

Becoming Visible 2011

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Dear Reader,

A year of writing regular blog columns has given me priceless joy. It has provided me with an opportunity to share stimulating conversations and encounters and to highlight the work of exceptional friends, colleagues, thinking activists and passionate implementers from all corners and sectors of society.

To prepare this New Year's treat I asked those I profiled or referenced in my 2010 blogs to answer this question:

What would you like to become more visible in 2011?

Fifty-eight responded.

And here they are in full splendour, wisdom and provocation. Have a look at the index of contributors on the next page, meander among them and savour!

And feel free to share. In fact, please do!

May 2011 be your year to make your passions, pursuits and projects more visible.

Blessings

Al Etmanski

Social Innovation Generation Partner

PLAN President and Co-Founder

www.aletmanski.com | www.sigeneration.ca | www.plan.ca

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Contributing Authors

Adam Kahane

Alison Loat

Andre Picard

Alexandra Samuel

Alison Hewitt

Arthur Wood

Bob Williams

Budd Hall

Brian Salisbury

Cairine Macdonald

Caroline Casey

Cheryl Rose

Christian Bason

Cormac Russell

Daphne Nederhost

David Bornstein

David Eaves

David Roche

Delyse Sylvester

Denis Rowley

Don Cayo

Donna Thomson

Gordon Hogg

Gord Tulloch

Gregor Wolbring

Ilse Treurnicht

Ian Curtin

Jacques Dufresne

Jennifer Corriero

Jessica Fraser

Joan Lawrence

John McKnight

John Mighton

John Restakis

Karim Harji

Leighton Jay

Linda Couture

Mark Kingwell

Nancy Hall

Paul Born

Paul Pholeros

Peter Block

Peter Deitz

Peter Nares

Ray Cohen

Richard Bridge

Richard Faucher

Richard Steckel

Sam Sullivan

Sean Moore

Shauna Sylvester

Shawn Smith

Sherri Torjman

Stacey Corriveau

Stefan Lorimer

Stephen Huddart

Steve Sunderland

Ted Jackson

Ted Kuntz

Theressa Etmanski

Tim Brodhead

Tim Draimin

Vickie Cammack

Victor Lachance

Adam Kahane

Author of *Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change*; partner in Reos Partners, and an Associate Fellow at the University of Oxford and the University of Waterloo.

<http://www.reospartners.com>

To co-create new social realities, we have to work with two distinct fundamental forces that are in tension: power and love. This assertion requires an explanation because the words power and love are defined by so many different people in so many different ways. I use two unusual definitions of power and love suggested by theologian and philosopher Paul Tillich. His definitions are ontological: they deal with what and why power and love are, rather than what they enable or produce. I use these definitions because they ring true with my experience of what in practice is required to address tough challenges at all levels: individual, group, community, society.

Tillich defines power as "the drive of everything living to realize itself, with increasing intensity and extensity." So power in this sense is the drive to achieve one's purpose, to get one's job done, to grow. He defines love as "the drive towards the unity of the separated." So love in this sense is the drive to reconnect and make whole that which has become or appears fragmented. Power and love stand at right angles and delineate the space of social change. If we want to get unstuck and to move around this space—if we want to address our toughest challenges—we must understand and work with both of these drives.

Rather than a choice to be made one way or another, power and love constitute a permanent dilemma that must be reconciled continuously and creatively. This reconciliation is easy in theory but hard in practice. Carl Jung doubted whether it was even possible for these two drives to coexist in the same person:

"Where love reigns, there is no will to power; and where the will power is paramount, love is lacking. The one is but the shadow of the other." His student Robert Johnson said, "Probably the most troublesome pair of opposites that we can try to reconcile is love and power. Our modern world is torn to shreds by this dichotomy and one finds many more failures than successes in the attempt to reconcile them."

I have seen many examples of reckless and abusive power without love, and many examples of sentimental and anaemic love without power. I have seen far fewer examples of power with love. Too few of us are capable of employing

power with love. More of us need to learn.

If we are to succeed in co-creating new social realities, we cannot choose between power and love. We must choose both.

Alison Loat

Director of Samara

<http://www.samaracanada.com>

My hope for 2011 (and beyond!) is to make the functioning of our democracy more visible.

We are blessed in Canada to live in a free and vibrant democracy, and it is important for all of us lucky enough to live here to do what we can to preserve and enhance it. This requires reflecting on how we live in our communities every day, not just what happens in our capital cities and during elections.

One way Samara seeks to contribute to our collective understanding is through the development of a Democracy Index¹ that will measure the health of everyday democracy in Canada. This 'report card' will be released annually and aims to be inspirational: to give praise and point out deficiencies, but above all to encourage focus and conversation on the continued improvement of our democracy.

Underlying this index is the belief that a healthy democracy requires having conversations about important issues in public and on purpose, rather than in private and by accident. The index will support decision makers and the public by measuring the function and resulting public perception of three essential components of our democracy: political leadership (including Parliament and political parties), media discourse on public issues and the participation of citizens in public life.

In 2011, we will seek input from a broad set of Canadians in defining what a "healthy democracy" means to them, and what the index should include. Information will be posted on our website, <http://www.samaracanada.com>, and we hope you will visit and contribute to the discussion. With your help, we hope to make our democracy more visible to all of us!

With warm wishes for a healthy and happy 2011.

¹ http://www.samaracanada.com/Democracy_Index

Andre Picard

Public health reporter at The Globe and Mail

<http://www.andrepicard.com>

It is stated repeatedly - to the point of being accepted as fact - that the aging population is driving health-care costs through the roof. Aging baby boomers, we are told grimly, will bankrupt medicare.

It's not true.

It is true is that the proportion of Canadians who are seniors is increasing. Today, 14 per cent of the population is over 65. That will rise to 23 per cent over the next 15 years, according to Statistics Canada.

It is true, too, that per capita health spending increases steadily with age, from a low of \$1,223 at age 5 to \$3,772 at age 65. After that, per capita health spending doubles every decade, hitting \$8,425 at age 75 then \$16,821 at age 85.

Looking at those numbers we assume, intuitively, that we are doomed.

But those numbers tell only part of the story.

Life expectancy is at an all-time high. A boy born today in Canada can expect to live to 80, a girl to 83. And those figures factor in all the people who will die young.

A more relevant figure is the life expectancy of today's seniors. A 65-year-old Canadian male can expect to live another 18 years, and a 65-year-old woman 21 more years.

They will live the large majority of those years in good health. Just look around: There are a lot of healthy, vibrant, 70, 80 and 90 year-olds.

My 90-year-old uncle plays the tuba in a Dixieland band - and one of his favourite gigs is playing for the "old folks" in nursing homes - when he's not sailing, volunteering at church, dancing, hosting dinner parties and travelling. And he's not atypical.

Of course, my uncle won't live forever. Neither will his peers. In the last months (and maybe years) of life they will ring up significant healthcare costs.

But that hardly makes them parasites.

Older Canadians have spent decades paying taxes, contributing to the public insurance plan that we call medicare. How can we begrudge them collecting on their insurance when they have dutifully paid the premiums?

Aside from the individual financial contributions, the Boomers (and those before them) have helped create a health system - and a social welfare system - that is the envy of the world.

They have helped create the Canada we have today, one that is as wealthy and healthy as any nation on Earth.

The lifetime contributions of our seniors need to be not only more visible, but respected and honoured.

Aging is inevitable, but ageism is not. The vilification of seniors - granny-bashing posing as fiscal prudence - offends Canadian values.

Alexandra Samuel

Director of the Social + Interactive Media Centre at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, co-founder of Social Signal, and a blogger for Oprah.com and the Harvard Business Review. She writes about how social media is transforming politics, work and personal lives.

<http://socialsignal.com>

2011 should be the year that we embrace our lives online as part of our real lives. The acronym IRL -- "In Real Life" -- is used as shorthand all over the Internet, to distinguish what happens online from what happens offline.

And it's a lie. If we still refer to the offline world as "real life," it's only a sign of deep denial — or unwarranted shame — about what reality looks like in the 21st century. The Internet's impact on our daily lives, experiences and relationships is real. And yet many of us feel like we don't have a lot of choices about the role of the Internet in our lives. We spend more and more time online, but feel less and less connected. Still, the fact that life online can occasionally surprise and delight us points us towards the truth: it's not the Internet itself that leads to pathologies like cyber-bullying, spam and identity theft. Rather it's our decision — individually and collectively — to separate the Internet from the context, norms and experience that guide human behavior. It's our decision to engage in online interaction as if it were fundamentally different from offline conversation. It's our decision to label the Internet as something — anything! — other than real life. It's time to start living in 21st century reality: a reality that is both on- and offline.

Acknowledge online life as real, and the Internet's transformative potential opens up. My post on 10 reasons to stop apologizing for your online life sketched out what that could look like.

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2010/07/10_reasons_to_stop_apologizing.html

Alison Hewitt

Director, Social Entrepreneurship, MaRS Director, SIG@MaRS

<http://www.marsdd.com>

I have spent my life in the not-for-profit sector; it is core to who I am. It is through the social services sector that I have worked to create change and help those in need. From volunteering at the age of 12 with my home economics teacher to make breakfast (white bread and Cheez Whiz, no less) for kids coming to school hungry; to running shelters for homeless youth or battered women; from launching an innovative program to allow people to access human service information; to advocating for children's health – the not-for profit sector has been my home.

But then something happened to me, something a bit odd in fact: I landed on MaRS. MaRS is a “convergence innovation centre” located in downtown Toronto. It was set up to help commercialize life science research but soon moved to supporting entrepreneurs in the areas of information technology, clean tech and social innovation. The social innovation practice is something that I have been privileged to help design and implement as part of the Social Innovation Generation (SiG) team and as the Director of Social Entrepreneurship at MaRS.

Although MaRS is a not-for-profit organization, most of my colleagues come from the for-profit sector. Our clients in the SiG practice are social entrepreneurs who, interestingly enough, come equally from social enterprises (NFP) and social purpose businesses (FP). And what I've come to conclude is that all those entrepreneurs want the same end goal: systemic, sustainable, social change.

As a result of this work I have come to challenge my own assumptions about the appropriate vehicle for creating social change. I have come to accept that the corporate structure of an organization should not matter as much as the outcome or impact we are able to achieve. In fact, we should aim for a “blended value” proposition in all our work. And it seems this blended value concept is not in fact all that odd. That the term even has an originator, Jed Emerson, and that management gurus like Michael Porter write about it in the Harvard Business Review under the heading: The Big Idea.

So what I want to become more visible in 2011 is the realization that it is possible to achieve both social and economic outcomes in your work. That it is possible to live and work your values. That you should not have to make a choice between sacrificing your values to make money or sacrificing your earning potential by working for an organization that helps people. The choice is yours, and – if you look hard enough - you will be supported in your efforts to both make money and make a difference. Regardless of your choice of corporate structure, I'll be standing right behind you.

Arthur Wood

Founding partner, Total Impact Advisors

<http://www.totalimpactadvisors.com>

Eleven, eleven is generally remembered as the time and date the first world war came to a close. The certainties of the Victorian age were over. 2011 could mark a similar watershed in how development and social finance are seen. Here is a shot at eleven trends to look out for - Eleven for Eleven

1. Money will grow increasingly tight - watch for the pain - with Governments retrenching from traditional aid and grant models. International development aid will be somewhat sheltered as hard military power becomes an increasingly ineffective tool. The outstanding question: whether innovation will be allowed to empower communities or whether the traditional (and sometimes corrupt) top down status quo grant and aid models will prevail
2. Increased focus on new innovative development roles of the Sovereign Wealth Funds - specifically the Norwegians and Singaporeans
3. The Big Society (in the UK) will get off to a better than expected start, however it will face major scaling problems unless a facilitating finance and legal structure is put in place. The Charity Commissions report due in Q2 will be a critical turning point, with "charitisation" and hybrid structures potentially becoming a driving force. The social experiment in the UK is more radical than people think
4. Globally look for innovative finance solutions designed to leverage capital to come to the fore. Examples include Insurance / Credit Guarantee structures as well as mechanisms such as the new Social Impact Bond that allow the capture of future cash flow
5. Systemically these innovations will be crystallised in the first tentative steps to full outcome based models - encouraging collaboration. However watch for a developing political debate with the status quo arguing that the funds should go directly to them. This would be wrong, as it would ensure

- the forces of creative destruction are not at play in the social sector. Innovation and private capital will be denied its potentially pivotal role.
6. In the US as budgets finally get pared backward, Foundations face the risk of being criticised for how they allocate funds. The flash points may potentially be the Race, the Rural and Education agendas. Will a closed Investment trust framework be enough - or should we also apply modern capital and fiduciary tools to these social endeavours?
 7. In the US, ironically given Federal Obama care, look for local back door health care privatisation driven by local state and municipal governments being short of money and having to sell off assets.
 8. All the above will further drive the metrics debate, as well as the need for new hybrid legal vehicles. These will redefine a new social contract. Will the voluntary not-for-profit sector accept the challenge to define its own terms of engagement with the for-profit world? Or will its own obsession with silver bullets allow the corporate sector to define the agenda?
 9. Look for the continued growth of new intermediaries who act as the agents of local social entrepreneurs and social enterprises ensuring that the community and local innovation receives a fairer deal
 10. The Banks and Corporations will face further pressure to engage in the Impact Investing field, and will respond. They will see it as a 'bottom of the market' opportunity, but will need new intermediaries to aggregate supply and the different sources of capital.
 11. Watch for a money laundering scandal. Philanthropy along with money launderers are the only two global players who happily make a loss and where money in philanthropy's case is being passed from two largely unregulated markets - in open architecture models

Bob Williams

Board member of Vancity Credit Union, former BC Cabinet Minister and British Columbia's most accomplished social entrepreneur

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/02/bob-williams-british-columbias-olympian-social-entrepreneur.html>

Probably a dozen years ago, when I was approaching 65, a bright, stimulating colleague said to me, "Bob, have you noticed that at a certain age you become invisible to most people?" I tended to agree, but I asked AI to explain himself.

"Well", he said, "at a certain age in our society we tend to be invisible – we're not relevant for most of the people out there – you know – at the end of the week, an easy-going Friday afternoon at the office when most of your colleagues are going out for a drink, or get together – you're never invited, you're irrelevant."

My friend Al was as bright a guy as you'd ever meet; he was interested in almost everything despite having a highly specialized PhD. At one point I even hired Al to analyze a computer scam at one of our big Crown corporations; he figured it out in no time, of course. But more than all that, Al was a keen student of the human condition, with a lovely sense of humour. It was great fun to just spend time with Al and open up about anything and everything; and we often did. He was as stimulating as you get...but he was becoming invisible.

The invisibility seemed to be more the case when Al and Peggy decided to retire in Victoria. There was still the occasional phone call, making the link to his former world, but the calls became more infrequent. A few years ago, they ceased. I was remiss in not making a simple phone call; I feared the worst. Al had become invisible for me as well.

Recently, when Al Etmanski called, urging me to write a page or two about what I wanted to become visible in the coming year, I agreed – you can't say no to Al. But I puzzled about what to write, then realized that my friend's invisibility at a certain age was the subject.

There had been recent incidents in my own life when I was dismissed as irrelevant because of my age, and I reflected again about my friend and his invisibility. I realized I must call, fearing he might have died in the meantime. Al's wife answered the phone and I asked for Al, explaining who was calling, and he was there!

Al was cheery and pleased to hear from me, remembering some of the old times. I explained that I wanted to write about the invisibility of our elders. Al laughed and said, "I could walk nude down Yates Street and never be noticed". Towards the end of our conversation I asked Al how old he was now. It was then that he stammered a little and chuckled that he better hand me back "to the fountain of all knowledge", his wife, Peggy. That was the reason he had not called.

These past few years Al had been slipping slowly into dementia. I talked with Peggy again and wished Al the best.

The invisibility was now almost complete.

I guess that's what I'm looking for in the coming year...the end of invisibility.

