Leadership for Social Innovation
Results of a Pan-Canadian Study on Leadership Learning for Social Change

James Stauch

Institute for Community Prosperity
Bissett School of Business
Mount Royal University
Calgary, Canada

ABSTRACT

In the face of profound global and regional challenges, there is a need for skilled leadership tied to achieving transformational change through social innovation. But leadership for social innovation is inherently distinct from traditional forms of leadership development, nested within a layer-cake of approaches that include transformational, adaptive, servant, commons-based, social change leadership, self-organizing and systems leadership theories.

The paper summarizes the results of a year-long inquiry into the landscape of leadership learning in Canada, with a focus on the social innovation milieu. A wide array of leadership programs were examined across Canada, each focusing on the fostering of individual leadership skill sets within a context of civic engagement, community development, public policy, social responsibility and/or sustainability, and social innovation. Each program employs distinct learning approaches, core assumptions, and theories of change, with most tending to be heuristic in their design, and surprisingly few engaged in formalized efforts to understand impact.

An inventory of close to 100 Canadian leadership programs was developed, which formed the basis of data collection through program staff and key informant interviews, as well as a survey of leadership program alumni. A series of 'leadership for social change' paradigms were then developed, which includes a Social Innovation Leadership paradigm, as well as other paradigms that align with certain perspectives on, or aspects of, social innovation. This paradigm ties leadership to systems thinking and understanding complexity as cornerstones for pursuing transformational change.

Key phrases: systems leadership, social entrepreneurship education, leadership development, social innovation learning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When social systems fail - where political, economic or community institutions, or networks of institutions, reveal themselves as unable to address a major challenge – we often instinctively label such a breakdown as a "failure of leadership". Most current approaches to leadership development, however, are inadequate to achieve the scale and depth of transformation required to address such challenges (Reinelt, 2010).

As Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noted at Davos earlier this year, the pace and integration of commercial and technological innovation, including advances in computing, data analytics, robotics and biotechnology, could deliver spectacular progress for societies around the globe. However, he added, "it is also not hard to imagine how it could produce mass unemployment and greater inequality", noting that "leadership" will determine whether the future is liberating, healthy and equitable vs. oppressive, degrading and dystopian (Trudeau, 2016).

Implicit in this quandary is the belief that society ought to invest in leadership development as well as in forms of innovation that lead to greater human health, social equity, economic mobility and ecological sustainability, among other public values. Societal leaders of all kinds working to affect positive social change at local, national or international scales are being challenged to improve their understanding and exercise of leadership. Whether within community activism, civil society, philanthropy, public government, socially-responsible corporations or social enterprise, there is growing recognition that the marriage of leadership with social innovation carries urgency. It challenges practitioners and scholars alike to deepen collective understanding of how these concepts synchronize, both theoretically and operationally.

This paper emerges out of two studies conducted by the Institute for Community Prosperity at Mount Royal University on the subject of leadership development: The first of these studies provided insight for practitioners and funders into how potential "leaders" are trained and nurtured to catalyze social change – i.e. in the service of community-building, active citizenship, international development, peace-building, human rights, social justice, ecological sustainability or other common good oriented purposes. This applied, community-partnered research developed an inventory of leadership development programs in Canada, included interviews with program managers and key field builders and surveyed program alumni (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016b).

The second study was a literature review conducted in preparation for the first National Youth Innovation and Leadership Summit (NYLIS), hosted by the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto in April, 2016. It aimed to illuminate the likely effectiveness of various youth leadership and youth innovation approaches and whether there are certain approaches that are more likely to produce outcomes that help Canada thrive economically and socially (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016a).

Leadership and Social Innovation: Framing the Discussion

The concepts of "leadership" and "social innovation" each have a rapidly expanding scholarship, but there is relatively little writing on the convergence of these two notions. As well, the definition and use of these two largely abstract terms is contested, normative and spans a wide range of disciplines and sectors. For example, some authors focus on public sector leadership and social innovation (Sørensen and Torfing, 2014; Bason, 2010), others on market-based leadership and corporate social innovation (Mirvis, Herrera, Googins and Albareda, 2016; Fernando, et al., 2016), and still others on voluntary sector leadership and service-rooted social innovation (Shier and Handy, 2016; Westley, Antadze, Riddell, Robinson and Geobey, 2014; McGonagill and Reinelt, 2011).

Leadership as a subject of study has an extensive and wildly divergent scholarship (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). The literature informing the author`s exploration of the topic is drawn from adult education, behavioural psychology, business leadership, community development, complexity science, crisis management, economics, engineering management, evaluation studies, human-centered design, political science, public administration, military studies, organization behaviour, recreation and leisure studies, social innovation, social psychology, theology and moral philosophy.

