *Whole-of-government* refers to how public service departments work across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and generate an integrated government response to particular issues.

What is Mission Innovation?

According to the OECD, which has created a dedicated web resource on missions:

> "a **mission** refers to a well-defined overarching policy objective to tackle a societal challenge within a defined timeframe. Missions are typically **bold and ambitious**, involve a **large range of stakeholders across sectors** and require **significant innovation and coordination**. They are also characterized by a **long-term vision** and **transformative ambition**… **Mission-oriented policies** are policy frameworks aimed at contributing to meeting specific missions. The mission-oriented approach emphasizes a **problem-solving focus**, where policy interventions are designed to **mobilize resources**, **coordinate stakeholders**, and **stimulate innovation** and **collaboration across government and sectors** to **tackle the identified challenge** and **meet set mission targets**. Mission-oriented policies often involve a combination of regulatory measures, financial incentives, research funding, and targeted investments to drive progress towards the mission." (Emphasis **added**.)

Mission Innovation — *The* Narrative Shaper

Undoubtedly the key catalyzing institution for mission innovation's prominence has been the UK's **Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose** at University College London. Created in 2017 by Professor Mariana Mazzucato, the IIPP has been a *field builder*[2] par excellence.

The IIPP — with the motto, "Changing how the state is imagined, practised and evaluated to tackle societal challenges" — has contributed to a veritable *social movement* around building the field of mission innovation. In summary, IIPP has become a strategic leader for an expanding equitable and inclusive growth movement engaging governments, business, academia and civil society.

Besides carrying out research on mission innovation for shaping industrial policy, it has been educating students, creating global learning cohorts of public officials, providing strategic advice to national governments and global institutions, and engaged in practical on-the-ground work with local governments.

Significantly philanthropy has made all this possible. IIPP receives support from numerous foundation grantmakers, including the Rockefeller, Ford, Open Society, ClimateWorks and Laudes foundations, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and 10 other philanthropic partners. Other funders include government and multilateral agencies. Overall, IIPP sees itself galvanising "a broad coalition of actors to join our new movement and reconfigure economics for a fairer, greener, more just future."

In numerous ways IIPP has contributed to the growing interest in mission innovation by the UK's politicians and political institutions. This meant that by 2022 when the Labour Party was exploring how to articulate a compelling policy platform to the UK public, party insiders proposed framing their electoral agenda around five compelling missions. It was felt that the concrete nature of "missions" dovetailed with Keir Starmer's self-identity as a problem solver. Starmer first laid out the missions in February 2023. These evolved over 15 months into the Change Labour Party Manifesto 2024 released on June 13th.

[2] A "field builder" is an entity, platform or individual that facilitates the development and progress of a collective effort to address a social or environmental challenge or shapes the enabling context for the field. This involves creating shared knowledge, fostering collaboration, and aligning resources and strategies to achieve large-scale impact.

The United Kingdom Context

Labour's adoption of mission innovation comes at a very challenging moment in the modern history of the United Kingdom. The new government follows 14 years of Conservative Party rule, one marked by deep austerity, the Brexit referendum and subsequent departure from the European Union, and a general economic malaise and lack of economic and productivity growth. The national debt was about 65% of GDP in 2010. By 2023 it had reached over 100% of GDP. This is despite the fact that between 2010 and 2019 British public spending fell from forty-one per cent of GDP to thirty-five per cent.[3] Since 2008 British weekly wages are up about 0.8 per cent – not per year but in total.[4]

The results are declining social outcomes across the UK. A recent study by the Social Metrics Commission reports that one in three children and a quarter of adults are living in poverty. This is the highest level of poverty this century as 2 million more people plunged into severe hardship since 2019.[5]

Tory austerity meant that between FY 2010/11 and 2015/16 more than 50% of the central government grant to local government was cut. The cuts have been calamitous for local communities. For example, the BBC has reported that since 2010 nearly 800 libraries have been closed. Nineteen local councils were bailed out in early 2024. In October a study by the Local Government Association (LGA) estimated that as many as one in four English councils could go bankrupt in the next two years if not bailed out.

According to the UK Parliamentary Library the NHS waiting list for hospital treatment has grown to 7.6 million. In the social care sector it is estimated that 250,000 people were waiting for a care assessment.

These dramatic social realities, which created the context for the Labour Party choosing the 5 missions, have placed high public expectations on the new government and pressure for visible short term results. The mission agenda is caught in the vice of rising expectations and a stagnant economy. Compounding this for Prime Minister Starmer, who imagined himself as a domestic policy prime minister, is the election of Donald Trump in the United States and the threat of import duties and other diversionary pressures like Russia's war in Ukraine focusing the government on global relations.

In addition, the deteriorating context outstrips the capabilities of the government's pinnacle departments at the "centre", in Whitehall. The non-partisan Institute for Government organized a blue ribbon panel, the **Commission on the Centre of Government**, which over the course of a year examined "what could be done to radically improve the centre of UK government". Their conclusion: "No.10 Downing Street, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury are not capable of meeting the challenges facing the United Kingdom in the 2020s and beyond. The centre of government must become more strategic, better able to set direction and hold the rest of government accountable for delivery."[6]

[3] Sam Knight, "What have fourteen years of Conservative rule done to Britain?", The New Yorker, April 1, 2024
[4] Ben Southwood, Samuel Hughes & Sam Bowman, "Why Britain Isn't Working", The Sunday Times, September 29th, 2024
[5] Josh Halliday, "More than one in three children in poverty as UK deprivation hits record high", The Guardian 18 November 2024.
[6] Institute for Government, Power with purpose: Final report of the Commission on the Centre of Government, p.7, March 2024

The Experimenting Society

One intriguing facet of the recent policy discussions about the UK's mission government approach is the question about whether the country is an "experimenting society"? What is the socio-cultural, economic policy and political context which enables a national mission innovation approach to succeed or not?

Tim Harford, in his Financial Times column (16 October 2024) asks: "Why are governments so bad at problem solving?" Harford quotes from a 1971 lecture by Donald T Campbell, "Methods for the Experimenting Society" that explains how an experimenting society is an innovating society:

> "The experimenting society will be one which will vigorously try out proposed solutions to recurrent problems, which will make hard-headed and multidimensional evaluations of the outcomes, and which will move on to try other alternatives when evaluation shows one reform to have been ineffective or harmful."

Harford reflects on the UK of today, saying:

> "We do not seem to be living in an age that rewards humility, an honest admission of uncertainty or a willingness to change course. But we won't know for certain until a serious politician gives it a try. It's natural to advocate an experimental approach to policy on the grounds of effectiveness: good policy experiments produce results, telling us what works and what doesn't and allowing us to get better outcomes for less effort."

Campbell's 38-page lecture, written in wake of the Czechoslovakian Spring, expands on a long list of attributes of the characteristics of the experimenting society. It will be an *active* society, committed to *action research*. It will be an *evolutionary*, *learning* society. It will be an *honest* society, committed to *reality testing*. It will be: a *nondogmatic*, *scientific*, *accountable*, *challengeable*, *due-process* society. It will be an *open* society. And *decentralized*, committed to both *means-idealism* and *ends-idealism*. It will be a *popularly responsive* society, a *voluntaristic* society and an *equalitarian* [sic] society. (pp. 224-226)

Unfortunately the UK is not yet an experimenting society. By late November the new government was seen as having stalled in managing the national agenda. And its complicated mission platform is seen as a big part of the problem. As a result, on December 5th PM Starmer made a major public address, laying out his agenda for change and specifying much more specific and detailed electoral term targets for half a dozen policy priorities.[7] Can the government regain public confidence and manage public expectations?

Significantly Starmer used the speech to highlight that the Plan for Change also means reforming the civil service. He decried the fact that too many in Whitehall were "comfortable in the tepid bath of managed decline." He wasn't apologizing for fixing this, "Make no mistake, this plan will land on the desks across Whitehall with the heavy thud of a gauntlet being laid down." (Days earlier Starmer had announced the appointment of the new Cabinet Secretary, Sir Chris Wormald who heads the civil service. Starmer said that Wormald had accepted the challenge of wrapping the ambitious missions agenda with parallel instructions to work on "nothing less than the complete re-wiring of the British state.")

