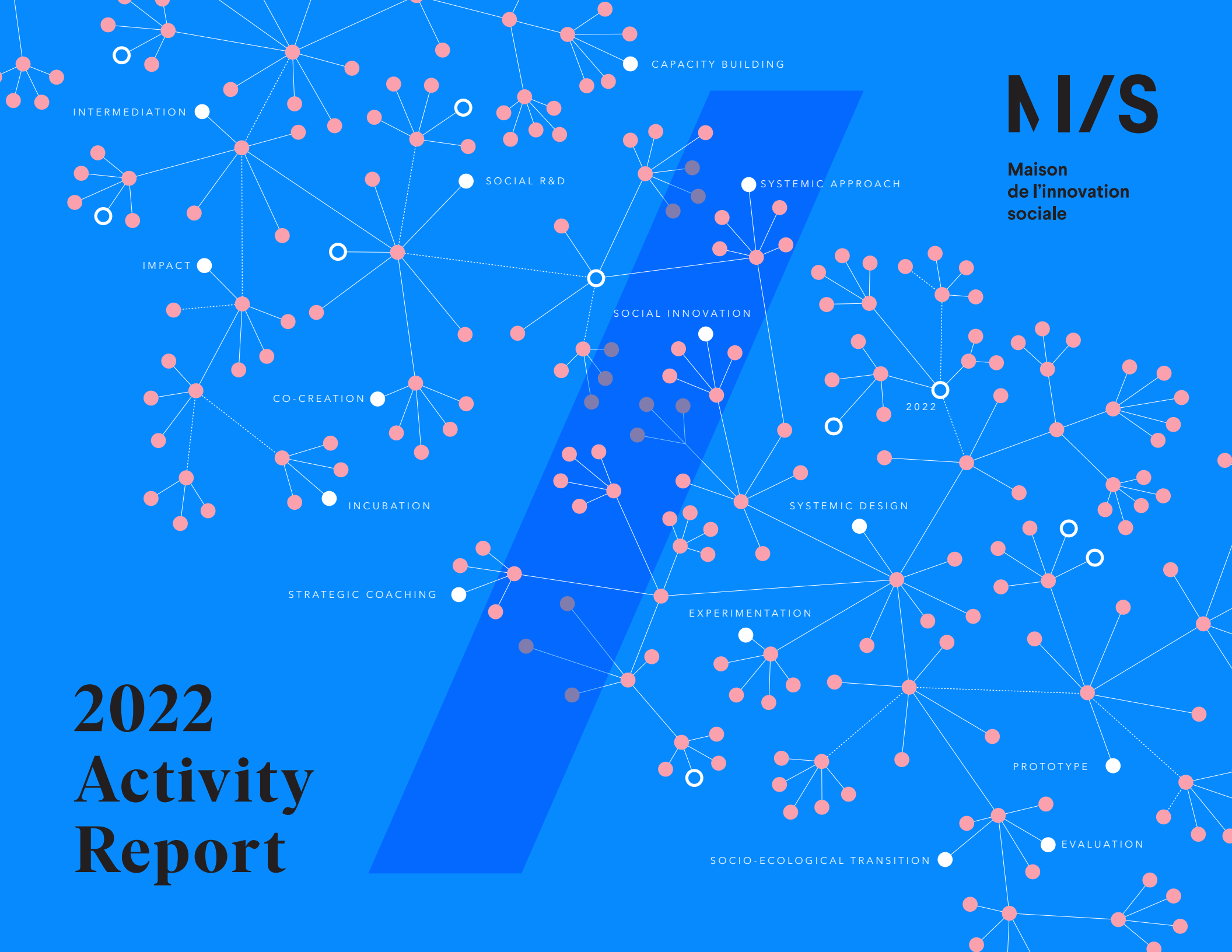


# MI/S

Maison  
de l'innovation  
sociale

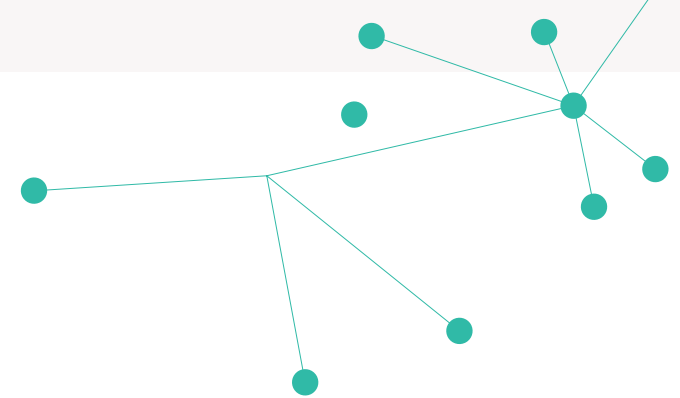
## 2022 Activity Report





# **FROM IDEA TO IMPACT**

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**A MIS team member**  
(Credit: Youssef Shoufan)



# About us / Our mission

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.

### **MIS's mission is to:**

- **validate**, democratize, and contribute to the development of the practice of social innovation to support positive social and systemic transformation;
- **reduce** the barriers that stand between an idea with high potential for social and environmental impact and its implementation;
- **support** impact projects in their ideation and seed phase; and
- **contribute** to the emergence of a greater number and diversity of social innovations.

In elevating both the scale and impact of the practice of social innovation, MIS focuses on three spheres of activity:

#### **Strategic coaching**

To respond to stakeholders' ever-growing emphasis on social innovation, and to support projects with social and environmental impact, MIS's team of strategic-coaching experts conducts training in capacity building for territories, communities, and organizations.

The team provides coaching in strategic-innovation thinking and planning, systems mapping, feasibility analysis, and service design—always with a focus on implementing and supporting high-impact projects.

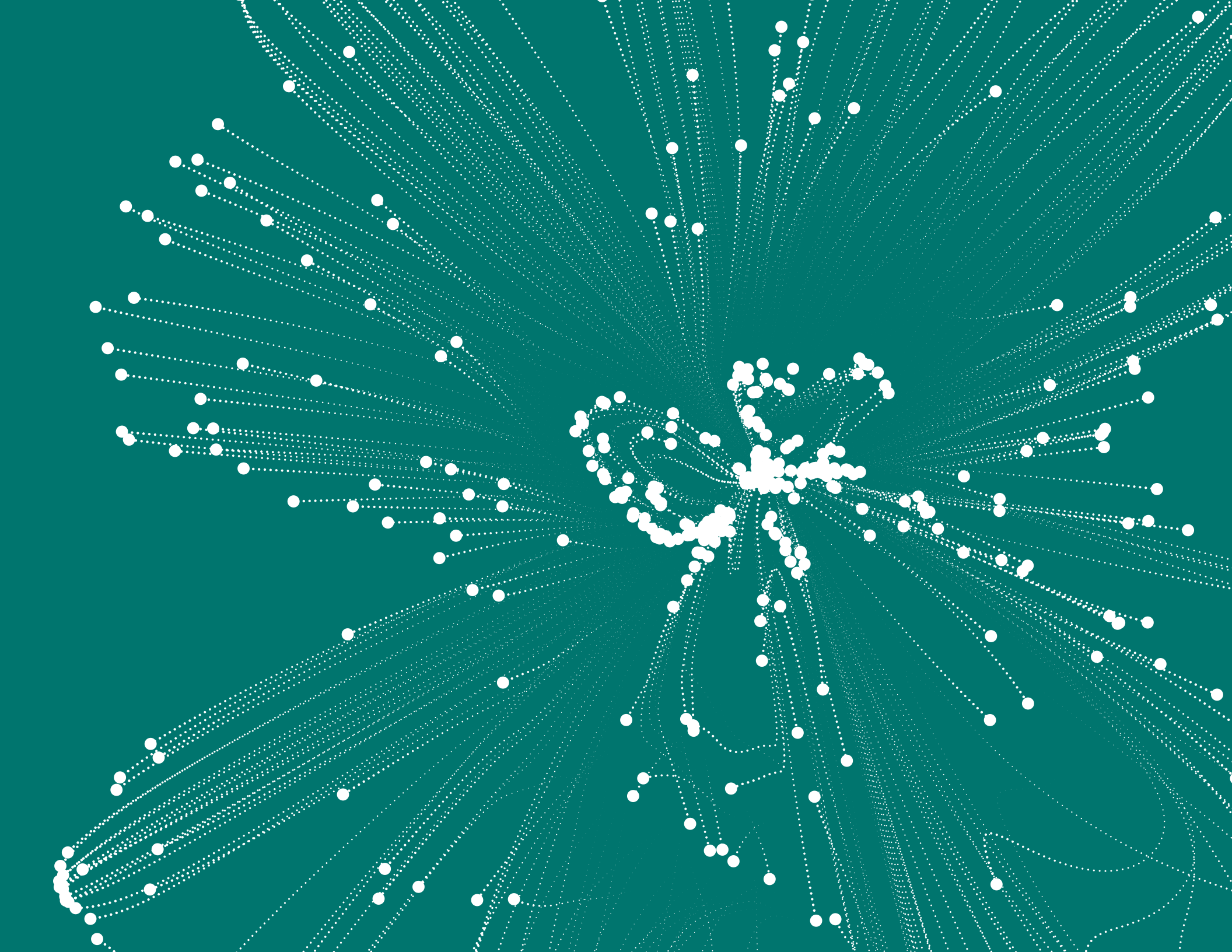
Many change agents at the city, regional, and organizational levels express strong interest in deploying social innovation as a strategic tool to respond to complex emerging needs. They evince a willingness to address such needs by means of a reflection or positive-impact project. MIS's strategic-coaching service helps them in their decision-support process to increase their capacity to innovate.