Budd Hall

Founding director of the Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria.

<http://web.uvic.ca/ocbr/>

In 2011, I want to make visible stories about our universities, communities and social movements creating and using knowledge together in new ways that will support organising for change and creating space for collective action for a more just, sustainable, inclusive and joyful world. I want to see stories on how our collective capacities to 'name the world' as Paulo Freire said, can make a difference to everyone including whom Gandhi referred to, using the Sanskrit word, as 'Antyodya', the last person.

In the city where I live, Victoria, Canada, a wealthy city in a wealthy country, there are 1500 women and men (in a population of 250,000) who do not have a place to sleep at night. In spite of the creation of the Coalition Against Homelessness, the numbers of people who suffer from poor health, violence, substance abuse as a result of poverty and homelessness continues at about the same level.

In India one of the fastest growing economies in the world, 600 million people live without literacy, adequate water and sanitation, poor health facilities and insecure food security.

Indigenous people in North and South America, Africa and Asia have dramatically lower life expectancy and higher levels of health difficulties than the non-indigenous members of their communities. Their languages are disappearing daily and with the languages, extraordinary parts of our human knowledge base and culture.

Climate change is having a more dramatic impact on the poor and marginalized persons in all our communities; one only has to look at the earthquake in Haiti or the floods in Pakistan to see how natural disasters impact the poor.

Concerns with the protection of the wealthy from risk, the protection of access to non-renewable resources and water occupy the minds of vast numbers of the world's inhabitants and a dramatically disproportionate level of government budgets.

The neo-liberal global economic machine produces wealth in historically unheard of quantities but exacerbates the gap between the rich and the poor both within nations and amongst nations.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's exhaustive study, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, on inequality and its impacts around the world is a fairly recent study showing that on almost every index of quality of life there is a strong correlation between a country's level of economic inequality and its social outcomes. Communities and nations that are more equal, are healthier and more productive. Communities and nations where levels of inequality are highest have the worst performance in an entire range of social outcomes. And what is more, the evidence shows us that both the rich and the poor fare better in societies with less inequality. This is true whether one speaks of mortality and morbidity, educational outcomes, mental health, obesity, violence, or the status of minorities.

It is the unequal world however that we live in. It is a world where greed continues to be celebrated and economic growth stubbornly put forward time and time again as the salvation. This is the world that in our work as researchers, as teachers, as activists, as scholars and intellectuals, as Higher Education administrators we must challenge.

The Portuguese sociologist Boaventura De Santos Souza speaks of the desirability of an 'ecology of knowledges' whereby the diverse knowledges of all peoples from all locations and all spaces will be respected, acknowledged and acted upon. Fortunately we have many examples already existing of these more inclusive, democratic and movement oriented uses of knowledge. When Nigel Livingstone's teams of adaptive technologists at the University of Victoria create a new device to assist a young person with limited abilities to function more fully in the world, we are witnessing the use of advanced scientific knowledge combined with the deep personal knowledge of the differently abled young person who together create a new technology for fuller participation.

When researchers and food security activists on Vancouver Island come together to find solutions to producing and distributing Island-based foods as part of the UVic Office of Community-Based Research they are using their collective knowledge to accelerate the pace of change.

In June of 2010, hundreds of activists and engaged scholars gathered in Montreal to imagine a new Canadian Knowledge Commons. You are welcome to check out their Ning site and move things forward.

In May of 2011, perhaps as many as 1000 community activists and academics will gather in Waterloo, Ontario for CUExpo2011. It will be a celebration of the emergent knowledge democracy movement. Lots of time to sign up.

At the world level, many networks are working together to change the policy

agendas and funding opportunities which would be more supportive of a knowledge democracy movement. The Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research has recently facilitated a Global Dialogue on South-North Collaboration in dramatically new forms of community and university partnerships.

The stories are already here. They are in our families, our places of work and community centres. We want more visibility for these new ways of using our knowledge collectively to, as Nelson Mandela has said, "Turn the World Around"

Brian Salisbury

Director, Strategic Planning at Community Living British Columbia

<http://www.communitylivingbc.ca>

Over the past decade, the importance of belonging, contribution and citizenship has been emphasized. However, community living faces many complex challenges, including growing demand in the face of finite resources and practices and support models that have outlived their usefulness. To address these and other issues, the sector must reach beyond its own walls and more effectively engage in relationships, partnerships and collaborations with the larger world of business, non-profits, charities, and various levels of government to maximize opportunities to grow and improve. Such an approach can broadly be defined as "co-production", a concept popularized in the UK and Europe over the last two years.

"Co-Production™" is about working together for a strong community and more effective social services. It starts with the idea that services are successful only when the people being served are involved, a principle applicable to almost every field of service. There are five core values of "co-production" that can help create a renewed sense of membership, belonging and joint ownership in positive outcomes:

1. People served, their supporters, and other stakeholders, are seen as
1. valued assets
2. Their contributions are valued and rewarded
3. Reciprocity leads to mutually rewarding support and stronger outcomes all
round
4. All stakeholders, including people in local communities contribute in ways
that build a web of mutual support
5. There is respect for what each person brings to the table

"Co-production" stands in strong contrast to the almost visible gulf between professional helpers, people served, and local communities that often exists

today.

Upon close examination, you will find:

- Professionals and service providers typically operate within systems that do not solicit the active support of those they are trying to help
- People compete for scarce services and consume them in a sort of learned helplessness
- Communities feel disconnected and powerless, leading to suspicion of the large institutions around them – they are seemingly unaware that they hold the key to making needed change
- People with money, or systems, often pay for the services that family, neighbourhoods and communities used to provide.

These realities must change for community living to become a resilient, adaptable sector. "Co-production" and the collaborative partnerships and processes this involves, offers a way forward.

While many facets of social finance and social innovation have direct parallels to the underpinnings of co-production, I think that the latter concept provides a more accessible framework for people to understand where the more complex world of social finance / social innovation might fit.

Cairine Macdonald

Selected as one of the 100 most powerful women in Canada in 2010, former Deputy Minister. Housing and Social Development and just recently appointed as Deputy Minister, Environment, Province of British Columbia

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/11/cairine-macdonald-one-of-canadas-most-powerful-and-loving-women.html>

I saw Tina Turner perform in concert when she was 62 – a survivor who rose to all of life's challenges. Tina, in her raucous and raspy voice, demands to know "what's love got to do with it?" In terms of leadership, whether in the private, public or not for profit sector, the answer is everything.

As Kahlil Gibran put it: "Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love, but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy. For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half a man's hunger."

As a woman in leadership, I early formed the view that: "You earn your stripes

as a woman. I don't think it's automatic. It's certainly not based on the camaraderie, back-slapping kind of thing. It's really a lot more... you work hard, you demand results, you get stuff done and you also care about people." So it is not a touchy-feely type of love – rather more robust, results focused and outcome driven.

One of the key strategic drivers is how to make the circle bigger – for everyone – with a focus on inclusion. My mother taught us a poem by Edwin Markham, for times when we were feeling left out of things, which can also serve as a call to action for leaders:

*He drew a circle to shut me out...
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.*

Leadership, to be effective, must be inclusive - it must open and embrace all of the employees and not single out those who are unique in some way. At the same time, it must be open and embrace all employees including those who are unique. The best management is management that makes the circle bigger and invites employees to take their places in the circle. Good management for women is also good management for men.

Love is not an easy conversation to introduce in the workplace. My former ADM Allison Bond recently wrote in her own blog about this love thing: "Cairine's hallmark was to 'love the customer'. In the first few months she started at what was then the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, she stood by that phrase – 'love the customer' – despite the clear discomfort of her executive team. We came to understand that loving the customer meant so many things: understanding our clients, believing in our clients, and sometimes making decisions that would be hard for clients in the short term, but so much better in the long term. We weren't expected to like all of our clients, but we were expected to look at them, and our work, with fresh eyes. Cairine had a knack for pushing the envelope, and her leadership team."

At the same time, it is love that helps determine the tenacity of the leader in the face of obstacles. During the economic downturn over the past few years, Daniel Goleman's question from *Primal Leadership* has resonated: "Is there enough that I love about this company and these people to keep me here through the tough work coming up?"

Also central to leadership is taking care of yourself – Rainer Maria Rilke speaks about work with both deep perception and true beauty: "Like so many other things, people have also misunderstood the position love has in life... those who

want to have deep love in their lives must collect for it and save for it and gather honey." I love that "collect for it and save for it and gather honey".

Leadership makes a difference when it is visible – we speak of "walking the talk". As Lewis Mumford said: "Men become susceptible to ideas, not by discussion and argument, but by seeing them personified and by loving the person who so embodies them."

It comes down to that quotation by Markham: "Love and I had the wit to win: We drew a circle that took him in".

Caroline Casey

Founder of Kanchi and the O2 Ability Awards, international speaker and adventurer

<http://www.kanchi.org>

My answer is definitive and without competition – the value of the one billion people in the world touched by disability.

10 years ago on the 16th of January 2001 I began an extraordinary 1000 km journey across India on an elephant called Kanchi, which is now the name of our organisation. The journey had several aims outside my own ambition to regain my confidence when finally faced with the fact that I was partially sighted. The most vital one being to reframe and reimagine disability in a positive way - moving away from the traditional stereotypes of charity, pity, dependency and need to one centred on a person, their abilities, value and unique potential.

My bid to become Mowgli of Walt Disney's Jungle Book started a 10 year passion to see this happen; one that I never for one moment expected would take up just about every waking hour of my life these last 10 years. But the more I began to work on this, the more I discovered that not only, was the disability demographic totally misunderstood but also, shockingly we were virtually absent from the global agenda, with the exception of the UN Convention.

It is hard to understand why, but at leadership levels across the world, be it the World Economic Forum, Clinton Global Initiative, and TED where I recently spoke in Washington, not only does the word disability remain absurdly absent from discussions but it is also rare to see a person with a disability on a panel. I often think it is because unlike other social issues, disability does not have a Bill Gates, a Nelson Mandela or a Bono advocating with and on the behalf of this community. Disability isn't even a millennium development goal. Most of THE most powerful foundations in the world do not fund disability initiatives or see the

interconnections of disability and other social issues like education and poverty.

I believe we are just about to reach a tipping point and by 2012, burgeoned by the ageing demographic and the advances in assistive technology – disability will be like the new green. Society, business and policy makers will want to harness and include the disability demographic – in a sense its D time or the D advantage!

My organization wants to lead a global disability business movement. If we can fundamentally change the way the business community works with and values people with disabilities, society will naturally follow. Discrimination and exclusion will no longer make sense. This year Kanchi began the globalization of our intensive business programme with The Ability Awards. I don't imagine we will stop until every company in the world becomes an Ability Company.

When we gave our organization the name "Kanchi" it was the most appropriate name we could imagine – because disability is like society's elephant in the room. I am hoping that this name will soon no longer be fitting and that the elephant will finally leave the room so that there is space for everyone to be included!

Cheryl Rose

Accomplished educator, pioneer in the development o Community Service Learning in universities throughout Canada, and colleague at Social Innovation Generation - Waterloo

<http://sig.uwaterloo.ca/profile/cheryl-rose>

Choosing just one thing for a wish to become more visible in 2011 is hard - there seems to be so much that begs to be revealed out there. So I asked myself to take the question out of my head, pull it in closer to my heart and listen. And suddenly, I realized the thread that runs through so many of my own hopes for this world; may passion become visible.

Passion seems to be a bit of an embarrassment to some these days and gets hidden away as not mature, not practical, not logical. I say it's the core of any chance for change. I recognize it in others and I instinctively know it's central to the beginning and the sustenance for all that we're hoping is possible for our communities. I'm thinking of the young people I meet every day that hold a deep passion for a better world - may their passion be encouraged. I'm thinking of the hundreds of academics on university campuses who are passionate about thinking and working with others to help solve real problems – may their passion

be celebrated.

I'm also thinking of the politicians who are passionate about helping change the status quo – may their passion be emboldened. I'm thinking of the corporate executives who see much more than the bottom line and hold a passion for new ways of thinking about 'profit' – may their passion be recognized. I'm thinking of all those who work creatively and passionately in our stretched social sector – may their passion be purposeful.

And I'm thinking of my own passion for meaningful social change. Just as it is for everyone from time to time, my passion succumbs to frustration, hopelessness, fear, and just plain weariness - may my passion, and yours, be kindled and burn clear and bright.

We live in a time when transformative change seems possible. Our passions, yours and mine, are beacons that light the way on these new paths we're exploring. Keep passion alive in 2011; uncover it and let it shine!

Christian Bason

Head of MindLab, a unit for citizen-centred innovation in Denmark

<http://www.mind-lab.dk/en>

"Paradigm shift". "Eye-opener." "Like holding up a mirror".

These were some of the statements I heard when I recently interviewed public managers in Australia, the UK and Denmark about how they have conducted projects based on co-creation – using ethnographic research and design methods to understand how citizens in practice experience public services. In each instance, the managers had achieved profound new insight by gaining an outside-in view of their own organization's practices.

In Australia, a manager of a family assistance program took part in interviews and participant observation of at-risk families. She discovered how her own agencies' program in many respects failed to help these chaotic families. Through the ethnographic research however, she found that with new kinds of interventions – such as pairing troubled families with the 'positive deviant families' who, in spite of adverse conditions, had overcome their challenges, it was possible to foster truly thriving families. Check the Australia Centre for Social Innovation's family by family project to learn more.

<http://www.tacsi.org.au/family-by-family-getting-the-message-right>

In a UK hospital, nurses discovered that they had for years essentially been humiliating patients by taking their weight on a scale placed visibly in the waiting room. When design researchers relayed citizen's own personal stories about what it felt like to be measured in full view of strangers, the nurses immediately moved the weight to a more private location – and as soon as the story spread to other hospital units, their co-workers did the same. See how the UK National Health Service works with design methods to improve patient's experience in hospitals.

<http://www.service-design-network.org/content/nhs-institute-innovation-and-improvement>

In Denmark, the Industrial Injury Board, which assists citizens with work injuries, realized through in-home interviews with injured citizens that by sending them 25 or more letters in bureaucratic, technical and legal language, the agency added to their confusion and dependency, essentially making the very people they tried to help even more sick. See MindLab's cases about perceptions of government bureaucracy.

<http://www.mind-lab.dk/en/cases/vaek-med-boevlet-for-unge-arbejdsskadede>

In all these cases, getting to really know citizens' own experience, creates the insight that there must be a better way – and triggers new ideas about how that way might be shaped. Insight opens up a new opportunity space. This is the essence of innovation.

As we pass into the year 2011, I wish that public managers across the globe become better at generating the kinds of insight that enable new action that is more valuable to our citizens, business and communities.

Cormac Russell

Faculty member of the Asset Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) and Managing Director of Nurture Development an Irish training and development agency. He works internationally advising governments, organizations and communities on how to re-negotiate the Social Contract in a way that strengthens community life and social justice.

<http://www.nurturedevelopment.ie>

Bill Mollison reminds us that assets can be thought of through the lens of two basic questions:

"What can I get from this land, or person?

or

*What does this person, or land, have to give if I cooperate with them?
Of these two approaches, the former leads to war and waste, the latter to peace
and plenty."*

Bill Mollison, co-founder of Permaculture

The latter quest(ion) – especially if we interpret ‘cooperate’ to mean ‘share gifts reciprocally’- offers a useful way to identify and connect community strengths and assets and, as Mollison suggests, leads to sustainability. The former provides-if the combined histories of colonialism, and capitalism were to be written in one sentence and in the form of a question- a concise history of human greed.

Therefore, the manner in which we identify and respect individual and community assets is critical to the resulting social outcomes. In this sense the supra-asset is being mindful in how one identifies, connects, and mobilizes assets. The heart of the matter and the key to Asset Based Community Development is our connections and relationships. This is why asset mapping is not the critical action in capacity centred community building, connecting is. Connections among citizens leads to citizen power – that is the ability of people to address their own needs and to define when they need help from outside agencies.

