



MI/S

Maison
de l'innovation
sociale

2021 Activity Report

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A MIS team member during a collective workshop (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

About us

Eliminate the obstacles between an idea with a positive social and environmental impact and its implementation.

The MIS loves starting lines, preliminary sketches, and early beginnings. It is interested in the precursor stage of a social innovation—identifying the root causes of a persistent social and environmental problem, generating solutions to address it, removing the barriers between an idea and its realization, and implementing the idea as a vector of systemic transformation.

The MIS loves both generating and bringing to life ideas that can make our ways of doing things more compatible with humanity's future. It seeks to encourage people to develop promising ideas and transform them into social innovations in the real world.

The MIS involves itself very early in assisting an agent of change in their journey to implement an idea with social and environmental impact.

By creating the first bridges as levers of development in a project's advancement, the MIS positions itself as a vital force and champion of social R&D. It facilitates the emergence of social innovations. It creates the optimal conditions for the implementation of both a greater number and a greater diversity of projects with high potential for social and environmental impact. And it helps to create a foundation for promising and unusual collaborations within Québec's social-innovation ecosystem.

The MIS implementation model

At the time of its creation in 2017, the MIS's objectives were to:

- support and enhance social innovation as a field of practice that contributes to positive social and systemic transformation;
- reduce the barriers between an idea with high potential for social and environmental impact and its implementation;
- offer specific and custom-tailored support to emerging projects in the ideation phase; and
- contribute to the emergence of a more—and more diverse—social innovations.

These original goals are still relevant in 2021.

The MIS has broadened the scope of its activities by targeting different contexts and

sectors of intervention. It has relied on the mobilization of a multiplicity of stakeholders, including those most likely to accelerate the social-ecological transition. In 2020, the MIS updated its implementation model in order to advance social innovation on a larger scale and increase its impact on systemic transformation.

Having helped to create the winning conditions for social innovation, the MIS today wants to build on them. To further leverage its strengths in social R&D, it is now developing laboratories focused on reducing structural barriers to social innovations related to the financial and regulatory systems, rural and urban social infrastructure—and designing new levers for action on existing systems

The MIS is also expanding its service offering in the areas of training, capacity building, and the structuring of coaching paths in

order to incubate and launch socially and environmentally impactful projects with a greater diversity of change makers.

The MIS has developed incubation models for public actors (including entrepreneurs) and private organizations wishing to support local social innovation. These pathways should be launched in 2022.

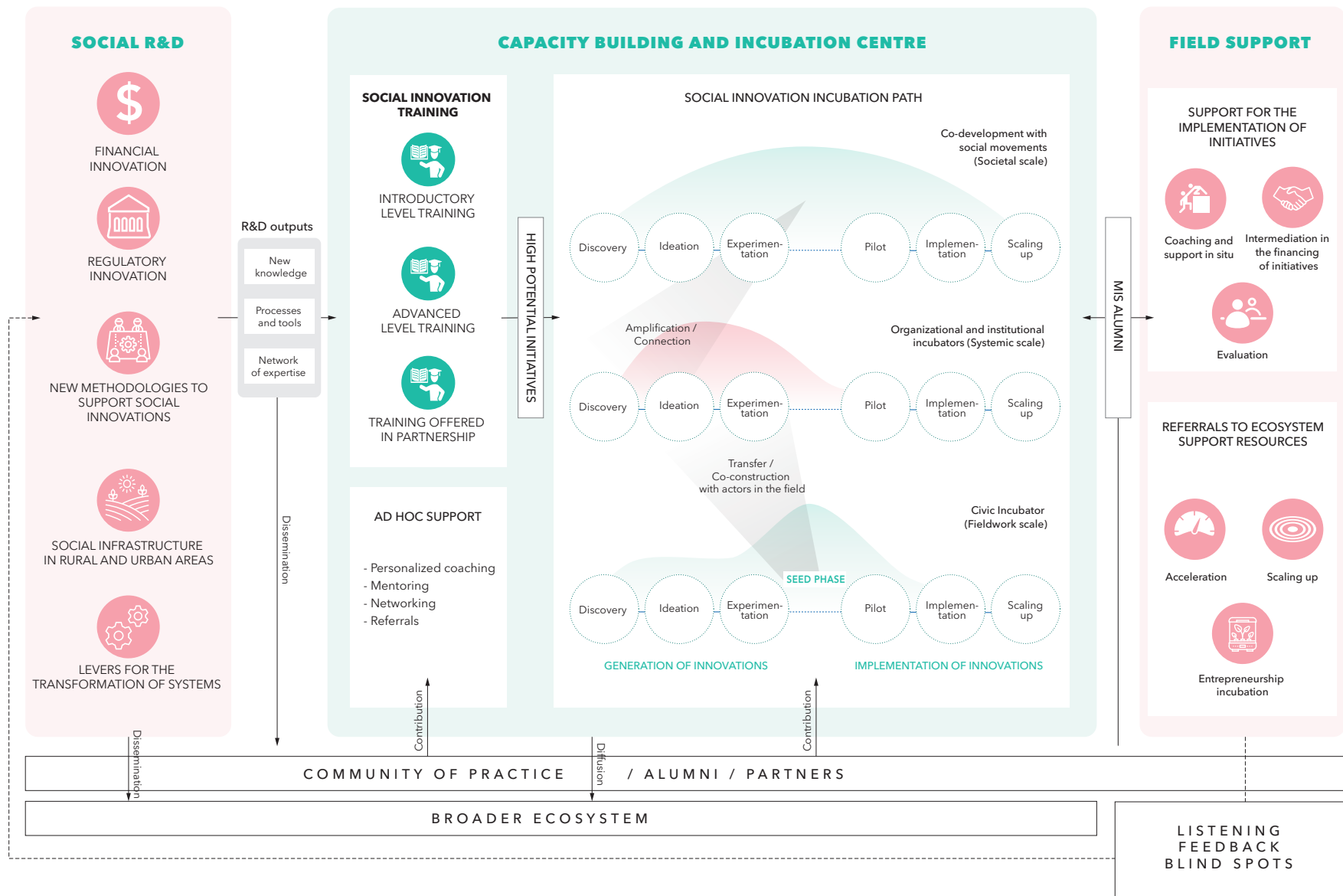
The alumni of the program, having benefited from training and support, will be equipped to sustain their projects; establish a culture of innovation; and multiply social impact initiatives within their organizations, communities and territories. It is at this stage that the scaling up and maximization of the expected systemic impact of the MIS business model will gain full momentum.



The MIS implementation model strives to:

- 1 **foster** the emergence of social and environmental innovations in collaboration with communities and their stakeholders by harnessing innovative prototypes whose introduction, without such support, would be riskier and more difficult;
- 2 **generate** new knowledge to reduce the structural barriers innovators face;
- 3 **equip** organizations, territories, and agents of change by promoting the transfer of expertise and capacity building as undeniable forces for catalyzing change;
- 4 **reveal** the potential and impact of systemic transformation—and, more broadly, of social movements anchored in the socio-ecological transition—by amplifying the voices of communities that are seeking to innovate; and empower committed project leaders to carry their initiatives to fruition, and to the next deployment threshold;
- 5 **link** ideas that have high potential for positive impact with strategic levers of territorial and institutional implementation in Québec and Canada, thereby promoting their scaling up and accelerating systemic change.

Illustration of the MIS implementation model



What do we offer and for whom?

Social R&D activities, coaching and the MIS programs help a variety of actors realize projects with social and environmental impact, from ideation to implementation. The MIS—by relying on its expertise in intermediation, obtaining feedback, user research, open innovation, co-creation, prototyping, service design, and social design—meets the social innovation needs of the following clientele:



Engaged citizens and collectives

seeking to move from idea to impact, and to develop a project with social and environmental benefits—as well as their own potential as agents of change—by taking advantage of a rigorous coaching program within the MIS Civic Incubator that will support the implementation and prototyping of their project.



Local development organizations

seeking to strengthen their capacity to innovate, consolidate, and optimize their overall service offer to better meet the emerging needs of their community; or seeking to co-create, and experiment with, new solutions.



Public institutions seeking to strengthen the public sector's capacity to innovate to generate new integrated processes while promoting buy-in from their stakeholders; and to consolidate and maximize the impact of collaborative ties between the various levels of government and territorial or sectoral communities—while, at the same time, focusing on complex and systemic local issues such as inclusion, employability, housing, aging populations, immigration, and ecological transition at regional, rural, and municipal levels.



Companies (all legal forms) seeking to go beyond corporate social responsibility (CSR) and stand out from their competitors by putting social and environmental impact at the heart of their business model—thereby increasing the positive impact of their products and services—and by investing in social R&D practices, or developing links with agents of change within their markets.



Foundations and impact investors seeking to diversify their investment portfolios, reduce risk in their investment projects upstream, develop new financial products with social and environmental returns, or strengthen the capacity of their beneficiaries.

Word from the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director

The solidarity and responsiveness of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic has made us take the full measure of our collective resilience. It has also made us aware of the potential of social innovation to transform, with agility and intelligence, our way of living together. As the pandemic continues, the relevance of this field of practice takes on its full meaning.

We have all suffered the consequences of this health crisis—some communities far more than others. Uncertainty and the unknown have proven to be the leitmotifs of this new reality we face. Like climate change, the pandemic knows no boundaries. Its scope reveals the urgent need to make room for new know-how and skills to help us move forward. It calls for a true cultural transformation in which stakeholders from civil society and the private, public, philanthropic, and community sectors work with a systemic perspective. It encourages us to value diverse knowledge and the capacity of communities to act, co-create, experiment, and work through iteration in order to bring about concrete, immediate, and sustainable impacts. It is by adhering to the pillars of social innovation that we will be able to innovate and overcome the complex social and environmental challenges of our time.

The consultation work around the Québec Research and Innovation Strategy (SQRI) 2022, carried out by the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation (MEI) throughout 2021, confirms the willingness of our public authorities to use structuring tools to provide consistent, realistic, and necessary responses to

post-COVID challenges—thus ensuring a sustainable recovery. In this context, the MIS submitted a brief in 2021; it also participated in the working committees of the Innovation Council in order to position social innovation as a lever to accelerate the socio-ecological transition. We are convinced that 2021, despite its enormous challenges, will pave the way for the practice of social innovation to take root as an essential part of this new era.