This research focuses within a frame that focuses on the dynamics of social change, and therefore excludes leadership writing in the traditions of business management or transactional leadership. Transformational leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Avolio, 2003) provides a foundational frame, where leadership is earned, not conferred. Where the veracity of a vision for change carries more force than formal authority or organizational position. This is superimposed with adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Linsky and Grashow, 2009), where leadership is intrinsically connected to the imperative of risk-taking and innovation amidst complexity. Transformational and adaptive approaches have provided the basis for thinking more deeply about leadership in the face of complex social problems (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, 2000). Other lenses that have proved useful to this analysis include servant leadership (Wong and Chandra, 2015; Greenleaf, 1977) and what is variously described as commons-based, social-perspective or social change leadership (Dugan, Bohle, Woelker and Cooney, 2014; Komives, 2012). The frame of analysis is further informed by writings on collaborative, self-organizing or network leadership (Ansell and Gash, 2012; Ganz, 2010), that highlight lateral, decentralized, shared and open forms of decision-making (manifest today in peer-to-peer mechanisms, crowdsourcing, swarm intelligence, extended enterprise, and so on).

Of particular appeal to this analysis is the emerging concept of systems-leadership (Senge, Hamilton and Kania, 2015). Systems leadership "entails deep co-sensing – the blending of careful listening, honing our empathic responses to others, uncovering and discovering the real issues, interests and causal dynamics that lie beneath these surface symptoms. It requires the marshalling of adaptive and creative resilience, as well as moral courage, such that we can design or embrace systems that hold promise and avoid or transform systems that portend collapse" (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016a, p. 8). As Scharmer & Kaufer (2013) note, identifying addressing the root causes of systemic disconnects and limitations is the key to social transformation.

Social innovation is a broad paradigm that is rapidly moving from the margins to the mainstream of discourse on societal change and the future of our communities, evidenced, for example, in the White House's *Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation* or the Canadian Government's new *Inclusive Innovation* agenda. In Canada, social innovation is most often spoken of in terms of transformation of systems, and typically draws heavily from complexity science and resilience theory. Important Canadian contributions to public and practitioner understanding of social innovation include *Impact: Six Patterns to Spread Your Social Innovation* (Etmanski, 2015) and *Getting to Maybe* (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2007). Culture change within organizations and sectors of activity is often the manifestation of where leadership and social innovation converge. As Sørensen and Torfing, (2014) assert, social innovation leadership is demonstrated most clearly in the form of workplace culture, where knowledge and decision-making is co-produced. Some of the hallmarks of this culture include an emphasis on creative talent, diversity, mobility, play, welcoming and learning from failure, de-emphasizing performance measurement in favour of experimentation, and decision-making that preferences networks over hierarchies (Ibid.).

One other leadership frame of particular importance to the development of Canadian society, challenged to move forward within a frame of reconciliation and de-colonization vis-a-vis Indigenous Peoples and the settler society, is an emerging scholarship on Indigenous leadership (Voyageur, Brearley and Calliou, 2015; Kenny and Fraser, 2013). These writings emphasize community, reciprocity and commons-based approaches, rooted in cultural practices and protocols, above development of the individual-as-leader. As such, there is strong overlap with, and even resemblance to, the notion of social innovation leadership (McGowan, 2016; Tremblay and Bagelman, 2016). So much so, in fact, that approaches to social innovation leadership development within Canada that ignore or under-emphasize Indigenous participation, practice and protocol are unlikely to thrive, or at minimum are vulnerable to rebuke.

Leadership Learning: Developing Leadership through Formal Programming

Early research in what has come to be known as leadership studies posited that leadership was innate. Essentially, one was either born to lead, or not. Over time, this 'trait theory' of leadership was challenged and replaced. It is now widely accepted that leadership abilities can, indeed, be learned and acquired (Day, 2001; Fredricks, 1999).

While "leadership development" has a long history in the context of business or government, the last decade has witnessed a rapid expansion in the number of leadership development programs focused on civil society and the social economy. Just over 80 such programs were identified in this analysis, but a reasonable current estimate would put the number of such programs in Canada upwards of 150, many having been established since this research began nearly two years ago. Similarly, there has been a marked increase in innovation education, in tandem with a mushrooming number of entrepreneurship programs at the post-secondary level. 'Social innovation' as a specific language and set of practices aimed at systems change, both on-campus and off, has much more recently taken flight (Scaled Purpose, 2016; Ashoka, 2014).