Starmer's turbulent first six months complicates the Labour government's long term plan for change and the public's exasperation with the deterioration of everyday life in the UK. At the same time, concern is voiced that the government's attempt to lay out measurable and practical mission goals will inadvertently undermine longer term reform. For example, will the goal of shorter NHS waiting times to treat patients

[7] Pippa Cerar, "Labour 'needs to tell a better story' – and Morgan McSweeney has a plan", The Guardian 28 Nov. 2024

mean resources won't support the long term goal of shifting from a curative to preventative health regime?

While public discussions recognize the merits of the longer term perspective in marshalling resources for structural and transformational change, there is less discussion of how the UK's innovation practices will become more integrated, collaborative, social and bottom-up.[8]

Most of the policy reports on the UK's new mission government approach are fixated on ideas and recommendations about the inside-of-government mechanics. Geoff Mulgan is one of the few commentators placing the phenomenon in a broader, societal lens:

EXCERPTS

Why it's smart policy and smart politics for the Labour government to engage with social innovation and experiment

By Geoff Mulgan | October 18th, 2024

It's no secret that Labour's focus on campaigning sometimes came at the expense of attention to policy or preparation for government. Here I mention one of the gaps which I hope gets some attention over the next few months as the government finds its feet. It is the absence of policies or thinking on social innovation or social experiment: how to discover better ways of solving the many acute social challenges the UK faces. There are obvious policy and political reasons why this should matter to Labour…There is little point having furious innovation in science and technology if our societies stagnate. Hence the argument that energetic innovation and experiment is as important for care for the elderly, recycling, neighbourhood design, mental health, childhood support and homelessness as it is for electric vehicles and AI chips.

Over the last 20 years a lively field of social innovation has grown up around the world…So far, however, there is little sign of these ideas in Labour's thinking or in its actions. Five factors may explain the current blockage:

1. The first is the absence of a broader vision to fit them into – ideas on where Britain might get to and how to get there…
2. The second issue follows from this. Labour has yet to work out its stance on civil society and the third sector…
3. The third is a blind-spot in science and innovation policy. The UK spends well over £14bn of public money on R&D. But this is now almost entirely devoted to science and tech: AI, materials, pharmaceuticals and aerospace. There is next to nothing for social R&D…
4. The fourth reason, is more technical: the lack of any funding for exploratory social science or design...
5. Finally, there is a structural issue: it's not clear whose job it is to tackle this…Social innovation is a space where Labour could offer a much more distinctive diagnosis and prescription.

The UK remains extraordinarily rich in social innovation and entrepreneurship, community enthusiasm and creativity. I spend a fair amount of time with frontline staff and community groups and am always amazed at how much good sense there is on the ground, and how rarely that is tapped into by decision-makers at the top…

[8] Despite the bumpy road, a myriad of new reports and hosted events by London-based think tanks has followed the announcement of the mission agenda. The breadth of UK think tank engagement on mission policy illustrates the degree to which the London policy *nomenklatura* have proactively ensured that the missions' agenda has become the new ground zero for national policy discourse.

Mission Innovation Meets Moonshot Philanthropy

The evolution of innovation policy towards mission innovation has been happening in parallel with how other adjacent fields are re-thinking how they achieve greater impact and become more innovative. For example, the emergence of mission innovation and mission government in the United Kingdom is being matched by a parallel growing UK interest in both Moonshot Philanthropy and more generally philanthropy's unique capabilities to catalyze large scale, cross-sector social change. Philanthropy has been challenged increasingly in the last 15 years to re-think its role and be more accountable for achieving impact in lifting up the common good.

Just as Mariana Mazzucato latched on to the moonshot metaphor for her seminal book on mission innovation, Mission Economy: A moonshot guide to changing capitalism, so too the metaphor has been borrowed by Professor Beth Breeze and the University of Kent's Centre for Philanthropy and its Moonshot Philanthropy program. The Centre describes moonshot philanthropy as "an emerging approach where philanthropists deploy capital at scale to accelerate ambitious but achievable ideas or interventions. It is characterised by working with communities and experts across business and government." Specifically citing the IIPP's research, the Centre says that "[m]ission-based approaches are promising ways of scaling innovations, but to inspire a new generation of philanthropists we need a better understanding of what makes a good moonshot."

The Centre's current operating definition of moonshot philanthropy is concise:

> "Moonshot philanthropy is a high-risk, long-term approach to philanthropy that combines collaborations with multiple stakeholders and experts with funding for innovations with transformative potential, all in pursuit of ambitious goals."

The Centre's research to date identifies moonshot philanthropy being characterised by six key features:

Ambition: Pursuing a moonshot (highly ambitious goal), achievement of which will have transformative impact, but is so challenging it seems almost impossible.
Boldness: Actively seeking and taking on risks other stakeholders cannot, and embracing failure as an opportunity to learn and adapt.
Collaboration: Catalysing change by bringing multiple stakeholders together, aligning the ecosystem behind a shared vision.
Determination: Long-term thinking and funding to support ambition, risk-taking, and experimentation needed when pursuing moonshots.
Expertise: Addressing donor ignorance, building and empowering a network of experts (including end beneficiaries), and generating an evidence base of 'what works'.
Funding: Absorbing the large financial cost, focussing funding on defined issues and risky, innovative ideas that may take a long time to yield an impact.

Another UK source of expertise in philanthropic strategy development influencing innovation is The Partnering Initiative (TPI), which over twenty years has researched dozens of large scale private-public social and environmental partnerships tackling wicked challenges. These multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) have involved government, multilateral agencies, the UN system, nonprofits, the private sector, and foundations. Its 2023 study, Unite to Ignite: Accelerating the transformational power of partnerships

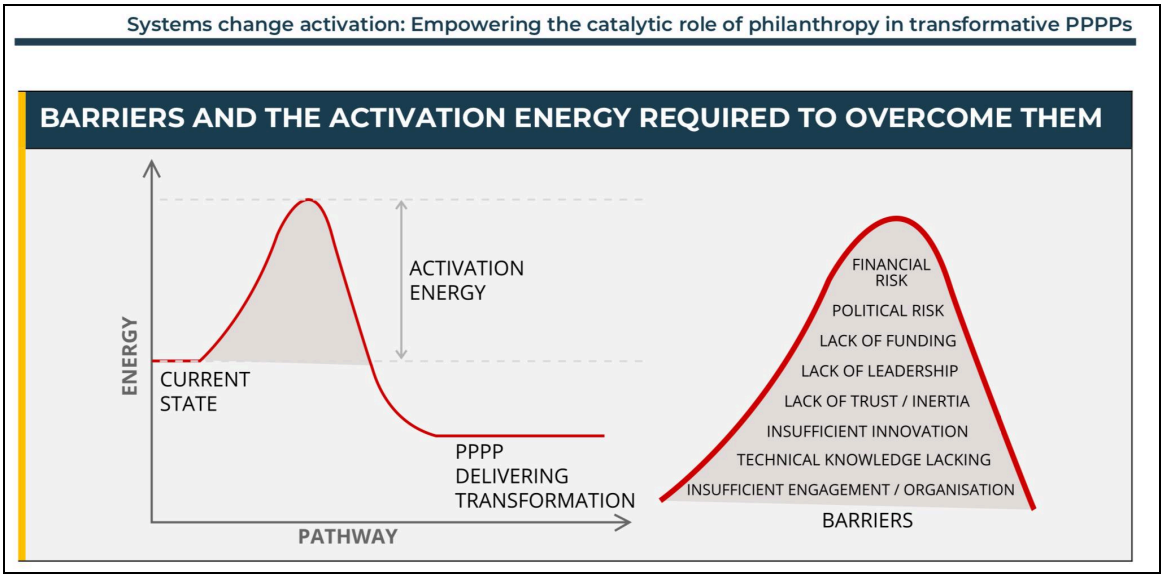
for the SDGs and Beyond, cited the United Nations SDG Progress Report 2023 which stated: "It's time to sound the alarm. At the mid-way point on our way to 2030, the SDGs are in deep trouble."[9]

TPI acknowledges the weakness of the multi-stakeholder partnerships and says that they "are not happening at anything like the scale required."[10] The solution, says TPI, is to ignite a new, systematic wave of transformational collaboration by focusing on key enabling factors for empowering solution generating partnerships.

TPI terms these multi-stakeholder partnerships as Public Private Philanthropy Partnership (PPPP) for People and Planet. They define them as:

> "A long-term **multi-stakeholder collaboration** in which **public, private, and philanthropic sectors** align and combine their unique resources and powerful levers to together deliver social, economic, and/or environmental **transformation**." [Emphasis **added**.]