Beyond the MIS's many projects, 2021 was also a year of renewal in terms of its governance. In addition to undertaking an in-depth governance overhaul aimed at increasing the relevance of its offerings and expanding the field of practice of social innovation to include more diverse actors of change (both in terms of backgrounds and networks), the MIS also bade farewell to a great visionary and benefactor in the person of Claude Pinard, who has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the MIS since its creation. Having taken on new duties as President and Executive Director of Centraide of Greater Montréal, Mr. Pinard relinquished his position as Chairman of the Board in order to concentrate fully on his new professional challenges. The entire MIS team and the members of the Board of Directors join us in warmly thanking him for his dedication, his leadership, and his invaluable contributions in guiding the MIS from its beginnings to its full blossoming. Promoting social innovation in order to find solutions to social and environmental issues has clearly been one of his legacies for all of us.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the MIS's financial and support partners. We would also like to thank our many collaborators and project leaders—from different sectors of activity in Québec as well as other Canadian provinces—who have trusted the MIS to launch social R&D projects or have given us the opportunity to help them launch their own innovative initiatives. This trust is not only a privilege, but also a source of inspiration for us! Finally, we would like to recognize and thank the MIS administrative team for its immense resilience, dedication, and adaptability during this second year of the pandemic.

Thanks



Lyse Brunet
Acting President



Patrick Dubé
Executive Director

2021 Outcomes

NEARLY

90%

of projects incubated by the MIS reach the experimentation or full deployment phase

12

organizations
coached on Québec-
Canada initiatives
and networking

53

public and private
organizations, NPOs, and
collectives supported by the
MIS (in addition to the 2021
Civic Incubator projects)

1

new podcast
series dedicated to
social innovation

3

training programs offered to
private, public, and community-
sector organizations

MORE THAN

40%

of projects supported, led, or
co-sponsored by the MIS focused
on equity, diversity, or inclusion

30% of supported
projects
targeted a local/
neighbourhood
scale; 35%,
a municipal
scale; and 40%,
a provincial
scale (many
projects targeted
multiple scales
simultaneously)

38,500

listens, views, and reads
of content in Raccords,
our digital quarterly on
social innovation



SOCIAL R&D

A MIS team member (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

Social R&D, a pillar of social innovation

Research and development (R&D) is widely practiced and encouraged in all areas of society that privilege pure science, health sciences, and industrial and commercial technologies. Yet it is often ignored by public, institutional, civic, and private-sector decision-makers. Social R&D is an ideal lever for social transformation. An organizational culture that makes room for social R&D encourages social innovation to emerge. It encourages organizations and institutions to create spaces for experimentation, the generation of knowledge, and new solutions to social and environmental issues, all within a perspective of sound risk management.

Because the MIS supports multiple innovative ideas through its programs, it has a front-row seat to the systemic barriers project leaders face during the ideation phase. Often their innovative but embryonic initiatives come up against regulatory obstacles, models, or limitations of systems—cultural or economic—over which they have no control. These obstacles constrain their capacity to act and, in so doing, undermine the potential impact of their projects. The MIS has invested in several social R&D projects in order to overcome these systemic impasses. By conducting collaborative experiments with multiple stakeholders—from

the public, private, academic, community, and philanthropic sectors—the MIS is working to open up possibilities and generate knowledge in order to renew models and systems for living together sustainably. These lessons are reinvested in all of the collaborations in which the MIS participates, and are disseminated through tools, publications, and events in the transfer and leadership of practice.

For example, in 2021, the MIS began work on a white paper on living laboratories as a way to collectively innovate at the community and regional levels. We will publish this paper in 2022. The organization also supported a pan-Canadian reflection around the concept of “Participatory Canada” which aims to strengthen social infrastructures via local incubators. More specifically, this project’s objective is to increase the capacity for citizen action at different scales in order to create solutions with a high potential impact on the problems and challenges communities experience.

Inspired by the British Participatory City model, the MIS was mandated to document the winning conditions for the implementation of such a social infrastructure model in three Canadian cities, including Montréal.

Social R&D can help overcome complex societal challenges by inviting us to explore new avenues as well as reconsider our collective ways of doing things. The MIS seeks to contribute to the acceleration of the socio-ecological transition. At the same time, it aims to help democratize and anchor a culture of social R&D whose impact is as decisive as that of R&D in fields such as technology, engineering, and medicine. Its social R&D initiatives focus on five pillars of experimentation:



Financial innovation



Regulatory innovation



New methodologies to support social innovations



Social infrastructure in rural and urban areas



Levers for the transformation of systems

The *Laboratoire d'innovation civique pour l'expérimentation réglementaire* (LICER)

LICER is the Civic Innovation Laboratory for Regulatory Experimentation. It is a research and development (R&D) space around regulation as a means to activate and accelerate the socio-ecological transition at the municipal scale. LICER hosts experiments on the regulatory implications of emerging environmental initiatives in Montréal. The goal is to explore, in partnership with civil service and the population, how to frame and support such initiatives. This laboratory is part of the international movement to transform governance rules to support social and environmental impact. It is also an essential lever for the city of Montréal in promoting the transition.

Regulations are sometimes out of phase with societal transformations. Certain regulatory frameworks devised to address past considerations remain in force, even as we are collectively elsewhere in terms of needs and aspirations. For this reason, innovative citizen projects often encounter regulatory obstacles. To remedy this, regulatory bodies usually issue waivers. This strategy can be very costly in terms of time and resources; also, it merely sidesteps a given obstacle.

The advantage of regulatory innovation is that it goes beyond the case-by-case approach to propose a more agile, relevant, and sustainable avenue. This is a winning approach—both for communities pursuing initiatives that will enhance their living environments, and for the city, which strives to maximize innovation and citizen leadership in the socio-ecological transition.

→ In 2021, the MIS structured the LICER project, engaged key stakeholders, and began a series of research and analysis activities on regulatory challenges and the processes of regulatory innovation and experimentation. A Summary of Findings for 2021 has been published. This is the second in a series of five documents that not only set the stage for the project's next phases, but also share findings about regulatory innovation in a municipal context, with a view to democratizing and deepening this field of practice.

A project of



LICER is led by the MIS, with Cité-ID/ENAP and Dark Matter Labs as research partners. LICER team also works with various partners of Montréal en commun—an innovation community supported by the city of Montréal—including Solon, the Urban Agriculture Laboratory (AU/LAB), and (as an extension of its privileged collaboration with AU/LAB) the Carrefour Solidaire Community Food Centre. These latter partnerships extend the experimental scope of their respective projects to the dimension of regulatory experimentation specific to LICER.

→ In 2022, the MIS, in collaboration with LICER's partners, will conduct various experiments aimed at testing and evaluating the integration of new sustainable practices in mobility, food security, and alternative use of public spaces—all at the scale of Montréal's living environments. For example, an initial experiment in real-world conditions will focus on the deployment of winter greenhouses in the streets of the Centre-Sud neighbourhood.

To learn more about LICER, visit [the MIS website](#).





Installation of urban greenhouses in the Centre-Sud neighbourhood, a project supported by the MIS within the framework of LICER (Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)

AcadieLab: innovating to rehabilitate agroecosystems

The AcadieLab is a living laboratory in the L'Acadie River watershed in Montérégie that was launched in 2015 under the aegis of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR); the PleineTerre group; and the Club agroenvironnemental Techno-Champ 2000, which brings together some 70 agricultural producers in this territory. This living laboratory hosts an array of experimental projects focusing on different levers for positive change in the conventional agricultural system.

Since 2020, the MIS has been collaborating with the AcadieLab by contributing its expertise in piloting social-innovation initiatives. AcadieLab works over the long term with some of Québec's most important agricultural businesses. It addresses, among other things, the socio-cultural challenges that hinder their adoption of regenerative agro-environmental practices. It also promotes the emergence of sustainable solutions that are adapted to those businesses' reality.

A digital application to encourage the adoption of agroenvironmental practices

This project is led by the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) in partnership with PleineTerre, the Club agroenvironnemental Techno-Champ 2000, and the Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS). It is funded by the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation (MEI) and by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (Audace program).

In recent years, the MIS and its various partners have collaborated to develop a prototype for a digital application in order to help agricultural producers and agronomists measure soil and phosphorus loss on watershed farms. The application aims to identify suspended solids by analyzing the colour of the water in waterways that border fields. Eventually, the application will allow farmers to model changes in agricultural practices on their farms and assess the impacts of these practices on soil loss.

Led by



and funded by



Starting with an existing database (Geodep) developed by the Institut de recherche et de développement en agroenvironnement (IRDA), the project mobilized an intersectional and cross-disciplinary research team comprising experts in numerous fields—environmental geography, computer science, and land-use planning, as well as digital-experience design—along with agricultural consultants and producers.

→ In 2021, following an initial phase of listening and field research conducted with agricultural producers and agronomists, a prototype of the digital application was designed and tested to evaluate its usefulness and user-friendliness. Agronomists and farmers also conducted simulations to evaluate how the application affected their interaction as well as their ultimate choice of agricultural practices. In this experimentation phase—the project's final stage—the prototype was refined and improved, and recommendations were made for its future development.



Agricultural terrain in the L'Acadie River watershed (Credit: MIS)

A model for the collective management of black soil for commercial gardening in the regional county municipality (RCM) of Les Jardins-de-Napierville

This project is led by the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville, in partnership with the Centre local de développement (CLD) des Jardins-de-Napierville; the PELI; PleineTerre and its research laboratory, the PRISME, and its Phytodata research laboratory; and the Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS). It also benefited from the support of Dark Matter Labs. The project was made possible thanks to the financial participation of the Government of Québec under the Climat municipalités - Phase 2 program, and it meets the objectives of the Plan pour une économie verte 2030.

Conducted on Québec's largest concentration of black earth used for commercial agriculture, this project consists of co-developing, with local stakeholders (including agricultural producers), a collective-management model to support the sustainability, resilience, and regeneration of this agrosystem, which is particularly vulnerable to climate change.

Once swampland, now highly fertile soil, black earth is at the heart of the market gardening production of this region; it now ensures its economic vitality. This soil is subject to flooding, pests, and erosion, however. Black earth is disappearing at a rate of two centimetres per year. At this rate, without technical and social innovations, commercial agriculture in the region will die out within 50 years.

Black earth is vital to the preservation of the region's biodiversity and its species at risk, as well as to specific habitats such as woodlands and wetlands. Due to private ownership of commercial-agriculture land and the complexity of regulations, legal restrictions governing land-use planning are not always respected. Conflicts of use arise and highlight the sometimes competing responsibilities and interests of the various local stakeholders, making it difficult to find solutions that are acceptable to all. Even if laws, regulations, and financial mechanisms attempt to support the conservation of this fertile land, they have failed to rally the agricultural and non-agricultural communities around a common vision for managing it. To provide a winning framework to anticipate and remedy these complex issues, several organizations—the MIS; the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville; the CLD; the Pôle d'excellence en lutte intégrée (PELI); PleineTerre, and PRISME, and their respective research laboratories, along with Dark Matter Labs—have launched a social-innovation project with local stakeholders.

→ In 2021, this multidisciplinary project team embarked on a three-part project. It updated field data on the territory; it undertook to listen to the issues experienced by agricultural producers; and it conducted an exploratory review of financial and regulatory mechanisms that could inspire a new approach.