As Reinelt (2010) notes, however, most commons-focused leadership programs have operated under the assumption that developing the individual in the service of developing the organization will lead – vicariously – to positive social change. However, this approach is fragmented, siloed and difficult to scale. Social innovation leadership requires networked, participatory, self-organizing modes of leadership development, informed as much by community development praxis as by entrepreneurship, in order to address complexity (Ibid.).

A Pan-Canadian Study: Methodology

The analysis included a literature review, an inventory of 85 leadership development programs in Canada, 29 interviews with program managers of a subset sampling of programs as well as with key field builders, and an online survey of program alumni designed and administered through a Qualtrics platform (with 93 complete responses). The survey tested programs' influence on their employment and career path, their propensity and depth of community engagement, their shift in worldview, and their overall perceived level of skills, tools and knowledge development. The program interviews probed thematic focus, theory, design, recruitment, achievements (including replication in other regions), skills and aptitudes, and alumni engagement.

Program criteria were established that *included* NGO-led, University-led, or hybrid programs, whether competitive or open recruitment. Included in this were fellowship or award programs, internships, residencies, practicums or mentorship programs with a strong identified leadership learning component, as well as certificate, diploma or degree programs focused on leadership and social change. Programs in scope were required to serve Canadian participants, but need not necessarily be Canadian-based. Additionally, there must be some mention of transformational, systems-focused, and/or community-connected approaches within the program description.

Excluded from this inventory were programs that defined leadership as primarily organization management or attached to formal authority. It further *excluded* programs expressly designed for personal empowerment, which meant excluding most outdoor leadership programs, as well as executive or business leadership programs designed for private sector managers, or programs exclusively for public sector managers or political leaders. The inventory also excluded programs with a commercial entrepreneurship focus, absent a social lens. However, it should be noted that the literature review conducted for a complementary study referred to previously (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016a) did also look closely at entrepreneurial leadership approaches that were not necessarily social in focus. In all, 85 programs that met the criteria were inventoried, forming the basis of the primary analysis. It should be noted that some of these programs switch out "leadership" for proxy terminology like "change-making", "connectorship" or "social entrepreneurship".

In reviewing the programs, informing the design of the program manager interviews, the analysis looked at the following criteria: 1) Scale and scope criteria: Geographic and thematic focus. 2) Program design and delivery criteria: Pedagogical approach, theory of change and evaluation strategy; 3) Cohort Criteria: Number of participants and alumni, participant time commitment and deliverables and alumni relations activity; and 4) Ancillary criteria: Organizational

backbone, primary funding source, longevity of program delivery (number of cohorts across what timescale) and whether the program had particular 'champions' (public figures, 'thoughtleaders', etc.).   Of these criteria, the analysis focused in on theory of change and cohort composition.

Social Innovation as a Leadership Paradigm

In order to better frame and understand the shear diversity of programming captured in this analysis, a set of program archetypes were developed, summarized in Table 1 (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016b). A set of substreams are also identified where natural clusters of programming types emerged across the Canadian landscape. Outside of Canada, a different set of substreams might well emerge. In reality, virtually all programs cross more than one paradigm or substream, but the categorization is nonetheless helpful to identify the range and main foci of programming.

Table 1: Summary of Leadership Program Paradigms & Descriptive Criteria

Paradigm	Description
Community Development Leadership	The facilitation, mobilization and/or empowerment of neighbourhoods or other communities with a focus on building the skills for collective action that enable *communities themselves* to make the change *they* desire. Leadership is manifest through the recognition and flourishing of the innate capacities of others. The community's expression of this is "we did it ourselves." *Substreams:* 1. Asset-Based and Citizen-Led Development Leadership 2. Co-operative and Community Economic Development (CED) Leadership.
Global Citizenship	Rooted in the notion that identity transcends national citizenship and that the entire human community is interdependent. Leadership is fueled by a concern for international affairs, for development and eradication of poverty within the global south, the desire to achieve much deeper awareness and appreciation of cultures and an embrace of shared human responsibility for the planet's ecological integrity. *Substreams:* 1. International Service 2. International Identity & Policy 3. Intercultural Cooperation 4. Global Human Ecology
Indigenous Leadership	In the Canadian context, Indigenous leadership refers to programs – usually Indigenous-led and operated - that develop the skills, confidence and networks of First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis people. They are grounded in Indigenous cultural practices, learnings and protocols. However, they differ widely with respect to cultural or thematic focus and geographic scope. As Voyageur, Brearley and Calliou, 2015, assert, such programs typically cultivate retrospective awareness, the recognition of current capacities, and the capacity to imagine future possibilities; leaders who are "deeply awake to our present