Philanthropy "can be critical in building momentum, solving problems, and helping the partnership overcome existing barriers to success. We term this the **activation energy**, appropriated from the scientific term meaning the initial energy that may be needed for a chemical process to start."



The Partnering Initiative

TPI recognizes that philanthropic funding in partnerships, based on the deep research of many case studies, is catalytic in nature and has been critical for partnerships to deliver system change. Using this research, they have identified six key roles of philanthropy to activate partnerships:

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[9] A mid-point SDG assessment from the UN General Assembly Economic and Social Council (2023) shows that of "140 targets with data, only about 12% are on track; more than half are moderately or severely off track and 30% show no change or have regressed below the 2015 baseline."

[10] Lorna Benton and Darian Stibbe, The Partnering Initiative; and UN DESA, Partnerships 2030, Global Forum for SDG Advisory Bodies 2023, UNITE TO IGNITE: Accelerating the transformational power of partnerships for the SDGs and beyond (2023) p. 5

The six key roles of philanthropy to activate PPPPs

The research found philanthropy can inject the activation energy required in six main ways:

1. **Initiating/convening** the partners, taking them through a partnership development process, and potentially coordinating the partnership's activities, bringing credibility as a connector, and enabling dialogue among partners;
2. **Cocreating** and **codesigning** PPPPs with public and private partners and, if appropriate, with peer organisations;
3. **Initial and catalytic funding** of a PPPP's set up and running costs (but not the cost of implementing the transformation);
4. **Capacitating** partners to be able to play their roles in the PPPP and **accelerating progress with technical assistance.** Philanthropy often brings the technical expertise to develop new models and can support partners as they adopt new ways of working;
5. **De-risking** a PPPP for other partners such that it can tackle the most difficult challenges and then reach large scale by mobilising mainstream private sector investors;
6. Enabling PPPPs to be able to **test and learn** through multiple iterations of a solution, and by prototyping innovative ways of working.

The Partnering Initiative

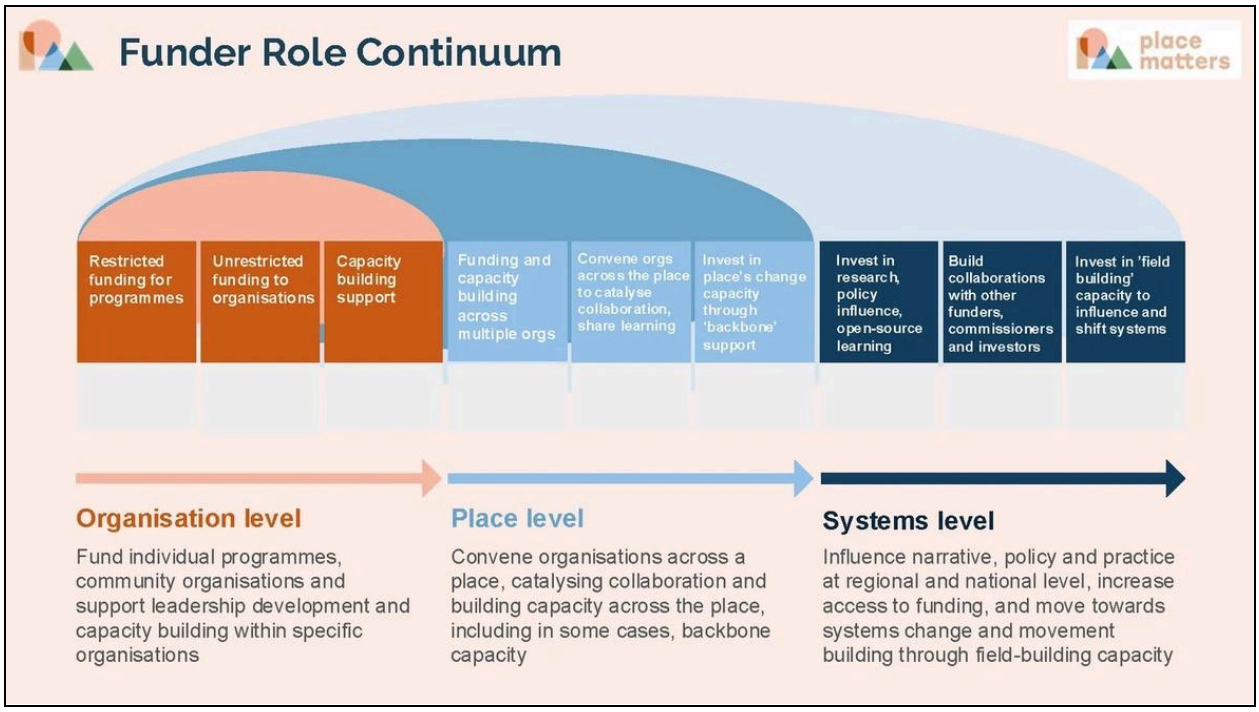
The TPI research is global and mostly (but not exclusively) based on global south examples. While there are numerous successful multi-stakeholder partnerships, the fact is that the enabling environment for mission innovation partnering is weak and ill-understood by many practitioners.

Governments, like the UK's as noted above, often don't start by recognizing the breadth of representative partnerships necessarily includes civil society actors. Clearly philanthropy does have an out-sized opportunity to be a facilitator, conveyor, broker, codesigner, de-risker, colearner, and enabler to provide the missing critical supports for powerful partnerships to emerge.

Mission innovation, which aspires to tackle those complex and wicked challenges that are usually lacking pre-determined solutions, is itself highly complex and dependent on an enabling societal ecosystem. Where is the work taking place to support the emergence of an enabling mission innovation ecosystem? While the UK would point to IIPP as a catalyzing field builder for mission innovation as a field of knowledge, the country lacks any apex-like champion when it comes to pro-actively advocating for and shaping the overall ecosystem.

The United Kingdom's philanthropic sector is at an early stage in appreciating the role of both collective impact approaches and the essential roles of field builders in supporting the more integrated and coherent work linking diverse organizations and sectors together to achieve a common goal.

Place Matters UK is one organization supporting the capacity building within the philanthropic sector by convening funders.



One takeaway from examining the UK experience with mission innovation, and the parallel but not yet intersecting emergence of moonshot philanthropy and related ambitious initiatives, is that these ostensibly separate phenomena are really sharing the same strategic outlook and need to be connected and integrated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As the UK experiments with mission government, mission innovation is moving to the central stage as a practical toolkit for transformational change as societies confront major challenges thrown up by the polycrisis. At the same time, there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach but more a set of practical and adaptive approaches. Even the IIPP founders like Mariana Mazzucato and Rainer Kattel acknowledge there is no cookie cutter:

> "Mission-driven government is not about achieving doctrinal adherence to some original set of ideas; it is about identifying the essential components of missions and accepting that different countries might need different approaches." (Mazzucato & Kattel, 2024)

How could mission innovation be a stronger national narrative for positive change? Do we need to reimagine how to design national innovation ecosystems, like Canada's, to ensure they can grow their ability to catalyze mission government and mission innovation? Where does leadership and responsibility lie for that re-design? Where are the parallel social and mission innovation constituencies represented?

Traditionally governments have seen themselves in the driver's seat of partnerships they initiate. But as the Future Governance Forum noted above, what is needed is **collaborative statecraft** where the government recognizes it needs to "act as an **orchestrator**, galvanising a wide ecosystem of partners in pursuit of its bold, long-term goals…" [Emphasis **added**.]

The emerging knowledge field of system change acknowledges the multifaceted nature of that change and the need for what some analysts call **system orchestrators**. In the context of social innovation and

systemic change, a **system orchestrator** is an individual or organization that works to enable, coordinate, and accelerate large-scale societal transformations. They aim to address complex social or environmental challenges by aligning various stakeholders, resources, and interventions to create meaningful, sustainable change.[11]

Although governments have a paramount role setting the stage for mission innovation through their policy leadership (setting priorities, allocating budgetary resources, re-designing the architecture of government, creating incentives, etc) important aspects of system orchestration for mission innovation can probably be much better handled by more independent third parties.

This is where there is an important discussion to be had with the philanthropic community. Foundations are in an extraordinarily privileged position: they have access to significant discretionary resources, knowledge and learning systems, and growing networks capable of knitting together constituencies hitherto excluded from large scale change processes.

All these developments and emerging insights point to the value for academics and nonprofit changemakers to better understand how they can best support each other and become more effective allies in bringing about root and branch change to Canada's underperforming innovation ecosystem.