#### **Capacity building and incubation**

MIS is constantly expanding its service offerings to reach a greater diversity of participants. It maintains a focus on training, capacity building, and development of coaching paths for the incubation and start-up of projects with social and environmental impact.

The Civic Incubator is MIS's flagship program. It prototypes and brings to maturity ideas, conceived by agents of change, for social- and environmental-impact projects. Open to committed individuals, groups, and social entrepreneurs who are seeking to increase a project's impact, MIS welcomes each year, free of charge, a cohort of twenty individuals and teams selected through a Call for Projects. Since its launch, the Civic Incubator has incubated some 80 projects; it has now begun scaling up outside of Montréal.

MIS has also developed a model for an institutional-incubation pathway for public actors, including intrapreneurs, who wish to integrate support for social innovation into their territory. This pathway is currently being prototyped.







**MIS team members**  
(Credit: MIS)

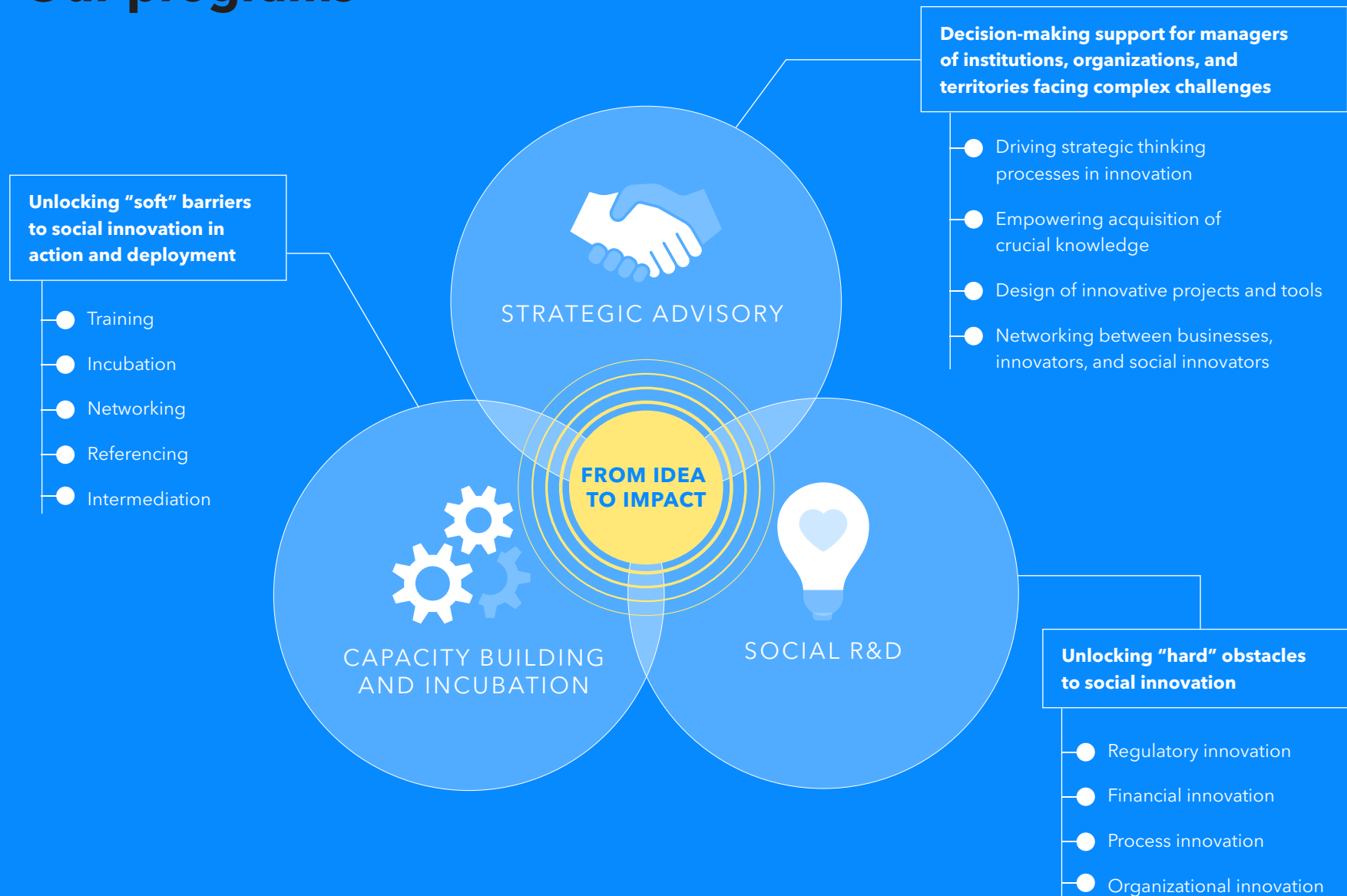
## Social R&D

By drawing on its strengths in social R&D, MIS focuses on creating winning conditions for the emergence of social innovations and systemic transformation. It invests in the development of living laboratories focused on reducing structural barriers to social innovation—including financial and regulatory innovation—and rural and urban social infrastructure. By mapping challenges and leverage points within a given system, it designs new strategies to overcome systemic impasses and activate transformation. The findings and innovations from these laboratories are reinvested in the projects MIS supports and the mandates it carries out.

### 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.

# Our programs





# 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 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**

wishing to reflect on their investments in order to increase and diversify their impact on the territories; or think about the creation of innovative financial mechanisms to support collective-impact initiatives; or de-risk their investment projects upstream; or develop new financial products with social and environmental returns; or strengthen the capacities of their partners in the field.

# Word from the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director



**Luciano Barin Cruz,**  
Chairman of the Board



**Patrick Dubé,**  
Executive Director

As we have often said, the Maison de l'innovation sociale (MIS) bases its business model on the bootstrapping of initiatives with high potential for social and environmental impact. Why "bootstrapping"? Because a project's passage through the "valley of death"—the time elapsed between the conceiving of an innovative idea and its adoption by the community—is a vulnerable phase, and to traverse it successfully requires a solid deployment strategy, allies who are won over by the expected impact, and substantial financial support. It's in this phase of the innovation life cycle that MIS believes it can catalyze maximum impact. In 2022, MIS, with the support of the communities with which it collaborates, succeeded in passing this critical threshold! We are now ready to scale up the organization's activities.

MIS is focused on supporting innovative, game-changing initiatives that have the capacity to accelerate the transition. MIS's deployment model fills an important and relevant gap by collectively activating the changes that are needed to address the complex

challenges of our time. As we review MIS's incredible progress over the past six years, we take pride in the work accomplished and look forward with confidence and enthusiasm to the next steps in the organization's development. We feel enormous gratitude to the many stakeholders who have supported us in our mission.

We are especially grateful to the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation, the McConnell Foundation, and the other financial partners of MIS's many programs and projects, including the City of Montréal and BMO; the social-innovation practitioners and organizations with whom we collaborate in Québec and elsewhere in Canada; the actors of change we welcome and who place their trust in us; our formidable team—resilient, determined, and committed—and the members of the Board of Directors who volunteer their time and dedication to the governance of MIS and to maximizing its impact. In this regard, we must thank Lyse Brunet, who carried out the difficult mandate of interim president of the

Board of Directors until last summer. With great professionalism, she not only redesigned the organization's governance, strengthening its representativeness and diversity of perspectives, but she also successfully led the recruitment of new Board members, all in collaboration with her fellow directors and the Management.

2022 was a year of many achievements for the MIS team. Several social R&D projects carried out, or co-sponsored, with valuable partners over the past two years have brought together a variety of new stakeholders who are helping to create levers for positive change—to enhance a culture of social and environmental experimentation, and to mobilize employees with sometimes divergent interests around innovative initiatives with the potential to accelerate the transition. We should also mention a new service offering at MIS: the formation of a team entirely dedicated to strategic coaching. This new entity enables MIS to respond to a growing demand from territories, communities, and organizations in terms of social and

environmental impact. With respect to capacity building and incubation, we would like to highlight MIS's Civic Incubator program, which has reached a level of maturity that now allows for its adaptation for and transfer to other territories in Québec and elsewhere in Canada.

We believe that the practice of social innovation is taking root today. We have noted a marked increase in the number of institutions and organizations that are rethinking their ways of doing things in order to respond to the needs and desires of communities. We have observed an alignment and convergence of collaborations between civil-society agents. We have witnessed a change in posture and mentality with respect to pressing societal challenges. A new field of possibilities now seems within reach, one the MIS team can deploy as a springboard for the carrying out of its mission.

**Thank you all for your trust and unwavering support.**

# 2022 Selected Outcomes

Implementation of

1

new service offer in strategic coaching focused on the resolution of complex problems related to the challenges of the socio-ecological transition, including the recruitment of **4 new staffers**

+ than

35

organizations and collectives supported in their innovation process

100%

of projects from the Civic Incubator's 2022 cohort are in the experimentation or full deployment phase

+ than 120

people—from the municipal and research sectors, as well as from several field organizations and civil society—mobilized around regulatory experimentation to accelerate the transition at the city level

64%

of the projects supported by MIS in 2022 target a municipal scale, while **19%** target a local scale, **13%** target a provincial scale and **4%** target a federal scale. (N.B.: Certain projects target several scales simultaneously.)