	moment as well as our responsibility to the future." (Ibid.) Leadership is grounded in the ethics and cosmologies of distinctive cultural traditions. For example, the Anishinaabe seven grandfather teachings: Love, humility, respect, honesty, truth, wisdom, and bravery. The notion – common in mainstream western discourse - that 'leadership' could be divorced from responsibility to the common good is unthinkable within Indigenous notions of leadership (Earl Young, 2006). *Substreams:* 1. Regional or Culturally-Specific Approaches 2. Canada-Wide Approaches
Public Policy Influence, Civic Innovation and Social Activism Leadership	The exercise of influence over the public agenda, either as a change agent external to government or through the pursuit of formal political power. Leadership is rooted in civic engagement, political vision, knowledge of the public policy process, and utilizing community organizing and activism tools. For participants, such programs often serve as preparatory groundwork for the eventual pursuit of elected office. *Substreams:* 1. Public Policy 2. Civic Engagement 3. Social Activism 4. Nation Building
Social Entrepreneurship	A mindset and mode of operating that is focused on developing and advocating for innovative solutions to society's most pressing social or environmental problems. Leaders in this vein identify assets, opportunities and resources where other people tend to see only problems. Typically, such leadership is manifest through the creation of a new social venture (whether nonprofit or commercial). *Substreams:* 1. Social Entrepreneurship 2. On-Campus Incubation 3. Human-Centred Design Leadership
Social Innovation Leadership	Focused on the transformation of social systems, within a context of complexity. It integrates efforts to affect behaviour change, culture shift, public policy change, and organizing for collective impact across sectors. Leadership is manifest through the altering of patterns, processes and relationships in fundamental ways, typically across multiple organizations and at significant scales. *Substreams:* 1. Off-Campus Residencies & Fellowships 2. On-Campus Social Innovation Programs
Voluntary Sector and Service Leadership	The exercise of community service, either domestically or abroad, driven by a strong sense of mission and ethical compulsion to serve the common good. It is typically manifest through the mobilizing of volunteers, philanthropic influence or through the founding or flourishing of a non-profit, non-governmental organization. *Substreams:*

	1. Post-Secondary Education or Executive Nonprofit Programs 2. Service Leadership 3. *Environmental NGO Leadership* 4. *Philanthropy Leadership*

Virtually all these program paradigms could make a credible case to be considered within a liberal definition of 'social innovation'. However, a more precise formulation of social innovation is proffered here, such that it distinguishes social innovation leadership development from other forms of commons-based, community change-focused or entrepreneurial leadership development.

In the Canadian context, social innovation has come to refer much more often to transformation of social systems, the adoption of universal health care being a prototypical example. Frances Westley, the founder of the Waterloo Institute for Social innovation and Resilience (WISIR) defines social innovation as "an initiative, product, process or program that profoundly changes the basic routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of any social system in the direction of greater resilience." (as cited, for example, in Cahill, 2010, p. 3). Certain philanthropic foundations and university-based institutes play a key role in advancing social innovation as an ethos. In Canada, this has been led by WISIR and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation (under the moniker of *Social Innovation Generation (SiG)* and more recently through its *RECODE* initiative). Social innovation has found traction within many post-secondary institutions' curricular and co-curricular programming as well as in certain public-private-non-profit collaborative initiatives. The approach to leadership in this context is very much a systems-level focus within a context of complexity. As such, programs tend to include a melange of tools and techniques relating to behaviour change, culture shift, public policy change, and organizing for collective impact across sectors.

This approach is further divided into two streams:

1. Off- Campus Residencies and Fellowships: Programs that recognize and support individuals to uncover, illuminate or catalyze social innovation. Leading for social innovation is premised on discovering or creating the 'ecological' conditions where innovation can occur as opposed to managing innovation as a linear evolution of product and systems design. There are a small number of leadership programs in Canada in this vein, perhaps the most recent and highest profile example of which is the *Getting to Maybe: Social Innovation Residency* at the Banff Centre. The Montreal-based Girls Action Foundation runs the *Young Women's Leadership Program* (formerly called ELLE Project), which is a national initiative for young women focused on skill building, peer learning and reflection, to foster personal and community leadership for social innovation. The Alberta Social Innovation Connect (or *ABSI Connect*) Fellowship, run by SiG, is a regional leadership experience tied explicitly to the notion of social innovation. *MaRS Studio [Y]* is another such example, focused on learners, leaders, and innovators ready to navigate 21st-century challenges toward a vision of bold economic and social impact, while fostering equity and innovation in Canada. The Metcalf Foundation, also based in Toronto, provides *Innovation Fellowships* for individuals with vision, creativity and talent to pursue powerful ideas, models, or novel practices with

respect to creating healthy and resilient communities in Ontario. The Vancouver-based Plan Institute convenes a *Salon Series* bringing leaders in thought and change into a conversation about social innovation, and the Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone has just completed a *Social Innovation Pilot Cohort*, focused in part on leadership development (Tremblay and Bagelman, 2016).