Institutional and agency ‘asset mapping’ is on the increase in an era of funding cutbacks. There is a danger that asset based work will be used by some to legitimate state based global efficiency drives and austerity measures.

In doing so, albeit unintentionally, agencies are starting with Mollison’s first question, which, given the manner in which state funding is typically dispersed - creates competition, duplication and displacement of effort and in many instances reinforces dependency on outside aid as opposed to citizen empowerment.

One of Father Moses Coady’s great calls to action as Founder of the Antigonish Cooperative Movement in Nova Scotia was ‘we will secure what we need, by using what we have’.

Citizens expect of systems things they can never achieve regardless of how well resourced they are. From church to government to the free market, generation after generation have had to learn that ultimately systems can’t do our living or dying for us. At best they can do for us what we can’t do for ourselves, but as citizens we are at liberty to define so much more of our lives than we currently realize. More often than not, we have what we need to secure what we have not: bridging the gap calls us into a new relationship with assets.

This is not to say that Governments should be let off the hook as it were, but

rather that Governments are more limited than any one person may know, and citizens individually and collectively are more powerful than most proclaim. In the final analysis then democracy is not about casting a vote, which in fact is the act of handing ones power over to another, but about stepping up and taking a powerful place in a community with the audacity to reinvent democracy.

Daphne Nederhost

Founder of Sawaworld

<http://www.sawaworld.org>

In 2011, my energy will be focused on being an ongoing global advocate for the insight that solutions to extreme poverty can be found among the people who live in extreme poverty. During the last 50 years, over one trillion dollars have been spent on foreign aid by the rich countries to solve extreme poverty for the approximately 1 billion people that still live on one dollar per day or less. Very little progress has been made. In fact the renowned author, Dambisa Moyo, in the book Dead Aid states that "across the continent of Africa, the recipients of this aid are not better off as a result of it, but worse—much worse ":

In 2011, the organization that I founded Sawa World (formerly Sawa Global) wants to make it visible to the world that the solutions to ending extreme poverty already exist. Leaders living in extreme poverty have these solutions right now! Sawa works with these local champions to ensure they can grow and replicate their solutions and thrive free of charity and foreign aid. If the international community wants to see global poverty eradicated they must recognize, learn from and work with the innovations that come from among people who face crippling poverty everyday. Imagine, creating a world free of extreme poverty, led by those living in it: a Sawa World.

David Bornstein

Journalist and author who specializes in writing about social innovation

<http://www.dowser.org>

I'd like to see the aspects of the world that are healthy, corrective and resilient become more visible. The view of the world that we receive from the media -- the news and entertainment -- is disheartening and damagingly skewed. There is simply no reason why people should be inundated with stories about problems, scandals, violence, corruption every day -- and only hear about potential solutions now and then, almost as an afterthought. It makes no sense.

Journalists don't help society to self correct when they expose its shortcomings every day -- no more than parents help their children become better human beings by criticizing them every morning over breakfast. For the world to improve, yes, we certainly need to understand the problems, but equally important, we need to understand what can be done to solve those problems. We need to see the positive pathways that are opening up.

Behaviour change is aspirational. We change most readily when we can move towards a desirable vision, not when we are repelled by an ugly one. So: what are the creative, realistic ideas and models emerging today to reshape the world? What steps are available for each and every person to make a powerful and rewarding contribution to the world?

There are so many opportunities today. We're going through a social innovation renaissance, with the birth of millions of new organizations attacking social problems in new ways. We're witnessing the emergence of a new breed of social-purpose businesses. We're seeing people come together across sectors and fields and national boundaries to construct new systems to attack poverty, deliver energy and health care, protect the environment, make society more inclusive. These bright spots are not the exceptions. But they are a hidden history. One that needs to become more visible if its potential is to be fully actualized.

David Eaves

Public policy entrepreneur, open government activist and negotiation expert.

<http://www.eaves.ca>

Greater comfort with decline and death.

It sounds shocking – and I'm being a little over the top. But I mean it.

We are surrounded by institutions, business models and processes that serve us poorly. To me, the definitive example is the Yellow Pages. Here is an unsolicited "service" that is forced upon millions of Canadians, consumes enormous resources to create and distribute, and that is increasingly obsolete with the rise of 411 and the Internet.

Indeed, the stacks of unwanted yellow pages in residential apartment buildings across the country have become alarmingly large. The Yellow Pages are quickly becoming the definitive metaphor of our times: a business that can continue to exist and consume vast resources long after it serves individual or even a

collective good. Inertia, not innovation, is the core value.

We can do better. But it means letting things die.

So what I'd like is to be more visible in 2011 is death. For Canadians everywhere to look at their lives, their governments, their business or place of work and ask the metaphorical question: What's the Yellow Pages of my organization?

This is a hard question. And it challenges us in many ways. Sometimes it may mean we have to stop doing the thing we have become good at, or comfortable with. But we live in such an exciting era where so many new things are possible. But this will only matter if we get comfortable with letting go of the old. As we manage a scarcity of money, resources and time, being able to do this is only going to become more important. It isn't easy – but the alternative, poorly allocated and inefficiently used resources – is even worse.

David Roche

Inspirational humorist, motivational speaker and performer.

<http://www.davidroche.com>

I want your own true beauty to be more visible to you, seen in bits and pieces and flashes until it is well established. Then I want you to flaunt it so it is visible to others.

Last spring I was learning video blogging on my laptop's webcam. I found myself looking at my own face and its disfigurement from 15 inches away. Full color. Hi def.

I did not recognize what I saw as human. I could only focus on one part at a time. Like in a Picasso painting, parts did not fit together. Crooked mouth, bulging left cheek, eye too large. (Nose in the middle, good—a familiar reference point.) Eye, spotted like a dog's eye. I had a vague sense of panic. I began to understand that what I saw was making a crude attempt to be a face. I was revolted and frightened. I did not know what was behind that apparition.

When I accepted that it was me, I flashed with hatred and anger that such a face was pretending to be human. Raw visceral rage, and stronger rage that it was my own face and that I lived inside it and I was the one who was pretending to be human.

I was repulsed by my own appearance.

My face had popped in its horrible reality into my consciousness like a jack in the box.

I closed the laptop and retreated inside my own stunned and silent self.

I am not used to looking at my own image. In the morning mirror I ignore the disfigurement. I look in my eyes and smile. I can't even tell you where the bulging purple veins are on my face except in the most general way.

When I did talk to my wife, Marlena, about what had happened, she said, "Honey, you have built your soul inside yourself. That is what is real, that is who you are. You just slipped away from that for a few seconds. And you know what? You are strong enough to deal with what happened."

She was right. My sense of myself is creativity, empathy, imagination, all qualities on the inside.

I told a friend, a quite attractive woman, what I had experienced. She said, "Oh, I feel that way every morning."

Her statement surprised me, but as I talked more I found out that my reaction to myself was not that strange. The unusual aspect was that it was unusual because I do retain a strong sense of myself as a person of value, as someone who is attractive.

I had to make the effort to remember who I am and as I did my own value became visible to me again.

Perhaps my story will encourage you to make that same effort. I promise that as you do, your own beauty will become more visible to you. And to the world.

Delyse Sylvester

Director of Community with Ashoka's Changemakers. She lives with her partner, Lex Baas, and their two teenage daughters in Nelson BC.

<http://www.changemakers.com> | <http://www.ashoka.org> |

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/11/a-british-columbia-jewel-at-the-g-20-seoul-summit.html>

"No matter what party you support, you need to put in the hours to get the

leadership you want."

Even at an early age my mother couldn't fool me. Her non-partisan advice was a thin disguise for her Big 'L' liberal loyalties. I'm sure she envisioned the five of us around the table in little red sweaters stitched with Trudeau's profile, Liberal pamphlets pressed to our chests. As she spoke she eyed my father suspiciously-never quite sure of his pragmatic left or right of centre leanings.

The core message was to be a Changemaker. Like their chosen community organizations, my parents believed that government required our time, voice and finances to express and deliver on our collective values. The more we commit, the more opportunities we create for ourselves and the generations to come.

Increasingly, this childhood memory is more disturbing than uplifting. While my siblings and I grew up trading local and national policy stats and political leaders like hockey cards, I now find myself much less of a believer.

My numbing political sensibilities are about perceiving government now as a closed system with an increasing obsession for strategies to disengage. The thought of an election doesn't conjure up my mom's rally cry but makes me want to stay home and watch Saturday Night Live's Julian Assange skits.

I know there is no golden era of tri-partnership of civil society, business and government working in an open system of participation and impact. But we benefit from the legacies born from such collaborations – public education; healthcare; social service programs; the United Nations. All of which are suffering from an absence of our creative, collaborative roots.

Without each other at the table we are increasingly insular and risk adverse – talking amongst ourselves more fervently, but frankly with less conviction and dramatically waning creativity.

But I see hope.

As AI wrote last month I participated at the G20 Seoul Summit with an inspiring group of young leaders (and old) from Ashoka's Changemakers, the Rockefeller Foundation and global business and government leaders. The speed and transparency of our work together surprised us.

Our challenge: to unlock social finance for the developing world's small and medium sized enterprises chronically denied credit, loans and investment largely because of gender, race and class.

Within four months world leaders shared the G20 stage with 14 inspiring,

scalable innovations. In short order governments had their models to invest over 550 million dollars in incremental steps toward stabilizing the global economy. Civil society had agreement at the highest level of power to a social change agenda. And business had their opportunity to grow "the missing middle".

What we experienced was a collaboration that didn't require us to be convinced of each other's 'isms.' The innovations brought us to common cause not our words or past misdeeds.

We are still eyeing each other suspiciously across the table - as we should. Can government deliver the funding and do so in a transparent and accountable manner? Can the organizations deliver on their promises, continually innovating and avoiding corruption as they scale? Can the business and banking sector demonstrate through their investment that multiple bottom line is good for business?

My hope for 2011 is that we make change in partnership - more quickly and more profoundly than in the past sluggish years. Open sourcing hundreds of known and little known solutions to address other pernicious challenges in healthcare, prison reform, climate change and aboriginal education. You name it. What we need is a few months and a commitment to show up at the table.

Denis Rowley

Social entrepreneur, disability activist and the Director of Equal Futures, Scotland.

<http://www.equalfutures.org.uk>

There is an apocryphal story told by the great philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn about Herschel and the discovery of Uranus. Uranus was the first new planet discovered in a very long time. The other six planets - the earth plus the five planets that are visible to the naked eye were known to many pre-modern civilizations.

Now the strange thing is that many astronomers actually saw a celestial object in the sky where Uranus is. Each of them looked through their telescopes and it registered on their retina – it was physically visible but they did not see it! Their understanding of the solar system did not allow them to believe what was there in front of their eyes. Even Herschel was initially unconvinced, but once it was acknowledged as a new planet it changed everyone's view of the universe. Once they believed, they saw the universe in a new light. Astronomers using equipment that had been available before started seeing asteroids and making other new discoveries.

In our work with people with disabilities in 2011, I'd like to learn from that. If we believe in and proclaim our belief in people's talents and contributions we will all make more and more discoveries – not least about ourselves.

In Poland a couple of years ago I met a man with learning disabilities who made me re-examine my view of the world. I visited a day centre and fell in love with a sculpture made by one of the artists - a man whose name I couldn't even pronounce! The artist, Przemislaw Szymanski, heard of my interest and arranged to catch up with me later that day. With the help of two supporters and using his two walking sticks, he placed himself formally in front of me with the sculpture cradled in his left arm. He smiled, bowed rather courteously and said in English - "For the visiting professor, a gift". It was moment of high emotion and one that made me question just who had the disability and who was the gifted one?

This year I'd like everyone to be able to see and enjoy each other's gifts and contributions. When we make people's hidden gifts visible we all gain and are reminded that there is no "them" only "us".

Don Cayo

Columnist at The Vancouver Sun

<http://communities.canada.com/vancouver.sun/blogs/cayo/default.aspx>

I'd like to see a little more civility — well, maybe a lot more — in public discourse in 2011, especially on the Internet.

The web offers, on one hand, an incredible way to give a voice to a broad cross-section of society in discussion of the issues of the day. It can draw in new ideas, or promote and refine old ones. It lets people to build on each other's ideas and insights. And it can go some distance to identify where consensus might be found.

But these positive aspects are at risk when a discussion becomes dominated by the agenda-driven, the mean-spirited and the ignorant. Interactive Internet discussions too easily degenerate into mere mud-slinging.

I see this too often on my own Vancouver Sun blog, which deals with a wide range of issues of the day. Many commenters — I'm pleased to note this is a growing percentage — weigh in thoughtfully. No matter whether they endorse or dispute my own views, many offer really good ideas. But others seem not to have read what I or other posters have written — or at least not to care. They lash out

with harsh language and claims that bear no relation to demonstrable fact. My fear is the tone of such comments will chase away those who have something worthy to say.

The best answer is education, not censorship — though, in my case, I don't allow comments that I judge to contain libel or grossly bad taste. But my hope is that more and more Canadians come to see the strength of civility in discourse and debate, and to understand that name-calling merely entrenches what people already think and does nothing to bring about a meeting of minds.

Donna Thomson

International advisor for PLAN Institute and the author of *The Four Walls of My Freedom*

<http://donnathomson.blogspot.com/>

Recently, my husband and I went to a London theatre to see a musical comedy version of H.G. Wells' story, "The Invisible Man". As I gasped at the illusions and laughed at the double entendres, I felt a sense of unease. Here was a man who, as the result of an experiment gone awry, became an outcast by virtue of his invisibility. As his cries of anguish grew louder and his expressions of existential vengeance ever more daring, I admired the stagecraft, but felt sorry for the protagonist.

For I know what it is to be invisible. If there is no hope of reprieve from such a state, it is not pleasant. What do I hope will be more visible in 2011? Me. I hope to be more visible – to myself, to my family, to my friends and to anyone who cares to look at me.

I am a mother of a 22 year old young man with severe disabilities and complex health care needs. My son Nicholas is smart, funny, charming and optimistic. I have written at length about my son's talents and contributions but here, I would like to reflect on what Eva Feder Kittay calls "The Transparent Self of the Dependency Worker". This invisible person (often a mother) is described by Kittay as "a self through whom the needs of another are discerned, a self that, when it looks to gauge its own needs, sees first the needs of another."¹ Feminists will recoil at such a servile description of caring. But in the world of love, families and vulnerability, it is a necessary given.

Kittay looks hard at the physical assistance that we offer others and calls it

¹ Kittay, Eva Feder "Love's Labor", Routledge, New York and London, 1999, Pg. 51

dependency work. My son requires twenty-four hour a day dependency care and for eighteen years of his life, I managed to perform it with relatively little assistance. I felt what he felt, thought what he thought, and I made it my job to broker his relationship with teachers, doctors, nurses and playmates.

Caring well for a person with profound disabilities, especially someone who does not have spoken language requires the carer to sublimate her ego, her interests and much of herself. My point here is not that this form of invisibility is in itself a bad thing. Mothers love their children and want to take good care of them. Rather, I want to point out that apart from rendering the carer vulnerable to exploitation, having some opportunity for the expression of selfhood is a critical element of wellbeing for anyone. What is bad about transparent caring is if there is no hope of reprieve. For the past four years, my role with Nicholas has changed from dependency worker to natural mother. I have written a book called "The Four Walls of My Freedom" that allowed me to voice my ideas, experience and suggestions for policymakers. But I still catch myself wondering how I really feel about this or that. I am working hard to reconnect with myself.

In 2011, I hope that the inevitability of human interdependence will reveal itself, allowing more careers in Canada and around the world to receive the community supports they require to become visible to themselves, their families, their communities and their countries.

Gordon Hogg

MLA for Surrey-White Rock, British Columbia

<http://www.gordonhogg.com>

Charles Taylor refers to the constructive role that imagination plays in shaping our sense of how things are - our common fund of stories as well as our learned discourses.