The turbulent and uncertain political-economic-and-social context created by the Trump administration (re-setting not just the USMCA North American trade treaty but post-war norms) could be a powerful opening to advance key Canadian missions.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **MAP THE ECOSYSTEM** Commission the mapping of Canada's potential all-sector mission innovation ecosystem as one way to advance planning and network building for the catalyzing of robust missions by government or parastatal agencies.

- **BUILD INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM STRATEGY SCENARIOS** Build scenarios for how Canada's mission innovation system could both be catalyzed and operate; begin by co-developing with interested constituencies a short list of the most urgent and promising challenge issues; explore what would be sub-networks of innovation actors and constituencies by themes; analyze ways to coalesce and support strengthening the issue communities and ecosystem players as active policy players; scope out the requirements of a robust mission innovation narrative.

- **COHERE THE MISSION CONSTITUENCY** Co-convene a series of strategy discussions amongst the different constituencies of Canada's mission innovation community with key philanthropy affinity groups to accelerate the best ways for philanthropy to define and assume mission roles (funder, convenor, incubator, co-design partner, etc) ensuing the spectrum of "activation energy" and enabling supports for multi-stakeholder mission initiatives *and* map out the steps to get there.

[11] This definition is from Claude AI. There are many other more developed versions from organizations focused on social change, such as the 2024 publication by the Centre for Exponential Change, "A Journey with System Orchestrators" or Societal Thinking's System Orchestration: A framework to appreciate the leadership dimensions in practice (n.d.). See also discussion of orchestration involving adjacent sectors, like business innovation networks, e.g. Pia Hurmelinna-Laukkanen et. al., "Orchestrating innovation networks: Alignment and orchestration profile approach", Journal of Business Research, Volume 140, February 2022, Pages 170-188

(Community Foundations of Canada, Philanthropic Foundations Canada, Environment Funders Canada, Transition Accelerator, Tamarack Institute, etc).

- **SUPPORT A PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION WORKING GROUP ON MISSION INNOVATION** Collaborate with Community Foundations of Canada and Philanthropic Foundations of Canada to support a working group to explore how Canada's philanthropy community would best enable mission innovation's successful implementation.

- **ENGAGE WITH A GLOBAL LEARNING NETWORK** Inventory existing Canadian relationships with global mission innovation actors and design sustainable means for activating an international learning community leveraging as many existing international relationships as possible. Take a strong transdisciplinary approach capable of connecting and weaving learning from innovation, social change, systems change, etc. How could they be integrated into post-secondary learning and education programs?

- **CATALYZE CANADA AS AN EXPERIMENTING SOCIETY** Scope out the attributes for a dynamic mission innovation Canada, enabled by a culturally, socially and academically appropriate "experimenting society"; develop and socialize the best beta strategies and practical ways each sector can support its realization. Use the ecosystem map and strategy scenarios to identify leadership for different institutions populating the ecosystem.

- **PUBLISH AN ANNUAL STATE OF THE INNOVATION NATION** Ideally a multi-sectoral partnership and virtual policy platform that could collectively produce an annual Canadian state of the mission innovation ecosystem. It would be a tool for building the network, its profile, analytical strengths, learning and member cohesion.

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OECD Mission-Oriented Innovation Policy Online Toolkit This explorable guide helps policy makers design and implement mission-oriented innovation policies. With the support of policy makers and building on partnerships with selected institutions, this toolkit is a reference platform for all those who set up, implement, research, evaluate and advise on mission-oriented innovation policies.

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Primer on innovation archetypes and key systems roles

1. Missions

A concrete goal that, if achieved, will help to tackle a grand challenge, designed to set a clear direction for cross-sectoral and cross-actor investment and innovation.

See: Mission Critical 01: Statecraft for the 21st Century

2.1 Grand Challenge

A difficult but important systemic and society-wide problem with no 'silver bullet' solution. The Sustainable Development Goals set out the 17 most urgent global grand challenges.

See: Mission Critical 01: Statecraft for the 21st Century

2.2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Global challenges as represented by the SDGs are a unique opportunity for systems transformation, bringing together social and technical innovation. Agenda 2030 is an urgent, inclusive and value-creating direction towards sustainability that calls for both research efforts and new policy approaches. Sustainability cannot be achieved by merely optimizing existing systems, and it should take into account the interactions and trade-offs between different objectives. To address the SDGs, policies should decentralize them, and instead focus on the underlying transformation processes which will, if they unfold in the desired way, address the SDGs. This focus on transformation is in fact responding to the strapline of the UN Agenda 2030: Transforming our World.

See: A transformation innovation policy view on the SDGs, Johan Schot / Alejandra Boni / Matias Ramirez / Carla Alvial-Palavicino, Social Innovation Atlas, 2019

3. Mission-Oriented Innovation

A mission denotes a clearly defined overarching policy objective aimed at tackling a societal challenge within a specified timeframe. Missions are characterised by a far-reaching vision with transformative aspirations. Notably, the term encapsulates both a resolute declaration of intent and a tangible commitment to take bold collective action to confront a complex societal issue.

Since their realisation involves a range of stakeholders – often across multiple sectors and levels of government – they necessitate significant coordination.

See: OECD Mission Action Lab, a joint initiative of the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, the OECD Directorate of Public Governance and the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.

3.1 Mission-oriented policies

Policy frameworks put in place to realise mission objectives. When adopting a mission-oriented approach, policy interventions are crafted specifically to mobilise necessary resources and instruments, orchestrate stakeholder collaboration, and invigorate innovation across government and sectoral boundaries to meet the challenge at hand. Notably, mission-oriented policies can (and arguably should) draw from a range of policy domains, encompassing regulatory measures, outreach initiatives, financial incentives, research funding, or targeted investments, all orchestrated to drive progress toward the mission statement.

See: OECD Mission Action Lab, a joint initiative of the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, the OECD Directorate of Public Governance and the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.

3.2 Mission-oriented innovation policy (MOIP)

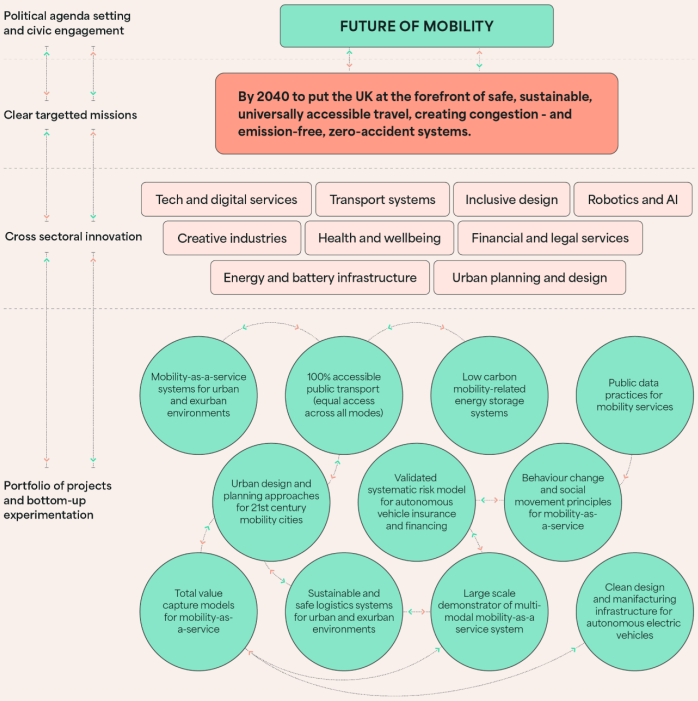
Harnessing innovation in all its forms — be it technological, social, or public sector innovation — to propel mission accomplishment. The OECD defines MOIPs as “co-ordinated packages of policy and regulatory measures tailored specifically to mobilise science, technology and innovation to address well-defined objectives related to a societal challenge, within a specific timeframe.” Above all, mission-oriented innovation policy seeks to instigate mission-oriented innovation: innovation that contributes to the realisation of mission objectives.

See: OECD Mission Action Lab, a joint initiative of the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, the OECD Directorate of Public Governance and the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.