While PleineTerre carried out an exhaustive analysis of the soil, water and agricultural developments, PRISME and Phytodata initiated a pest-modeling study. The MIS, for its part, engaged in a listening process with agricultural producers to help better define their issues, concerns, and interests. In collaboration with Dark Matter Labs, the MIS also conducted research on regulatory and financial innovation models in order to identify levers that could support the collective management of black earth.

→ In 2022, we will seek to deepen the three main themes of collective management—namely, water management, soil-conservation practices, and collective pest management. An analysis of the impact of laws and regulations on current and desired agroenvironmental practices will be conducted, along with an exploration of potential financial mechanisms. Throughout, the community will be mobilized and engaged in the conceiving of solutions that will be central to the collective management plan.

"Collaborating with the Maison de l'innovation sociale's team on a Participatory Canada conversation series offered us great perspectives grounded in deep knowledge in social innovation and community building. Our work benefited from the empathetic, highly technical subject matter expertise in systems and social impact that the team shared. We also appreciated the Maison de l'innovation sociale's deep relationships and culture-building established previously with the Participatory Canada team working in Montreal and with a vast number of partners. This created a positive, trusting, generative and great collaborative environment, especially for the workshops' audience. The result of our joint efforts was definitely better together!"

Sasha Sud

Director of Smart Cities with MaRS Partnerships

"This project [of collective management of black earth deposits] involves many actors with sometimes competing responsibilities and diverging interests. For this reason, it's difficult to implement collective solutions, especially those related to water quality and biodiversity. This is why we called upon the MIS to support us in the development of a transition plan for collective and sustainable management of the resources of the agricultural territory of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville. Since social innovation is at the heart of the process, the alliance with the MIS was a natural one, given its expertise in an approach that values co-creation with the actors in the field."

Isabelle Matteau

Coordinator of the Pôle d'excellence en lutte intégrée, CLD Jardins-de-Napierville

"Public administrations are open to reviewing regulatory frameworks in order to facilitate the socio-ecological transition. Very often, the paths to this paradigm shift must be invented! Given that the findings of such processes can inform the revising and drafting of regulations, we have great interest in following the progress of the Civic Innovation Laboratory for Regulatory Experimentation (LICER)."

Samuel Ferland

Planning Consultant, Direction de l'aménagement et de la mobilité, Ville-Marie borough, Ville de Montréal

A MIS team member (Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)

CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCUBATION

Capacity building and incubation paths to generate and sustain structuring innovations

As we know, reaching the five-year mark is a challenge for companies. The challenge is even more significant for innovative initiatives based on a positive social and ecological return on investment. These projects can fail from the outset due to a lack of access to networks, knowledge, or resources needed to cross the threshold between ideation and realization. Projects that call for behavioural or cultural change to address major societal challenges are particularly vulnerable to structural barriers. The MIS has therefore set itself the mission of eliminating such barriers. By focusing on coaching in the ideation and pre-launch phases, we can accelerate the development of an idea with high potential for positive impact.

It's crucial that a positive-impact project be well thought-out before it is fully deployed. This will guarantee its success and successful scaling up; it will make it attractive to funders and investors who are looking to manage risk. It will also facilitate its governance, its optimal development, the composition of its team, and its access to the market or to users; and it will help build the resilience of the project's leader. This is why the MIS's programs and activities focus on intervening very early in the

development of an individual or organization that wants to act on a complex societal problem for which a social-innovation approach seems appropriate. The support and capacity-building that the MIS provides to change agents in the start-up phase of their initiative helps to consolidate their capacity, as well as their will to take action and carry out their project. And it contributes to strengthening social innovation as a field of practice so that a greater number and greater diversity of people and organizations can make use of it.

Through its training, mentoring, and co-development programs, and through its incubation programs, the MIS team seeks to foster the emergence of innovative initiatives focused on the socio-ecological transition and to move them forward on solid foundations.

In 2021, the Civic Incubator program has achieved maturity and renown. It has captured the interest of a growing number of public organizations that support economic, social, and territorial development throughout Québec. They have all received requests from their beneficiaries for support of atypical projects with social and environmental impact. They see

the Civic Incubator as an appropriate vehicle for responding to this growing manifestation of citizen action. In order to eventually franchise its program throughout the province, the MIS has focused on capacity transfer.

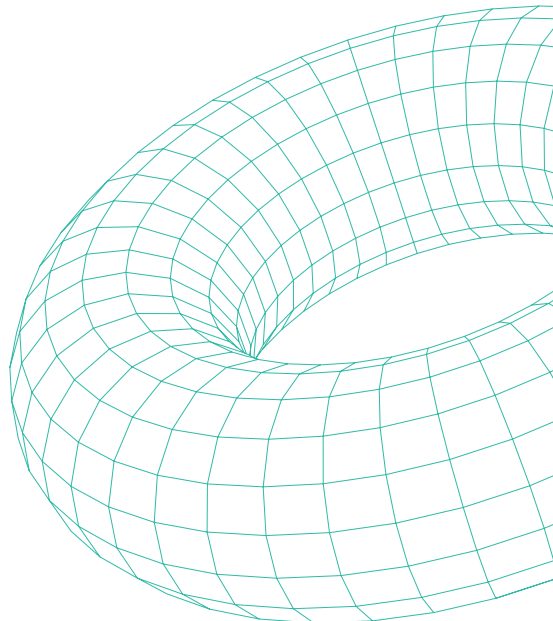
In addition, it has continued to develop organizational- and institutional-incubator programs that are aimed at reaching a greater diversity of stakeholders who are mobilized for the socio-ecological transition. It has also tested a variety of content via a training program for private sector actors with the École des dirigeants and IDEOS of HEC Montréal. Other training content has been developed and tested across Canada in co-development mode with various nonprofit organizations, allowing the MIS to continuously renew its expertise and knowledge and to remain at the forefront of best practices in social innovation.

By working at the territorial, institutional, and organizational levels, the MIS hopes to generate impact on a more systemic scale.

Coaching and co-development

In 2020, when the pandemic was declared, localities made an incredibly supportive collective effort in the social-innovation ecosystem. The MIS followed suit, putting in place a free service offering to support communities in crisis. In the years since, this program has been partially integrated into the daily practice of the MIS with a view to influencing the development of its activities in a sustainable manner. In fact, based on its experience in capacity-building, knowledge transfer, and mentoring, the MIS has offered blocks of hours of à la carte coaching aimed at supporting, on an ad hoc basis, award-winning project leaders who have completed the Civic Incubator program but need a critical and constructive look at the next phases of their projects. In 2021, close to 35 hours of coaching were granted free of charge to the MIS alumni.

The MIS has continued to offer its expertise in the co-development and co-creation of specific projects or initiatives aimed at mobilizing and engaging diverse communities, regions, and public institutions to accelerate the socio-ecological transition. This collaboration allows the organization to increase the systemic impact of its activities even as it enriches its own practices.



MIS coaching and mentoring workshop (Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)

A co-development approach for the implementation of an indigenization laboratory

In 2021, the MIS maintained its support for the Common Front for the Energy Transition in the development of its “Québec ZéN” initiative. This project consists of co-constructing a roadmap, with multiple organizations and universities across the province, towards carbon neutrality in Québec. The MIS has also begun a new co-development process with the New Pathways Foundation to support the creation of a living laboratory. This is an opportunity to provide support for the emergence of an innovative project, as well as to gather meaningful findings that can generate impact,

Established by First Nations members, the New Pathways Foundation promotes the well-being and development of Indigenous youth in Québec. Among their initiatives is a social-innovation laboratory on Aboriginal empowerment whose objective is to find new solutions, in a self-determination perspective, for the challenges First Nations youth experience.

The co-development process focuses in particular on the governance component of the laboratory. This enables the MIS to share its experience and knowledge in the implementation of a structure adapted to the reality of New Pathways’ stakeholders. Most importantly, the process allows the MIS to learn more about the “two-eyed seeing” model, which aims to provide the tools to navigate the worlds both of contemporary Western society and of traditional Indigenous practices and knowledge. The MIS will now be able to draw on this rich indigenous perspective to continuously improve its work in inclusion and socio-ecological transition.

The Lab was launched in 2021, but funding its operations remains a major challenge for the New Pathways team. Contribute now by discovering the foundation and its multiple projects!



Credit: Courtesy of New Pathways Foundation

The return of the Summer School on Societal Transformation for CIRODD

In 2021, the MIS began its second year supporting the Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en opérationnalisation du développement durable (CIRODD) in the design of the first school for societal transformation anchored in the socio-ecological transition. This training pathway—implemented in collaboration with Acadia University; Concordia University; the Institut Hydro-Québec en environnement, développement et société (EDS Institute) of Laval University; and the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC)—focuses on the development of skills required to resolve complex issues at the municipal level, while integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A first cohort, hosted in summer 2021, brought together sustainability experts, municipal officials, and graduate students. The MIS contributed its expertise in the design and development of experiential learning activities

tailored to the realities of professionals. It also actively participated in the steering committee, contributed to the evaluation framework of the summer school, and offered two training sessions within the program.

Because the MIS specializes in supporting the ideation phase of impact projects, the scope of its work unfolds in the early years of a project's implementation. Therefore, in 2022, the MIS plans to assume a more peripheral role on the steering committee. It will intervene as needed in adapting the design of activities in order to promote commitment, as well as in the appropriation and concrete application of theoretical and practical content at the end of the summer school training program.

This course was financially supported by the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes through the Canadian Relations Support Program; Sustainable Development Solutions Networks Canada (SDSN Canada); Concordia University; Universities Canada; and a contribution from the MIS.



Training for living laboratories to innovate at the community and territorial levels

In partnership with



and the financial support of the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes



At the local level, communities have long been confronted with complex challenges—both ecological and societal—concerning the preservation of their living environments. Multiple divergent interests operate on the same territory, generating distinct challenges that are experienced by all members of the community, to the point of discouraging them from acting. The living laboratory is a perfect way to empower people to take action and innovate collectively, because it places users at the heart of the process. By relying on human-centered methods and bringing together a coalition of diverse partners—ideally both public and private, along with citizens who share a desire to innovate around a collective issue, as well as a vision of collaboration, particularly in the sharing of resources and learning—the living-lab approach makes it possible to address complex and systemic issues in a given territory.

This is why the MIS has begun to develop à la carte and mini-cohort training courses to support communities in their desire to innovate collectively.

→ In 2021, the MIS joined forces with the Tamarack Institute—which supports a learning community of more than 38,000 members across Canada—and the Laboratoire en innovation ouverte (Llio) in Rivière-du-Loup to design a training program on living labs and their co-creation processes for community and territorial innovation. Supported by the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, the three organizations collaborated to offer an inaugural free webinar to some 150 registrants in December 2021.

→ As of 2022, this collaboration will continue. Workshops and personalized coaching to introduce living laboratories will be offered in French and English to train organizational actors from across the country in the implementation of such a device adapted to their needs, their contexts, and their issues.

In addition to these trainings, the MIS also plans in 2022 to publish a comprehensive guide to implementing a living lab at the territorial or community level.