Daniel Kahneman refers to our remembering selves as storytellers. What we keep from our experience is a story - our story.

The two might be helping us to find the common ground of belief that binds us all together; the bond that legitimates action and makes action possible. The kind of action that is founded in care, nurtured with passion and then liberated with the exhilaration of our daily lives. Daily lives - where we have our experiences, shape our memories and develop our stories.

May we have the courage to shape our stories as a reflection of that goodness that lives in each of us. May we respect and honour that goodness in ourselves

and in others. May "2011" be another step in our understanding of the beauty, purity and perfection that is our daily struggle and joy of living together in a place that we call community, a place that is home.

Gord Tulloch

Program Director for posAbilities

<http://www.posAbilities.ca>

I would like to see more community, and by that, I mean more natural and organic systems of connection. Besides philanthropic relationships, the closest our over-burdened social and health systems come to accessing community is usually through volunteers, which in the end, and in most cases, resembles an unpaid quasi-professional classification. One only has to sift through volunteer policies and processes, replete with background checks, liability insurance, monitoring mechanisms, codes and restrictions, etc, to know that by the time a formal system is done enlisting the aid of community, it has remade it, in its own image. Usually.

Finding solutions to social problems has to be about building better communities and engaging them; it is not about building more robust social service systems. The answers must come from slipping into the vast, awesome, and indefatigable currents of community. I don't think we have begun to contemplate all the relationships and partnerships that might be engendered—whether with businesses, artisans, neighbours, clubs, etc.—and how this will change the complexion of everything.

Gregor Wolbring

Professor at the University of Calgary

<http://www.wolbring.wordpress.com>

Disabled people are invisible in the discourses yet highly impacted by contemporary problems such as climate change, disaster adaptation and mitigation, access to water and sanitation, access to food, and energy and so forth.

I highlighted for example in the 2009 paper *A culture of neglect: Climate discourse and disabled people* that:

1. climate change will disproportionately and differently impact disabled

- people
2. the record of disaster adaptation and mitigation efforts towards disabled people is less than stellar
 3. despite the fact that other social groups such as women, children, 'the poor', indigenous people, farmers and displaced people are mentioned in climate related reports such as the IPCC reports and the Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting climate change: human solidarity in a divided world, disabled people are not mentioned in these reports although they are uniquely impacted by the problems covered and
 4. the adaptation and mitigation knowledge existing among disabled people is not mainstreamed

I highlighted in my nano water column that the first world water report ignored the different needs and insights disabled people have with respect to water and sanitation. The third edition of the world water report published in 2009 again ignored disabled people's needs and insights with regard to water despite mentioning other marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples, women in developing countries, the rural poor and their children. A memorandum for a World Water Protocol (MWWP) was recently generated. It also omits mention of people with disabilities. It states "Place particular emphasis on the participation, especially those groups of citizens that are under privileged, notably, women, young people and workers/peasants."

In 2011, I would like people with disabilities become more visible as problem solvers regarding the societal challenges that will impact them as significantly as other marginalized groups.

Read more: <http://2020science.org/2009/12/14/wolbring/#ixzz18rdaK7UW>

Ilse Treurnicht

CEO MaRS Discovery District

<http://www.marsdd.com/>

I would like to see more Diversity around the discussion and decision tables about building Canada's innovation economy during 2011. This future must be locally and globally relevant. Let's draw deeply on the full range of experiences, perspectives, knowledge and wisdom of young to old, long rooted and new Canadians, women and minorities, from all parts of the country - for fresh and better ideas. The results will resonate and matter more to all of us.

Ian Curtin

Co-founder The Inner Activist

<http://www.inneractivist.com>

Nelson Mandela is one of my heroes. The 92-year-old former president of South Africa and Nobel laureate has used his own self-knowledge and compassion to avert major bloodshed in his country. His compassionate understanding of what was in the hearts and minds of his opponents guided his actions. He was able to maintain his vision and integrity while navigating through the many pressures leadership brings. And given the extreme challenges he endured throughout his life, I am sure his personal mastery came with hard work.

Inner work takes courage. It takes guts to get out of the cycle of reactive righteousness, hopelessness and burn-out, that we, in our activist roles, often fall prey to. It takes commitment to develop the intra-personal, relational, self-care and spiritual skills that can make activism effective and sustainable.

I would like to see more of us exploring the importance of congruence between our inner selves and our actions in the outer world. Why? Because I believe as change agents we must first know a great deal about how change works within ourselves – how we take on or discard new values and beliefs – before we go about our work of encouraging others to change. Without some clear understanding of how we work as individuals, how can we be sure our efforts for change are going to be effective? I have spent over 25 years developing greater awareness within myself. I know first-hand how difficult it has been to shift my deeply held values and beliefs and to become aware of my blind spots: how I consciously use my rank and power, how I marginalize others, how my ego works, my communications style; the list goes on. Becoming aware of my own human frailties and limited perceptions has required a deep love for both myself and our world.

We have plenty of feedback these days that our collective blind spots continue to wreak havoc on our world. And our ability to live compassionately continues to elude us. We here at the Inner Activist Program have dedicated the last few years to developing learning experiences that will help social change agents develop the strength and personal mastery reflected in the work of great social change agents. We believe the current level of personal consciousness in the world is the central challenge in dealing with our global dilemmas: climate change, species extinction, genocide, widening gap between have and have not, etc. Our “rolling dialogue” over the past five years with North American social activists and personal development facilitators has made us aware that there is a sea-change taking place in personal consciousness within this region and other

parts of the world.

The time for more focus on what continues to drive us towards the brink of extinction is now.

The Inner Activist program initiative is designed to contribute to a collectively more relational and loving way of being, sorely needed to address the major challenges of our time. Specifically, our intention is to offer in-depth training programs that encourage relational leadership skills and value our diverse natures and natural equality. These are core competencies for social activists/innovators. Congruence between one's inner experience and one's actions for change in the external world is essential for inspirational social change.

Our contribution to this goal is the creation of the Inner Activist program that commences this June and the Inner Essential eCourse. They are designed to help change makers, social entrepreneurs, leaders and activists, be radically more effective in their life-serving work. We don't claim to have the answers, but we do have some powerful questions, dedicated and skilled faculty and experiential techniques to deepen the work of social change agents. For more information, visit www.inneractivist.com.

Jacques Dufresne

Quebec philosopher, founder and editor of L'Encyclopédie de l'Agora and editor in chief of Appartenance-Belonging.

<http://www.appartenance-belonging.org>

These thoughts on the dangers of a certain kind of ignorance, the type of ignorance on which totalitarianism feeds, occurred to me recently while listening to a Tea Party pundit.

There is ignorance of many sorts. Not knowing the correct facts and figures is one - is Montreal in BC or in Quebec ? Having a lopsided sense of relative values is another - should one rate Celine Dion above JS Bach? But the worst sort of ignorance is the one that comes from not knowing and not wanting to know one's self. This is the ignorance of the self-satisfied, blind and indifferent to the very causes of their ignorance. It turns the two previous kinds of ignorance into a permanent condition.

Aesop's fox, unable to get at the succulent, ripe grapes because they are too high, declares them unripe. This is resentment, a mechanism described by both Nietzsche and Freud. It builds a moral case to shield the ego from sources of

frustration, and from its sense of inadequacy. I lack talent, and so debunk the talented around me, perhaps even deny that there is such a thing as talent. Protect your self-esteem at all costs, lie to everyone and yourself, deny your age or weight if you must!

Enter Socrates: real knowledge of things and of others starts with knowing one's self. But knowing one's self is a long, difficult process, involving catharsis or purification, a process that can take a life-time. Therefore Socrates advises, trust only the wise, those who have undergone this process, even if their knowledge is limited to knowing that they don't know. This is the basis of all elitist theories of truth and knowledge, the ones that say our politics and our social life should be guided by the upstanding, the wise or the saintly among us, the philosopher-king of Plato.

Our modern ideas of democracy and science are built on the rejection of this ideal of Socrates. Democracy and science have much in common.

Classical science is predicated on the existence of objective, formal processes independent of the moral and psychological qualities of the scientists or observers, who are deemed to be interchangeable. Regardless of your private morals or wisdom, you can make an accurate reading of a thermometer. Science is a matter of methodology not of personal wisdom.

The same is true of democracy: my vote, whoever I am, equals your vote.

The link between democracy and science is so strong that any important change in one of the two has an impact on the other.

However, modern science is increasingly questioning the very idea of an objective observer: to observe is to interact, to interpret. The objective observer has become an interpreter. Theories, models and the social complexities of financing and publishing research stand between the scientist and reality. On complex topics, those that matter most and those where stakeholder interests are the highest, such as climate change, the effectiveness of certain drugs, or the causes of the current financial crisis, scientists are increasingly unable to come to a consensus.

The upshot is that we can no longer trust science blindly. We must give our trust to this or that particular scientist as a moral person. But who is the good scientist? Who should we trust? Surely, our trust should go to the one who sees clearly in himself, whose motives are pure, the one who has undergone the catharsis, and meets Socrates' test of knowing one's self. But how are we to know who meets that test?

Our faith in objective formal processes, whether in science or in politics, is such that we have lost the very capacity to differentiate. Who are the wise: those who really know and say what they know, those who know what it is that they don't know ? And who are the ignorant, those who think they know, and those who pretend to know, the ignorant of the third type?

If the popularity of the new brand of Tea Party type politician is any indication of what is to come, we are in serious risk of being led by those who don't know what they don't know yet are the most able to play on our collective ignorance, denials, and resentment in service of unseen ends and interests. This situation is fertile ground for unchecked totalitarian ideologies. This what the Spanish philosopher Fernando Savater was warning us about when he coined the term totalitarian ignorance. This is how Hitler got the approval of his countrymen.

Jennifer Corriero

Co-founder & Executive Director of TakingITGlobal

<http://www.takingitglobal.org>

I would like the environmental and entrepreneurial ideas of youth developed last year to be transformed into actions. Taking It Global (TIG) is committed to capacity building and sustainable development of young leaders between the ages of 13-30 by offering a diverse set of educational resources and action tools intended to inspire, inform and involve. Through a multilingual online learning community and innovative education programs, TIG will continue to empower youth to take informed action on building a more peaceful, inclusive and sustainable world.

Next year, we want to expand our Tread Lightly Challenge that encourages youth to find ways to reduce their ecological footprints. With the generous support of the Staples Foundation for Learning, TIG will promote this program in eight European countries: England, France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Norway. In addition, we plan to translate the teacher resources into six new languages. This will enable students across Europe, North America, Asia and South America to take part in the program. Over 2011 our aim is to engage thousands of students in reducing their ecological footprints and produce artwork for our Imprints contest that closes on April 15, 2011. We want youth to consider two questions: What do you imagine could happen to the earth if we don't mitigate climate change now? What could climate change solutions for your community look like?

Submissions to the contest before November 22, 2010 were displayed at an international art exhibit at the Convention On Climate Change conference (COP

16) in Cancun, Mexico. The Imprints Arts Contest hopes to actively engage thousands of students worldwide to express their thoughts and feelings on important issues like climate change. We want to promote eco-art that addresses environmental themes and incorporates recycled or re-used materials.

We hope to provide resources to students to collaborate on assessing what individual action they can take to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Last year, the Tread Lightly Imprints Art contest posed the question: "if you could visualize your ecological footprint, what would it look like?"

This year, Tread Lightly brought 24 youth delegates from around the world to COP 16, to join in the debate about international climate change policy and ensured many more people have the opportunity to ask themselves the same question. Next year, Tread Lightly aims to provide more opportunities for students to discuss and act on climate change in an extended, multilingual capacity.

Through our Sprout e-course, in partnership with the Pearson Foundation for Learning, we provide training and mentorship to aspiring social entrepreneurs to help launch their project ideas. Applicants are selected based on the strength of their proposals. I would like to see more young social entrepreneurs turning their project ideas into measurable action. Sustainable development of young entrepreneurs requires providing them the resources to implement their projects.

Over 2011, we intend to develop the implementation phase of the Sprout program. Thanks to the continued support of the Pearson Foundation, the Sprout e-course now includes a Pearson Fellowship for Social Innovation; this international fellowship program selects the most deserving plans developed during the Sprout E-course and provides monetary support to 12 young social innovators to launch their projects.

In addition to monetary grants, winners will receive one-on-one mentoring from social innovators and guidance along the way as they implement their project plans. TIG plans to develop a special online community within the global TIG network to provide advanced resources and training to the Fellows.

Jessica Fraser

Active philanthropist and co-creator of Mobile Movement

<http://mobilemovement.tv>

What I wanted to share was an excerpt of a TED talk with Shekhar Kapur - the Golden Globe award winning filmmaker, activist, storyteller:

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/shekhar_kapur_we_are_the_stories_we_tell_ourselves.html

What is a story? It's a contradiction. Everything's a contradiction. The universe is a contradiction. And all of us are constantly looking for harmony. When you get up, night and day is a contradiction...and when you get up at 4am, that first blush of blue is where the night and day are trying to find harmony. Harmony is the notes that Mozart didn't give you but somehow the contradiction of his notes suggests a harmony. It's the effect of looking for harmony in the contradiction that exists in a storyteller's mind. In a storyteller's mind it's the contradiction of moralities, in a poet's mind it's the conflict of words, in the universe's mind it's between day and night...but the acceptance of contradiction is the telling of a story - not the resolution. The problem with a lot of storytelling in Hollywood and many films is we try to resolve the contradiction.

Harmony is not resolution. Harmony is a suggestion of a thing much larger than resolution. Harmony is the suggestion of something that is embracing and universal and of eternity and of the moment. Resolution is something that is far more limited, that is finite. Harmony is infinite.

Storytelling is the looking for harmony and infinity in moral resolutions resolving one but letting another go. And creating the question is really important.

The implications of looking beyond resolution and embracing harmony inherent in the contradictions is such an interesting challenge for social entrepreneurs, advocates, activists, citizens, storytellers - human beings. I want to bring this idea to the fore in 2011 in all my work - both filmmaking and my social entrepreneurship passion: Mobile Movement. I have always focused on questions like, 'Who has been given the power to speak?' 'What stories impact us and encourage us to want to listen?'

I believe in the power of story to transform while also believing that people get stuck in story. The contradiction. Looking at Mobile Movement -- it's now the question of looking beyond creating a micro-financing and mentorship portal using new technology and mobile phones -- looking beyond the resolution and outcomes for young people living in dire poverty - and concentrating on the unfolding of the story - the inherent harmony within the struggle. What continues to interest me is also what is immeasurable - and infinite - in Mobile Movement. Because the technology is allowing young people from the slums to tell their own stories, discuss their own businesses, engage in their own relationships with mentors and investors - the invisible is becoming visible in a tremendously empowering way.

Joan Lawrence

Co-Founder and Past President of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network and AI's mentor

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/05/who-is-your-mentor.html>

I would like to see PLAN, and in particular Personal Networks, more visible in 2011.

Parents started PLAN because of the fear of who would care for their son or daughter when they were no longer here. There are many successful Network stories about folks with disabilities and also resultant Peace of Mind for the parents. However, other families across Canada are unaware of PLAN and what it stands for. I continue to receive calls from people who have never heard of PLAN, asking for advice re: persons with a disability.

There are too many people with disabilities without a support system and I fervently believe the timing is appropriate to increase word of PLAN, it's networks and other benefits, not only locally but across Canada.

John McKnight

Co-Director, Asset Based Community Development Institute

<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/profile/?ProfileID=47&/JohnMcKnight>

Increasing numbers of North Americans are neighbour-less. They are, in reality, little more than residents occupying a house in an anonymous place. They often admit that they really don't know the people who live around them – except to say hello. It is a regretful admission, but in their view, of no more consequence than failing to wash the windows of their house.

Failure to see the costs of not having real neighbourhood relationships is the primary cause of our weak local communities. And it is this weakness that is eroding our ability to lead productive, satisfying lives in the 21st century.