Examples

In Mission Critical 01 - Statecraft for the 21st century, Professor Mariana Mazzucato and her colleagues Sarah Doyle, Nick Kimber, Dan Wainwright and Grace Wyld at the Future Governance Forum (FGF), outline what a **Future of Mobility Mission Map** would look like. (p.21)

Figure 3 - Future of mobility mission map (UCL Commission for Mission-Oriented Innovation and Industrial Strategy, 2019)



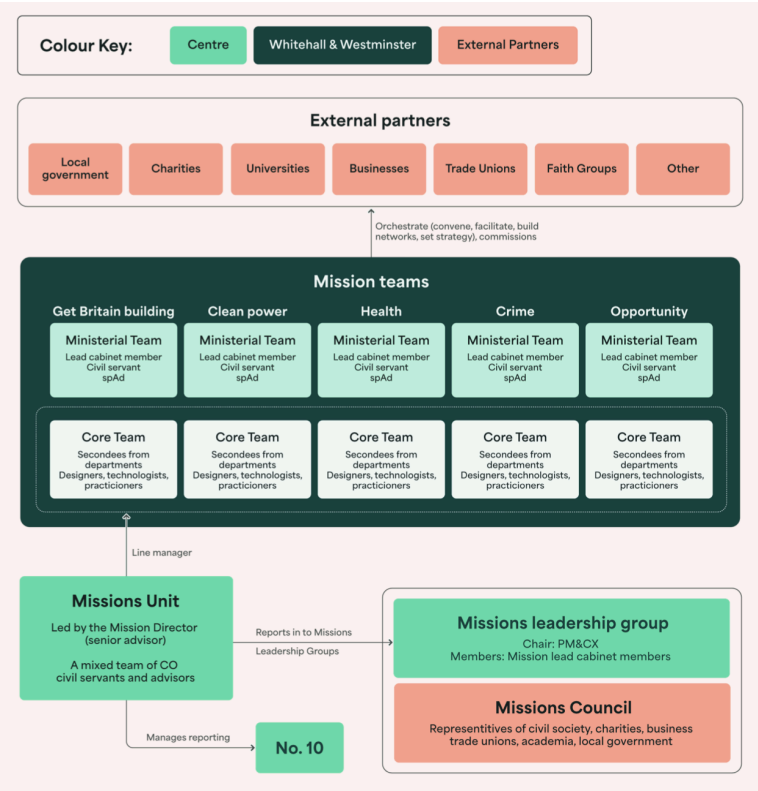
Key Characteristics and Principles

- bold, audacious goals to provide a clear purpose and direction
- whole of government approach
- governed in partnership
- ‘whatever it takes’ mindset
- long term commitments
- galvanise action beyond central government: need for a new method of statecraft, beyond convening, best described as ‘orchestration’.
- Build, nurture and grow a ‘coalition of the willing’
- Direct public and private investment in line with mission goals

In addition to patient public investment, private investment will be needed to meet the scale of challenges faced. *“...but government has a crucial role to play in crowding in and directing investment in line with missions. Mission-oriented investment may also be encouraged through well targeted tax incentives. - Dibb, G. (2022) Cutting corporation tax is not a magic bullet for increasing investment, IPPR. Available here.*

- Evaluation should aim to increase understanding of system dynamics, not just seek to prove impact of interventions.
- Evaluation should be participative, and based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, underpinned by a strong theory of change.

- For evaluation to be meaningful and helpful, it has to be designed in from the start, not commissioned afterwards.



See: Mission Critical suggested a mission governance structure p.61

4. Social Innovation

Social innovation is an initiative, product, process, or program that profoundly changes the basic routines, resource, and authority flows or beliefs of any social system (e.g., individuals, organizations, neighbourhoods, communities, whole societies). The capacity of any society to create a steady flow of social innovations, particularly those that re-engage vulnerable populations, is an important contributor to overall social and ecological resilience.

See: Frances Westley's Making A Difference; Strategies for Scaling Social Innovation for Greater Impact, Co-authors J. Mcconnell, N. Antadze, Published 2010

Social innovations are innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means. Specifically, we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act.

See: Study on Social Innovation, A paper by SIX and the Young Foundation for the Bureau of European Policy Advisors, 2011

Typically, definitions of social innovation recognise that it "is a new practice, is born as a response to social or environmental need, is open to engaging a variety of actors, and is social not only in its purposes, but also in the way it is delivered"

See: Building on Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation, OECD 2021

Examples:

Rikx, (Rotterdam) is a marketplace for social impact and a sustainable investment model for employment-related projects. It provides a platform where social entrepreneurs can propose a project while companies can act as buyers. By putting their money into these projects, investors help people to work sustainably. Rikx could allow other cities to bring much needed private investments into social sectors while offering companies a flexible and straightforward way to meet social return obligations. See: https://www.undercreativeconstruction.com/deepdive/rikx/

Jane's Walk, (Toronto) Jane's Walks are neighborhood tours coordinated and lead by local people. Part of the innovation of Jane's Walk is acknowledging that everyone has a perspective on their neighborhood, and that people actually know more about their city than they are given credit for. One need not visit the central library to find out about a neighborhood's history. Jane's Walks use walking as a way to connect neighbours, local merchants and the broader community. The idea came together in 8 weeks in 2007 with 27 tours that first year. Today there are thousands of walks on every continent - except Antarctica - and in more than 500 cities. Jane's Walk is about improving social cohesion; it addresses issues stemming from cultural and economic diversity, empowers people to discuss neighborhood development and establish access to city decision makers to improve their communities. See: https://janeswalk.org

Characteristics:

- explicit goal of addressing a social and, increasingly, environmental challenges
- aimed at system transformation
- attention to engagement of vulnerable populations and ecosystems
- collaborative: bringing together a wide range of actors including civil society, the public and private sectors as well as local networks
- non-linear process, experimental in nature
- benefit from digitalisation and technological developments

5. Inclusive Innovation

A collaborative and co-creative, multi-stakeholder approach to innovation* that emphasizes the agency and innovativeness of stakeholders that will be affected by the consequences of innovation, including those traditionally excluded from innovation activities, and aims to increase the contributions of innovation to social, environmental and economic outcomes.
See: Inclusive Innovation Hub (I2Hub)

Any innovation that leads to affordable access of quality goods and services creating livelihood opportunities for the excluded population, primarily at the base of the pyramid, and on a long-term

sustainable basis with a significant outreach" (Anant Mashelkar, chairman of the National Innovation Foundation of India and president of the Global Research Alliance, Mashelkar, 2013).

Inclusive innovation projects are initiatives that serve the welfare of lower-income groups, including poor and excluded groups. While growth dynamics have lifted many people out of poverty, they have not eliminated poverty and exclusion, which continue to affect millions of people. Inclusive innovation has therefore become an imperative for countries' socio-economic development, especially in emerging and developing economies.
See: Innovation Policies for Inclusive Growth © OECD 2015

Examples

Mobile banking services – such as **M-PESA**, a mobile phone-based money transfer and microfinance service operating in Kenya and other countries – are examples of inclusive innovation products reaching "scale."

Narayana Health offers low-cost cardiac surgeries and other healthcare services to the poor in India. It also caters to isolated communities via telemedicine. The innovation includes process innovations aimed at decreasing surgery costs, and use of communications technology to establish healthcare centres in remote locations for poor rural communities.

Key Characteristics

- Attention to engagement of vulnerable populations and ecosystems
- Affordable access
- Sustainability - allowing the innovation to move away from government supports
- Quality goods and services and livelihood opportunities
- Significant outreach
- often modify existing technologies, products or services to supply lower and middle-income groups.

Note: "Frugal" innovations allow setting lower unit product prices by preserving only the most critical functionalities, while retaining core quality characteristics. The lower price allows lower-income groups to purchase those innovations

Note: "Grassroots innovations" are inclusive innovations emphasising the empowerment of lower-income groups (Heeks et al., 2013). While they are undertaken by the poor, they can be supported by other actors in the innovation system, including universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private firms.

See: Innovation Policies for Inclusive Growth © OECD 2015

6. Disruptive Innovation

Disruptive Innovation describes a process by which a product or service takes root in simple applications at the bottom of the market—typically by being less expensive and more accessible—and then relentlessly moves upmarket, eventually displacing established competitors.

See: Clayton M. Christensen, Michael E. Raynor and Rory McDonald, What is Disruptive Innovation, Harvard Business Review, December 2015

Examples:

Netflix vs. Blockbuster
Netflix's disruption of Blockbuster is an illustration of how an under-resourced new entrant can take on and beat an industry leader. While Netflix lacked the ability for customers to immediately drive to a store to rent a movie on the same day, it allowed customers outside of core geographic regions to cheaply access a wide library of DVDs by mail. As Netflix's offering gained traction with customers, Blockbuster's business model proved a stumbling block to responding to its new competitor. This is another classic hallmark of disruption. Like many retailers who have tried to respond to disruptors, Blockbuster was never able to detach itself from a desire to leverage its existing (and expensive) physical locations. As a result of clinging to aspects of its existing business, Blockbuster couldn't also operate its version of a DVD-by-mail service at the scale of Netflix.