The Civic Incubator

The Civic Incubator's funding partners in 2021 are:



Montréal

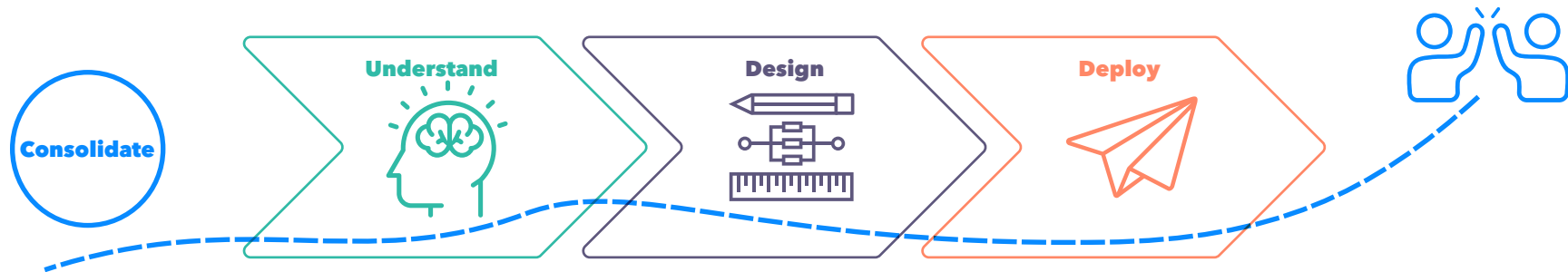
La Fondation
McConnell
Foundation



The Civic Incubator aims to prototype and bring to maturity ideas for innovative projects that have the potential for positive, transformational social and environmental impact. It supports projects from an early stage of development to a level of maturity from which they can proceed to the financing and implementation stages. Selected via a highly competitive call for projects, project leaders take part in a free

MIS coaching program valued at \$15,000. For nearly five months, investing some seven hours per week, project leaders participate in training sessions, practical workshops, and mentoring, along with group and individual coaching, in order to clarify concepts, define their social-impact strategy, test their ideas in the field, and prepare to implement their initiative.

[Watch a video featuring three leaders of selected projects on the MIS YouTube channel.](#)



More specifically, the Civic Incubator program is structured in four modules:

Consolidate

in order to develop the soft skills and know-how that facilitate the successful implementation of a project with a positive social and environmental impact

Understand

in order to analyze the context in which a project is implemented, using data from field research in particular

Design

in order to design an innovative project with a positive social and environmental impact using, in particular, the principles of service design

Deploy

in order to determine the main steps of a promising strategy to carry out a project

CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCUBATION

Since 2020, thanks to a multi-partner support agreement between the City of Montréal, the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation, the McConnell Foundation, and BMO, the MIS has been able to double the number of projects it can host within its Civic Incubator program. It can now accommodate 20 projects per cohort.

In addition, the MIS is now able to offer a hybrid coaching pathway via the new e-learning platform it deployed during the pandemic. This is suitable for those seeking a balance between distance and face-to-face modes; it allows participants to maintain their day-to-day professional or academic obligations. This sound risk-management approach means there is one fewer barrier between an idea with high impact potential and its implementation.

→ In 2021, the MIS has redoubled its efforts to enrich the program. In order to support the full deployment of the projects it incubates at the end of the program, it offers their leaders enhanced visibility. Writing project-presentation texts, producing video clips, and supporting media outreach all provide visibility that contributes to the implementation of an innovative initiative.

→ In keeping with its desire to make the Civic Incubator a lever for strengthening the capacity of support actors, the MIS invited new collaborators from the ecosystem to join the program as coaches. Their external perspective allowed the MIS to evaluate its strategies for supporting social and environmental impact projects and to highlight a key strength of its program—namely, the strengthening of meta-skills and the mindset to favour the deployment of a social innovation. This dimension of the program is just as important as methodological skills are.

→ The work of consolidating the findings of the program's various iterations and the highlighting of its distinctive aspects now allow the MIS to note the maturity of the Civic Incubator and to consider scaling it up as early as 2022, relying in particular on its' expertise in capacity transfer.



Project leaders selected for the Civic Incubator (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

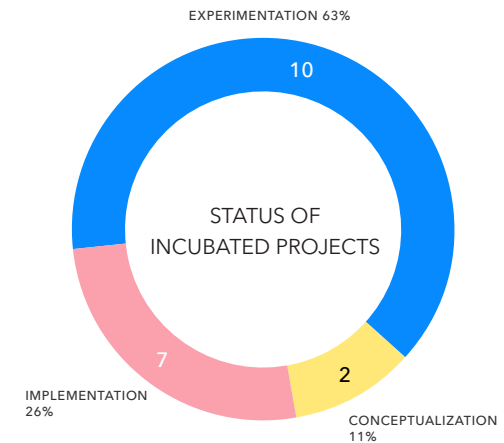
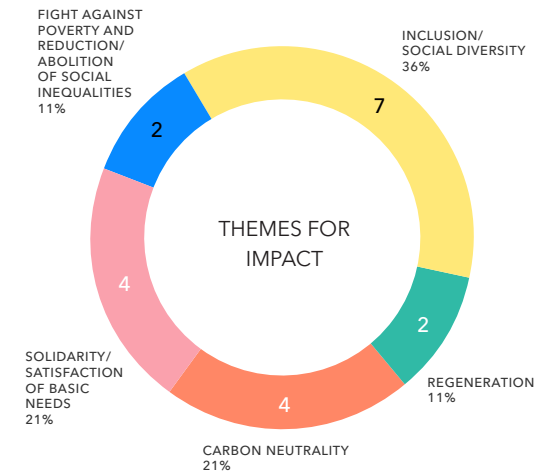
CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCUBATION

The Civic Incubator: A few numbers from 2021

- **33 project leaders** took part in the Civic Incubator's 2021 coaching pathway in the two cohorts ending in March 2021 and June 2021, respectively.
- **More than 26 percent** of the projects supported in 2021 have already moved to the deployment stage, and more than 63 percent are in the experimentation phase.
- **63 project leaders** submitted their applications to join the Winter 2022 cohort during the Call for Projects in the fall of 2021.
- **More than 46 percent** of applicants self-identified as visible minorities; racialized, ethnic minorities; or indigenous people—testimony to the MIS team's inclusion efforts in the Call for Projects during fall 2021 for the Winter 2022 cohort.
- In just forty days of this campaign, there have been more than **3,690 online views** of the 2020-2021 Call for Projects document and some **9,250 interactions** with MIS social-media posts, a sign of enthusiasm for a program offering ideation-stage support free of charge.

THEMES FOR IMPACT ADVOCATED BY THE AGENTS OF CHANGE AND STATUS OF INCUBATED PROJECTS

FALL 2020 COHORT + WINTER 2021 COHORT



"Throughout the development of our Summer School on Societal Transformation, the CIRODD team was brilliantly coached by the MIS. Their expertise and constructive criticism have allowed us to develop a program that is innovative in its form, its content, and above all, in its concrete ability to increase learners' capacities and support them in changing their practices. This relationship with a human, open, and rigorous partner has equipped us to increase the social impact of our actions and to achieve our mission, which is to accelerate the socio-ecological transition."

Chloé Barrette-Bennington

Coordinator of the Summer School on Societal Transformation, CIRODD

"As a guest coach at the MIS Civic Incubator, I had the privilege of mentoring leaders of bold projects focused on the socio-ecological transition. I discovered a high-caliber path, led by a welcoming team skilled in capacity transfer. The MIS was able to quickly train me in the use of all the monitoring, coordination, and evaluation tools that would allow me to support the winning teams in initiating their impact projects. This experience has certainly enriched my own practice!"

Thomas Baracos

Executive Director, Espace Temps, and guest coach of the MIS Civic Incubator

"The Tamarack Institute was pleased to collaborate with the MIS on a webinar on living labs that was very well received by participants. The MIS team brings both a strong knowledge base and a practice-oriented approach. During this collaboration, I found a great synergy of expertise and experience between our organizations!"

Myriam Bérubé

Consulting Director, Québec, Tamarack Institute

"The New Pathways Foundation is very grateful to the MIS for its support of the creation of our Laboratory for Social Innovation in Indigenization. The tools shared with our team have reinforced our idea of placing young people at the heart of this approach to make the Lab a living laboratory."

From now on, the people most impacted by the initiative will influence and contribute to the process by producing content for the Lab and participating in its activities."

Marie-Claude Cleary

Managing Director, New Pathways Foundation



Workshop at the Community and Social Health Cluster in Montréal-Nord (POLO) – (Credit: MIS)

COACHING IN THE FIELD

Coaching in the field to support innovation by and for communities

To strengthen the capacity for action of the organizations with which it works, the MIS favours an approach focused on the participation of users in the process of social innovation. This approach is inspired mainly by service design, social design, and innovation laboratories where users occupy a central place in the process. At the organizational or institutional level, or as part of a concerted action at a territorial scale, this effort requires a commitment and decisive will—on the part both of organizations and stakeholders—without which the scope and sustainability of the process would be compromised. The MIS emphasizes that it does not innovate for communities, but rather collaborates with them so that they can innovate independently on an ongoing basis.

It is with this intention in mind that the MIS developed the Social Innovators in Residence (SIR) program. Set to evolve in 2021, this program favours embedding an MIS team of multidisciplinary social innovators in local development organizations, public institutions, or even companies. In each context, the goal is to establish a social-innovation unit within the organization and to ensure that each group is ready and motivated to follow the steps towards change.

Embedding a team of social innovators in organizations or communities makes it possible to:

- test innovation approaches that respond to the social, economic, and environmental challenges specific to their clientele or their users;
- validate the potential for users' adoption of the proposed innovations;
- strengthen their teams' capacity to innovate through approaches that favour real-world conditions;
- foster the acquisition of new design- and project-management approaches to sustainably amplify the social and environmental impact of their activities;
- and democratize and foster a culture of experimentation with local and regional organizations so that they can support emerging innovations.

Through the SIR program, the MIS aims to accelerate systemic transformation through social innovation in the following areas:

- organization (governance, managerial capacity, and organizational processes);
- projects (listening and ethnography activities, ideation, experimentation, design based on user experience, and the creating of a business model for social enterprises);
- community and territorial groups and collectives (strategic design, learning, and collaborative practices).

In 2021, the MIS continued to support social-health projects deployed at the territorial level in various Montréal neighbourhoods. Some of these projects are presented below. In addition, several project leaders relied on the MIS's expertise in order to continue deploying their initiatives within the constraints imposed by the pandemic. Some organizations seized upon the pandemic as an opportunity to support community resilience. In 2022, with its new capacity-building and incubation services, the MIS will optimize this program. This will allow the MIS to sustain the capacity of organizations to transform their activities for a constantly renewed positive impact.