In this century, we have entered an era when neighbourhoods must take on significant new functions if our lives are to improve. These are the functions that our large institutions can no longer perform, because they have reached their limits. The medical system no longer has major consequence for our health. Most police leaders understand they have reached the limits of their ability to provide local security. An improved environment will be shaped less by laws than our own local decisions about how we heat, light, transport ourselves, and

the amount of waste we create. The majority of our jobs are not going to be provided by large corporate systems. Small business will be the major job source in the future of new enterprise. Our mega-food systems provide high cost, wastefully transported, chemically grown produce that is slowly being replaced by locally produced and healthful food.

Of even more importance is the obvious limit of trying to pay our institutions to raise our children. Even though we say, "It takes a village to raise a child", we actually outsource most of our child raising. They have become the children of schools, counsellors, athletics, youth workers, therapists, McDonald's, the electronic industries and the mall. And we call these village-less children the "youth problem."

For all these reasons, it is now clear that the good life in the 21st century will have to be grown in the local neighbourhood. Once we see the need for a strong, connected, productive local community, our basic building blocks are the skills, gifts, passions and knowledge of all our neighbours. It is these neighbourly capacities that are most often unknown to us. It is making these capacities visible and connected that is the basic task of a functioning 21st century.

There are many ways to uncover the productive capacities of a neighbourhood. One innovative approach is illustrative of the possibilities.

In a working-class African American neighbourhood in Chicago, the neighbourhood organization has initiated discussions at the block level with local residents regarding their gifts, skills, passions and special knowledge. An example of the information they are making visible is what has been found, for instance, from six randomly interviewed residents on one block.

The six people reported sixteen "gifts" including being good with kids, a good listener, effective organizer and skilled communicator.

Asked about their skills, the six reported fourteen, including knitting, light repairs, real state law, computers and cooking.

The twenty "passions" the neighbours reported included: skating, correcting building problems, decorating, jazz, gardening and photography.

Of special significance for a "village that raises a child" are the fifteen topics the six neighbours said they were willing to teach youngsters or interested adults. They include reading comprehension, computer technology, sewing, first aid, mathematics, skating, cooking, real estate and self-esteem.

These six residents did not know most of their neighbour's capacities, though

they have lived on the block for some time. And no one had ever asked them about their abilities or whether they would share them.

The neighbourhood organization has made the capacities of the neighbours visible. With 30 households on the block, imagine the rich treasures that will be revealed when these "gift" discussions are held with the neighbours in the other 24 households.

It is this hidden treasure chest that can be opened in any neighbourhood in North America. Using these treasures requires connecting the capacities of neighbours. And those local neighbours good at organizing are the perfect local connective tissue.

If you are a person who has discovered and connected the productive capacity of your neighbours, I would love to hear from you. And if you are a neighbour interested in initiating the process of opening your neighbourhood treasure chest, let me know, and I can share useful materials and, perhaps, connect you to other pioneer neighbours.

John Mighton

Mathematician, author, playwright, and the founder of JUMP Math

<http://jumpmath.org/>

Every society is beset by invisible problems that are among the most difficult to solve, for no other reason than because they are invisible.

The ancient Greeks who conceived of the first democracies were innovative thinkers, but they still took it for granted that some people are born to be slaves, and that women should be excluded from politics. Imagine the male politicians of the day, engaged in a bitter debate over whether they should raise taxes or build a new road: in the face of the larger issues plaguing Greek society, such debates would clearly be beside the point.

And even now, after the long, painful struggle for democracy in the modern world, the issues that preoccupy our politicians and our media often seem to be beside the point.

Perhaps we have made such slow progress in solving highly visible problems, such as global warming, poverty and systemic violence because, like the ancient Greeks, we are incapable of seeing the deeper causes of these problems as problems in themselves.

There is one such problem that I would like to see become more visible in the next year: as a society we have accepted without question one of the most destructive tenets of education, namely that children are born with vastly different mental abilities and that only a small minority can be expected to love or excel at learning. The intellectual poverty which we have imposed on the majority of children, out of ignorance of their true potential, may be a major cause of material poverty, because it makes our society less capable of distributing wealth in a fair, rational or sustainable way.

A teacher in Toronto using the JUMP Math program tested her students at the beginning grade of five using a standardized test of mathematical aptitude and found they differed greatly in their abilities and backgrounds. Some scored as low as the 9th percentile and some as high as the 75th, with the average score in the 55th percentile (this range represents a difference of about four grade levels). A year later, the average score for the students was in the 98th percentile with a range of 4 marks. After two years with the same teacher, the entire class signed up for the Pythagoras competition (which is normally only written by top students) and all but three of the students received awards of distinction (with those three coming within a few marks of distinction).

New research in cognitive science suggests that this kind of result should be commonplace. The brain possesses far more potential than anyone suspected, and is capable of developing surprising new abilities with rigorous instruction and practice. (For a summary of this research see David Shenk's book *The Genius in All of US: Why Everything You've Been Told About Genetics, IQ and Talent is Wrong*, or "The Expert Mind" an article that appeared in *Scientific American* in 2006.)

If we taught children according to their true potential, and helped them develop their natural passion for discovery and creativity, they would be less driven by insecurity and more capable of adding up the consequences of their actions. They would spend less time worrying about the priority and ownership of ideas, and more time appreciating their actual beauty and the beauty of the struggle to create or discover those ideas.

John Restakis

Executive Director of the BC Co-operative Association in Vancouver, by vocation he is a community organizer and popular educator, sessional instructor in the University of Victoria's new Masters in Community Development, an international consultant on cooperative development including the Bologna Summer Studies Program with Professor Stefano Zamagni, and author of *Humanizing the Economy: Co-operatives in the Age of Capital* (New Society Publishers, 2010)

<http://www.bcca.coop/>

Over the last decade, there has been a welcome shift in economic thinking to take account of the social dimensions of economics, and much of this has been sparked by a broad reaction to neo-liberal views that economics and the marketplace are primarily about the prerogatives of capital and the maximization of profit. The terms “social economy” and “social entrepreneurship” have now entered the vocabulary of academics and activists alike, who are searching for a broader interpretation of what economics looks like when it serves the interests of communities and the totality of human needs, not just those of corporations and capital. What I would like to see in 2011 is an awareness and exploration of a distinct kind of market that responds to, and reflects, the character of the social economy.

Social economy organizations are those that pursue their goals, whether economic or social, on the basis that individuals' contributions will be reciprocated and the benefits shared. Reciprocity is the economic principle that defines both the activities and the aims of these organizations - whether they are co-operatives, voluntary associations, or conventional non-profits. Their primary purpose is the promotion of collective benefit. Their social product is not just the particular goods or services that they produce, but human solidarity - the predisposition of people in a society to work together around mutual goals. Another name for this is social capital. And, as opposed to the capitalist principle of capital control over labour, reciprocity is the means by which a social interest - whether it takes the form of labour, or citizen groups, or consumers - can exercise control over capital. As a sub division of civil society, the use of reciprocity for economic purposes is what distinguishes the social economy from the private and public sectors.

A mature social economy requires a corresponding social market. What then, does a social market look like, especially in the context of social care? Five factors seem essential.

The first entails shifting the production of many social care services from

government to democratically structured civil institutions. The primary role of government would remain the public funding of these services and establishing the rules for their delivery. And whereas government provides for access to these services its role in producing them would diminish.

Second, government funding should, at least in part, flow directly to social care recipients who would then select the services they need from accredited organizations of their choice. To qualify for receipt of public funds, these organizations must have provisions for user control in their operations. Social services must be democratized.

Third, social care organizations must have the legal ability to raise capital from among their users and from civil society generally on the basis of social investing. Users of a social service organization and community members should be able to purchase capital shares for the purpose of capitalizing the organization. As social investments these capital assets would not be taxed as income. Social capitalization also requires the creation of a social market exchange based on the principle of reciprocity. Individual investors would purchase shares yielding a limited return, with the capital being used to provide credit and investment capital to social economy organizations. Shares would also be eligible for tax credits on the basis that such investments have a clear and direct social benefit. A social stock exchange such as that established in Milan is one model.

Fourth, any surpluses generated by these organizations should be considered as social assets. Social care organizations using public funds would establish an indivisible reserve for the expansion and development of that organization and its services. A portion of operational surplus would also have to be used for the partial capitalization of the social market exchange through the purchase of shares.

Finally, while the primary role of government would be to continue to provide public funds for social care services and to fix the rules of the game, the locus of service design and the designation of service needs would take place, as much as possible, at the community and regional level of delivery. Most importantly, this decentralization of service delivery must include the democratization of decision-making through the sharing of control rights with service users and caregivers.

These provisions are obviously not exhaustive. They do however outline a direction for the considered development of a social market structure that is focused on the social and economic realities of the goods and services it is meant to facilitate, while simultaneously reducing the dependence of such service organizations, and the social economy as a whole, on the state.

Karim Harji

Senior Manager for Partnerships & Social Impact at Social Capital Partners

<http://www.slideshare.net/kharji>

2010 saw several important developments in social finance in Canada and internationally, much of which has been blogged about and discussed at socialfinance.ca. In 2011, I would like to see more opportunities for young people to take their interest in social finance to the next level, so that they can actually build a meaningful career in this area.

There are already lots of ways to make a difference. There are literally hundreds of nonprofits that would benefit from the expertise and insight that young people can bring at multiple levels within their organizations. To attract the best talent, many large corporations are offering young people the opportunity to creatively integrate social value in a more holistic manner into their operational and strategic decisions. Canada's non-profit sector - among the largest in the world - continues to attract young professionals keen to make a difference. And a new generation of young social entrepreneurs are intent on proving that you can both make money and change the world for the better.

So what is missing? Allowing more young people to be exposed to the areas of social finance, social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, social innovation, and a host of related topics, will bode well for the good of our communities and planet. Generally speaking, I believe that my generation (Gen Y, if in fact we can even be represented as a homogenous group) is keen to blend their values into their work. No longer is it true that the first part of one's career must be spent on making lots of money, and the latter half devoted to giving it away. Mark Zuckerberg affirmed that recently, but it is also a truism for those of us that do not have the luxury of owning (and donating) Facebook stock!

We need several things to happen if we are to create pathways for young people to be more deliberately engaged in this important work:

1. Education: there is an increasing demand for education, particularly around social entrepreneurship. Virtually every highly-ranked international university has developed courses or curriculum, often developed directly to address demand from existing students, or to attract the top talent for future years. I teach one of the few courses on social entrepreneurship in Canada at the Schulich School of Business. There needs to be more options for young people to learn about these issues at their schools, colleges and universities.
2. Internships: learning about these areas is important, but gaining a level of

- hands-on experience can be invaluable. A good way to do this is by offering internships for young people to learn about how to influence social or environmental change, while bringing new perspectives and skills to these initiatives. The key challenges are, for these organizations to "package" their internships to make them relevant to their immediate (operational or strategic) needs, while balancing the learning expectations of interns. Many international NGOs have successful (and different) approaches to do this (see Recognition below) - one that provided a springboard for me into the world of microfinance was the Fellowship in International Microfinance and Microenterprise.
3. Mentorship: there is simply too much knowledge that is still not being transferred deliberately to the next generation of social entrepreneurs, community activists, non-profit managers, and their peers. A lot of young people still do not have the opportunity to access, and contribute to, important conversations that they have a rightful place in. This is slowly changing, as many of these conversations are being facilitated online, transcending the online-offline divide. Securing connections and face time with today's leaders will continue to be a challenge for young people, and this may involve more of these leaders setting aside this time to foster such exchanges.
 4. Funding: simply put, more money needs to be directed to young people and the organizations that they are spawning all across Canada. Organizations like the Canadian Youth Business Foundation combine funding with business support and mentoring, but we need more of this. Flexible funding - and we're not talking about a lot of money here - needs to be targeted at those ventures that have a proven idea or track record, as well as to those ideas that may be far-fetched. A certain degree of unreasonableness is a trait of many successful entrepreneurs, and so we should be comfortable in allowing tenacious young people to experiment as they nurture their ideas, and fund them accordingly.
 5. Recognition: There are numerous ways we can recognize the efforts of young people and thereby enable them to tap into the relevant resources, networks, and opportunities to propel them and their ventures. A plethora of international initiatives are doing just this: the Acumen Fund Fellowship, Echoing Green, and The Unreasonable Institute. Ashoka continues to be a leader in recognizing social entrepreneurs, and we certainly appreciate inspiring role models like Aaron Pereira and Anil Patel.

And finally, we need to remind ourselves of the importance of patience and resilience - qualities that may not be at the top of the list for keen change-makers. AI's work on several fronts (including the RDSP, and the Social Finance Task Force) is a testament to the fact that meaningful and lasting social change takes much time, effort, and collaboration. Sowing the seeds today for social change tomorrow requires us to till diligently, strategically, and constantly. And there are

lots of young people raring to do so, if they are linked to the right opportunities and resources. This will be uncomfortable for some established organizations and seasoned practitioners (and even downright risky), but it is certainly an investment worth betting on.

Here's to seeing some of those investments in 2011!

Leighton Jay

Senior Lecturer in the School of Management Curtin University, Western Australia

<http://www.business.curtin.edu.au>

I was recently based at Queens University in Kingston (ON) when that city received its first snow of the season. My office overlooked the football oval. On the first day when snow was on the ground, someone carefully wrote a message of love to another using their footsteps in the snow. On the next day, another message of friendship and love appeared for different people. It helped me realise that the world would be a richer place if more of us outwardly expressed our inner feelings so that others might know us better. In 2011, I am going to travel more slowly, do less things and be present with myself and others in ways that enable me to know others more deeply and to be known more deeply by them.

Linda Couture

Director of Living With Dignity

<http://www.vivredignite.com>

There is one question people of retirement age must ask themselves about assisted suicide and euthanasia. Did I spend my adult, working life to build a society where death – government-administered death – is offered as the answer to social challenges?

The question is not a religious question. It is not a partisan political question. It does not come from the perspective of Catholicism or Islam, conservatism or liberalism, federalism or separatism. It is an intensely personal question because it arises exactly at the boundary where individual choice meets social consequence.

The reality of that boundary helps us see clearly the error in the thinking of our

fellow citizens who, with the best of intentions and genuine compassion, depict euthanasia and assisted suicide as acts of autonomy that affirm an individual's control over his or her own body.

By their very nature, euthanasia and assisted suicide can never be autonomous acts. They always require the minimal involvement of one other individual: the assistant to the suicide or the administrator of the means of euthanasia.

What our fellow citizens advocating euthanasia and assisted suicide seek, however, is much more than the minimal involvement of one other individual in discreet cases.

They want the entire apparatus of the state to become involved in approving and administering all cases of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

They want, with all compassionate motives and best intentions, to standardize euthanasia and assisted suicide as common medical practice in our health care system.

In order to realize their stated goal of individual autonomy, then, they are prepared to transform Quebec's entire social model of public health care from one based on treatment, care and comfort to one whose resources are at least in part allocated to paying for state-administered death.

Now, it is a fair argument to say that the deplorable state of Quebec's medical system leaves it a long way from being a model of treatment, care and comfort. It is also justifiable to argue that at least some of the support for euthanasia and assisted suicide comes from those who have suffered, or fear they will suffer, from the frightful deficiencies of that system.

But those deficiencies, surely, represent a failure of public policy. And when, exactly, did death become a desirable response to public policy, failed or otherwise?

Put another way, why should the people, indeed all Quebecers of retirement age, who have worked so hard for the past two generations to build a fair, equitable and secure society, let politicians off the hook for their failures of policy and administration? Why should the elderly in Quebec take death in the arm, or wherever else it is administered, simply because politicians cannot properly exercise the trust we place in them to provide us with functional, effective, dignified health care?

Democracy does not make deals with death. Democracy uses the collective energies of individual citizens to press hard and forward for societies that are fair,

equitable, secure, that show solidarity with the weak, the disadvantaged, the elderly who may no longer be able to speak for themselves as they once did.