Toyota vs. American automakers
Toyota came with a cheap, tiny subcompact in the 1960s called the Corona, which General Motors and Ford ignored because they were making big cars for wealthier consumers.

Key Characteristics

- Entrepreneurship focused
- Attentive to market conditions and windows of opportunity
- make products and services more accessible and affordable
- making them available to a larger population
- NOT breakthrough technologies that make good products better

7. Sustaining Innovation

Incremental or breakthrough improvements to a product or service that maintain the current trajectory of competition.They are improvements to existing solutions on the market and are typically targeted at customers who want better performance from a product or service. This is why they are often sold for more money and at a higher margin.

Example: Every new version of Apple's iPhone

For more on Disruptive and Sustaining Innovation visit The Christensen Institute

8. Transformative Innovation

Transformative innovation aims, through technologies, ideas, business models, and partnership arrangements, to bring about fundamental changes to the way we consume or produce, creating social value. This includes creating markets for unexploited demand, challenging existing assumptions and turning products into services through digitalisation and platforms. In doing so, it drives the overall sustainable transformation of our societies.

The OECD has recognized the importance of systems innovation for societal challenges, defining it as “a radical innovation in socio-technical systems which fulfil societal functions, entailing changes in both the components and the architecture of the systems”

See: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015): Systems Innovation: synthesis report. p.15

Characteristics:

- transformation of socio-technical systems
- Focus on complex systems composed of aligned technologies, knowledge, infrastructure, markets, governance and regulation, culture, and industry structures
- Long range time horizons
- Protection from disruption

Risks

- Transformative innovation is inherently unpredictable and requires appropriate incentive structures, performance measures and institutional frameworks and infrastructure to allow for experimentation around new, more radical and mostly more risky ideas.

See: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE) Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN)

Examples:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML): AI and ML technologies have transformed industries such as healthcare, finance, retail, and transportation by automating tasks, generating insights from data, and enabling new capabilities. AI and ML are used for tasks such as personalized recommendations, fraud detection, medical diagnosis, autonomous vehicles, and natural language processing. They have the potential to disrupt existing business models, create new services, and drive innovation in numerous industries.

Renewable Energy Technologies: Renewable energy technologies, such as solar power, wind power, and energy storage, have transformed the energy sector by providing sustainable and clean alternatives to traditional fossil fuels. These technologies have advanced in terms of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and scalability, driving the adoption of renewable energy sources and transforming the way energy is generated, stored, and used.

9. Transdisciplinary Innovation

A transdisciplinary approach to innovation differs from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in that it is not just about working towards a shared goal or having disciplines interact with and enrich each other. Instead, transdisciplinary innovation is about placing these interactions in an integrated system with a social purpose, resulting in a continuously evolving and adapting practice’ (McPhee, Bliemel, and Van der Bijl-Brouwer, 2018);

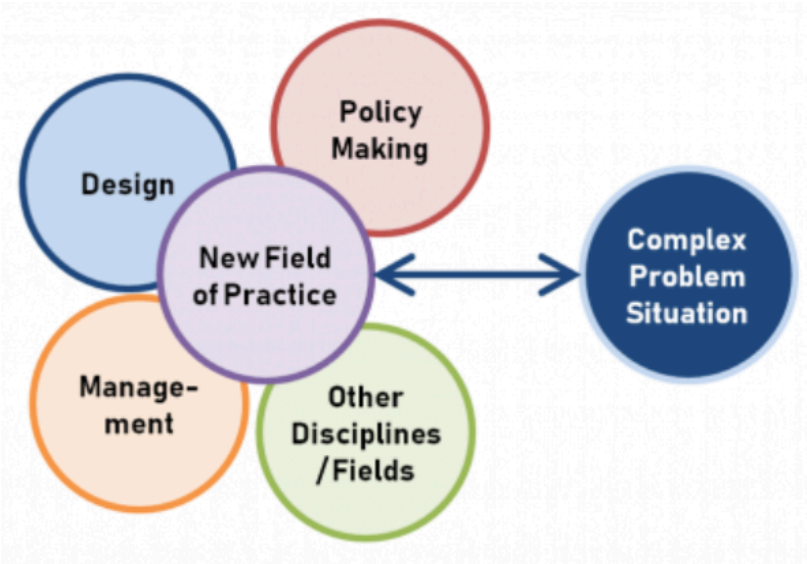


Figure: McPhee, Bliemel, and Van der Bijl-Brouwer, 2018

Transdisciplinary thinking seeks to build bridges between fields of study and expertise so diverse perspectives can intersect, ideas can be shared more fluidly between industries, and people can thrive through exposure to new ways of thinking. Transdisciplinary thinking illuminates possibilities for the future by building on multiple ways of knowing, uncovering novel approaches to the challenges of our time.

See: University of Technology Sydney

Characteristics:

- Strong, galvanizing vision
- engagement with a social purpose
- focus on learning-by-doing
- design for complex challenges requires a co-evolutionary, systems change approach.
- continuous, evolving forms of collaboration and participation.
- the actor, object, and practice space co-evolve.
- the transdisciplinary approach highlights reflexivity* and evolutionary vision

Note: Reflexivity in this context is a practice of examining one's own beliefs, assumptions, and judgments, and how they may influence the research process.

See: A Co-evolutionary, Transdisciplinary Approach to Innovation in Complex Contexts: Improving University Well-Being, a Case Study, Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer Giedre Kligyte Tyler Key. Published 2021 by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of Tongji University.

Examples:

ELSA (Ethical, Legal and Societal Aspects) Defense Lab

AI technology is needed for dealing with new challenges in both peacekeeping and warfare to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and security of the Dutch armed forces. We must be able to deal with misleading or false information, cope with our enemies using artificial intelligence (AI),

and we must handle the processing of large amounts of data. AI, therefore, has a crucial role to play. The introduction of new technology in defence offers opportunities, yet also creates risks. Introducing AI technology raises ethical, legal, and social issues. How can AI-driven systems remain under human control?

Transdisciplinarity**:** To support and oversee the development of ELSA Labs, The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Netherlands AI Coalition launched an NWA call for 'Human-centric AI for an inclusive society: Towards an ecosystem of trust'. After testing by an independent NWO evaluation committee, five projects were approved at the end of January 2022, including this ELSA Lab. Furthermore, the ELSA Lab Defence is endorsed by the NL AIC label, thus operating in line with the strategic goals and quality of the Nederlandse AI Coalitie NL AIC, a non-profit organization in the Hague, Netherlands.

10. Social R&D

During the past decade and especially since 2015, in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K., Social Research and Development (Social R&D) has been described by its champions as a rigorous methodological framework through which organizations can learn, adapt, improve, and invent new services that meet people's fast-changing needs (Mulgan, 2017; Rajasekaran, 2016; Schulman, 2017b).

Frequently associated with experimentation for human service and policy improvement (Ryan, Schulman, & Rajasekaran, 2018), Social R&D is framed as a quintessential approach able to optimize the early stages of social innovation processes (Mulgan, 2019; Pearman, 2017). Moreover, Social R&D is presented as a bottom-up process that relies directly on the lived experience and involvement of the community and users who participate in the design and invention of new services (e.g., a digital knowledge brokering platform for connecting neurodiverse and neurotypical users [Pearman, 2019]).

See: Goulet-Langlois, Nichols, & Pearman (2021) Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research

"We can think about R&D […] as the experimental process of gaining fresh insights to solve problems and find opportunities. Invention is the creative process by which new insights and personal experiences are harnessed to develop original products, tools, processes, and technologies. R&D and invention bleed into one another. Innovation happens when people use and find value in those inventions - and when rules, networks, and resources shift to enable adoption and diffusion."

See: Develop and Deliver, Making the case for social R&D infrastructure, Sarah Schulman, May 2017

Characteristics:

- **Preparing**: Building the mindset, resources, skills, and permissions for maximizing impact of R&D efforts
  Examples: R&D training and practice, R&D benchmarking, reflective practice, community partnerships and co-production, resource allocations and organizational readiness.