Community and Social Health Cluster in Montréal-Nord

This project is supported by the Bibliothèques de Montréal-Nord; the Carrefour jeunesse emploi Bourassa-Sauvé de Montréal-Nord; the Centre d'action bénévole de Montréal-Nord; the Centre de pédiatrie sociale de Montréal-Nord; the Centre des Femmes Interculturel Claire; the CIUSSS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal; Entre Parents; the Faculty of Dentistry of McGill University; La Maison Bleue; and Parole d'excluEs.

The Community and Social Health Cluster in Montréal-Nord (POLO) was born in 2019, when eight organizations in the territory decided to join forces in order to optimize their ability to serve a vulnerable population in the borough's west sector. Having identified difficulties—physical, psychological, and social—in this Montréal neighbourhood, this multi-sectoral grouping of organizations from the public, parapublic, and community sectors wanted to initiate a social-innovation process aimed at going beyond the limits of their respective strengths. They sought to co-create an integrated service offer that would be responsive and adapted to the reality on the ground.

But despite the richness of the borough's social fabric, and despite the quality of the care and services offered, the stakeholders of the group observed that some of their clients were not taking advantage of the services available to them. The stakeholders examined the reasons for this phenomenon. Was it because the services offered were not adapted to the population's needs? Was it because of barriers related to language, culture, or the absence of social ties? How could these organizations act in a complementary manner and create bridges

between their different service offers to better address complex challenges in the field and increase the positive impact of their work on the community's physical and social health?

With the support of the MIS, the members of the Pôle began a process of social innovation by putting residents at the heart of the approach in order to imagine, design, and test a new way of deploying proximity services. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 certainly altered the way the initiative was implemented. Confinement and difficulty in accessing care also highlighted the relevance of this approach as a critical vector of resilience and well-being for the Montréal-Nord population, particularly in times of crisis.

→ In 2021, the MIS analyzed and synthesized the data from a listening phase that was carried out in hybrid mode—i.e., both in person and remotely. This feedback allowed for a more detailed understanding of the obstacles and challenges in terms of the overall health of users in this sector of Montréal. In particular, it provided critical information about the profiles

of populations in vulnerable situations and their strategies for getting around obstacles to accessing existing health and social services. It also offered crucial details about services that are not well-known or not adapted to this clientele (or potential gaps in services), and it suggested opportunities for networking among the Pôle's partners. With the project team, the MIS team co-designed a modus operandi for the Pôle for governance, as well as scenarios for an integrated service path. These scenarios included the keys to articulating intervention approaches that are in harmony with support actors and consistent with the needs, realities, and priorities of the target population. The year ended with the development of an experiment using these prototypes.

→ In 2022, health measures permitting, there will be a test of the integrated service prototypes in real-world conditions in order to analyze and synthesize data and make recommendations for the next iterations. In addition, since the governance structure has been approved by all partners, steps have been taken to form an NPO.

COACHING IN THE FIELD

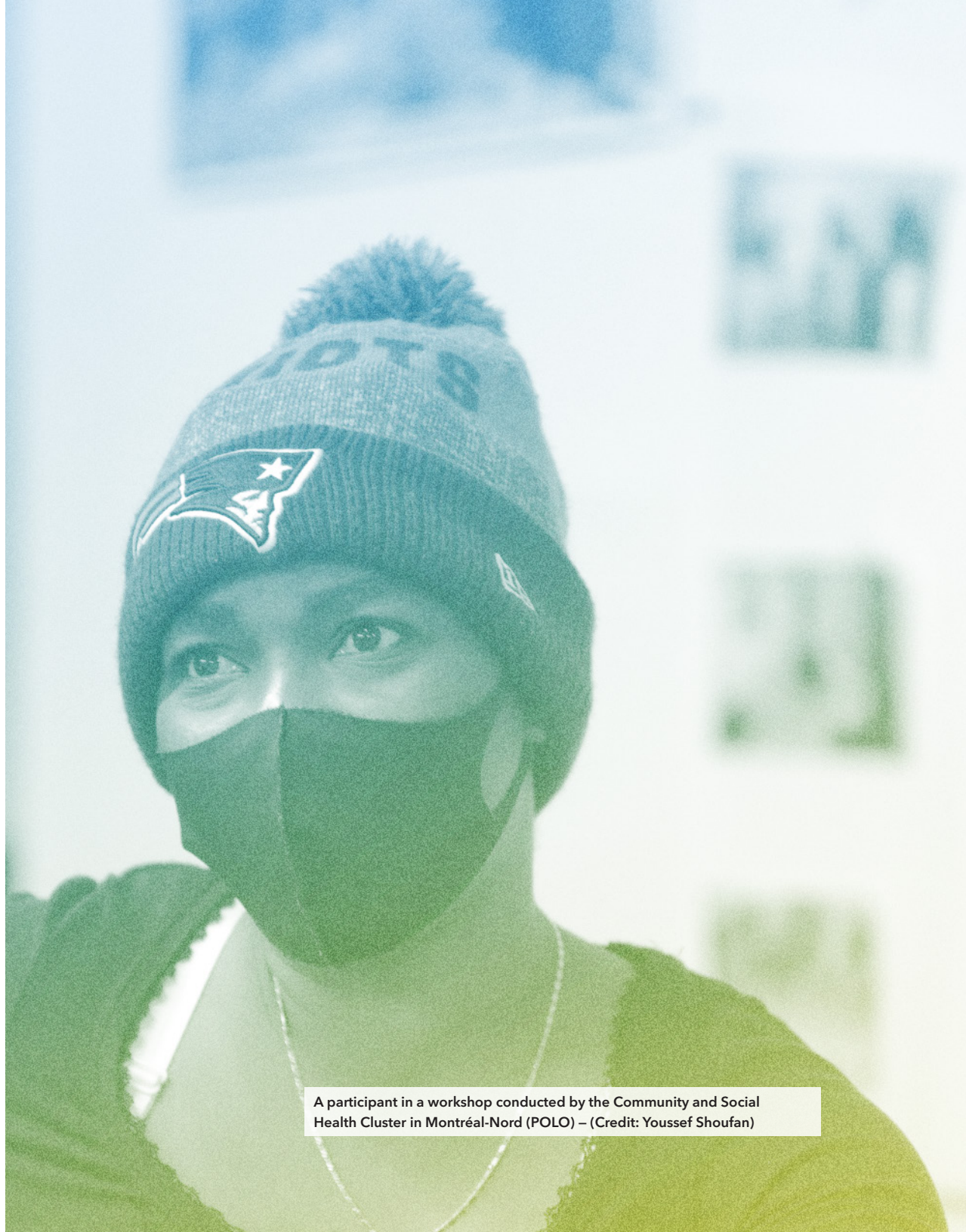
The start-up phase of the social-innovation process was graciously supported by the Maison de l'innovation sociale. The design, ideation, and experimentation phases were made possible thanks to the financial support of the Québec government through the Secrétariat à la région métropolitaine of the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (Fonds d'initiative et de rayonnement de la métropole) and the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation.

A project funded by



Québec

Finally, a review of the experimentation will be presented in the spring to all partners, collaborators, and participants. As part of this feedback, the MIS plans to produce a narrative of this social-innovation process in a time of pandemic. This narrative will take the form of a roadmap meant to guide any team considering social innovation as an approach for the realization of their project, along with social-innovation practitioners who must intervene in times of crisis.



A participant in a workshop conducted by the Community and Social Health Cluster in Montréal-Nord (POLO) – (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

The “Innovating Neighbourhood”, a living laboratory in social geriatrics in Côte-des-Neiges

A project led and funded by



Geriatric University Institute of Montréal (CRIUGM) in the implementation of a living laboratory aimed at improving the quality of life of seniors in the Côte-des-Neiges district of Montréal. By focusing on the spheres of cognition, communication, and mobility, the partners of this laboratory—including community organizations, local seniors, and a research team from the CRIUGM—seek to increase the social inclusion (and thereby decrease the social isolation) of seniors in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. Since 45 percent of this area’s aging population lives alone, and many of them are in vulnerable situations or face barriers in terms of language or other factors hindering their social mix and overall health, the potential impact of this laboratory is very significant. This innovative research model seeks to transform the perception of aging for a better integration of seniors, as well as to create a rapprochement—and a decisive interaction—between the health field and the environment. It can also be replicated in other neighbourhoods; hence the relevance of examining it in greater depth for the benefit of eventual scaling up.

→ In 2021, the MIS continued its strategic support of the living laboratory’s project teams. Specifically, it contributed to the reinforcement of their methodological capacities related to the human-centered design approach. The objective here was to allow them to conduct a series of co-creation workshops for each of the research axes—i.e., cognition, communication, and mobility of seniors.

To do so, the MIS collaborated with numerous partners in the field: the Côte-des-Neiges Library; the Intercultural Library; the Maison de la culture de Côte-des-Neiges; local merchants; the SARPAD Volunteer Centre; the Côte-des-Neiges Seniors’ Centre; and senior residents of the neighbourhood. The development of several tools was initiated during these workshops, including tools to address cognitive disorders, communication issues related to aging, and a tele-prevention program for falls. These tools are intended for service providers, merchants, volunteers from community organizations, and seniors living in low-income housing.

In order to prepare for the experimentation phase planned for 2022, the MIS has produced training content intended to demystify the process of experimentation in a living-laboratory context.

→ In 2022, the MIS will continue to support project teams by focusing on the transfer of skills, tools, and knowledge, with the goal of gradually increasing the long-term autonomy of the research groups. The MIS will also introduce evaluation tools to measure the impact of the living laboratory. The next year should see a transition to the experimentation phases.



"The lever [for impact] is the MIS and its reputation; it was a great move to partner with them. This different way of doing things has been inspiring for the community... The sustained coaching has helped the project evolve and solidified relationships."

A participant from the Community and Social Health Cluster in Montréal-Nord (POLO)

"The MIS has played, and continues to play, a critical role in mentoring the stakeholders of the Quartier innovant, particularly in terms of governance, the codesign process, and the posture to adopt when mediating a living laboratory. The MIS knows how to put in place the winning conditions for the emergence of an innovation! Also, we greatly appreciate the human qualities of its team."

Nathalie Bier Researcher, CIUSS Centre-sud-de-l'île-de-Montréal - Research Centre of the University Institute of Geriatrics of Montréal (CRIUGM)

PRACTICE LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH



Democratizing social innovation to accelerate the socio-ecological transition

The MIS wishes to make its leadership of practice an engine for the democratization of social innovation as a field of practice. There are several ways in which the MIS demonstrates its commitment to the development of this field as a key element in accelerating the socio-ecological transition. These include producing content on social innovation that is adapted to a variety of audiences, such as social-innovation practitioners; contributing to events that bring together social and environmental issues; and bringing greater visibility to various international protagonists as well as to the social innovations carried out by the community—in particular by agents of change who pass through the Civic Incubator program.

In 2021, the MIS has opened up new avenues for actors committed to the socio-ecological transition throughout Québec and Canada. Practice leadership is thus a strategic axis that allows us to amplify the impact of the MIS while contributing to the development of the field of social innovation.