All of you, in your individual ways and in your own lives, have worked for many years to make Quebec such a society. Please don't let that project be abandoned now, no matter how well intentioned or compassionate the arguments of our fellow citizens may sound.

Mark Kingwell

Professor of Philosophy at University of Toronto

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/04/civility-tips-for-solution-based-advocacy-5.html>

What needs to be more visible in the new year is the same thing that needs to be more visible every year: real democracy. The Great Recession of 2008 has exposed, like nothing else in recent memory, just how much the process of First-World government has been colonized by moneyed interests. The business community—which is not a community at all, but a fleet of rival brigands with no commitment other than to themselves—now holds sway in almost every aspect of state decision-making, even as thin-skinned Wall Streeters go on bemoaning their status as victims. The five largest American investment banks—which are not banks at all, but houses of runaway speculation—now controls assets worth 67 percent of the U.S. GDP. Just fifteen years ago, the same figure was 15 percent. The financial sector, together with insurance and real estate (aptly known as FIRE for short) demands, and receives, government bailouts even as it bolts on new superchargers to the derivative-fuelled engine of economic collapse.

We are told that this sector must be protected in order to 'stimulate the economy', to 'remain competitive', or because parts of it are 'too big to fail'. These are the slogans of democratic enfeeblement, with the background irony that those who cry foul at 'socialist' medical insurance and tout the free market come, eager hands open, for taxpayer bailout. Socialized debt equal private profits, with all risk in the unchecked speculation deflected onto hapless citizens.

Don't ask how the Troubled Asset Relief Fund creates jobs: it just does. Don't ask why an economy that stagnates workers' wages even as it multiplies toxic assets is competitive: it just is. Don't ask what happens to those people who bought the complex lie of self-improvement known as the American Dream via predatory lending, or why tax cuts for the wealthiest and tiniest minority of citizens are in everyone's interest. Don't ask why dissent now takes the bizarre form of free-market anger at government when government is merely the tool of

business and that very same actually unfree market. Oh, those 'troubled' assets, wayward teenage sons of the republic! Here, take the car keys and go for joy ride. No, really, you need the diversion.

Democracy can become dislocated in all sorts of ways. Citizens may lose interest in voting, or may vote against self-interest, or be swayed with bad arguments delivered by plausible charlatans. But the worst and most eviscerating failure of democracy is when citizens no longer have any purchase on decision and choose to ignore it. The long purchase of government by finance, the final moves in a decades-long campaign of regulatory capture, are underway right now in the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and a dozen other alleged democracies living on borrowed time and spending the in-hock scrip known as money. When political challenges come, or when they might, it can seem merely convenient to close the doors of parliament or deflect the protests of 'civil society'—that superficially respectful but actually condescending name for anyone uncomfortable with the depredations of the current arrangement—into a designated protest zone behind a citizen-funded wall guarded by citizen-funded police who are presumptively beyond prosecution of any kind. The main effect of these zones is only to demonstrate that the polity as a whole is a democracy-free zone.

Meanwhile, the incidental losses for workers and unmoneyed citizens of these countries are massive, structural, and possibly irreversible. But possibly also means possibly not. There is room for hope -- that much-abused democratic virtue -- because even the most narcotized and self-interested consumer can eventually recognize when his or her desires no longer get so easily satisfied, when the social order of shopping and infotainment is disrupted by unemployment, foreclosures, and stalls on upward mobility. The first step to changing anything is to cast off basic delusions about democratic legitimacy in what are, in fact, oligarchic plutocracies—or, if you are somewhat more cynical, kleptocracies.

A Don DeLillo narrator says this: "The world changes first in the man who decides to change the world." That first change is actually easy. Do it now. You're not alone.

Nancy Hall

2010 Clarence Hincks Award Winner and social advocate

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/10/queen-nancy-hall-honoured-in-london.html>

I would like to see a strategic agenda for social service change in 2011. Government will cease to fund more 'business as usual' services that are expensive and don't work. Our climate has shifted and our economy is resetting to one based more on quality of life and social purpose. We have to leave behind a money and car driven economy and switch to one which seeks full employment, creative engagement and neighbourhood resilience.

I work in the area of mental health and addiction so here are ten items I want to see more of in 2011:

1. Services for people with chronic health problems are designed by them and located in the neighbourhoods where people live. This requires research that asks people what might work for them. Medical services that emphasize people's deficits are not particularly helpful.
2. People with disabilities are employed to help others stay well and develop local social connections.
3. Elders are supported through informal means in their neighbourhood. Individuals in the various faith communities provide social supports to the vulnerable in their neighbourhoods. We know who our vulnerable citizens are and we should encourage their neighbours to watch out for them.
4. Those with complicated medical conditions such as cancer will have personal support networks. We are not dependent upon professional services for every day living. An example of this is the www.Tyze.com support networks.
5. People are taught to understand that feelings of mental instability are quite common and ultimately manageable. To 'own' a mental illness is straightforward and with help from your friends and neighbourhood professionals, one can weather the storm and feel capable and safe.
6. Mental health supports that build positive mental health. People have permission to feel vulnerable and family caregivers get support and recognition.
7. Transitional housing for people navigating various life passages is available for example: new mothers needing intensive supports, youth leaving the foster care system, elders and their caregivers in the early stages of dementia and people learning to cope with brain injury and a rearranged family life.

8. More integrated housing supports are available so that people with unique needs have their housing integrated with others. This prevents social isolation and avoids high-rise asylums.
9. Public services move from professional to peer support and mutual aid. For example, Mom's on the Drive is a 300-member Yahoo listserv that grew from a nurse run clinic to a coffee group to a listserv for new mothers needing parenting support in the neighbourhood.
10. Support networks are developed by non-profit service providers. My Circle networks developed by the Canadian Mental Health Association in West Vancouver is an example of this.

Making these shifts is a lot easier than it might seem. People and neighbourhoods are more capable than we are led to believe.

Paul Born

Director of Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement

<http://seekingcommunity.ca/blogs/paul-born>

When I reach for my morning coffee, or stop to meditate on my yoga mat, or put on my shoes that will walk me where I need to go, when I prepare a meal for others and myself and when I try to do something for the betterment of our world, I want to feel like I belong. I want the same for everyone I touch (virtually or through a great bear hug) - to feel that they belong and to feel a sense of community.

I want more community in my life. I figure the only way I am going to get this is if my neighbours also want more community in their lives. The only way that that is going to happen (unless I escape to a cloistered place) is if community becomes much more important to everyone.

Three of the fastest growing movements in the world give me hope that I am not alone. The slow food movement (<http://www.slowfood.com>) is driving a go slow - grow local agenda. Transition Towns (<http://transitionnetwork.org>) in response to peak oil concerns are asking people to get ready for a more sustainable future fossil fuel free. The simplicity movement (<http://www.simpleliving.net>) is causing more and more people to find each other or should I say "stop long enough to smell the roses together". All of this is causing us to rediscover community and even though our skills for community are rusty, people are relearning this very innate ability quickly.

Here is my very simple plan for getting to more. I want more people to join me on this journey. So in 2011 I am calling all seekers to sign up at

<http://www.seekingcommunity.ca> to share their longings and ideas about community. I also plan to convene 50 seekers to join together for a three -day retreat to talk about community and in turn to commit to hosting the first 250 community conversations and to then blog about each conversation on the site. From here we will collectively develop the next stage of learning and create a strategy for more community in the world.

Paul Pholeros

Architect and Director of Healthhabitat. Since 1999 alone, their work has improved the lives of over 40,000 indigenous Australians in 180 locations by improving over 7,000 houses. The work has spread to urban and rural areas Australia, involves indigenous and non-indigenous and overseas to New Zealand, Nepal and the USA

<http://www.healthhabitat.com>

Starting simple

When asked the apparently simple question in the mid 1980's - how to find ways to "stop people getting sick", who would have thought that 25 years later the answer¹ would still be evolving, have spread far and wide from its central Australian, indigenous focused, desert origins to most parts of Australia and a few other parts of the world. The simple principles² are still as relevant today.

Simple is a tricky concept.

Simple can be easily confused with simplistic, the glib "one liner", a mindless advertising message or the short lifespan health promotion mantra. Simple is slow to make, has longevity and emerges, slowly. Simple allows expansion and change without losing direction by providing clear focus. Ideas are reviewed and recycled rather than being replaced by the latest fashion.

To make simple is hard work.

The earliest version of "the answer" to the question of finding ways to "stop people getting sick", took 6 months of detailed and considered work. It involved a skilled medical team digging through and sorting local, regional, national and international health data. It meant finding the direct connections between health

¹ Nganampa Health Council Inc., South Australian Health Commission and Aboriginal Health Organisation of South Australia 1987, *Report of Uwankara Palyanyku Kanyintjaku, An Environmental and Public Health Review within the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands*, Alice Springs.

² Pholeros, P, Rainow, S & Torzillo, P 1993, *Housing for Health, Towards a Healthy Living Environment for Aboriginal Australia*, Healthhabitat, Newport Beach.

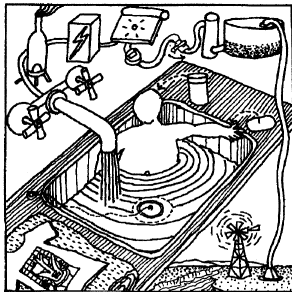
issues, the environment where people lived and the people who lived there.

Most importantly it meant distilling down complex information and learnings into nine apparently simple goals, the nine Healthy Living Practices, and giving these nine practices an order of priority. There is never enough time or money to achieve all goals and priority is important.

Simple involves connecting and refining detail

If you take the first of the nine Healthy Living Practices, Washing People, then this detail quickly becomes apparent.

- Poor hygiene increases the transmission of diseases, including diarrhoeal disease, respiratory disease, hepatitis and infections.
- The rates of these diseases in some Indigenous communities in Australia are as high as in many developing countries and are many times higher than for non-Indigenous children.
- Diarrhoea and respiratory diseases, in particular, are the major causes of illness among Indigenous children and also play a major role in malnutrition in the first three years of life.
- Skin infection is one of the most common problems of Indigenous children and causes chronic illness and discomfort. Recurrent or persistent skin infection is known to increase the risk of developing kidney disease and rheumatic fever.
- Trachoma and bacterial eye infections are known to be associated with poverty and poor living conditions. Studies have shown regular face washing can reduce the amount of eye infection.
- Being able to wash hands after using the toilet can significantly reduce the transmission of hepatitis.



Healthy Living Practice 1: the ability to wash people, particularly children

The "health hardware required to support the first Healthy Living Practice: the ability to wash people, particularly children, includes a chain of essential, connected and functioning parts.

A water supply, water storage, pipes to distribute the water to people, a working hot water system with adequate hot water for a large family, a functional wet area with working hot and cold water taps, a shower, or a bath or a tub or a hand basin for washing children and working drainage to remove the waste water. Available soap, shampoo, clean towel and clean clothes will increase the health benefits of washing the child.

Simple makes action, complex makes words

Having made connections between people, the living environment and health, the task of making change is not hampered by endless reports or repeatedly redefining the problems. Simple and immediate actions ensure people have access to the "hardware" that allows them to carry out the Healthy Living Practices.

For the "Washing People" example given above, work typically involves repairing or replacing hot water systems, shower/bathroom wall linings, taps, shower hoses, unblocking drains and making sure there is sufficient hot and cold water. The work is immediate, unsexy, unglamorous but essential and effective.

Simple gains local community support

The drawings of each Healthy Living Practices communicate a simple message to local community members who become involved in the work. 70% of all the project teams are local people.

The greater the distance traveled from the local community the more likely you find politicians and bureaucrats embarrassed by the "ordinariness" of the work and the bluntness of the Healthy Living Practices. It is just too simple for their housing or health policies, plans and strategies. The academies similarly find little joy in the simple direction of the Healthy Living Practices.

In stark contrast, local community members see the importance of a working shower, toilet or kitchen, they need no convincing about why the work is important. For those who see benefits from the work, it's simple.

Peter Block

Peter Block is an author, consultant and citizen of Cincinnati, Ohio.

<http://www.abundantcommunity.com> | <http://www.peterblock.com>

This is a great question because it constructs a world where the future we desire is close at hand, if we could but see it. The Bahamians have a quote which is likely common to most cultures, that "You look, but you do not see." The task of seeing what is close at hand but not visible is the task of the poet. But let me try to answer the question regardless.

I would have 2011 be the year that the existence and relevance of a shift in economic thinking becomes widespread. The existing economics is based on scarcity, consumption, globalization and competition. Its measures are the dollar

value of the exchange of goods and services. Its core belief is in self-interest.

There is an alternative economic narrative emerging that is based on abundance, citizenship, localization and cooperation. Its measures are on happiness and well-being. Its core belief is in generosity.

This transformation in economic assumptions is sprouting in many places. Here are a few. "Yes" magazine is telling the story on a regular basis. Edgar Cahn and his Time Banks are demonstrating how a gift-based economy actually works. Read his book, "No More Throw Away People." Berrett Koehler is a small, fierce, independent publisher that has a profound social intent. See their books, especially by David Korten and Margorie Kelly.

Seek out Olivia Saunders, economics professor at the College of the Bahamas. She chronicles the economic and social cost of political freedom to the circular flow of money in a neighbourhood.

Read Jim Clingman's books on Blackonomics, taking a similar path as Saunders. And of course, The New Economics Institute and its decades long commitment to innovative thinking about currency and civic values. Finally, Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar has written "Journey to the Common Good. " He draws a parallel between Pharaoh's economy in ancient Egypt and what is occurring today.

All of these have been doing heroic work for a decade or longer. They are engaged not only in creating a new economic narrative, they are also engaged in peacemaking as powerful as anyone on the front page.

Peter Deitz

Blogger, micro-philanthropy advocate, and the Managing Editor of [SocialFinance.ca](http://www.socialfinance.ca)

<http://www.socialfinance.ca>

In 2011, I'd like to see Data become more visible. Data has a reputation for being boring. In reality, it's anything but. Data, when shared in a format that anyone (or any machine) can analyze, reveals everything from injustice to interconnectedness and serves as the renewable energy for driving a socially and environmentally innovative agenda.

Our challenge is that Data has a history of being guarded too closely by institutions, either intentionally or because they lack another model. I'd like to see incentives created for institutions to share data that should be public as freely as

individuals on social network sites share data that probably shouldn't be public!

And then I'd like to see the combined data repositories of institutions and individuals linked up in ways that a few years ago we wouldn't have thought possible. This is the work I'm committing myself to in 2011. Linked open data across multiple sectors: the financial sector, the philanthropic sector, and media. What will come from more open and linked data? We don't entirely know. But that's what makes living in the first half of the 21st century so exciting.

Peter Nares

Founding Executive Director of Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI)

<http://www.sedi.org>

I would like social innovation to gain more visibility in Canada in 2011. In my mind, social innovation means the development and market testing of new socially progressive ideas. However, this is easier said than done.

Right now there is a lot of noise about the economy. In fact, the economic noise pollution is so pervasive that little else gets on the radar. For non-economists and politicians this is a problem because it sucks up space, money and political energy. This leaves little room for anything non-economic like social progress, which is just as important as economic and environmental progress. I have spent enough time with planners to understand that the three areas are interrelated but in the myopic world of politics when push comes to shove, it becomes all about the economy and this has a broader dampening effect on hope, opportunity and prosperity, the bedrock ideals of social progress.

One of the antidotes is social innovation because it is a process that can effect substantive and positive change. It is a practice that is developing, but in spite of the best efforts of groups like ASHOKA, the work and its promise are largely invisible, especially in Canada. This limits its capacity to contribute to positive change and to take good ideas to scale. I would like that to change next year and this is why.