- **Looking**: Seeking new pathways for social transformations
  Examples: Community-led inquiry, ethnography, lit review, case studies, data sourcing
- **Thinking:** Refining observations and insights into a deeper understanding of i) the challenge/opportunity, and ii) the characteristics of new solutions
  Examples: Brainstorming, generating hypotheses, leveraging small, big and open data
- **Developing:** Converting new and deeper understanding into new solutions, and/or applying it within existing solutions
  Examples: Designing and testing, piloting, prototyping, designing feedback loops, co-production
- **Diffusing:** Contributing to collective knowledge, socializing innovations and enforcing a strong ethical framework
  Examples: Building/sharing capacity, aggregating/sharing lessons from success, failure and process development, leaping by learning

See: Social R&D Practices

11. Moonshot Philanthropy

Moonshot philanthropy is an emerging approach where philanthropists deploy capital at scale to accelerate ambitious but achievable ideas or interventions. It is characterised by working with communities and experts across business and government. It is an approach that emphasises learning from failure, long-term (10+ years) commitment and stretching goals.

See: Moonshot Philanthropy: achieving responsive social change by privatising failure and socialising success. Professor Beth Breeze and James Chen (2022), University of Kent

Characteristics of Moonshots:

1. unique, creative, and sustained synthesis of science, engineering, entrepreneurship, collective will, and resources;
2. doable in that researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, governments, and other stakeholders have taken real initial steps toward the moonshots' must-go destinations;
3. a growing sense of promise about the future to combat a corrosive sense of cynicism.

See: The Moonshot Catalog, Tom Kalil, Chief Innovation Officer, Schmidt Futures, and Ivan Amato, Visiting Researcher, AAAS, and editor

Example:

Moonshot: The rise of atmospheric dioxide, massive islands of waste plastic in the oceans, vanishing wildlife, and dwindling supplies of potable water are just a few of the signals that humanity is at an industrial inflection point. The game plan so far has been to extract raw materials, manufacture products out of them, and then — with a modest amount of recycling and repurposing — throw the products and the resources embodied in them away after the products are no longer directly useful. Now is the time to supplant this linear economic model with a more circular economy that acknowledges Earth's finite resources.

Moonshot Philanthropy: The UK-based Ellen MacArthur Foundation was launched in 2010 to promote this vision, and the organization has become a leading force in driving the circular

economy forward. In part, it has succeeded by highlighting the tremendous benefits that are possible if a circular economy were deployed on national and global scales. With support from philanthropist Wendy Schmidt, the foundation started the New Plastics Economy initiative. This initiative brings together more than 400 businesses and governments behind a common vision of moving from a linear economy where materials are used and thrown away to a circular economy of reusing, recycling and repurposing plastic items.

See: From Treasure to Trash and Back, Dan Ferber, The Moonshot Catalog, 2020

11. Adaptive Philanthropy

An adaptive philanthropy strategy is marked by "a clear but flexible definition of success, clear criteria for what kinds of opportunities are in and out, nimble decision-making, an openness to new ideas, and a passionate commitment to continuous improvement."

- Susan Wolf Ditkoff

Characteristics:

- define what success looks like over the medium and long term, for whom, and over what timeframe. This includes taking stock of what they really care about, all of the assets at their disposal (expertise, relationships, voice), what their stakeholders say that they or their staff are really good at, and what they need to learn.
- defines the strategy anchors (what shouldn't change in changing times); it also defines clear but flexible boundaries within which investments can move to catch currents. It defines the criteria by which adaptive leaders will judge new opportunities that pop up and determine whether or not to seize them.
- understand what the evidence says about what does and doesn't work, what's known and unknown. This includes gold-standard evaluation evidence, where available, as well as the voices of beneficiaries and others whose mindset and behaviors they are trying to influence, on an ongoing basis.
- clear learning agenda and plan to experiment so that they can come down the learning curve as quickly as possible, especially in new areas. Such a plan defines the most important assumptions to test and external factors that might require course correction.
- clear boundaries and a goal informed by evidence.
- increased comfort with risk and uncertainty.
- rapid prototyping of ideas
    - frequent feedback from important stakeholders (not once a year, but monthly)
    - Incorporating outside perspectives on all thinking
    - rapid decision-making, shorter cycle times on budgets and paperwork
    - capital that funders can allocate flexibly to emerging opportunities throughout the year.

See: Five ways to move from strategic to adaptive philanthropy, SSIR, 2014

Example:

GeShiDo's funding model is about more than just funding single agencies or projects, and it's not about making a donation and walking away. They believe that by connecting funders with industry experts—and then funding an ecosystem of solutions—they can make breakthrough change.

Asking for $1 million per funder* per year for three years to move 1 million people out of crisis.

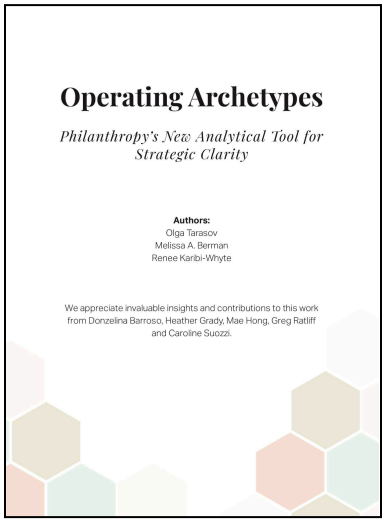
Core to the GeShiDo model is the inclusion of industry experts who have deep knowledge on specific issues. They come from both for-profit and non-profit sectors across Canada and collectively provide the brain trust to effectively evaluate projects and co-design ecosystems.

See: GeShiDo Brochure here

12. Worth a look:

Operating Archetypes: Philanthropy's New Analytical Tool for Strategic Clarity

This is intended to provide funders seeking to optimize their operations and impact with a mirror that serves as a tool for action and alignment.



13. Systemic Investing

Systemic Investing is the strategic deployment of diverse forms of capital, guided by a systemic theory of change and nested within a comprehensive systems intervention approach, for the purpose of funding the transformation of human and natural systems.

See: TransCap Initiative

Systems Change

13.1. Anna Birney from the School of System Change wrote about the definition is a 2018 blog post, with three options depending on circumstance:

- System Change — A system has changed — there has been a shift of a system from one state to another. This looks as system change as an outcome.
- Systems change — Systems are changing all the time — they are constantly moving and adapting
- Systemic change — recognises that change is systemic — for example emergent, multi-level/temporal, multi-actor etc.

Although at times using these terms interchangeably, she ultimately opts for ***systems*** change as follows: Systems change — the emergence of a new pattern of organising or system structure.

This definition tries to recognise that systems change is both an outcome and a process — that it is both the shift from one state to another as well as the systemic process of emergence. *See earlier definition of social innovation as also citing both outcome and process.*

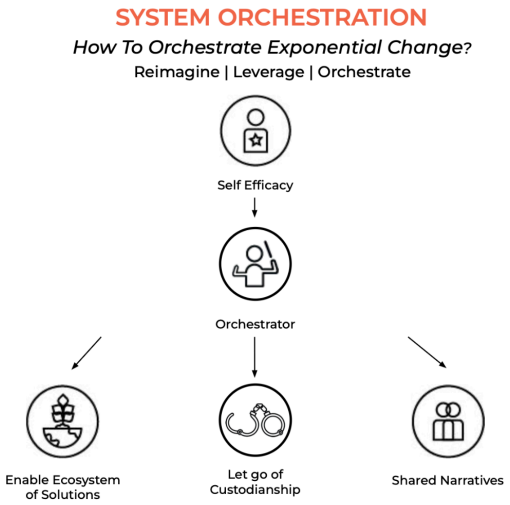
13.2. The Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, in their Systems Change Toolkit described systems thinking and systems change thusly:

Systems thinking is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how different parts of the systems relate to each other, how systems work and evolve over time and what outcomes they produce. Systems change is an application of that thinking to real world situations.

14. System Orchestrator

14.1. An individual or organization that drives large-scale, systemic change by aligning diverse stakeholders, resources, and efforts toward a common goal of societal transformation. They act as catalysts for exponential impact across interconnected systems.

See: Centre for Exponential Change



14.2. In the context of social innovation and systemic change, a system orchestrator is an individual or organization that works to enable, coordinate, and accelerate large-scale societal transformations. They aim to address complex social or environmental challenges by aligning various stakeholders, resources, and interventions to create meaningful, sustainable change.

Skills and competencies of a system orchestrator:

1. Systems thinking: Ability to understand complex social systems and their interconnections.
2. Stakeholder management: Skill in engaging and aligning diverse groups (e.g., government, NGOs, businesses, communities).
3. Strategic planning: Capacity to develop long-term strategies for systemic change.