Raccords, a digital quarterly on social innovation

Social innovation remains a field of practice that would benefit from being made more accessible to all. Raccords accessibly explores key themes in this field, which must be democratized in order to realize its full potential for impact. As a form of content for practice leadership, this digital quarterly, exclusively focused on social innovation, participates in the cultural transformation required to accelerate the socio-ecological transition. Raccords offers free content in English and French. It aims not only to equip people who are active in change, but also to awaken the interest of an ever-growing community driven by the desire to explore the potential of social innovation as a lever for systemic and sustainable change.

In 2021, Raccords launched its podcast, allowing us to go deeper into the theme of each issue and to feature more collaborations with experts from all walks of life. These individuals—who are involved in various causes and impact areas—generously share their perspectives

and help us uncover blind spots in our practices, thereby strengthening the quality and relevance of Raccords' content. Coming from across Canada and the United States, the collaborators contribute to the development of the MIS's relationships with the ecosystem at the national and international levels, and to the expected impact in terms of sharing practices.

In addition to the new podcast, we have also added lists of the various favourites provided by our collaborators. This offers the public an additional way to explore the issues addressed—to consider social innovation as both a lens and practical approach. The team continues to dedicate itself to the production of video vignettes, written interviews, and visual creations. Available free, without advertising, and in a variety of formats, these media are designed to be easily shared to maximize their reach to a diverse audience.

*Subscribe to Raccords,
our free digital quarterly
on social innovation that
delivers impactful content!*

Share our articles, podcasts, and
videos in your newsletters and
distribution channels to capture the
attention of your audiences engaged
in the socio-ecological transition.

www.mis.quebec

#11, MARCH 2022

THE INTERVIEW

Could experimentation on the social R&D front be a game-changer for the future?

In the collective imagination, experimentation occupies a universe of test tubes and white coats, a milieu of technical and scientific expertise, of trial and error in a closed laboratory. The testing of ideas is not exclusively reserved for the pure and applied sciences, however, and laboratories are not always closed rooms in research centers. Even if existing societal structures favour experimentation in fields such as medicine, finance, or engineering, it is equally imperative to establish mechanisms for systematic experimentation in the social, political, and cultural spheres.

For **Geoff Mulgan**, Professor of Collective Intelligence, Public Policy and Social Innovation at [University College London](#) (UCL) and former Chief Executive of [Nesta](#), the UK's innovation foundation, it is high time to collectively invest in a well-structured system for social R&D experimentation. This requires a culture of social experimentation that is as coherent, institutionalized, and embedded in our practices as what we take for granted in pure and applied science today.



The issues of Raccords in 2021

[RACCORDS #10](#)

What can a systems approach teach us about making meaningful change in the world?

[The interview:](#) How can we equip ourselves to make use of the systems approach?, with Darcy Riddell, PhD, Consultant in Strategy and Systems Change;

[The podcast:](#) Forget about one-size-fits-all solutions to complex problems, with Annika Voltan, PhD, Executive Director of the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia;

[The video:](#) Discovering transitional-space projects in Montreal to illustrate the systems approach, with Philémon Gravel, Managing Director and co-founder of Entremise.

[RACCORDS #9](#)

Can storytelling be a strategic lever for social and environmental change?

[The interview:](#) How to build a transformative narrative?, with Annie Neimand, PhD, Research Director of the Center for Public Interest Communications at the University of Florida;

[The podcast:](#) Can storytelling inspire us to engage in change?, with Samantha Wright, Senior Vice President at Participant Media;

[The artwork:](#) Minimum Monument, Rome, 2020, by Néle Azevedo, Brazilian artist and independent researcher.

[RACCORDS #8](#)

Can cognitive differences revolutionize a system that privileges assimilation and the norm?

[The interview:](#) Neurodiversity as a vector of creativity and innovation, with Marylène Ouellet, founding president of Brainlab;

[The podcast:](#) A neurodiverse person's quest for an environment that will allow her to blossom, with Émilie Vion, Director of Partnerships and Customer Success at Le Printemps numérique;

[The video:](#) Minds that work differently and enrich our vision of the world, with Falisha Karpati, PhD, inclusion consultant.

[RACCORDS #7](#)

How can we reconnect with Indigenous knowledge in order to accelerate social and ecological transition?

[The interview:](#) What if we were to forge new connections?, with Melissa Mollen Dupuis, an Innué activist, director, and columnist who is the spokesperson for the Forest Campaign at the David Suzuki Foundation, and Rachel Plotkin, head of the Boreal Campaign at the David Suzuki Foundation;

[The podcast:](#) How can we build bridges between Indigenous and scientific knowledge?, with Deborah McGregor, Associate Professor & Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice at York University, and Jayce Chiblow, Coordinator of the Indigenous Environmental Justice Project and Community Engagement Lead for Indigenous Climate Action;

[The illustration:](#) Pocokacinan, by Meko Ottawa, Atikamekw activist and multidisciplinary artist.

Contributions to the vitality of the social-innovation ecosystem

In 2021, the MIS had multiple opportunities to contribute, share, and create partnerships. These efforts sought to increase the collective scope of the ecosystem's efforts to accelerate the socio-ecological transition in Québec.

TANGRAM

Collaboration with peers

Transfer of the Tangram platform

In June 2021, the MIS donated its Tangram platform to the Réseau Passerelles, thereby contributing to its growth and the consolidation of local technology assets focused on social transformation. Originally developed by the MIS, Tangram lists resources and organizations that support social innovators; it also connects them in support of their positive social-impact initiatives. Its integration into the Réseau Passerelles contributes to the collective impact of this digital commons. [See Tangram on the Réseau Passerelles.](#)

Québec Research and Innovation Strategy (QRIS) and Conseil de l'innovation du Québec Forum

By submitting a brief, the MIS took part in the consultation process surrounding the Québec Research and Innovation Strategy (QRIS) 2022 of the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec (MEI). The MIS also sat on a committee that made recommendations on the evaluation of social innovation in Québec. At the invitation of the Conseil de

l'innovation du Québec, the MIS co-organized and co-hosted the Social Innovation Forum with leading organizations in the social-innovation ecosystem. This event took place on November 19, 2021, and brought together some one hundred actors from the field.

Select Committees - Evaluation and Transfer

The MIS sat on a select committee organized by the Innovation Council to define the key indicators of social innovation in Québec and develop a provincial innovation barometer. In addition, the MIS was invited by Axelys, a development and transfer of research non-profit in Québec, to participate in a workshop on a project for the development and transfer of innovations in society and culture. Finally, the MIS participated in a working committee led by Humanovis, an agency of the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation, to create evaluation tools better adapted to the support of social innovations and their scaling up. The work of this committee will continue into 2022.

Media and speaking out

Press review and editorials

[Investir dans les infrastructures sociales après la COVID-19](#)

April 9, 2021 | *Options politiques*

[Urbanisme temporaire: la vacance comme ressource au service de l'action publique](#)

May 11, 2021 | *Millénaire 3*

[Jardins-de-Napierville: vers une gestion collective des terres noires](#)

May 12, 2021 | *Coup d'oeil*

[Enraciner l'innovation sociale comme champ de pratique pour un Québec plus résilient](#)

May 15, 2021 | *Stratégie québécoise de la recherche et de l'innovation 2022*

[Entrevue au sujet de l'innovation réglementaire à l'échelle municipale, à l'émission Vivement le retour](#)

August 2, 2021 | *Radio-Canada - Vivement le retour*

[Faire de l'impact socio-environnemental positif une opportunité d'affaires stratégique](#)

September 24, 2021 | *Conseil de l'innovation du Québec*

[Le développement régénérateur - Engager les villes dans la transition socioécologique](#)

November, 2021 | *Revue québécoise d'urbanisme*
(Association québécoise d'urbanisme)



Conferences and webinars

MARCH 2021

Guest speaker on the panel of Effet Transition "Les municipalités de l'avenir," the Laval forum for environmental issues, an event powered by Laval en transition, a winning project of the MIS Civic Incubator

MARCH 2021

Co-host of the "Innovation" soirée as part of the Dynamo Social Hackathon

APRIL 2021

Guest speaker at the General Assembly of Alsace Active to present the Maison de l'innovation sociale

MAY 2021

Guest speaker at the webinar titled "Innovation for the socio-ecological transition", organized by Mosaïc HEC and Pôle IDEOS - HEC Montréal

MAY 2021

Guest speaker at the panel titled "Universities, CEGEPs, businesses: working together for a strong and innovative economy" of the Social Innovation Forum proposed by the Quebec Innovation Council

AUGUST 2021

Guest speaker at the event "Gestion de l'innovation" organized by Les Affaires

NOVEMBER 2021

Guest speaker at the panel titled "What is impact: benefits and missteps" organized by Bonjour Startup Montréal during Impact Week

NOVEMBER 2021

Guest speaker at the opening conference of the Rencontres Internationales de l'innovation sociale on the theme of "Resilience, and after?" - France

DECEMBER 2021

Guest speaker at the webinar titled "Place-based Social Innovation Through Living Labs" organized by the Tamarack Institute

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



(Credit: C. Lavedan)

The Maison de l'innovation sociale's place of work is in Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal), an unceded traditional Indigenous territory. Many Indigenous peoples converged here long before the arrival of European settlers, and still do today. This includes the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation, a member of the Haudenosauni Confederacy and the custodian of the water and lands of Tiohtiá:ke. This is a gesture of solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

And you, on whose land do you live or work on?

<https://native-land.ca>



An approach that gives us the means to innovate inclusively

In keeping with the commitment it has made since its founding, the MIS continues to pursue equity, diversity, and inclusion. The meeting and networking of many types of knowledge and worldviews are essential if we are to resolve complex socio-environmental issues. Through its activities, publications, and position papers, as well as through the projects it accompanies and the actors of change it supports, the MIS renews its involvement and refreshes its thinking on an ongoing basis in order to inform its practices and provide team members with the best possible tools. A clear indicator of its sustained efforts: nearly 45 percent of the projects accompanied, supported, or co-supported by the MIS in 2021 promoted equity, diversity, or inclusion.

In line with this commitment, and to take a more rigorous look at its practices and posture, the MIS initiated an internal reflection on these concepts in 2021 and created an EDI (Equity - Diversity - Inclusion) working group composed of four team members.