NEARLY  
60

people trained in the validation of social innovations emerging from research in the field of health and social services

MORE THAN  
3630

new subscribers to our digital platforms and **47,000 visits** to our website, demonstrating keen interest in the field of social innovation

NEARLY

45

transferable tools (templates, videos, process guides, reports) designed to elevate the practice of social innovation

Co-creation work with some

25

organizations from the municipal, academic, governmental, social and community sectors in the deployment of social R&D projects

100%


of members of the Civic Incubator's 2022 cohort consider the program to have had a positive impact on:

- + their project's impact potential
- + the clarity and feasibility of the deployment of their project
- + their confidence in their ability to deploy their project
- + their increased resiliency in dealing with obstacles encountered during project deployment

65 HOURS OF COACHING

offered free of charge to impact-project leaders outside of the Civic Incubator program





A MIS team member  
(Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

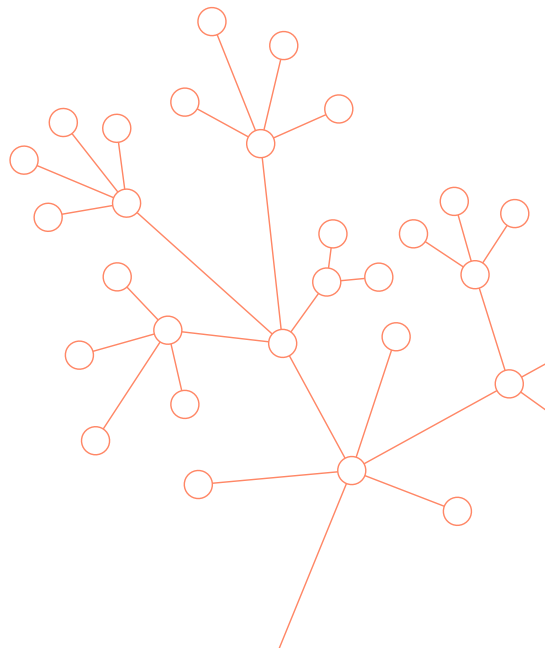
# STRATEGIC ADVISORY

# Strategic support of innovation by and for communities

After more than six years, MIS is pleased to see that the practice of social innovation is rapidly expanding in different sectors of activity and attracting the interest of more, and increasingly diverse, stakeholders. This is proof that the practice meets a very real demand from public, private, community, and non-profit organizations that wish to respond innovatively to social and environmental challenges or revisit their ways of doing things in order to maximize the positive impact of their work.

This recognition of social innovation as a lever for impact is a source of great motivation for the MIS team—which is at the service of those who want to take action to address the complex challenges facing society today.

But the demand for services has grown significantly, now that many agents of change at the city, regional, and organizational levels are approaching the MIS. In 2022, MIS created a strategic coaching team to meet this demand and build capacity to support projects with social and environmental impact conducted by territories, communities, and organizations. This new team, which was mobilized in the fall of 2022, is a key ally in any decision-support process. It also strengthens a continuum of services focused on social R&D, capacity building, training, and incubation.



## Proven expertise in strategic support practices:

- transdisciplinary expertise in social innovation to address the complexity of systemic challenges; to facilitate participatory ideation processes; and to experiment;
- mandates and deliverables focused on impact modeling, strategic reflection and co-construction, and the development of evaluation frameworks and systemic and organizational diagnostics;
- methods and tools for gathering information, such as action research or analysis of territorial ecosystems; systems thinking, as well as human-centred and territory-centred design; co-creation mechanisms; and innovation laboratories;
- support at the intersection of consulting, coaching and training, based on project management.



# A strategic support mandate focused on affordable housing in the D'Autray MRC



The Comité local en développement social de D'Autray (CLDS), in the Lanaudière region of Québec, promotes exchange, consultation, and collective action focused on social development and improving living conditions in the community. Since 2019, this organization, in collaboration with a variety of actors in the territory, mobilizes around high-priority issues such as mental health, educational success, and food security. In addition, its housing committee focuses on access to affordable and quality housing. To support the committee's work, the MIS was mandated to produce a documentary portrait, to carry out consultations and diagnostics, to identify inspiring initiatives implemented elsewhere, and to develop, with the members of the committee, an action plan linked to the work and activities of the Chantier régional en habitation.

This mandate is based on a systemic approach that highlights the deep-seated causes, beliefs, and structures of the system that have contributed to the housing crisis in the D'Autray MRC. Beyond creating a statistical portrait of the situation (including data on the housing supply, the demographics of the rental and resale market, and the supply of social and community housing), the team also organized multiple meetings with stakeholders who seek to deepen and expand the quantitative analysis of housing challenges at the territorial level. Eventually, an action plan will be developed to propose solutions, many of them pertaining to the main obstacles to creating and maintaining an adequate supply of quality affordable housing in the D'Autray MRC. Launched in the fall of 2022, the mandate will continue into 2023.



Meeting with stakeholders of a sectoral community of practice in Montérégie-Ouest  
(Credit: Concertation Horizon)



# An integrated social development plan for five MRCs of the Montérégie-Ouest



Concertation Horizon is an integrated regional consultation body that supports social development and educational success in the territory of five MRCs in the Montérégie Ouest region of Québec. Its mission is to increase the capacity for collective action in the improvement of living conditions in its territory. Within the framework of a collective process to elaborate an integrated social development plan, five sectoral communities of practice were established on the ground, with the objective of developing concrete project proposals that respond to needs and problems in their territories. To consolidate the vision of this initiative and plan its implementation on a solid foundation, Concertation Horizon mandated the MIS team to develop an integrated social development strategy on a regional scale.

More precisely, the objective of this mandate was to support Concertation Horizon:

- in the co-conception of an innovative financing model to support the activities of the consultation body over a five-year period;
- to equip stakeholders to reduce the barriers to the full realization of the territory's potential for social development;
- to rally actors in the field around the same vision of social development in their territories, while promoting collaborative work.

One of the strategy's innovative elements is the proposed funding structure for projects emerging from the five sectoral communities of practice. Rather than opting for a project-by-project, partner-by-partner, MRC-by-MRC funding strategy, projects will be carried out within a single, consolidated, long-term, region-wide structure. This funding model includes a framework for the various partners to consult on how funds will be allocated.

This integrated social development strategy allowed Concertation Horizon to outline a path for the implementation of the project, including the sharing of roles and responsibilities for each of the organizations involved. Moreover, the MIS approach was based on a hybrid approach for co-construction and decision support, a winning condition in itself for the buy-in of stakeholders.

# A customized ideation process to amplify the collective impact of foundations

In early 2022, as a prelude to the creation of a new team dedicated to strategic coaching, MIS had the privilege of supporting a group of Québec foundations for several months.

MIS's mandate was to design a reflection process to increase these foundations' collective impact on the socio-ecological transition.

The MIS team created a process, including documentation and a visioning exercise, to allow these groups to work collectively to design an innovative social-finance co-investment mechanism that builds on the strengths and complementary missions of each foundation.

The details of this initiative will be unveiled by the group of foundations in the spring of 2023.



MIS team members (Credit: MIS)

*"We are delighted to be working with the Maison de l'innovation sociale to help us explore the complexity of housing challenges in our territory and to assist us in developing an action plan that makes room for innovation. Our collaboration solicits the active participation of multiple stakeholders and allows us to move forward collectively towards sustainable solutions for increasing affordable housing for the benefit of our community."*

Testimonial on the mandate  
with the D'Autray MRC


**Daphné Kelly,**  
Mobilization Agent  
D'Autray MRC

*"The people we work with, whether at the organizational, institutional, or social-movement level, are increasingly interested in learning about, understanding, and even benefiting from the complexity of the dynamics specific to the systemic issues that hinder the socio-ecological transition of territories. Our practice of strategic coaching in social innovation responds precisely to this need and the collective desire to co-construct new models of mobilization and activation of innovative initiatives at the community level, drawing on the diversity of our expertise, including systems thinking and design, and regenerative development."*

Testimonial on strategic coaching

**Patrick Dubé,**  
Executive Director  
Maison de l'innovation sociale



A man with a beard and a woman with a grey scarf are sitting at a table, looking at a diagram with sticky notes. The man is on the left, looking down at the table. The woman is on the right, pointing at a sticky note. In the background, other people are working at tables in a bright, modern office space.

# CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCUBATION

Project leaders selected for the 2022 cohort of  
the Civic Incubator (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

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 various obstacles. 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 the last two years, 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. All of these organizations have 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 to partner territories throughout the province, MIS has focused on capacity transfer. In this way, it hopes to foster the emergence of innovative solutions which are adapted to the needs and realities of communities and contribute to the collective capacity for action.

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

MIS is inspired to act by the idea that initiatives meant to improve society could—due to a lack of support—fail before they are even born. For this reason, it offers diversified coaching services for seed-phase projects with high potential for social and environmental impact. This is in addition to the incubation and acceleration services offered by the social-innovation ecosystem. MIS believes that by empowering project stakeholders to take action, both internally and externally, it can play a catalytic role and act as a springboard to impact.