Conditions for low income Canadians are not improving. There are still too many poor people, many of them children. Wealth is increasingly owned and controlled by the top percentile of Canadians and the incomes of many Canadians are not keeping pace with inflation. As history has taught us, if left unchanged these conditions will lead to even more serious social and economic issues. Current social policy is inert and seemingly confined to tweaking the same old ineffective ideas that have been around for years (e.g. welfare). The last large-scale new

social policy reform or innovation in this country was arguably the National Child Benefit in 1998. The next one will be the result of social innovation and we need it sooner rather than later.

For the unconvinced, you have to look no further than recent natural disasters to see the utility of social innovation. It is clear that in extreme conditions and when old systems and ideas fail, innovators (the good and the bad) fill the space. From an aid perspective the immediate need is for promising solutions that can work quickly. These situations enable risk and therefore innovation. Highly visible examples would include the straw houses now being built in Haiti and the modular home units championed by Brad Pitt in New Orleans after Katrina. Visibility clearly attracts ideas and capital, the underpinnings of social innovation.

Obviously we don't want a disaster to be the catalyst but increasing the visibility and capacity of social innovation will provide hope, opportunity and progress for Canadians. Why wouldn't we want it to be more visible to all?

Ray Cohen

CEO & Founder of the Canadian Abilities Foundation

<http://www.abilities.ca>

I would like to think 2011 to be a year of unprecedented positive change for people with disabilities in Canada – and that each of us makes a significant contribution to that very worthwhile end! Here is a little bit of a context.

Since 1986, when I started the Canadian Abilities Foundation, I have been increasingly struck by the amount of passivity existing in our population around important issues. People with disabilities have been referred to, at least within the North American context, as the last front in the struggle for human rights. Whether we are talking about physical access, education, employment or transferability of services across our country, people with disabilities must still ride on the back of the bus – if they are even allowed to get on the bus at all.

It is true that there have been great strides. It is worth noting that barely a generation ago, people with disabilities were warehoused, condemned to live apart and rarely seen in public. The closing down of institutions, increased accessibility, and emerging legislation have changed that considerably. But there are many hurdles yet to overcome before we can say that we live in a truly inclusive world. One would think that people with disabilities themselves would lead the charge towards positive change and equity – but after having seen the same faces age along with my own for nearly a quarter of a century, I am very much afraid that we are missing the boat. Most people with disabilities need to

become more engaged. We are 4.4 million strong in this country – and we can effect positive change.

There are many opportunities. Organizations such as the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), Inclusion Press, Independent Living Canada, and PLAN are just a few of those more than willing to share knowledge and, very often, opportunities for involvement.

The Canadian Abilities Foundation, through our newsletter, website and magazine, frequently offers opportunities to get involved in matters important to all of us – it is, after all, worth remembering that a rising tide raises all boats.

So, my hope for 2011 is that we see a turning point where people with disabilities take advantage of opportunities as never before in making their voices heard for the general good. Do not let the committed few carry the ball for you. To smack a tired platitude squarely across the bottom: it does, in fact, take a village to raise a child.

Richard Bridge

Lawyer

<http://www.lawyerforcharities.ca>

The invitation from Al Etmanski to write about a passion I am pursuing was irresistible, and the choice of topic obvious. It is a passion that led me to move to an old farm in the Annapolis Valley in rural Nova Scotia and that has had profound impact on my life and on my family. It is a passion that has led some family and friends to conclude that I have lost my sanity.

The passion is a search for old rural wisdom. Skills like making cheese and maple syrup, caring for hens, cows and bees, grafting apple trees, growing a diverse organic garden, saving seeds, making flour from your own grains, managing a forest for heat energy and building material, carpentry, preserving root crops over the winter, to list just a few. I have always admired folks with these skills and want my three boys to at least have some exposure to them. So far, my 19 year old son has immersed himself completely in this environment, and teaches me and others what he has learned. See his farm blog at <http://www.annapoliseeds.com>

This is knowledge that most people had and applied just three or four generations ago. But it has been lost on a staggering scale and at a disturbing pace. I believe this is the biggest case of collective amnesia in human history. I also believe this loss creates serious vulnerability.

Pursuing this old rural wisdom provides new insights to several inter-related and fascinating subjects, including bio-diversity, food security, global trade, intellectual property law (Monsanto v. Schmeiser), demographics, rural community economic development and all of the sciences.

I hope in a decade to reach a basic level of competence with the key skills, and I can see more than a lifetime of learning on this path. Given the physical demands involved, I am hopeful that it will be a relatively long and healthy lifetime of learning. There is no need for a gym membership when there are old fashioned farm chores to do.

Richard Faucher

Executive Director for Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion

<http://www.gobaci.com>

I learned a long time ago that ‘identifying needs’ as a starting point for supporting people with disabilities was not the way to go. The more lists I made, the more impossible it became to imagine meeting all the needs. Worse, making the lists distracted me from recognizing the talents, gifts and assets that exist within the people we serve – not to mention those within their families, friends, BACI (Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion) and community partners. This deficit-based approach perpetuated the image of the people we serve as ‘needy’ and impeded our efforts to support their inclusion in the community. What I am just now starting to learn is that the deficit roots in our sector run deep, and moving away from them is far more difficult than I imagined it would be ten years ago.

A decade ago, I thought the answers lay in values-based staff training, person-centred planning, the development of effective safeguards and personal support networks, and family advocacy. I thought that if we truly focused on a person’s strengths, and then supported the person to share those strengths with others, they would be welcomed into community and they would belong. What I didn’t understand, or at least underestimated, was the depth of influence the deficit perspective has had on our sectoral practices, from policy development to advocacy approaches, funding agreements to service provision.

I am beginning to learn that as an organization we have got to behave differently if we want different results. I am learning that when we actually think in new ways, new strategies are plentiful and opportunity is everywhere.

To start with, we must no longer see ourselves as, introduce ourselves as, or promote ourselves as, a needy charity that looks after all the people that don’t

belong. We must see ourselves as the agents of a huge talent pool with tremendous assets, introduce ourselves as an economic contributor with huge purchasing power, and promote ourselves as innovative change makers with amazing concepts and ideas ready to move forward. To do otherwise will perpetuate deficit.

In 2011, I would like to make our collective assets more visible and more effective. I would like to explore new ways to better leverage these assets with our community partners and farther advance our agenda of social inclusion. If we do that, there will be no stopping us as a movement.

Richard Steckel

Heads of the Milestones Project

<http://www.milestonesproject.com>

Dignity, kindness, mutual respect and understanding. AND, more time to laugh out loud and so hard that your nose runs.

Sam Sullivan

Former mayor of Vancouver and a social advocate

<http://www.samsullivan.ca>

One idea I am exploring and that I would like to become more visible in 2011 is the concept of Greeting Fluency. As Vancouver becomes more multicultural with increasing immigration, many of our neighbours speak languages that are not understood by the mainstream. While it is extremely unlikely that many of us will become conversationally fluent in any of these other languages it is very possible for a great number of us to become Greeting Fluent. I believe that by being able to say seven short phrases in one or more of the languages of our neighbours we would accomplish much both personally and for the community.

By becoming Greeting Fluent we make a powerful statement of respect to our new neighbours and indicate an openness and interest in one of the most fundamental markers of their identity. By being able to greet our neighbours in their own language, we immediately build bridges and create an environment for developing friendships. The act of learning another language also creates empathy for our neighbours who must live and work in a strange language in Canada.

There is an old saying "learn another language, gain another soul". Learning some of the basics of another language gives deep insights into other cultures and other ways of analyzing and describing the world and this knowledge can be very enriching. Medical professionals often encourage people to learn another language as an effective way to prevent deterioration of the brain. With benefits to both the community and the individual I hope the concept of Greeting Fluency will be more visible in 2011.

Sean Moore

One of Canada's most experienced practitioners, writers and teachers on public-policy advocacy.

<http://www.seanmoore.ca>

My 2011 hope is for bold new progress in improving the lives of Canada's First Nations people.

Living conditions on many Canadian reserves are what one normally thinks of as Third World. The experience of many urban aboriginals is hardly any better.

The "vital statistics", as it were, of Canada are heavily influenced by the grim realities of aboriginal life in this country: child poverty, infant mortality, single-parent families, access to basic amenities of water, sanitation and housing, educational achievement, employment – all drag Canada down the international scale of development and national well-being indices. Have we become immune to being enraged by this? Are we no longer ashamed?

Are there some good news stories in Indian Country? Yes, there are, but in most cases they are an exception to the rule when it comes to housing, employment, overall community well being and the health of democratic process. If money alone could solve the problems of Canadian First Nations communities, then annual federal expenditures (of more than \$8-10 billion) would have solved it long ago.

Is there a role for government? Of course. There are scores of public-policy issues to be addressed that could have substantial impact on the lives of Canadian native peoples. There are major changes in process – and attitude – that need to take place within First Nations communities

But I believe the scale of the challenges require an effort that extends beyond government or tribal council.. It requires some new thinking on the part of everyone – aboriginal and non-aboriginal; politician, bureaucrat and citizen; First Nations leaders and their people; and especially individual non-aboriginal

Canadians acting both on their own and through the many institutions and organizations through which they live their civic life – associations, interest groups, employers, professional and trade associations, unions, places of worship and other communities of interest.

Why not, in 2011, challenge all Canadians to play a role? Industry or professional associations could take on projects aimed at contributing their expertise to the development of First Nations communities. Parishes, synagogues, temples and mosques could adopt a faith-based organization or social-service initiative in an aboriginal community. Sports leagues and athletics federations could consider developing a special relationship with a First Nation community nearby or in another province. Individual community colleges and universities could target a native community to support. Ideally every major association in the country would develop a First Nations initiative of some sort.

The objective would be for non-aboriginal Canadians not just to "give", as in cash. Indeed, in most cases, I suspect what will probably be even more valuable is "time" - the time it takes to learn and appreciate the challenges faced by others. The time it takes to learn enough about a situation to determine how you can truly help. The time it takes to actually "do something" that can make a difference.

That is my hope. Can it be more than a dream?

Shauna Sylvester

Executive Director for Carbon Talks and a Fellow at SFU Centre for Dialogue

<http://www.canadasworld.ca>

In 2011 I would like our democracy to become more visible in Canada. It's a shadow of its former self and if we continue along the course we are following, I fear we will lose some of the basic rights and freedoms that we have struggled to secure.

Some might argue democracy is a core competency for Canada in the world, a model for others to emulate – after all our motto of peace, order and good governance has served us well (even if it makes us seem a little boring). But Canada's image as a strong democratic nation is fading and is now in desperate need of a refresh.

One year ago today, Canada's Parliament was closed, prorogued by Prime Minister Stephen Harper for no particularly good reason than to stall an inquiry on

Afghan detainees and take control of the Senate. This was the second prorogation of Parliament in a year.

Now proroguing Parliament is not in itself enough to suggest a decline in our democracy but there are other troubling trends. Since coming to office, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has:

- Severely curtailed access of the media to the government. (e.g. all questions to the Prime Minister must be submitted and approved by a central media officer prior to a press conference)
- Centralized government messaging out of the Prime Minister's Office (e.g. All attendance at public events or media interviews by any member of the public service must be approved by the Prime Minister's Office).
- Attacked members of the civil service who raised concerns about shifts in policy – like the head of our nuclear safety agency and a foreign diplomat – making it clear to all public servants that they must toe the line and stay quiet, no matter how much government action might challenge their own conscience or break the law.
- Advised Members of the Conservative Party who are running in elections not to participate in all candidates meetings or public interviews during elections, unless they have been hosted and organized by the party.
- Stopped consulting with Parliament on most foreign policy issues, opting instead to make announcements through the media as they did on Canada's position on climate change in Copenhagen and Cancun.
- Stonewalled Access to Information requests and eliminated the Information Requests Registry, the body that managed such requests within government.
- Ceased funding of non-governmental organizations because their policy positions did not coincide with the government's positions.
- Ended the long-form census and have made its completion voluntary thereby making it difficult for other levels of government to access critical data for policy decision-making.
- Enabled an unelected Senate to overturn a climate action bill that had been approved by the majority of elected Members of Parliament.

While these might seem like necessary evils in maintaining stability with a minority government, they are far more troubling when viewed through a democratic lens. If, for example, a civil servant is asked to take action that fundamentally goes against Canadian laws (e.g. like transferring prisoners when they know they are going to be tortured), what recourse does he or she have? By tightly controlling information and messaging in and out of government and attacking anyone who might present alternative fact-based messaging, the government has undermined the most basic tenet of a functioning democracy – freedom of expression.

The erosion of our democracy brings a price in Canada. The membership in political parties is at an all time low, young people are staying away on election-day in droves and citizens are losing confidence in their politicians and the governing institutions of our country.

But we haven't walked so far down the road towards authoritarianism that we can't change this. In 2011, our government can turn things around and embrace our historical traditions as a great democratic nation. By removing the "gag" orders on civil servants (and trusting them as professionals to do their jobs), by enabling open and accountable reporting by our Parliamentary press and by embracing dialogue and engagement with citizens on public policy issues, the government can revitalize our democracy in Canada. These are not big asks, they just require our elected members and particularly our Prime Minister to have the will to press the refresh button.

Shawn Smith

MBA graduate having studied at Simon Fraser University and Oxford. He now teaches at SFU; co-founded Education Generation and is co-founder and President of Global Agents for Change, an organization seeking sustainable solutions to global poverty while inspiring youth to create a better world.

<http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2010/03/where-have-all-the-young-ones-gone.html>

<http://www.educationgeneration.org/eg/team>

<http://www.globalafc.org>

I often question whether every generation feels that things are more critical now than ever, and perhaps more interestingly, if technological and economic acceleration means that each generation has generally been right in that notion. Whether we speak of financial, food, aid, educational, democratic or any number of other systems, the current generation is coming of age in a time when existing modes of operation simply aren't doing the job, and aren't proving robust enough to evolve with rapidly shifting realities. Where do we find the leaders that can push the pace of this evolution, or build entirely new systems where needed? Undergraduate business education, for better or worse, attracts huge numbers of future leaders at a time in their lives when their goals are crystallizing. Among this cohort, there is immense appetite, in my experience, for learning about social innovation and entrepreneurship. However, schools are struggling to expose students to anything significantly beyond "business as usual", let alone equip

them to deal with these challenges. All business is by its nature social, and I believe there is immense power for change in markets. We have a group of emerging leaders facing an inflection point in their lives that should be learning how to harness that power.

While it may not have the immediacy of other solutions, there are few more potent and readily accessible leadership pipelines that I can identify. I'd be glad to hear from anyone else interested in or working on this issue!

Sherri Torjman

Vice-President of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy

<http://www.caledoninst.org>

In 2011, I hope we can walk tall. Walking tall actually has nothing to do with walking. Nor does it have anything to do with tall.

Walking tall is about taking the high road. It is about bringing integrity to a world filled with cynicism and distrust. It is about a higher plane which is uniquely human but which seems to have become lost in a frenzied, angry world.

Walking tall is about spirituality – not in a religious sense though some may express their spirituality through religion. Rather, it is about what it means to be human.

It is about how we care for ourselves, for each other and for our neighbourhoods and communities.

Walking tall is about putting humanity back in our lives. To make human well-being a priority rather than an afterthought on the public agenda – after the economic plan is in place, after the deals are done and after the money is made.

The world seems more divided than ever – by religious conflict, racial tensions and glaring inequalities in wealth and power. The gap between those with and without continues to grow. Perhaps the biggest loss has been our sense of self, of each other and of our place on this planet.

How did we get here? How have we come to live in a world in which so many want to get off? Or have already dropped out – through drugs, crime or violence. Or more quietly through depression and despair.

Others have not chosen to drop out but they have been left out. They have been excluded not by their own choice but by others. By fear. By discrimination. By attitudes and barriers that deny access to place, to self-respect and to the means

to earn a living.

Then there are those who have jobs but still live in poverty. They are employed but can't make ends meet. They work for pay yet remain poor.

My hope for 2011 is that we take more time to value our world and the quality of life. We need to place human well-being at the centre of development.