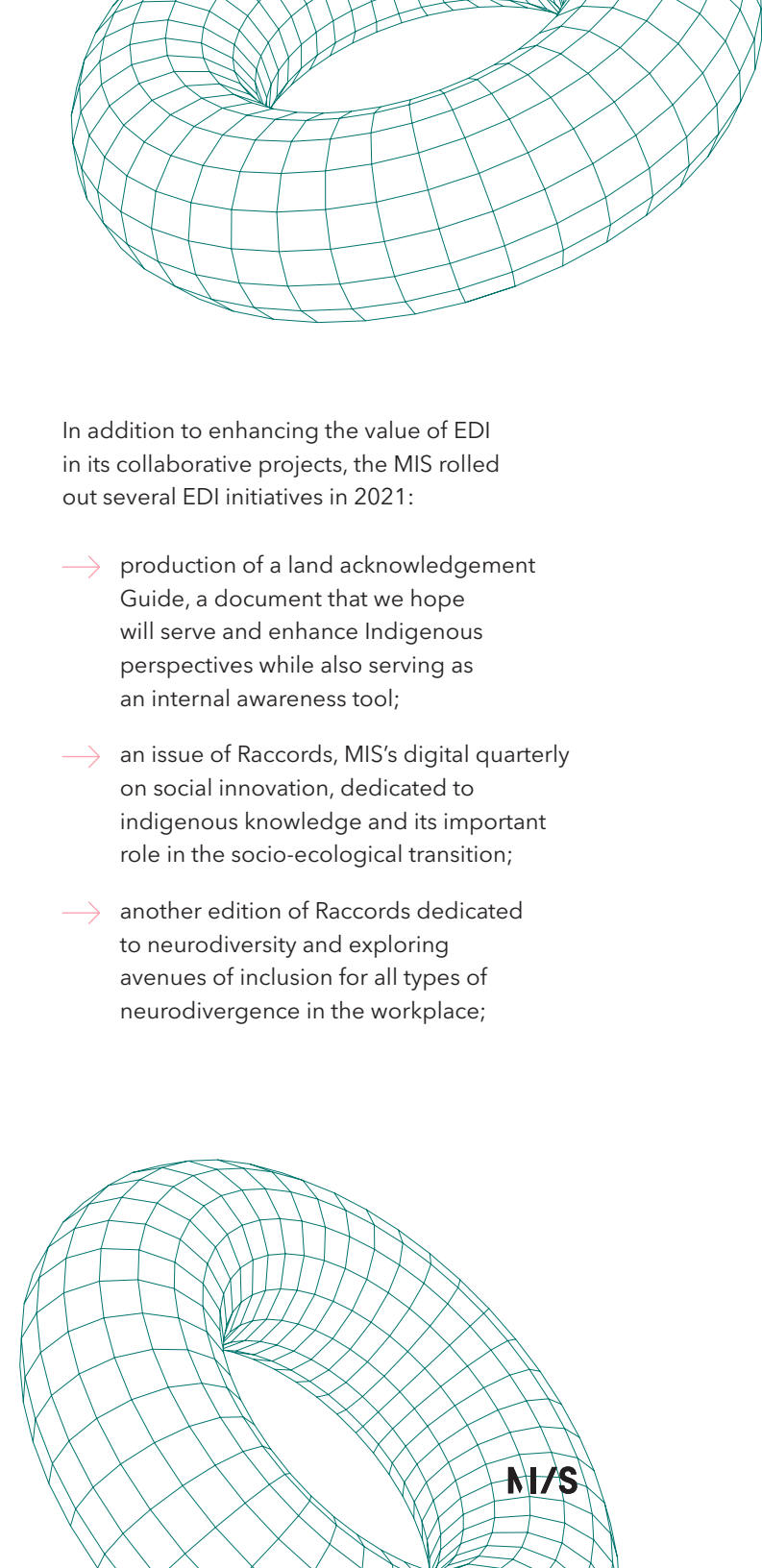
The objective of this working group is to act as an engine for adopting and integrating EDI best practices by:

- guiding MIS's efforts in deploying and monitoring the evolution of an EDI approach in line with the organization's strategic priorities and needs; and
- fostering a space for information sharing, discussion, collaboration, and learning around EDI issues.

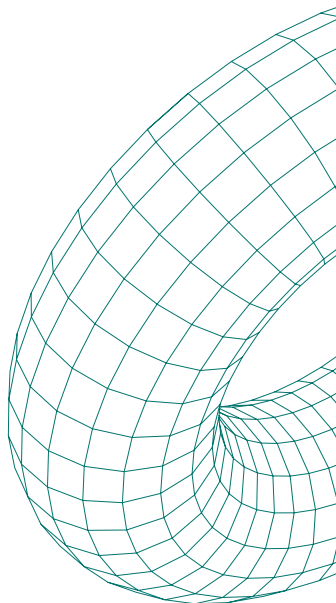
In 2021, the members of the EDI working group dedicated more than 130 hours to the identification of promising projects and the sharing of information on these concepts. Such an investment of internal resources allows the MIS team to be fully engaged and to learn from the process beyond its results—a process that is fully consistent with EDI itself.

In addition to enhancing the value of EDI in its collaborative projects, the MIS rolled out several EDI initiatives in 2021:

- production of a land acknowledgement Guide, a document that we hope will serve and enhance Indigenous perspectives while also serving as an internal awareness tool;
- an issue of Raccords, MIS's digital quarterly on social innovation, dedicated to indigenous knowledge and its important role in the socio-ecological transition;
- another edition of Raccords dedicated to neurodiversity and exploring avenues of inclusion for all types of neurodivergence in the workplace;



- optimization of the already-initiated MIS recruitment and retention process, which will continue in 2022 to ensure that it is more consistent with good EDI practices and better serves organizational staffing objectives—this to be accomplished with the help of an EDI consulting firm which has been granted a coaching mandate to help the MIS improve its practices;
- a review by the MIS of its public digital content to focus on gender-neutral and accessible language from an inclusionary perspective; and
- a successful strategy promoting the Call for Projects within the framework of the Civic Incubator in order to increase the diversity of project leaders: of the 63 applicants, more than 46 percent self-identify as visible/racialized minorities, ethnic minorities, or Indigenous people.



Pocokacinan, 2021, an art work by Meky Ottawa, visually representing the theme of Raccords #07

MIS team members during a collective workshop (Credit: MIS)

GOVERNANCE AND TEAM

Governance overhaul

As part of its new development cycle, which aims to deepen and increase the structural impact of its activities in Québec and the rest of Canada, the MIS began an in-depth governance review in 2021.

Building first on its achievements and findings, it also examined best practices in governance specific to its development objectives and its desire both to increase and maintain the relevance of its offerings.

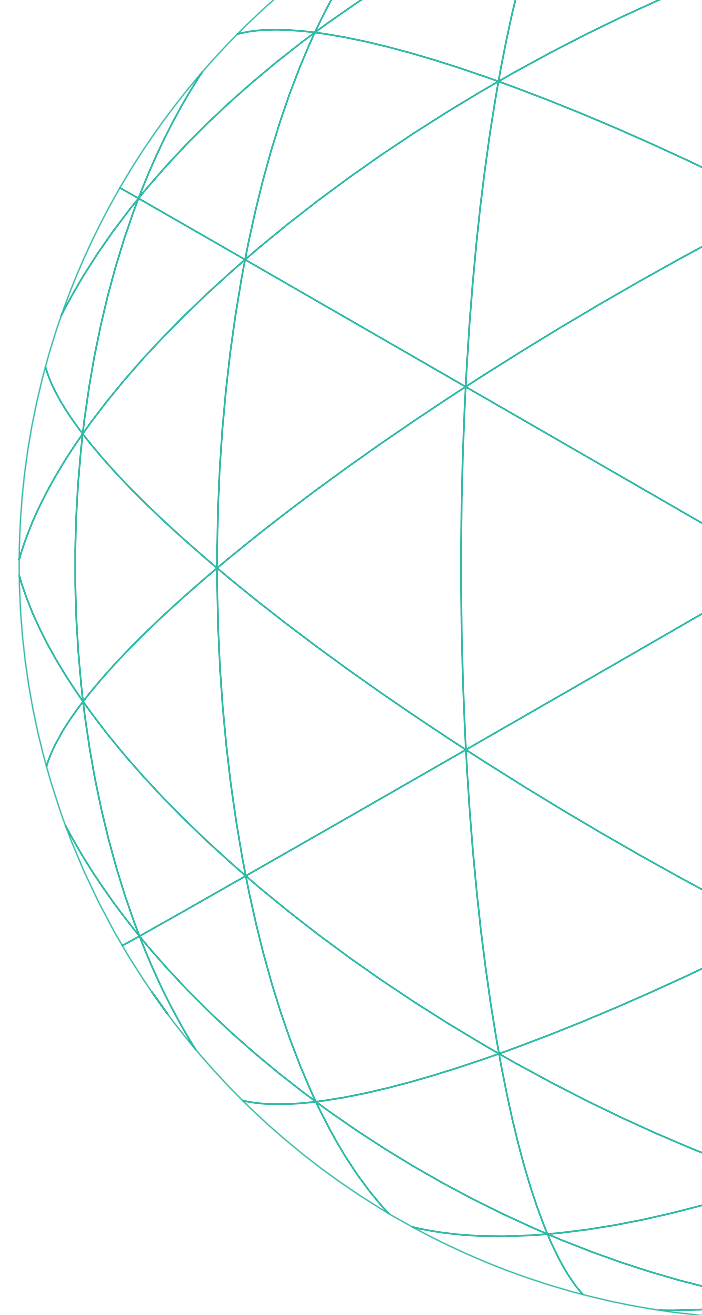
By reviewing its governance, the MIS seeks to strengthen its position as an intermediary within the social-innovation ecosystem, with the goal of extending this field of practice to a greater diversity of change agents from different backgrounds and networks.

→ With the unwavering support of its Board of Directors, an ad hoc Board committee on governance, and an external think tank, the MIS in 2021 completed some thirty consultations on the fit between

the needs of the social innovation ecosystem, MIS's offerings, and good-governance practices. Several avenues were raised, including adding more board positions and broadening membership to encompass more members of the social innovation ecosystem—all with a view to strengthening the representation and diversity of perspectives at the MIS.

This process also highlighted the relevance of creating a "Strategies and Programs" committee that reports to the directors, as well as the implementation of a mechanism for listening to the territories that the MIS serves in order to keep it informed about the challenges experienced by local stakeholders.

→ In 2022, plans include implementing the selected recommendations, amending the bylaws and statutes accordingly, and calling for nominations for new MIS board members.



Board of Directors



Photo provided by: Lyse Brunet

ACTING PRESIDENT

Lyse Brunet

With a passion for transforming lives for a better world and fascinated by the creative potential that lies within everyone, Ms. Brunet has been involved in community and philanthropic action throughout her 40-year career. She has directed the Fonds pour le développement des jeunes enfants (Avenir d'enfants) created by the Government of Québec and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, and was Vice-President Social Development at Centraide of Greater Montréal. A very committed woman, now retired, she continues to be involved in the community by serving on boards and through mentoring.