It is in this spirit that MIS has recently developed an enhanced program of customized training and coaching for the change leaders with whom it collaborates. The MIS welcomes various stakeholders—alumni of its programs, NPOs, university research staff, public-service actors, territorial organizations, collectives, and foundations—to an array of turnkey training courses designed to evaluate how practical application and exchanges between participants contribute to:


- the development of an understanding of key concepts in social innovation with respect to such topics as the design phase of an innovation mechanism, the mobilization phase of stakeholders, or the framing of a common vision, on any given theme, for intervention;
- the appropriating of tools and reference frameworks that enable participants to take action;
- an understanding of the conditions for the successful deployment of an impact initiative;
- the validation of the partners' desire to continue exploring the application of the concepts in their work.

At the end of the training program, participants assess their desire to take action. Once confirmed, this intention takes concrete form in a process of planning and framing the coaching methods best suited to the deployment context.

Our coaching program differs from our training program. First of all, it targets smaller teams which are made up either of members of the same team or multi-partnerships. The coaching process is also deployed around a circumscribed phase in the development of a given project.

On an operational level, follow-up meetings are organized in person or online, on a weekly or biweekly basis. Prior to each coaching session, participants are invited to identify their most urgent challenges and highest-priority agenda items. Their assigned coach then mobilizes different kinds of support—including sharing structuring tools, advice, a problem-solving process, even training—to help each team overcome the obstacles that emerge in the implementation of the innovative project MIS is supporting.

This coaching program, based on an action-oriented approach, aims to develop the teams' confidence, resilience, skills, and approach. In 2022, in addition to its paid coaching program, MIS provided 65 hours of coaching free of charge to participants in its coaching programs.



A member of the 2022 cohort of the Civic Incubator (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)





A public plaza installation in Sherbrooke  
(Credit: courtesy of Entreprendre Sherbrooke)



# A coaching approach in a municipal context



In 2022, as part of an innovation process focused on urban revitalization, MIS was pleased to initiate its first collaboration with a parapublic organization in the Eastern Townships.

To meet the complex challenges confronting them, municipalities must innovate.

Entreprendre Sherbrooke, a para-municipal economic-development organization, has taken an innovative approach to the revitalization of some of Sherbrooke's commercial arteries and their adjacent neighbourhoods. A network of temporary public plazas has been set up for the summer season to respond to the desire expressed by the local population for more public space, including greenery and meeting places.

The public consultations held prior to the deployment development project facilitated the design of public plazas that responded to the expressed wishes of the community. That said, despite their potential for positive impact, the experience on the ground brought to light some social and economic challenges. Entreprendre Sherbrooke recognizes how critical the ownership factor in any innovation is, as well as what kind of leadership is required to revisit and optimize municipal projects consistent with the reality of their communities. The organization called upon MIS to coach its team as it embarked on a second iteration of one of the public plazas.

**The objective of the mandate was to support the Entreprendre Sherbrooke team so that it could, in an autonomous way:**

- 1 implement a co-creation process fully mobilizing the collective intelligence of the various stakeholders in the community;
- 2 support all the actors of the territory in their common understanding of the stakes for the implementation of collective action; and
- 3 design and deploy innovative solutions in order to generate the desired impacts while minimizing unexpected negative effects.

The mandate was launched in 2022 and will continue until the summer of 2023.



**A MIS team member**  
(Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)

# A coaching approach in an academic and public setting

A project of



and funded by



In 2022, with the financial support of Innoweave, MIS was pleased to support CityLab, an innovation hub based in Hamilton, Ontario, with a coaching mandate aimed at increasing the relevance and impact of one of its programs.

CityLab brings together leaders from the public and academic spheres—including the City of Hamilton, McMaster University, Redeemer University, and Mohawk College—to collaborate on sustainable solutions to today's complex challenges. The result is a rich experiential learning program in urban innovation that fosters the emergence of new ideas to address the city's strategic priorities and trains the next generation of civic and public actors.

The Semester in Residence, one of CityLab's programs, is a 15-credit immersive course in which students, along with an interdisciplinary team of municipal, community, and territorial actors, work on urban projects with social and environmental impact. CityLab has sought to maximize the relevance and impact of this program among its student clientele in terms of leadership, community involvement, project management, and design skills. For the program's redesign, CityLab mandated MIS to support its general management as well as the management of the Semester in Residence. The mandate began in the summer of 2022 and will continue until the spring of 2023. The redesigned program will be rolled out in the fall of 2023.



## A training session promoting social innovation in the health and social-services sector

In the fall of 2022, the MIS team had the pleasure of welcoming nearly 60 people in the health and social services sector to its offices, where they participated in a training session on promoting social innovation.

The training program was custom-designed for the Direction de l'enseignement universitaire et de la recherche (DEUR) of the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CCSMTL). It followed on the work of research teams based in the practice environments of health-care institutions. More specifically, it was designed to help participants grasp the full scope of the field of social innovation, thereby supporting and increasing the social- and environmental-impact potential of their innovations.

The DEUR includes three research centres, four university institutes, and a university affiliate centre. It undertook this training process with the MIS in collaboration with longtime partners, including the Société de valorisation du Québec Axelys, the Bureau Recherche-Développement-Valorisation (BRDV) of the Université de Montréal, and the Service des partenariats et du soutien à l'innovation (SePSI) of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

Faced with a growing demand from a variety of stakeholders curious to learn more about increasing the positive systemic impact of their work, the MIS is enhancing its training courses.



Participants in the DEUR custom-designed training (Credit: MIS)

# The Civic Incubator

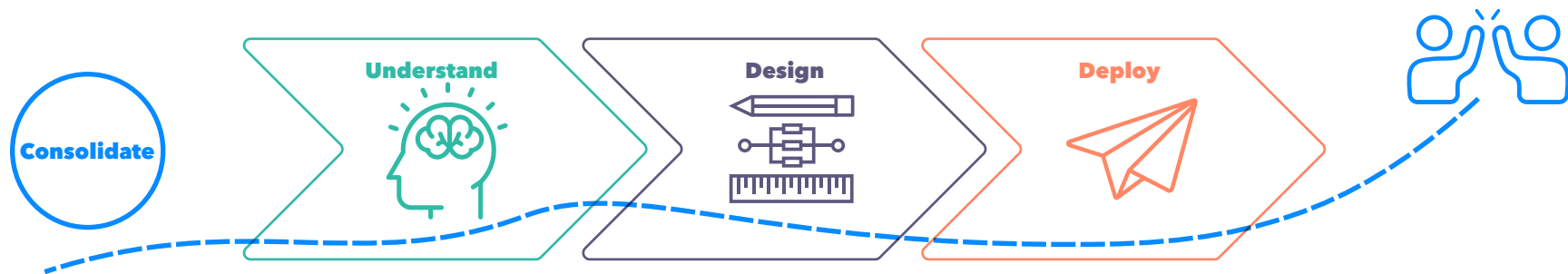
The Civic Incubator's funding partners in 2022 are:



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 in which the MIS team explains how the Civic Incubator is a unique support program for anyone wishing to kickstart their social entrepreneurship project or social and environmental initiative.](#)



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





A member of the 2022 cohort of the Civic Incubator  
(Credit: Youssef Shoufan)





A member of the 2022 cohort of the Civic Incubator  
(Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

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.

#### Several new features have transformed the program over the past two years.

- Its online learning platform and diverse activities allow it to offer hybrid support for those who seek a balance between distance and face-to-face modes so that they may maintain their personal, professional, or academic daily obligations. This approach represents one fewer barrier between an idea with high impact potential and its implementation.
- Beyond methodological skills, the program also focuses on strengthening meta-skills and the optimal attitude for the deployment of a social innovation, both of which determine the success of a project's deployment following the support program.
- Two hallmarks of the Civic Incubator's programming are 1) the production of

written and audiovisual content for selected laureates; and 2) support for project leaders in dealing with media coverage of their initiatives. These initiatives offer visibility to the laureates, help reference their projects over time and, above all, support the full deployment of their innovations at the end of the program.

- The MIS team has refined its intervention approach in order to adapt to the natural working rhythms of its laureates. This is another way in which the MIS creates winning conditions for the successful deployment of incubated social and environmental impact initiatives.
- Finally, the MIS team continues to test its knowledge and capacity-transfer practices by bringing external coaches into the program. This allows MIS to prototype certain aspects of the program so that they may be scaled in other regions of Québec and Canada.

#### Scaling the Civic Incubator outside of Montréal

In 2022, MIS collaborated with various Québec territories to scale up its Civic Incubator, a program for catalyzing citizen action and social innovation for transition at the city level. Carried out in collaboration with these stakeholders, this scaling up will allow partner territories as well as public and parapublic organizations to:

- rely on a proven support infrastructure;
- benefit from the new practices developed by MIS in its programs, including its social R&D activities;
- achieve economies of scale by sharing operating and development costs with other partner territories;
- benefit from MIS's ongoing support for the mobilization of the alumni community throughout Québec and related services.