4. Communication and facilitation: Ability to convene discussions and build consensus among different parties.
5. Change management: Understanding how to guide large-scale transformations.
6. Policy knowledge: Familiarity with relevant policies and how to influence them.
7. Data analysis: Skill in using data to inform decisions and measure impact.
8. Adaptability: Flexibility to adjust strategies in response to changing circumstances.
9. Empathy and cultural competence: Ability to work effectively across diverse communities.
10. Resource mobilization: Skill in securing and allocating resources for initiatives.

The definition, skills and competencies above was produced by Claude AI.

14.3. "…orchestration goes beyond enabling collaboration by bringing people together or coordinating different activities and tasks. We explore orchestration as a category of entrepreneurial activity and examine actors with a focus on generating social impact by means of collective action in open and participatory processes of social innovation. Literature on networks and innovation has pointed to the potential organizing challenges orchestrators face as they need to balance power asymmetries among stakeholders, steer knowledge flows across organizational boundaries, manage plurality, or battle temptations of mission drift."

The above description was taken from Pathways and mechanisms for catalyzing social impact through Orchestration: Insights from an open social innovation project, co-authors Johanna Mair, Thomas Gegenhuber, Laura Thäter, René Lührsen for the Journal of Business Venturing Insights, 2023

Examples of successful system orchestrators in this context:

1. Collective Impact initiatives: While not individuals, these are structured collaborations that act as system orchestrators. For example, the "Strive Partnership" in the United States, which works to improve educational outcomes.

2. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation: This organization acts as a system orchestrator in promoting and accelerating the transition to a circular economy, working with businesses, governments, and academia.

3. EyeAlliance is accelerating equitable access to eyeglasses for 1 billion people to create a world in which all children and adults can obtain high-quality eyeglasses where they live and learn. In 2023, Skoll Foundation produced a spotlight on the project to showcase system orchestration.

15. Field Building

A "field" is a set of individuals and organizations working to address a common social issue or problem, often developing and using a common knowledge base.

"Field building" is the activities or investments that drive a field's progress toward impact at scale.

Bridgespan notes that although there are two distinct methods of building a field's capacity — strengthening organizations or strengthening connections and collaboration — the report cited is mainly concerned with the latter.

Bridgespan's research shows that most fields share five observable characteristics that, individually and collectively, enable impact at scale. These characteristics serve as the foundation for the field and can mature with the right investment and support.

- **Knowledge base:** the evolving body of academic and practical research that helps actors better understand the magnitude of the issues at hand, identifies and analyzes shared barriers, and draws connections between problem-focused fields that reside within it.
- **Actors**: the individuals and organizations that together help the field develop the shared identity and vision that are required to achieve impact at scale.
- **Field-level agenda:** The "agenda" collectively refers to the most critical approaches that field actors will pursue to address barriers and develop adaptive solutions. These approaches are varied yet complementary, and bound by an overarching strategy.
- **Infrastructure:** Field infrastructure is "connective tissue" that strengthens each of the other four field characteristics as well as the complementarity between them. Infrastructure exponentially enhances the efforts of actors in the field by making them more coordinated, connected, and effective.
- **Resources:** Resources may be financial capital or nonfinancial support, such as facilitating introductions between funders and organizations. Both forms are necessary during all phases to support the organizations doing the work and engender conditions for them to be most effective.

See: Field Building for Population-Level Change, Lija McHugh Farnham, Emma Nothmann, Cora Daniels, The Bridgespan Group, 2020

16. Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance is a formal or informal process where partners representing different interests make decisions together, share resources and strategically align to solve problems.

Collaborative governance requires the right balance between process and product. The process should be defined enough so that those involved are aware of the overall organizing structure, their individual roles, and accountabilities, an understanding of how to contribute to shared decision-making, progress and impact, and a sense of alignment and commitment between their personal and/or organizational and the co-developed and shared agenda of the collaborative effort.

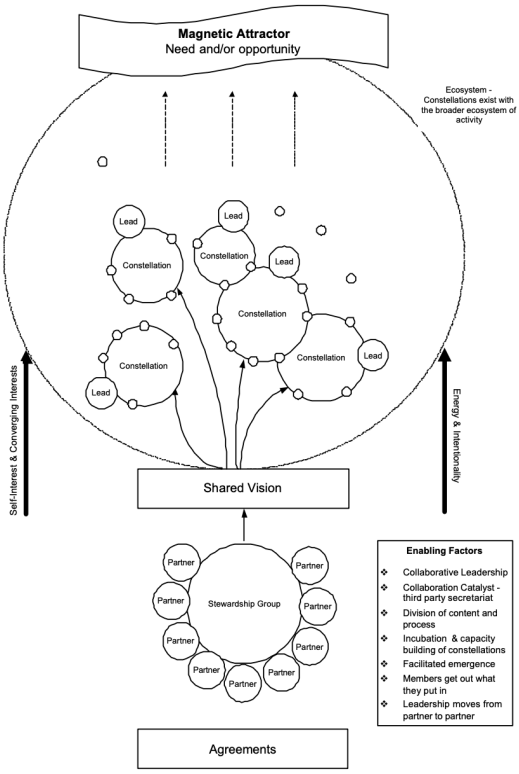
See: Solving the puzzle of Collaborative Governance, Liz Weaver, Tamarack

Examples:

Constellation Model
The Constellation Model emerged out of the necessity to support the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) — a cross-sectoral, multi-organizational partnership of 11 organizations working on toxics issues. CPCHE, through its powerful partnership, dedicated partners and collaborative strategy, was instrumental in getting the Federal Government to ban bisphenol-A in baby bottles making Canada's Chemicals Management policies one of the most child-protective on the planet. It also sparked a market transformation which resulted in the virtual

elimination of bisphenol A in food-grade plastics and a fundamental re-think of toxics in plastics in general.

The Constellation model is a complexity-inspired governance framework for multi-organizational collaboration. It is a way of organizing a group of interested parties to meet a need without having to create a new organization to 'hold' the issue. It is a tool to help us recognize and become conscious designers in a complex ecosystem of organizational collaboration.



See: The Constellation Model Description, Centre for Social Innovation

17. OECD Innovation Portfolio Approach

A portfolio approach to international development facilitates better balance of risks and rewards. It enables an organisation to take stock of the social return of investment across an entire portfolio, as opposed to limiting evaluations to single innovations and projects.

Example:

The USAID assessed the entire portfolio of its Development Innovation Ventures portfolio assessment and found an overall 17:1 social return on every US-dollar invested. While 41 innovations were supported over a 2.5-year period, the success of this number was attributed to just five high-performing innovations. That is the value of a portfolio approach to innovation. Having one's fingers in many pies as a way to maximise rewards.

18. Transformation Catalyst

A transformation catalyst is an individual, organization, or initiative that accelerates systemic change by intentionally connecting and amplifying emerging solutions to complex societal challenges.

These catalysts operate as "system alchemists" who understand deep patterns of change and deliberately work across traditional boundaries to shift mindsets, build networks, and create enabling conditions for transformation.

They typically combine qualities of systems thinking, bridge-building between diverse stakeholders, and the ability to recognize and support emerging innovations that have transformative potential.

Rather than driving change through top-down control, transformation catalysts work to strengthen the collective capacity for change by connecting changemakers, amplifying successful approaches, and helping to remove barriers to systemic innovation.

Their effectiveness comes from their ability to see emerging patterns, build trust across different groups, and strategically intervene in ways that help promising solutions gain momentum and scale.

See: Sandra Waddock, Catalyzing Transformation: Making System Change Happen, 2023

19. Quantum Social Change

Key elements

- The idea that consciousness and human agency play a critical role in social transformations, similar to how observation affects quantum phenomena. She emphasizes that individual and collective beliefs, values, and worldviews actively shape social reality.
- The concept of entanglement - that social changes are deeply interconnected across scales and systems, meaning local actions can have non-local effects through complex feedback loops and relationships.
- An emphasis on potentiality and emergence rather than deterministic outcomes. Like quantum superposition, multiple potential futures exist simultaneously until particular pathways materialize through conscious intervention and action.
- The importance of what she calls "quantum social change" as a framework for addressing complex global challenges like climate change. She argues that transformative change requires engaging with both the practical, exterior dimensions of systems and the interior, subjective dimensions of human consciousness and culture.

See: Karen O'Brien Substack

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