Photo provided by: Luciano Barin Cruz

DIRECTOR

Luciano Barin Cruz

Associate Professor of Management and Social Impact at HEC Montréal, he serves as the Director of Pôle Ideos (Social Impact Centre) at HEC Montreal, the Director of the Yunus Social Business Centre (HEC Montreal), the Director of the 'Sustainability Challenge' module of the EMBA McGill-HEC Montreal. He also holds a research professorship in Organizational Models and Social Impact. Professor Barin Cruz has served as an expert on projects supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Government of Quebec, and Desjardins International Development as well as with several other organizations integrating social impact into their value chains. His research projects focus on social impact/innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility and they have been published in numerous specialist journals.



Credit photo: Mathieu B. Morin

DIRECTOR

Josée Duplessis

Executive Director of the Maison du développement durable, Ms. Duplessis has more than 25 years of experience in management and public policy. A sociologist by training, she holds an EMBA from the McGill-HEC joint program and is also an *Administratrice de société certifiée, ASC*. She was Senior Director, Public Affairs for Canada at CN after her involvement in politics at both the federal and municipal levels. She has occupied the following positions: Chief of Staff for the Minister of Family, Children, Social Development, Employment Insurance and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Chair of the Board of Directors of Recyc-Québec, Executive Director of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, City Councillor and Chair of the Executive Committee of the Ville de Montréal.



Photo provided by: Camillo Lisio

DIRECTOR

Camillo Lisio

Interim Executive Director of the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation since July 1, 2021, Camillo Lisio has more than 30 years of experience in business management. Mr. Lisio was President and Chief Operating Officer of Saputo Inc. for over 18 years.



Photo provided by: Jane Rabinowicz

DIRECTOR
Jane Rabinowicz

Jane Rabinowicz is passionate about community leadership for social and environmental change. She is currently Chief Program Officer at the McConnell Foundation, overseeing granting and programs focused on climate change, reconciliation and community resilience across the country. Jane is also Vice-President of the Silver Dollar Foundation and serves on the Board of Directors of the Foundation of Greater Montreal. Jane was previously Executive Director of SeedChange and has held leadership and Board positions with organizations such as MakeWay, Equiterre, Santropol Roulant, Food Secure Canada, and others. She is grateful to live and work in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal), traditional, unceded Mohawk territory.



Photo provided by:
Bram Freedman

TREASURER
Bram Freedman

A lawyer by training, Mr. Freedman spent most of his professional career at Concordia University as a senior administrator. From 2013 to 2018, he served as vice-president of development and external relations and oversaw the university's fundraising and outreach efforts, including the Office of Community Engagement. He is an active volunteer who has held several executive positions in the following organizations: CLSC Métro, Jewish Eldercare Centre, Destination Centre-Ville, Conseil Emploi Montréal and the Mallet Institute. In the spring of 2018, he was appointed president and CEO of the Jewish General Hospital Foundation of Montréal.



Photo provided by: Erica
Barbosa Vargas

DIRECTOR
Erica Barbosa Vargas

Global Head of Sustainable Finance & Innovation at SecondMuse Capital since 2021, she works to engage global investors in building inclusive economies of the future. Previously, Erica was Director of Solutions Finance at The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, where she led strategies for financial innovation and for integration of the Foundation's financial assets to support social and economic system's transformation. She also has a global professional experience in the private sector and international development, primarily in Latin America, Canada and the UK. She holds a MPA in Public and Economic Policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and completed an undergraduate studies in behavioural psychology and neuroscience. Co-founder of Educating the Streets-Building Society in Bolivia, she sits on Advisory Boards of various investment funds in Canada, and of organizations working in social innovation globally.



Team

SARAH ABARRO

Incubation Programmes
Coordinator

ELENA BEAULIEU

Governance and Special
Projects Coordinator

PÉNÉLOPE SEGUIN

Social Innovation Project
manager - LICER project

MÉLANIE BISSON

Senior Advisor - Development
of Relations with the Social
Innovation Ecosystem

HUGO STEBEN

Director of Social
Entrepreneurship

PATRICK DUBÉ

Executive Director

**LAURENCE DUFOUR-
VILLENEUVE**

Writer and editor

ÉLISABETH LISTON

Director of Communications
and Marketing

LAURENCE ROSSET

(newly hired)
Project Portfolio Coordinator

TIMOTHÉE GUTH

Communication Agent

NATHALIE RODRIGUES

Director of Programs, Generation
of Social Innovations

GHYSLAIN BOILEAU

Director of Operations
and Administration

MAUD REYMOND

Communications Advisor

VIRGINIE ZINGRAFF

Senior Advisor - Skills Transfer,
Design and Innovation

**MARIE-HÉLÈNE
LAURENCE**

Social Innovator in Residence

STÉPHANIE VIAU

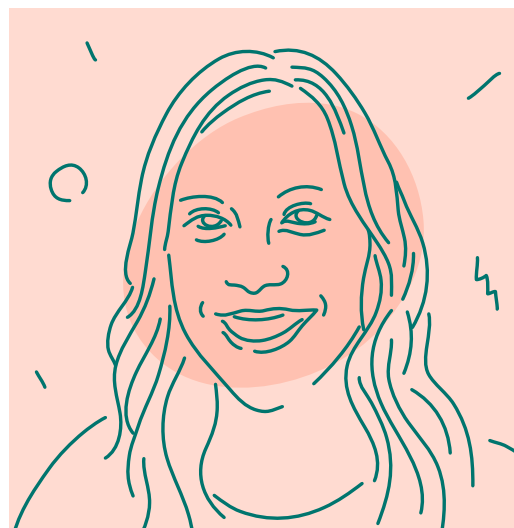
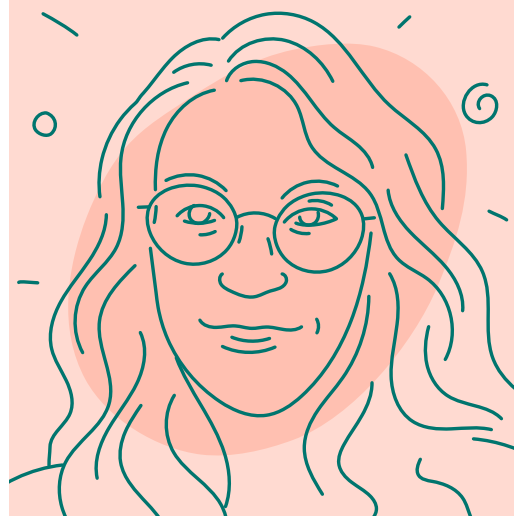
Coordinator - Administration
and Logistics

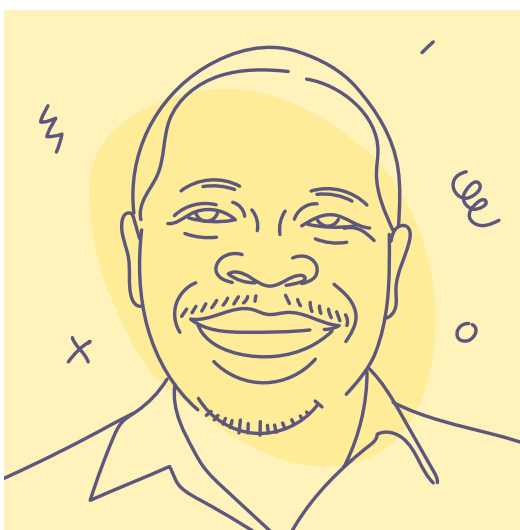
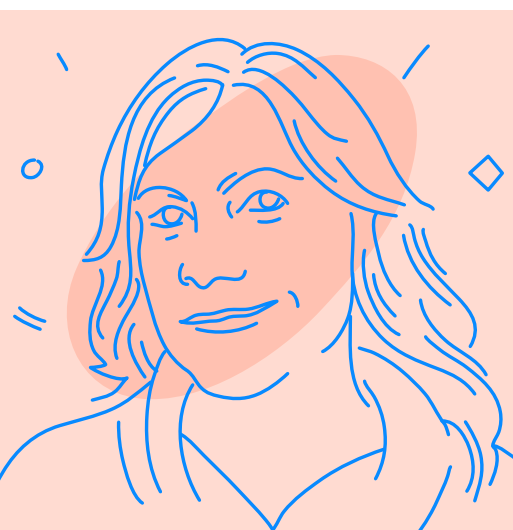
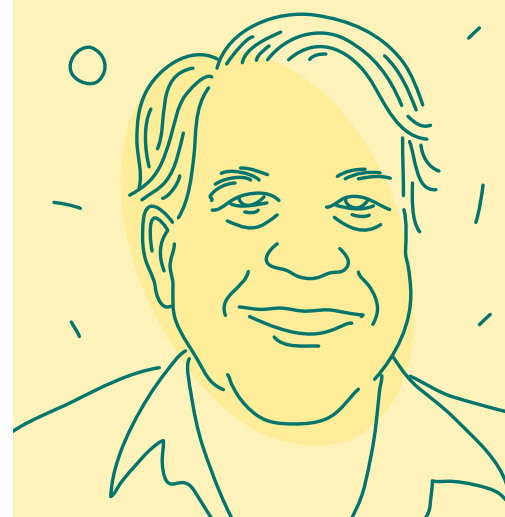
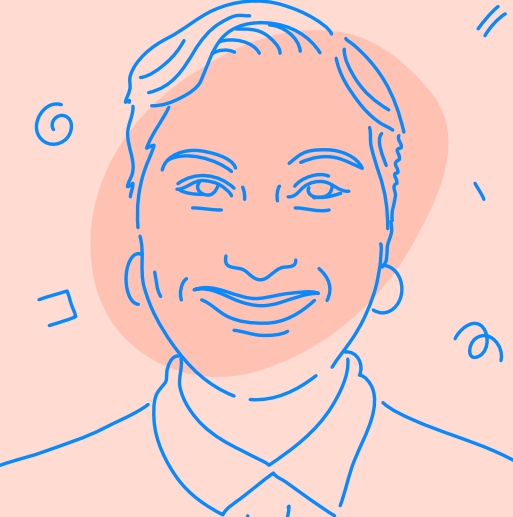
**MARC-VICKY
BARTHÉLEMY**

Agile Project Manager
in Social Innovation

CLARA EL MESTIKAWY

(newly hired)
LICER Evaluation and
Mobilisation Support Agent





Financial and support partners

The Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS) would like to thank the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation and the McConnell Foundation for their financial support and their continued trust over the past years.



She would also like to thank the members of her Partners Committee for their support. This committee is a governance body that aims to enrich its strategic vision while promoting exchange and collaboration among its members on promising social innovation projects throughout Québec. In addition to representatives of its main funding agencies as members of this committee, other members include the CIRODD (Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en opérationnalisation du développement durable), the CIRM (Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Montreal), Esplanade, HEC Montréal and Concordia University.



The MIS also counts on many business partners who are involved in a variety of social innovation projects. These partners are mentioned in this activity report, within the pages dedicated to the programmes or social innovation projects they support.

Finally, the MIS would like to thank the team at AOD Marketing, a Montreal-based digital marketing agency, for helping it outwit stubborn algorithms.








Maison
de l'innovation
sociale

MI/S

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