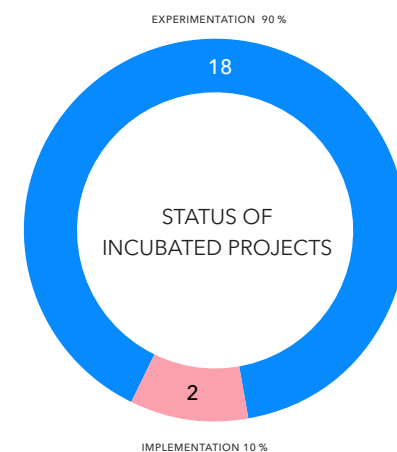
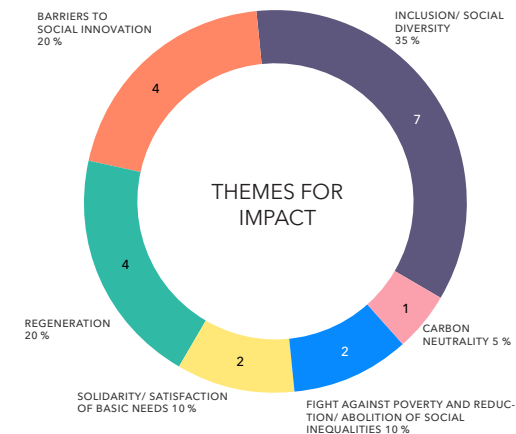


MIS is actively scaling up this program in Québec and Canada. It strongly believes that the referral of projects and the development of collaborations between incubators in different territories will help accelerate the societal transformations that are needed to address the major complex challenges facing Canadian communities. This network, committed to supporting civic innovation that serves the transition, will allow the MIS's partners to maximize the impact of their activities and to share their findings on urgent socio-environmental impact themes for all territories.

#### The Civic Incubator: A few numbers from 2022

- In the Call for Projects for the 2023 cohort, **68 projects were submitted** by 100 applicants in the fall of 2022.
- During the **47 days** of this campaign, there were **2,785 views** of the Call for Projects page and **1,388 views** of the form, as well as **483,000 online views** on MIS social media—clear evidence of the excitement generated by a program offered free of charge for seed-stage support.
- Of the applicants, **57 percent** self-identify as a visible minority or as a person who is ethnic, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, or living with a disability, according to the self-identification section of the application form. This is a new indicator related to the MIS team's inclusion efforts for the 2023 cohort.
- **31 project leaders** in the 2022 cohort participated in the Civic Incubator coaching program that ended in June 2022.
- **100 percent** of the 2022 cohort teams completed the program.
- **90 percent** of the projects supported in 2022 are currently in the experimentation phase and 10 percent are already in deployment.
- **100 percent** of the teams in the 2022 cohort affirm that the program helped increase their project's clarity and feasibility, as well as their own confidence and resilience.

#### THEMES FOR IMPACT ADVOCATED BY THE AGENTS OF CHANGE AND STATUS OF INCUBATED PROJECTS 2022 COHORT



*"The MIS's support has been essential to the success of our socioeconomic innovation process involving the Parc du Petit-Canada on rue Alexandre in downtown Sherbrooke. It's no small feat to mobilize so many different stakeholders—from the civilian, community, municipal, political, commercial, and real-estate sectors—to share both a public space and a vision of inclusion and social diversity. The MIS was able to equip us with the tools we needed to successfully navigate this enormously complex process. Thank you!"*

Testimonial on coaching in a municipal context

**Philippe Angers-Trottier,**  
Social Innovation Adviser,  
Entreprenre Sherbrooke

*"I think the civic incubator is a super interesting development platform, not only for social entrepreneurs like us, but also for those who want to validate a project that's still taking shape—an idea that is not obvious. I think the Civic Incubator can be used to reveal the potential of these ideas. I have seen people in our cohort transform a good project idea to an even better one, which was really illuminating for them."*

Testimonial on the Civic Incubator

**Benoît Bernier,**  
Director of Development  
Campus Agora  
Winner of the Civic Incubator

*"This training—which is equally relevant for managers, professionals, and researchers alike—has helped us see new ways of maximizing the impact of our interdisciplinary teams' innovations. It has also enabled us to enhance the interplay of our expertise on various themes and challenges specific to different clienteles. I am very impressed by the MIS team's ability to grasp the client's issues, to adapt to their reality, and to deliver training with relevant content whose added value is undeniable!"*

Testimonial on training in the health and social-services sector

**Annie-Kim Gilbert,**  
Ph. D., Director of University Teaching and Research,  
CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (DEUR-CCSMTL)

*"Working with the MIS has been a highlight of my work with CityLAB Hamilton. Its' strategic approach, clear-eyed vision, and ability to offer clarity, insight, and perspective were invaluable to us as we navigated new programs and partnerships. I particularly appreciated the wealth of tools and experiences it brought to the challenges our organization is facing, which allowed us to focus on the most important elements of our work and design strategies to move forward. I'm confident that MIS's work will help CityLAB reach new heights moving forward."*

Testimonial on coaching in an academic and public context

**Patrick Byrne,**  
Project Manager, CityLab Hamilton  
Digital & Innovation Office, City Manager's  
Office City of Hamilton

A MIS team member  
(Credit: Youssef Shoufan)



# SOCIAL R&D

# Social R&D, a pillar of social innovation

Facing the complexity of today's social and environmental challenges requires a radical transformation of the way we do business. At MIS, we believe that all of society's stakeholders have the capacity to propel this transformation through innovation. All that is needed is to invest in timely levers such as social R&D.

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.

By focusing on social R&D, society can help accelerate the socio-ecological transition. It is by democratizing, standardizing, and anchoring a culture of collaborative experimentation in all societal spheres that we will succeed in bringing out promising innovations for complex systems with many components.

## Its social R&D initiatives focus on four pillars of experimentation:

- Regulatory innovation
- Financial innovation
- Process innovation
- Organizational innovation



# A model for the collective management of the black-soil basin in the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville

A former wetlands which has been transformed into a highly fertile commercial agricultural region, the black-soil basin of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville is the foundation of the area's economic vitality. These lands, however, are subject to flooding, irrigation, pests, and loss of soil quality and quantity. They are disappearing at a rate of 2 cm annually, suggesting that commercial agriculture in this locale will die out within 50 years if technical and social innovations are not adopted.

Moreover, this region is vital for the preservation of the region's biodiversity and endangered species, as well as for specific habitats such as woodlands and wetlands. But regulations for land-use planning are not always respected because of regulatory complexity and private ownership of lands used for commercial agriculture. Conflicts of use ensue, highlighting the sometimes competing responsibilities and divergent interests of the various stakeholders in this territory, and making it difficult to develop solutions acceptable to all. While laws, regulations, and financial mechanisms attempt to support the conservation of this common

good, they have failed to rally the agricultural and non-agricultural communities around a common vision for the management of this abundant land. This is why MIS and its partners in the region—the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville, the Centre local de développement des Jardins-de-Napierville (CLD), the Pôle d'excellence en lutte intégrée (PELI), and the Groupe PleineTerre and PRISME / Phytodata advisory clubs—have initiated a social-innovation process with local stakeholders to anticipate and address these complex challenges.

— In December 2022, some twenty stakeholders from the agricultural ecosystem of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville convened a first workshop to mark the end of the first cycle of work. The workshop, which included representatives of both the research and public sectors, focused on identifying challenges; reviewing financial and regulatory mechanisms; exhaustively characterizing soil, water and agricultural developments; and modeling of pests on the territory.

The workshop allowed participants to:

- understand the socioeconomic system of the black soil basin
- characterize the biophysical system of the black-soil basin (e.g., challenges around water, soil and pest management, etc.)
- devise examples of financial innovation
- imagine a collective black-soil management system

— In 2023, a report synthesizing challenges and opportunities will be delivered, in time to inform the co-design phase with stakeholders. This will be accomplished through a series of participatory workshops that will mobilize the farming community to develop the solutions on which the collective-management plan will be based.

- In particular, this approach will educate farmers on the problems of water-use conflicts and pest attacks. This will enable them to organize themselves collectively to address these challenges in an integrated, sustainable, and collective manner—harmonizing and balancing their individual practices.
- Small-scale experimentation with an initial black-soil collective-management model is planned for the 2023 agricultural season.

*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; the Groupe PleineTerre and PRISME / Phytodata advisory clubs; 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.*

Participant in a workshop of the Terres noires project (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

# 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.

Innovation evolves faster than regulation does. It is precisely to unleash the potential impact of citizen innovation that LICER was born. 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.

A project of



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.



Installation of the Street Greenhouse project in the Centre-Sud neighbourhood, accompanied by the LICER (Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)



UN ÉCOSYSTÈME

SOLAIRE



Nos serres passives sont chauffées par le rayonnement du soleil. Les parois de la serre laissent passer la lumière, mais piègent une partie de la chaleur émise.