1) On-Campus Social Innovation Programs: Undergraduate, graduate or practitioner certification programs emerging on Canadian campuses. The McConnell Foundation's *RECODE* program has been a major catalyst to the emergence of university and college-based social innovation programming. As of early 2016, seventeen universities provide courses related to social innovation or social entrepreneurship. The University of Waterloo's *Master's Diploma in Social Innovation*, which has essentially been replaced by the aforementioned partnership with the Banff Centre, was probably the best known program. At least eleven Canadian campuses also provide mentorship support specifically tied to social innovation and four – University of New Brunswick, Ryerson University, Simon Fraser University and Waterloo - offer fellowships (Scaled Purpose, 2016). Queen's University's Centre for Social Impact provides an annual *Social Innovation Bootcamp*. McGill's *Social Economy Initiative* integrates social entrepreneurship and social innovation into all of its management teaching, research and outreach activities. In the US, the best known example of this approach is perhaps the *Stanford Social Innovation Fellowship*.

A Note on Social Entrepreneurship

Social innovation in many countries would be a synonym for social entrepreneurship, which is why the latter concept warrants special mention here. In the Canadian context, and certainly for this analysis, it appears to be a distinct paradigm vis-à-vis the more systems-focused 'social innovation', it is acknowledge that there may be significant overlap with certain programs into social innovation (although arguably no more so than any of the other paradigms identified previous).

Social entrepreneurship, as described in this analysis, is a mindset and mode of operating that is focused on developing and advocating for innovative solutions to society's most pressing social or environmental problems. One of the seminal writers on social entrepreneurship, David Bornstein (2004), notes that social entrepreneurs identify assets and opportunities where people only see problems. Interestingly though, when provided a list of seven potential program completion goals, and asked to rate in importance, alumni survey respondents ranked "developing an entrepreneurial mindset" as the least important, relative to social awareness and community mobilization, for example.

The social entrepreneurship archetype is further divided into three streams: 1) Social Entrepreneurship Leadership, typically characterized by fellowship and awards programs, particularly in the US, honouring social entrepreneurship, and of which there are a wide variety; 2) On-Campus Incubation of either student-led or faculty-led social ventures (whether non-profit, commercial or hybrid models such as B-Corps), of which there is an accelerating trend on

Canadian campuses; and 3) Human-Centered Design Leadership: Inspired by the work of IDEO and the Stanford Design Program, a small but increasing number of social entrepreneurship experiences are centered around a human-centered design model, a creative, empathetic approach to the generation, testing and prototyping of ideas.

Key Lessons for Social Innovation Leadership

From the inventory process and the three human subject data sets the following top-level observations can be made. These observations span programs that otherwise vary significantly in scale and scope, target participants (cohort composition), and delivery, design and structure:

Many of these leadership development programs are emphatically contemporary and typically informed by a counter-cultural impetus. As such, interviewees are alive to the existential question of whether we "need better leaders" or whether the normative framework upon which we seek "better leadership" is so thoroughly broken that we need new way entirely of thinking about 'leadership' (and perhaps a new word to accompany it). In this light, it is interesting to note a top-level finding, across program archetypes, that there is a core belief that change happens because leaders play a role. Any cynicism certain respondents harbour over the limitations of the word 'leader' is tempered by the belief that the notion of leadership is critical to inducing and sustaining positive social change.

PROGRAM FOCUS AND EMPHASIS
The main themes cited as complex social challenges that are the subject of participant interest and/or program focus are mitigating and adapting to climate change, addressing inequality (global, regional and local), enhancing Indigenous leadership and increasing political participation/civic engagement (particularly with respect to new immigrants).

Program participants want to develop skills to address and deepen their understanding of social issues. However, this desire is manifest in different ways. In what we might label "cause first", the issue – climate change, for example – is the premise for the program and the need for leadership. For another subset of respondents – "community first" – leadership is manifest through the creation of space for the community to exercise collaborative, deeply democratic decisions and actions. A third subset – "context first" – preferences deeper discovery of history, global context or cultural norms, as a pre-requisite for true leadership to emerge. A final subset of responses – "character first" – posits that the development of the person as leader is necessary before change can happen. In this formulation, personal competencies are paramount, even moreso when dealing with leadership for social change. Both the literature and primary data reveal a recurring emphasis on at least one of three core personal leadership capacities: Empathy, creativity and courage. A range of other traits can be easily mapped onto, or substitute, these competencies if conceived as a troika (Stauch and Cornelisse, 2016a).