*LICER is led by the MIS, with Cité-ID LivingLab/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 LICER team applied and validated the relevance of its experimentation methodology in the context of the organization's support of the Street Greenhouse project. This initiative, led by the Urban Agriculture Laboratory (AU/LAB) and the Carrefour alimentaire Community Food Centre in the Centre-Sud neighbourhood of Montréal, tests the integration of urban-agriculture practices in public space in summer and winter. Its methodology is based on the introduction of new practices and allows for the orientation of their regulatory framework.
- In collaboration with the Cité-ID LivingLab, the team also conducted a second study of the factors that block or facilitate innovative mobility and food initiatives. This study helps to enrich the practice of regulatory innovation.
- The end of the LICER's first cycle of experimentation marks two years of activities; it presents an opportunity to evaluate and share findings. MIS brought together some fifty participants, many of them City of Montréal employees, to explore the relevance of this experimentation mechanism in a municipal context. The event helped paved the way for the next steps in the process, which are scheduled to take place in 2023 and 2024.
- In 2023, a third report on findings will be produced for distribution to stakeholders who are involved in reflections and initiatives on the evolution of processes and regulatory content.
- Also in 2023, MIS plans to replicate its innovative experimental approach to the improvement of regulatory frameworks. A collaboration will continue with the Solon organization on the regulatory challenges associated with citizen appropriation of public spaces. Another co-venture—with the Bureau de la transition écologique et de la résilience (BTER) of the City of Montréal and a variety of stakeholders—will focus on a regulatory co-production approach to the decarbonization of buildings. Ultimately, the plan is to embed these experimental methodologies in the City of Montréal's internal practices in order to foster regulatory innovation in the City's transition and Climate Plan objectives.

**To learn more about LICER,  
visit the MIS website.**



Participants at a LICER mobilization workshop  
(Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)



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

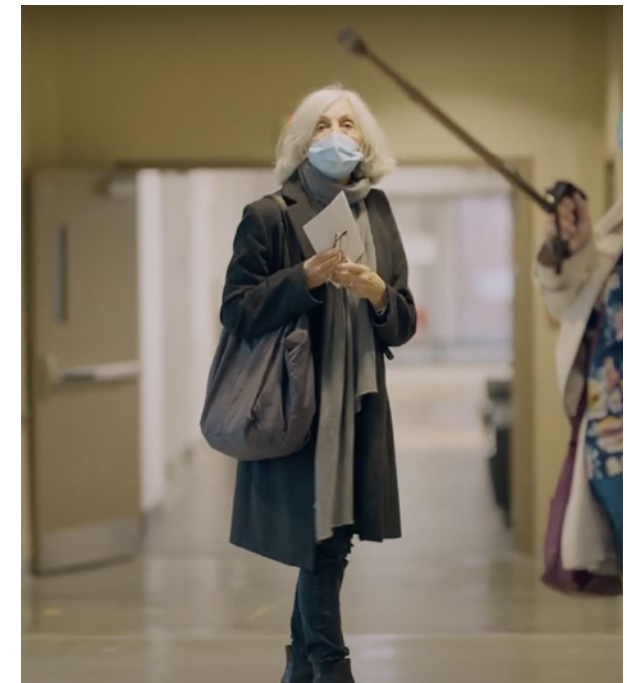
For the past few years, the MIS has supported the Research Centre of the University Institute of Geriatrics of Montréal (CRIUGM) in the implementation of a living laboratory aimed at generating innovations to improve the quality of life of the elderly in the Côte-des-Neiges district of Montréal.

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 decrease the social isolation) of seniors in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. Since 45 percent of the members of this area’s aging population lives alone—with many in vulnerable social or health situations or facing barriers in terms of language—the potential impact of this laboratory is very significant. It is an innovative research model that seeks to transform the perception of aging for a better integration of seniors, as well as to create a rapprochement—and decisive interaction—between the health field and the local population. It can also be replicated in other neighbourhoods, which means that deeply analyzing it can be crucial for eventually scaling it up.

- In 2022, the first experimental prototypes, co-developed with the stakeholders of the living laboratory, were deployed. In particular, an “Elder Mobility Brigade” awareness kiosk was piloted, with the goal of equipping the community with mobility assistance. Three coffee meetings were held to recruit volunteers and sensitize the community to communication challenges experienced by seniors. The café project is now entirely the purview of the SARPAD Volunteer Centre, a demonstration of the living laboratory’s impact on community adoption and ownership of innovations.
- Also in 2022, MIS co-created an evaluation framework for this living lab with CRIUGM. These assessments will help to enrich the findings and optimize the innovations that emerge from the lab, beyond quantitative data. The framework encompasses intervention at various scales—from the impact of projects, to the laboratory’s processes, to its positioning within the ecosystem and potential for mobilization.

Participant at an “Innovating Neighbourhood” workshop  
(Credit: Charles-Olivier Bourque)

A project led and funded by



*"The living laboratory also requires methodological expertise in establishing conditions that allow for co-creation or co-construction work with partners. For us, it was crucial to work with a partner like the Maison de l'innovation sociale. They supported us both in setting up our social infrastructure and in developing a co-creation methodology that is consistent with both our living-lab philosophy and best practices in the field."*

Testimonial on Innovating Neighbourhood

**Nathalie Bier,**

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

*"The situations experienced by agricultural producers vary greatly from one tract of land to another. While one farm may be facing a flooding problem, its neighbour may be facing drought, and actions taken to address one problem very often exacerbate another. It is much the same with pest management, in which the actions of one farm can influence the situation in the fields of its neighbours. We want to find solutions to break these impasses and improve the environment, and working to manage our black soil collectively is a step in the right direction."*

Testimonial on "Terres noires" project

**Marie-Pierre Maurice,**

Biologist and environmental team leader, Groupe PleineTerre

*"How do we preserve our black soil—not for the people of today or tomorrow, but for future generations?"*

*After a lot of awareness-raising among elected officials, preserving our black-soil basin has become the number-one challenge in the Plan de développement de la zone agricole (PDZA) of the MRC des Jardins-de-Napierville."*

Testimonial on "Terres noires" project

**Denys Van Winden,**

a vegetable grower with Van Winden Horticultural Productions Inc.



# THE REACH AND VITALITY OF THE ECOSYSTEM

A MIS team member (Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)



The MIS believes that the field of social innovation plays an essential role, both in addressing the major and complex challenges of our time, and in accelerating the socio-ecological transition. The organization seeks to rally actors working in a variety of fields to position social and environmental impact at the centre of their activities.

The MIS relies on several levers of action. These contribute to the vitality of a growing ecosystem and to the democratization of social innovation, and include:

- the production of social-innovation content adapted to a variety of audiences, including practitioners in the field;
- playing a role during events—in the person of a speaker or intermediary, or by raising consciousness—that bring together people around social and environmental challenges;
- sustained visibility for the social innovations of the laureates who pass through its Civic Incubator program or the stakeholders with whom it collaborates;
- pan-Canadian networking activities bringing together different initiatives and organizations dedicated to social innovation or the fight against climate change.

Protecting life requires a radical transformation of our ways of doing things, and social innovation can help bring about this change. This is why we want to talk about social innovation, broaden its scope, invest in and deploy projects that normalize its practice within our institutions and organizations, and strengthen our collective capacity to accelerate the transition.

## Raccords, a digital publication 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 publication, 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.

Each edition of Raccords looks deeply into a particular theme through a **written interview**, **a podcast**, **a video clip**, or **a visual artwork**, along with a list of **contributors' favourite resources**. Produced in a variety of formats, accessible free of charge and without

advertising, and designed to be easily shared, Raccords helps maximize MIS's reach to a diverse audience, in both French and English.

Raccords presents conversations with a wide range of experts who are involved in different causes and impact areas across Canada, the United States, and Europe. These people generously share their perspectives, helping us reveal blind spots both in societal challenges and our practices. They contribute to the development of the Montréal ecosystem's relationships with its counterparts at the national and international levels.



**RACCORDS #11**

(March 2022)

**Are we ready for a culture of public and social R&D?**

**The interview:** Could experimentation on the social R&D front be a game-changer for the future? with 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

**The podcast:** Recognizing the capacity of municipalities to innovate, with Stéphane Vincent, founder and executive officer of La 27e Région in Paris

**The artworks:** "Possible Futures," an exhibition by Adam Basanta embodying a posture of exploration and conceptual investigation, reflects the ways in which the imagination faces humanity's uncertain destiny

**RACCORDS #12**

(September 2022)

**Taking Action: How to Transform the Reality of Migrants?**

**The interview:** Putting immigrants at the heart of the transformation of immigration systems, with Laura Batalla Adam and Marianny Pacheco representing Hello Europe and Hola América

**The podcast:** When the contradictions of a system call for advocacy, with Nadja Pollaert, executive director of Doctors of the World Canada

**The video:** Bridging the gaps in a host country's system, with the Welcome Collective team and its executive director Dina Souleiman

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# raccords





# Contributions to the vitality of the social-innovation ecosystem

## Collaboration with peers, media and speaking out

In 2022, MIS took advantage of multiple opportunities to contribute, share, and partner. The objective of this work was to increase the collective reach of the ecosystem's social- and environmental-impact efforts, to help shift the posture of institutions and civil society in favour of social innovation, and to accelerate the socio-ecological transition in Québec.



## Collaboration with peers

### A national conversation on systemic change

As a founding member of Social Innovation Canada, a collaborative infrastructure that brings together social-innovation practitioners across the country, MIS is a leader in the effort to promote the field of social innovation practice across the country. In 2022, MIS Executive Director Patrick Dubé led our inaugural workshop on the systems approach, seeking to build participants' capacity for systems change in the socio-ecological transition and to explore the potential for hybridization of different approaches to systems change across the country. In 2023, MIS plans to continue this process by anchoring it in the theme of affordable and ecological housing.

Participants at an event co-organised by the MIS (Credit: Youssef Shoufan)

### A Franco-Québécois symposium on innovation through design in public action

The colloquium on innovation through design in public action was organized in November 2022 by the Bureau du design de la Ville de Montréal and the Cité du design de Saint-Etienne. The colloquium convened designers and sought to help them to use the system approach to reach the full innovation potential of their field of practice. The specific objective in this case was to better respond to the City's needs vis-à-vis the socio-ecological transition.

MIS was pleased to have the confidence of these partners as it designed and facilitated its workshop on the tools of systems design and regenerative development. This intervention opened the door to new possibilities for collaboration between designers and the City in the implementation of municipal strategic orientations.

This mandate also allowed the MIS team to deepen its understanding of the opportunities and obstacles to the use of design in public action and to forge links with the research community. It plans to test systems-design tools within its programs as early as 2023.

### **The new longevity: a demographic change as a catalyst for innovation**

To explore the challenges of the “new longevity” and to collectively reflect on the solutions that are needed, Ashoka Canada, HEC Montréal (IDEOS - Pôle gestion de l’impact social and the Direction de la transition durable), and the Maison de l’innovation sociale (MIS) joined forces to organize a day of reflection. Seniors, NPOs, philanthropic organizations and people from the research field were invited.

Three main questions were addressed in lectures, panels and workshops:

- How do we maintain a healthy and fulfilling life as we age?
- How do we foster resilience and independence in older adults?
- And how do we redefine the concept of retirement and the “Silver Economy” to make room for social inclusion?

This kind of event helps catalyze new social innovations and rally actors around the challenges of aging.

### **The CaNeoLabs Experience, an inaugural event on innovation labs for the Canadian community of practice**

In collaboration with Open Innovation Lab (OIL/Cégep de Rivière-du-Loup) and Social Innovation Canada, MIS has helped mobilize its network across Canada to build a community of practitioners of innovation labs. It contributed to the enrichment of the programming of an inaugural face-to-face event, which was financially supported by the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, in October in Rivière-du-Loup.

### **Committees dedicated to strengthening social innovation as a lever for impact**

In 2022, MIS continued its ongoing participation in a working committee led by Humanovis, an initiative of the Ministère de l’Économie, de l’Innovation et de l’Énergie (MÉIE), that is dedicated to creating evaluation tools for supporting and scaling up social innovations.

MIS also collaborated on the development of a proposal for a framework for evaluating social innovations at the MÉIE. This work was carried out by an evaluation committee coordinated by the Réseau québécois en innovation sociale (RQIS) and TIESS (Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire).

MIS participated in discussions on the Innovation Barometre envisioned by the Conseil de l’innovation du Québec, with other key organizations of the Québec social-innovation ecosystem.

The organization participated in the activities of the Mouvement des accélérateurs d’innovation du Québec (MAIN), which focuses on facilitating collaboration among its members, and took part in a committee within the Startup MTL Task Force, a group of organizations working to maximize the societal impact of Montréal’s impact ecosystem and encourage the “impact” reflex in emerging organizations.

## Press review and editorials

[Appel de Montréal pour un dialogue sur les changements systémiques](#)

December 2022 | Signed by the MIS in collaboration with the members of the Collectif Cop15

[La nouvelle longévité, une idée novatrice et porteuse de sens](#)

November 12, 2022 | Le Devoir

[L'AcadieLab, le seul laboratoire vivant en milieu agricole au Canada](#)

October 6, 2022 | Le Canada français

[Village Urbain - Le projet de cohabitat à Lachine en voie de se concrétiser](#)

June 27, 2022 | La Presse

[La SQRI<sup>2</sup> reconnaît l'innovation sociale comme approche de choix pour répondre aux grands enjeux sociétaux](#)

May 19, 2022 | Press Release

[Unir ses forces pour faire face à la crise](#)

April 9, 2022 | Le Devoir - Extrait du dossier Philanthropie

[Planter une microforêt au bord de l'autoroute 640](#)

April 6, 2022 | Le 15-18, Radio-Canada

## Conferences and webinars

### MARCH 2022

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Participant in two training workshops, organized in collaboration with the Tamarack Institute and the OIL, entitled "The living laboratory as a community and territorial-innovation approach." (Workshops subsidized by the Secrétariat québécois aux relations canadiennes)

### APRIL 2022

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Juror for the university competition, "Map the System," organized by HEC Montréal.

### MAY 2022

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Participant (remotely) in a panel on social innovation from both the Moroccan and Québécois perspectives, as part of WeXchange, the Abdelkader Bensalah Foundation's forum on social progress through innovation in Morocco.

### MAY 2022

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Speaker at "From citizens to social entrepreneurs: lessons learned from the Civic Incubator for economic- and territorial-development actors," an event during Expo Entrepreneurs.

### MAY 2022

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Participant in the Montréal Climate Summit event; also supported the Partenariat Climat Montréal (PCM) team in its reflection on the programming of the 2022 Summit.

### MAY 2022

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Participant in a panel, organized by Les Affaires, on the levers and obstacles to a public-sector culture of innovation that values agility, collaboration, boldness, and risk taking.

### MAY 2022

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Co-facilitator of a workshop offered as part of "Happening NPO 3737," a national conference organized by Groupe 3737 focused on building the capacity of NPOs to benefit Black communities and devising innovative solutions to complex challenges in our communities.

### JUNE 2022

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Speaker at "Regulatory Experimentation for the Socio-Ecological Transition," a webinar organized by the Montréal Urban Innovation Lab (LIUM).



### SEPTEMBER 2022

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Participant in a panel, "Social Innovation: From Research Project to Deployment," at Société Inclusive's "Annual Forum 2022: Participatory Research and Disability."

### OCTOBER 2022

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Co-organizer, moderator, and speaker at "The new longevity: a demographic change catalyst for innovation," an event organized in collaboration with Ashoka Canada and HEC Montréal (Pôle IDEOS and the Direction de la transition durable).

### OCTOBER 2022

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Participant in the inaugural meetings of CaNeoLabs, a community of practice on innovation laboratories in Rivière-du-Loup supported by the OIL. MIS also provided training on living labs prior to these meetings.

### OCTOBER 2022

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Organizer and moderator of the webinar, "Meet Catherine Houbart and Mikah Youbi, winners of the Civic Incubator, and discuss their journey and their projects with them."

### NOVEMBER 2022

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Participant in a panel on the social-economy support ecosystem organized by the Conseil d'économie sociale de l'île de Montréal (CESIM) and PME MTL as part of Social Economy Month.

### NOVEMBER 2022

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Speaker, juror, and facilitator at a workshop for the "Montréal, City of Startups, the Impact Reflex" campaign, an initiative bringing together Montréal's innovative entrepreneurial community and led by Startup Montréal during Montréal's Impact Week.

### NOVEMBER 2022

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Intermediary and speaker at the symposium on innovation through design in public action, organized by Design Montréal in partnership with the Cité du Design de Saint-Étienne as part of the Entretiens Jacques-Cartier.

### DECEMBER 2022

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Member of the COP15 Collective calling for major transformations and ambitious commitments to protect life as well as participation in outreach and advocacy efforts.

### DECEMBER 2022

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Organizer of "Regulatory Experimentation: A Municipal Must to Accelerate the Transition," a Montréal event on World Climate Day and Day 2 of the COP15 conference on biodiversity.





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>

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)



We know that all kinds of knowledge and worldviews are necessary to address complex socio-environmental challenges. What's more, anyone who claims to want to transform the world knows that they must first transform themselves. It is necessary for each and every one of us to do this work, and it is in this spirit that the MIS approaches diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Through its activities, publications, and public statements, as well as the projects and the agents of change it supports, the MIS is engaged in continuous reflection about how best to equip its team members and inform its practices. In 2022, 37 percent of the projects supported, carried out, or co-supported by MIS had an impact theme promoting diversity, equity, or inclusion.

As part of this commitment to scrutinize its own practices and posture, MIS continues to support the DEI working group, whose mission is to act as a learning and integration engine for good DEI practices.

In 2022, more than 300 hours were dedicated to DEI concepts—on reflection, training, development of knowledge, know-how, and interpersonal skills—as well as to the implementation of new practices. In addition to promoting DEI in the projects on which it collaborates, the MIS has deployed several initiatives in this sphere throughout the year:

- A coaching mandate was granted to [URelles](#), a DEI consulting firm, to help the organization improve its practices.
- An initial three-year action plan for DEI in employment was developed and adopted.
- The organizational staffing process for both the Board and the internal team has been made more inclusive. For example, among the important changes in the recruitment process are the introduction of information sessions accessible to all; a redesign of the MIS website's employment page to include a module for submitting unsolicited applications; and a revision of the way job offers are written.
- An edition of *Raccords* (#12) was published dedicated to the experiences of migrant people and to avenues of action to support their inclusion. This included a podcast on a project to advocate for public policies that address the issue of social solidarity with integrity.
- A team tour, facilitated by the NPO L'Autre Montréal, to discover Tiohtiá:ke (Montréal) through the lens of diversity and the struggle for equal rights and against racism.
- The establishment of an internal book club focusing on books on DEI.
- A promotional strategy for the Civic Incubator's Call for Projects aimed at increasing the diversity of project leaders. Once again, this strategy met with success: among the hundred or so applicants, 57 percent self-identify as visible/racialized minorities, ethnic minorities or Indigenous, LGBTQ+, or people living with a disability.