KEY PROGRAM CHALLENGES
Programs face similar challenges with respect to resources, recruitment, relevance, retention and results/evaluation:

- *Resources:* Programs are challenge to maintain long-term funding, alumni networks and volunteers. The reliance of social innovation leadership programing on funding from the philanthropic foundation sector is significant vis-à-vis government, individual donors, earned revenue or corporate sources.
- *Recruitment:* While most programs have little difficulty attracting sheer numbers of qualified applicants, there are questions about how effectively the programs reach those who stand to 'grow' the most in such a program. Sharp differences emerge in opinion as to whether a program should provide clarity of vision, even organizing around very specific social or environmental themes or challenges, or whether they should be open and adaptive to the emergent interests of participants.
- *Relevance:* Programs struggle with identifying the most important types of skills, which can be a particular challenge for those operating with a social innovation lens. How do programs 'stay ahead' of participants' needs, based on community, industry, technological and other trends?
- *Retention:* Ensuring sufficient time commitment is a difficult and often costly proposition. It is also a challenge – though one with rewards - to keep alumni engaged.
- *Results/evaluation:* Leadership programming does not lend itself to tracking outcomes easily, although measurement of participant perceptions and experiences is relatively straightforward. There is also a disconnect between the results that particular leadership programs can reasonably be held accountable for, and the outcomes that are beyond their direct control (Meehan, Reinelt & Leiderman, 2015). According to one study, albeit now more than a decade old, only between 10% and 20% of organizations who invest in leadership development in North America evaluate the effectiveness of programming on performance outcomes (Avolio, 2003). The inventory of leadership programming in Canada conducted for this research indicates a similar pattern. Leadership program evaluation appears to be underfunded, undervalued and underutilized. As well, very few programs use external evaluators.

EXCELLENCE IN PROGRAMMING
Although every program sees itself as addressing a unique gap in a unique way, the interviews and alumni responses point to five key ingredients in successful leadership programming, particularly in the social innovation context, all focused on building connections: To place, community, context, others, and experience.

- *Connection to place* refers most often to outdoor, land-based experiences as part of the learning program.
- *Connection to community* refers to activities that take participants beyond their self-exploration and beyond examination of their own organization.
- *Connection to context* refers to exercises that aim to identify underlying systems and root causes.
- *Connection to others* refers in particular to enhancing access to mentors and expanding professional networks.
- *Connection to experience* refers to testing, practicing and mastering skills (although the kind of skills identified varies widely, according to program and archetype).

It is also important to note the 'connections between the connections'. In particular, the notion of connecting transformation of self with transformation of social systems is a recurring theme that interestingly also marks the ecotone between literature on personal leadership development and systems change (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, 2000), echoed in such de rigueur concepts as psychological bricolage (Sanchez, 2015) and empathic design (Van der Ryn, 2013).

A CRAVING FOR MORE
Program participants desire multiple and varied leadership learning experiences. In fact, there appears to be a serial or habitual need to engage in multiple leadership programs: 31% of respondents particpated in 3 or more programs, while 8% participated in 9 or more distinct programs.

PROGRAM REACH AND SELECTION
Word-of-mouth and personal networks appear to be far more critical in garnering program awareness than either social media or traditional forms of marketing and outreach. However, a troubling dynamic of self-exclusion was repeatedly identified as a potentially very significant factor in who applies and who does not apply to take part in leadership programming. Many program managers and field builders expressed anxiety about whether leadership programs are successful at reaching the people who can benefit the most – i.e. those who may have latent system leadership abilities, but may lack confidence, connections or program awareness, or who may come from cultural contexts where self-identification as a 'leader' is taboo. Probing this latter point, and testing whether 'changemaker' has more universal appeal than 'leader', opinions were decidedly mixed, with no clear preference emerging. 'Changemaker' as a concept does not yet enjoy a rich etymology or widespread use, although it is an appealing way to integrate the concepts of social innovation and leadership (Alden Rivers, Armellini and Nie, 2015).

EFFECT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION
Program participants experienced higher rates of volunteer and civic engagement post-program, with 57% of alumni noting that their volunteer, civic or political involvement had increased post-program. However, there was little discernible effect on employment or career progression.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT
There is significant agreement that programs that actively and formally engaging program alumni in program news, activities and even re-design are more likely to maintain longevity and relevance, and more likely to experience enhanced participant recruitment.

COLLABORATION and INFORMATION SHARING
Leadership programs, for the most part, exist in splendid isolation from one another, despite the observation that many participants are themselves aware of, and take part in, multiple programs. Although a generic willingness – and some cases keen interest – was expressed with respect to collaboration, there is little such activity at present. Canada does not currently have any network or portal for information sharing or collaboration with respect to commons-oriented leadership programming. Contrast this with the US-based *Leadership Learning Community*, which was created a decade ago to build and strengthen the field of contemporary leadership development in

the US. It includes practitioners, scholars and philanthropic foundations that invest in leadership development.[1] In Canada, the National Youth Leadership and Innovation Summit, convened in April, 2016, marked the first time that most programs had come together in dialogue.

Research Limitations and Future Enquiry

Although the survey tool was strong, the sample capture relied on program staff to re-circulate to their alumni, which happened unevenly. As such, the uneven weighting of responses across individual programs and geographies limited the usefulness of this data, particularly with respect to universalizing responses. 54% of respondents associated with one of four programs, three of which were in Western Canada. Nearly half of alumni responses were also affiliated with programs identified beyond the 85-program drop-down list, suggesting either their definition is broader or the program inventory could have been more extensive.

There are many areas for further exploration that this analysis surfaces:

- Develop understanding about the gap between who enrolls and who should be enrolling, as well as who drops out of programs, and why;
- Explore the dynamic of self-exclusion / self-selection bias related to leadership identity;
- Explore the role of post-secondary institutions and secondary school programs in adopting and integrating leadership and social innovation programming;
- Explore the role of childhood learning in developing the core traits of leadership as social innovation;
- Garner further insight into, and examples of, Indigenous leadership development;
- Garner further insight into programming in Francophone Canada, as well as internationally;
- Consider developing an evaluator's toolbox, useful to programs and practitioners; and
- Explore whether a Canada-specific learning community and alumni network, modeled potentially on the Leadership Learning Community in the US, could be developed.

Conclusion

Leadership matters a great deal to the well-being of local, national and international systems. But, while 'leadership' has for many decades now been the subject of extensive scholarship, the much more specific variety of leadership that is focused on addressing the social systems change has received only scant attention.

Like many other countries, Canada is witness to a burgeoning number of programmatic approaches to developing leadership connected to strengthening the commons. An increasing number of educational institutions and socially-concerned organizations are seeking to create a learning path for either practitioner-citizens or student-citizens to build on their passions and

---

[1] A bi-product of the research outlined in this paper is the creation of a 'BETA' website – GenerationLeadership.ca, which could form the basis of an online information sharing vehicle.

skill sets to create transformative, enduring and widespread positive social, economic and environmental change. A subset of these programs focus on methodologies, mindsets and capabilities that can broadly be identified as "social innovation", whether of an entrepreneurship or social venture variety, a community or public systems-change variety, or some combination thereof.

The research reveals that few leadership programs connected to social innovation know of each other or speak to each other, and few programs undertake evaluation. Very few Canadians take part in leadership learning activities, while a surprisingly large subset of those who do participate in multiple programs. An informal leadership program "circuit" appears to have developed.

There is an expressed desire for collaboration and for programs to enhance reach and inclusion, but more robust information-sharing and avenues for field-building and reflective practice are needed for these aims to come to fruition. For social innovation to flourish in Canada, the investment in leadership development programs needs to be bolstered by broader investments in the field and in collective learning.

REFERENCE LIST

Alden Rivers, B., Nie, M. and Armellini, A., 2015. University teachers' conceptions of "Changemaker" A starting point for embedding social innovation in learning and teaching. *Education+ Training*, 57(5), pp.588-600.

Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2012), 'Stewards, mediators and catalysts: Toward a model of collaborative leadership', *The Innovation Journal*, 17(1): 1-21.

Ashoka U. (2014). *Trends in Social Innovation Education*. Arlington, TX: Ashoka U.

Avolio, B. J. (2003). Examining the full range model of leadership: Looking back to transform forward. Leadership development for transforming organizations: Grow leaders for tomorrow, 71-98.

Bason, C. (2010). Leading public sector innovation: Co-creating for a better society. Policy Press.

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cahill, G., 2010. Primer on social innovation: A compendium of definitions developed by organizations around the world. The Philanthropist, 23, p.3.

Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E., & McKee, R. A. (2014). Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(1), 63-82.