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white sweater, is leaning forward and gesturing with her right hand towards the left. She appears to be in a collaborative work environment. In the background, there is a white wall with a small yellow and white sign, and a purple banner with the letters 'YS' in white. In the foreground, there are several sheets of paper with architectural drawings of buildings.

# GOVERNANCE AND TEAM

A MIS team member  
(Credit: Maxime Lapostolle)

As part of its new development cycle aimed at creating roots for, and increasing the potential of, the structuring impact of its activities in Québec and the rest of Canada, MIS has carried out an in-depth governance overhaul over the past two years.

By building on what it has learned, the MIS has examined best practices in governance that are specific to its development objectives and its desire to increase and/or maintain the relevance of its services.

MIS has revisited its governance policies to strengthen its position as an intermediary in the social-innovation ecosystem. Its goal is to extend the reach of this field of practice to a greater diversity of change agents from different backgrounds and networks.

- In 2022, MIS acted on several recommendations that emerged from multiple consultations with an external think tank in collaboration with an ad hoc governance committee of the Board of Directors. These consultations focused on the fit between the needs of the social-innovation ecosystem, MIS's programming, and good-governance practices.
- Among other things, MIS conducted an extensive recruitment campaign to add new members to its Board of Directors, with the aim of strengthening the organization's representativeness and diversity of perspectives. As of December 31, 2022, MIS had nine members on its Board of Directors after receiving approximately 20 applications. It also amended the organization's statutes and bylaws accordingly.
- In 2023, as a continuation of this governance overhaul, MIS plans to expand membership to include more members from the social-innovation ecosystem, once again with the goal of strengthening the organization's representativeness and diversity of perspectives.





# Board of Directors



**Luciano Barin Cruz**  
PRESIDENT

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

Sustainable Transition Office (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 InterAmerican 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.

Photo credit: HEC Montréal



**Bram Freedman**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

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: Bram Freedman



**Erica Barbosa Vargas**  
DIRECTOR

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.

Photo provided by: Erica Barbosa Vargas





**Josée Duplessis**  
DIRECTOR

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 credit: Mathieu B. Morin



**Gerardo Almaguer**  
DIRECTOR

Gerardo Almaguer holds a degree in Chemical Engineering from the Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico, and a master's degree in Administration from

Tecnológico de Monterrey. He began his career in 1993 as an analyst at Nacional Financiera. In 1996, he joined the Guanajuato State Civil Service as Quality Manager. In 2001, he joined Développement international Desjardins (DID) in Mexico, where he started as a financial advisor. He then worked as a consultant for DID until 2005, when he was appointed Project Manager. Between 2009 and 2013, he worked for DID projects in Panama, where he was first an entrepreneurial credit advisor and then General Manager of the Panama Entrepreneur Financial Center. In 2013, he moved to Quebec where he worked as a business finance advisor before leaving for Colombia as a field manager between 2014 and 2015. Upon his return, he was assigned as a project manager before being appointed Senior Director of DID's Agricultural Finance and Food Security division. Since January 2019, Mr. Almaguer has served as DID's president and CEO.

Photo provided by: Gerardo Almaguer



**Selma Idjeraoui**  
DIRECTOR

As Business Transformation Manager at the consulting group of EY, Selma assists organizations in developing their business strategy to drive large-

scale transformations. In 2019, she co-founded The Bigger Data, a nonprofit organization that aims to bridge the gaps between academics and professionals in the field of business intelligence through the networking of charitable organizations and promising talent. She also acts as an ambassador for the Groupe des Trente, an initiative of Concertation Montréal that aims to inspire people from ethnocultural communities to get involved in boards of directors and co-develop original initiatives with Montreal's colours. Convinced that collective intelligence leads to innovative and humane solutions, Selma has been involved in the community for over a decade, earning her the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Youth.

Photo provided by: Selma Idjeraoui



**Ed D. Vertus**  
DIRECTOR

Ed D. Vertus is passionate about social entrepreneurship and supports people who are looking for innovative solutions that have a positive

impact on their communities. A graduate in management accounting from UQAM's École des sciences de la gestion, he specializes in SME management and financing as well as in the social economy and capacity building of NPOs. He taught accounting and management at the college level and was Director of Business Services and Fund Management at a CLD (now PME MTL). As a volunteer, he is a mentor at Futurpreneur and sits on Filaction's investment committee for the Afro-entrepreneurs Fund. Within Groupe 3737, he is Director, Social Innovation. He manages the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI) whose mandate is to provide project funding to non-profit organizations (NPOs) to increase their organizational capacity. Entrepreneur, Ed D. Vertus has launched and operated three restaurants in Montreal in twelve years. Since 2015, he has been President of Stratège PME, a firm specializing in strategic support and consulting for SMEs. He is a member of the Ordre des administrateurs agréés du Québec.

Photo provided by: Ed D. Vertus



**Isabelle Ouellet**  
DIRECTOR

Manager with over 26 years of experience, both in the Canadian financial sector and in international development. Holder of a bachelor's degree in agricultural

economics and a master's degree in economics, she is particularly interested in development economy and social impact. She is the co-author of a working paper addressing the issue of agricultural productivity in developing countries, research that led her to develop and implement innovative financial instruments in several developing countries. Her professional activities led her to work in America, Asia and Africa, mainly as program manager for Développement international Desjardins during more than 10 years. Senior Account Director at Investissement Québec since 2021, she ensures leadership in the analysis and execution of investments and business financing involving multiple partners, related to strategic and structuring projects whose economic impact is significant for Quebec.

Photo provided by: Isabelle Ouellet



**Stéphane Guidoin**  
DIRECTOR

Stéphane is an independent strategy and innovation consultant. A long-time leader in government transparency, he has been involved in the open data movement

since 2005 and was one of the instigators and director of Open North, an organization specialized in data governance. Subsequently, he joined the City of Montreal, first as head of open data and then as director of the Montreal Urban Innovation Lab. He piloted large-scale projects, including the submission of the candidacy for Canada's Smart Cities Challenge for which the City of Montreal won the first prize of \$50M. Since March 2022, he helps organizations and companies, particularly in their positioning in innovation and in collaboration with innovation players.

Photo provided by: Stéphane Guidoin

The MIS's Board of Directors also includes two observer members: Jane Rabinowicz, Chief Program Officer at the McConnell Foundation and Francesco Miele, Executive Vice President of the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation.





# Team

## CLARA EL MESTIKAWY

LICER Evaluation and  
Mobilization Support Agent

## LOÏC NIGEN

Senior Advisor -  
Strategic Advisory

## NATHALIE RODRIGUES

Director of social R&D  
programs and of organizational  
development

## MÉLANIE BISSON

Senior Advisor - Development  
of Relations with the Social  
Innovation Ecosystem

## RAPHAËL GUYARD

Advisor - Strategic Advisory

## MAUD REYMOND

Communications Advisor

## CAMILLE THERON

Advisor - Strategic Advisory

## ÉLISABETH LISTON

Director of Communications  
and Marketing

## GHYSLAIN BOILEAU

Director of Operations  
and Administration

## SARAH ABARRO

Incubation Programmes  
Coordinator

## CAROLINE BÉRUBÉ

Research and Documentation  
Officer in the Social Innovation  
- Terres Noires Project

## STÉPHANIE VIAU

Coordinator - Administration  
and Logistics

## ELENA BEAULIEU

Governance and Special  
Projects Coordinator

## HUGO STEBEN

Director of Capacity  
Building & Incubation

## TIMOTHÉE GUTH

Communication Agent

## VIRGINIE ZINGRAFF

Senior Advisor - Skills Transfer,  
Design and Innovation

## PATRICK DUBÉ

Executive Director

## PÉNÉLOPE SEGUIN

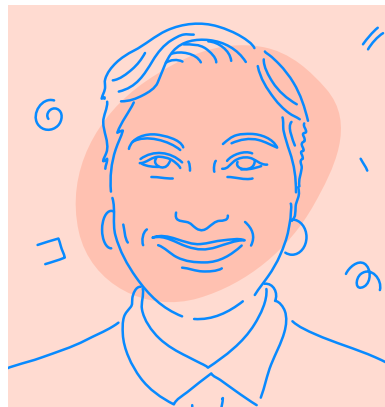
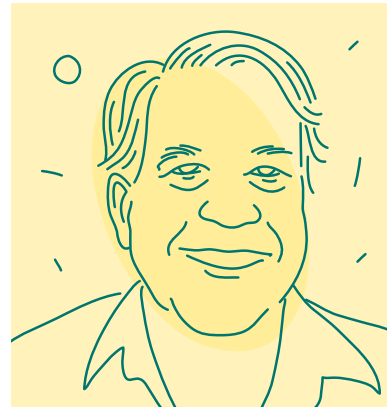
Social Innovation Project  
manager - LICER project

## THOMAS BARACOS

Director of Consultancy

## RÉBECCA PHANEUF-THIBAUT

Project Coordinator in Social  
Innovation - Terres Noires Project



## Acknowledgements



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.

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.

thanks

MIS





STRATEGIC COACHING

EXPERIMENTATION

PROTOTYPE

EVALUATION

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

Maison  
de l'innovation  
sociale

MIS

CURRENT HOME

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