Dugan, J.P., Bohle, C.W., Woelker, L.R. and Cooney, M.A., 2014. The role of social perspective-taking in developing students' leadership capacities. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 51(1), pp.1-15.

Earl Young, A., 2006. *Elders Teachings on Indigenous Leadership: Leadership is a Gift*. MA Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Etmanski, A. (2015). *Impact: Six Patterns to Spread Your Social Innovation*. Orwell Cove, PEI: Orwell Cove.

Fernando, M., Gibbons, B., Kautz, K., Spedding, T.A., Almeida, S., Randle, M. and Dharmage, S., 2016. Social Innovation through Responsible Leadership.

Fredricks, S. M. (1999). Exposing and exploring state-wide community leadership training programs. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 5(2), 129-142.

Ganz, M. (2010). Leading change: Leadership, organization, and social movements. *Handbook of leadership theory and practice*, 19.

Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.

Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M. and Grashow, A. (2009), The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing your Organization and the World, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Kenny, C. & Fraser, T.N. (2013). *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Komives, S.R. and Wagner, W., (2012). *Leadership for a better world: Understanding the social change model of leadership development*. John Wiley & Sons.

McGonagill, G. and Reinelt, C. (2011). Leadership development in the social sector: a framework for supporting strategic investments. *The Foundation Review*, 2(4), p.6.

McGowan, K. (2016). An Educational Ecotone? Submitted to International Social Innovation Research Conference (ISIRC) 2016.

Meehan, D., Reinelt, C., & Leiderman, S. (2015). *Leadership & Large-Scale Change: How to Accelerate Learning and Deepen Impact*. Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License.

Mirvis, P., Herrera, M.E.B., Googins, B. and Albareda, L., 2016. Corporate social innovation: How firms learn to innovate for the greater good. *Journal of Business Research*.

Mumford, M. D., Zaccaro, S. J., Harding, F. D., Jacobs, T. O., & Fleishman, E. A. 2000. Leadership skills for a changing world: Solving complex social problems. Leadership Quarterly, 11: 11-35.

Reinelt, C. (2010). The Future of Leadership Development. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.*

Sanchez-Burks, J., Karlesky, M.J. and Lee, F., 2015. 6 Psychological Bricolage: Integrating Social Identities to Produce Creative Solutions. *The Oxford Handbook of Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship*, p.93.

Scaled Purpose. (2016). *Where to Begin: How social innovation is emerging on Canadian campuses*. Calgary, AB: Institute for Community Prosperity, Mount Royal University.

Shier, M.L. and Handy, F., 2016. Executive Leadership and Social Innovation in Direct-Service Nonprofits: Shaping the Organizational Culture to Create Social Change. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, *27*(2), pp.111-130.

Senge, P., Hamilton, H. & Kania, J. (2015). The Dawn of System Leadership. *Stanford Social Innovation Review Winter,* 2015, 27-33. Retrieved from http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership

Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J., 2014. Enhancing social innovation by rethinking collaboration, leadership and public governance. *Social frontiers. The next edge of social innovation research*, Nesta, Glasgow.

Stauch, J. & Cornelisse, D. (2016). *Canada Next: Learning for Youth Leadership and Innovation.* Calgary, AB: Institute for Community Prosperity, Mount Royal University and MaRS.

Stauch, J. and Cornelisse, L. (2016a). *Strengthening Community Leadership Learning in Canada: Results of a Canada-wide Research Project on Leadership Learning for Social Change.* Calgary, AB: Institute for Community Prosperity, Mount Royal University.

Tremblay, C. and Bagelman, C. (2016b). *Social Innovation Pilot Cohort: Impact Report.* Victoria, BC: Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone.

Trudeau, J. (2016). The Canadian Opportunity (panel address). *World Economic Forum.* Davos, Switzerland: Jan. 20, 2016.

Van der Ryn, S., 2013. *Design for an Empathic World: Reconnecting People, Nature, and Self*. Island Press.

Voyageur, C., Brearley, L. and Calliou, G. (Eds)(2015). *Restorying Indigenous Leadership: Wise Practises in Community Development* (2nd Edition). The Banff Centre.

Westley, F., Antadze, N., Riddell, D.J., Robinson, K. and Geobey, S., 2014. Five Configurations for Scaling Up Social Innovation Case Examples of Nonprofit Organizations from Canada. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, p.0021886314532945.

Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., and Patton, M.Q. (2007). *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Vintage Canada.

Wong, L. and Chandra, Y., 2015. Service Leadership Education Embedded in a Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Framework. In *Promoting Service Leadership Qualities in University Students* (pp. 51-65). Springer Singapore.