One bright spot is the movement of economists who are trying to put happiness on the radar screen as a serious goal for public policy. Dollars go only so far in terms of meeting human needs. Real wealth is created through rich bonds of human relationships.

Their message in a money-maniac world is profound. It is a small but significant step in walking tall – and in reclaiming our humanity.

Stacey Corriveau

Director of the BC Centre for Social Enterprise

<http://www.centreforsocialenterprise.com>

A deeper connection between community economic development and environmental solutions.

One can't 'unknow' what one knows.

What I know is that climate change and peak oil are creating a perfect storm for the devastation of ecosystems, countries, and communities.

What I also know is that those working in the community economic development (CED) sector have deep concern for people.

We often complain of silos when observing work external to us, or when trying to break through external blocks in order to attract support or change systems.

We have been failing to see our own silo, the separation between 'our' work and that of environmentalists. Many within the social sector view environmental activities as a 'nice to have', only after social goals are met.

I don't hear enough conversations about the fact that once climate change and resource depletion are factored into the equation, we can expect poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, lack of infrastructure, gaps between rich and poor... as we have never known in our lifetimes.

In 2011, I would like to see this reality made more visible, and acted upon: environmentalism is a social movement.

Stefan Lorimer

Digital Technology Strategist, PLAN, community advocate and blogger

<http://www.stefanlorimer.com>

Being born should not mean inheriting a life where your primary purpose is to pay for the unrestrained social, environmental and financial decisions of those who came before. The abundance of today should grow and not be diminished for tomorrow. We should not hold future generations of citizens to ransom.

In 2011, I'd like a discussion of entitlement to be taken seriously. What makes us feel entitled? Why does that justify our actions? How does this help future peoples? These questions should inform our actions. Inter-generational entitlement, should be embedded in a revision of the concept of citizenship. It should govern, and inform our rights, privileges and obligations as citizens.

For example, a citizen should be entitled to clean air, free education and affordable housing. If we took entitlement seriously we might have to establish laws to limit the exposure of future generations to burdensome taxation, and massive debt and ensure the fair distribution of wealth from one generation, class, or government to another. They should not suffer the consequences of a problem they did not create. A serious entitlement discussion would also look at what is fair for both current AND future citizens.

The fight to rebalance societies is ongoing. The short-term needs of the dominant economic class should not create second-class citizens. Unfortunately, the current economic crisis shows evidence of this type of imbalance and injustice. Reduced expenditures for health care, for primary and secondary schools, for jobs, for tuition, and fair tax breaks for those who need them, all speak to a growing disparity of wealth. Witness the concentration of corporate wealth, extravagant bonuses to financial sector CEO's and growing military defense budgets, in the face of widening poverty and environmental degradation. Just a few years ago it was reported, "the 500 million wealthiest people (7% of world population) are responsible for 50% of the gas emissions that produce global warming, while the poorest 50% (3,400 million of the population) are responsible for only 7% of the emissions."¹ These signs of the time reflect a crisis of entitlement, not only because of the lack of fairness in the existing distribution

¹ (Fred Pierce, New Scientist 2009)

of wealth but also because the systems used to create it; systems that no one small group should be entitled to use exclusively.

Today's crises, financial and otherwise, are alarming not just because the impacts were predicted long before they occurred, but particularly because this type of short-term thinking is still largely viewed as acceptable. Somehow in the midst of our present efforts, campaigns, and policy changes, we forget we are dealing with a double whammy – the effects of previous decisions plus current decision-making without a serious consideration of entitlement. More of us need to say, 'these resources are being set aside for people 100 years from now, and it is our responsibility to ensure they are kept that way.'

A discussion about entitlement will force us to swallow some bitter pills. Today we need bold changes, world-impacting change, stop in the street and talk with strangers kinds of change and that kind of change doesn't start in the court-room, nor end in a parliament. A good place to start might be to consider this simple idea that "you are only entitled to the value of the investments you make in the future of others" and see where that takes us.

Our lives cannot be defined by a race to the bottom for the declining resources we have available on this tiny planet we occupy. Nor should it be lead by members of our human family who dictate we fight each other for the scraps they leave behind.

As the Globe and Mail has been stating recently, "The next discussion we need to have"¹... is about entitlement. In 2011, I hope that you will sit down at a dinner table with your friends, family or colleagues and ask yourselves this simple question, "Am I taking more than I am entitled to?"

Stephen Huddart

Vice-President of The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

<http://www.mcconnellfoundation.ca>

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said that the future belongs to those who give future generations reason to hope. Something that would give us hope is an enduring

¹ Campaign by the Globe and Mail 2010 – 2011 : "The next discussion we need to have: Who should pay for urban transit?", <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/the-next-discussion-we-need-to-have-who-should-pay-for-urban-transit/article1835397/> February 15, 2011 ; "The next discussion we need to have: the future of jobs", <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/the-next-discussion-we-need-to-have-the-future-of-jobs/article1828153/> February 15, 2011; "The next discussion we need to have: Caring for seniors", <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/the-next-discussion-we-need-to-have-caring-for-seniors/article1828653/> February 15, 2011;

and visible commitment to creating a resilient society.

The first decade of the 21st Century has demonstrated that we are in a time of multiple and accelerating crises in our economic, environmental, and social systems – issues too complex to be grasped by watching the daily news. The path to resiliency will not be found by charities that provide band -aid solutions; by companies driven to produce continually increasing quarterly earnings statements; nor by politicians whose primary interest is in winning the next election. So the first step is public engagement, informed by our best minds and involving citizens from all walks of life, to shape a vision of what we want things to look like in 10, 100, 1000 years.

As an outcome from the above, we would like to see policy and legal frameworks for transitioning to sustainability. When society's long-term viability is our starting point, it becomes easier to make sensible decisions today. As UBC Professor John Robinson says in relation to energy conservation and cities, retrofitting is important, but making sure that new buildings are designed for sustainability is urgent. We want more examples like 2010's Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, which commits an entire industry to transition to sustainability; and wider recognition of the visionary recommendations of the Task Force on Social Finance.

Finally, if we care about society's long-term health, we need to see continuous and extensive innovation in public education. Education for resilience calls for a new set of skills – emphasizing team-based projects and community service learning on the one hand and self-directed learning on the other. It may be time to re-introduce the practical skills of homemaking and craft - what were once called home economics and shop, useful things to know in a severe downturn, and of likely interest to a group of boys who currently find school irrelevant. At a time when their world is changing faster than school can possibly reflect, we need to listen to students about their needs and preferences.

All of these things I have mentioned are taking place, albeit sporadically and in general beyond the awareness of the mainstream media. Making them more visible would accelerate their spread, and increase hope.

Steve Sunderland

Ph.D., Director of the Peace Village and professor of peace and educational studies at the University of Cincinnati

<http://www.uc.edu/news/posters.htm>

I will be making more visible my own vocabulary of compassion. The word,

"compassion," rightfully touches us at some deep level. Even though we feel a definition, we acknowledge that some aspects of it as a concept and experience elude us. Toward the goal of casting light on the term, I offer the following:

- Compassion must be welcomed into the open space between people and allowed a seat in the circle even though it brings only the power of good heartedness.
- Compassion sometimes sits in the ear, a baseball glove like structure stretching out to hear the sounds of pain and hope.
- Compassion wears the colors of all cultures and so is recognizable when, sitting in the warm sun, we see it first as brown, then black, then beige, and then golden.
- Compassion is an invitation to dance, to move in public ways back and forth toward others, and with a smile of beckoning.
- Compassion posses a secret ingredient, once tasted, swallowed and digested, causes the expansion of the heart in all directions.
- Compassion is a holon, a part connected to other parts, forming both a whole and parts; at rest and in motion just as we might say that a hug comes from a person and is enlarged by the smile it receives.
- Compassion avoids being stereotyped, categorized, labelled or branded. Indeed, compassion cannot be copied, reproduced, or bottled. Yet, how nice when compassion taps us again.
- Compassion is a genuine apology, offered and advanced with no expectation.
- Compassion is an inspiring teacher, holding class with our hearts in circle where acceptance, safety, and joy are the lessons.

These ideas offered in the spirit of friendship, the twin of compassion.

Ted Jackson

University professor, management consultant and author, faculty member in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University.

<http://www2.carleton.ca/sppa/faculty-staff/jackson-edward-t/>

Way too many.

That's how many Canadians belong to the precariat. A term coined by British economist Guy Standing, the precariat refers to the alarmingly large pool of workers who rely on part-time and contingent work to earn a living.

True, for high-end professionals like accountants and consulting engineers, this is not a bad gig—though markets for their services can dry up fast, with little

warning. But the most intense problems are at the low end of the income scale, where part-time work in any sector—retail, cleaning, agriculture, even construction—just doesn't add up to a living wage.

This breeds roiling economic insecurity. Feeling undervalued, workers lose self-confidence and self-esteem; some become immobilized. Canadian households that are dependent on part-time and contingent work can't plan beyond the next paycheque; can't buy assets, like houses, that build equity; and, in the worst cases, can't even put healthy food on the table.

Guess who really likes the precariat? Organized crime! Anxious precariat members can become users of illegal and destructive drugs. Some who have been out of work a long time, and become delinked from the labour market and society in general, join criminal gangs to earn quick money and gain peer support.

Globalization only has one plan for the precariat, and that is to grow it even bigger. Most elites around the world are too self-absorbed to care. Corporations continue to be rewarded by stock markets and their shareholders for mass layoffs of fulltime employees. And governments seem unable or unwilling to use public policy to keep their citizens out of the precariat.

That's why my hope is that a wide array of pathways out of the precariat will become more visible in 2011.

In fact, there are many such stories, often with the innovative programs of civil-society organizations behind them. Yet these stories are too rarely reported in the media.

For example, many new Canadians have set up successful small businesses financed by the microloan program of Alterna Savings Credit Union in Toronto. On a larger scale, in Quebec, the Social Economy Trust makes long-term loans for the expansion of social enterprises that provide affordable services and products and good jobs to citizens who otherwise would be marginalized in the labour market.

And not all companies destroy jobs to get ahead. My friend, Canadian journalist Frank Koller, has written *Spark*, a brilliant book on Lincoln Electric, the American welding company that has had a no-layoff policy for a century and continues to thrive as a robust Fortune 500 firm. It turns out that Lincoln is the Harvard Business School's most popular case study of all time, even though most Business professors see it as an outlier.

Maybe it doesn't have to remain an outlier. Maybe corporations should be given

preferential tax treatment for creating and sustaining full-time, quality jobs with good benefits. And maybe a premium on the taxes of very wealthy Canadians could pay for it.

Share the wealth. Share the stories.

Ted Kuntz

Psychotherapist and author of *Peace Begins With Me*

<http://www.peacebeginswithme.ca>

As a student of human behaviour and an individual who has attempted to live consciously I've learned some things about declaring one's intentions for a new year. I've learned the importance of focusing my intentions on my actions and perceptions. This is where our true power resides.

Therefore, what I would like to see more of in 2011 is that I be an agent of peace and joy. I've learned that it is easy to be peaceful and joyful when others around me are peaceful and joyful. The true test of mastery is whether I can be peaceful and joyful when others are not.

This year I endeavour to be peaceful especially when those around me are angry and agitated. To maintain my joy especially when my children are exercising their capacity for choice and finding their power. To be respectful especially when the driver in front of me violates rules of courteous driving. To be in harmony especially when I am under assault from those who are fearful and living in unconscious and reactive ways.

In 2011 I resolve to be peaceful, joyful and happy and it is my hope that by living in this way I inspire others to a similar path with the result we experience more peace and joy in this world. This is what I would like to see more of in 2011.

Wishing you a peaceful and joyful New Year.

Theressa Etmanski

Graduate Student of Law and Asia-Pacific Policy

<http://small-things-with-love.blogspot.com/>

In 2011, I would like to see the issue of human rights abuses in Burma be publicly addressed by the international community, as well as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The issue of daily human rights abuses in Burma is one that is not often discussed in the international media. Instead, over the past three years, it has taken situations such as, hundreds of peacefully protesting monks being shot and beaten by the military in the street; thousands of citizens dying due to their government's refusal to allow international aid organizations to deliver much needed supplies after a record breaking cyclone devastated communities; or the recent election where the same military officials who facilitated these abuses stepped down from their positions so they could form a "civilian" party in order to run in, and win, the country's first "democratic" election in twenty years.

When such events occurred, the CBC, BBC, and CNN all granted a token amount of airtime to these abuses, and then quickly moved on to other international atrocities. During the periods in between, Burma is forgotten by the international community and within this void, human rights abuses continue to flourish.

While many countries around the world, including Canada, have imposed strict economic sanctions against the country, their effect is severely limited by other nation States who willingly continue with economic activity. While China and India are two of Burma's biggest trading partners, their own records of human rights abuses create a situation in which they are unwilling to use their economic leverage to create significant change for the Burmese people. Alternatively, another key source of economic activity for Burma comes from its membership in ASEAN. Until recently, ASEAN has remained quiet on the Burma issue, as the ASEAN Charter espouses guiding principles of non-interference and respect for State sovereignty. However, in light of the recent fraudulent election, representatives from two Member States, the Philippines and Indonesia, have spoken out on the issue.

This breach of protocol could be the opportunity Burma activists have been waiting for. If the international community, particularly those States who have existing economic or political leverage with ASEAN Member States, begin to put the pressure on ASEAN to call for change, Burma may be forced to act. Along with principles of non-interference, the ASEAN Charter also stipulates compliance with principles of democracy and human rights. While there may not be strong precedent for acting on these principles, it is written into the Charter that non-compliance will lead to a decision by the summit.

The ultimate result could therefore be expulsion from membership; a result that would not fit well with the junta's current facade, and will lead to huge economic

repercussions. This approach has its own limitations, including the less than pristine human rights records of ASEAN members. While Vietnam, the current ASEAN Chair, may exert significant influence on this issue; it is an opportunity that should not be passed up lightly. If nothing else, this is a chance for the international community to consider its responsibility to the Burmese people, many of whom are already risking their lives and safety to bring fundamental change to their country.

How much longer should we allow them to suffer in solitude? 2011 should finally be the year for the world's long overdue engagement.

Tim Brodhead

President and CEO of the JW McConnell Family Foundation

<http://www.mcconnellfoundation.ca/en/resources/presidents-corner>

Can money buy happiness? If so, we must be getting happier. After all, Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose during the 2000-2008 period from \$22,580 per capital to \$26,200, adjusted for inflation – almost 20 percent. And yet we don't seem happier, and polls confirm that Canadians, despite our relative affluence, are far from the top ranking when compared with other countries, even 'poorer' ones.

Well, of course we know that GDP simply measures the total of goods and services produced, whether they are beneficial or damaging in nature. A disastrous flood boosts GDP because of all the reconstruction that follows; more oil sands development is an unmitigated plus, and so on. GDP growth says nothing about our well-being or happiness.

In 2011, I look for GDP to come closer to being dethroned from its commanding perch as sole indicator of national well-being. The search for alternative measures is well underway. The best-known of these is perhaps Bhutan's concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH), a term coined in 1972 by King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk who wanted to measure the true quality of life in his country by including social progress and spiritual values, not just economic indicators. GNH incorporates sustainable development, cultural values, environmental conservation and good governance in a holistic approach that would not be very different from how many, perhaps most, Canadians would measure our own national well-being.

For the next several years GNH was regarded as eccentrically and endearingly Bhutanese, and derided by economists. However research to make it more rigorous and quantitative has directed attention less to measuring happiness,

than to the factors that create it: levels of disease, education, opportunity; the state of the environment; enjoyment of art and culture, etc. The UN's Human Development Report, launched in 1990, began to apply this holistic yardstick across countries, with increasing sophistication over the years. (Canada was very happy to acknowledge its status as #1 in the world for many years but pays less attention now as we slip steadily down the ranks of OECD member countries.)

In the past few years a number of competing standards have emerged: the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) which distinguishes between worthwhile growth and uneconomic growth (depletion of natural capital, cleaning up pollution, the cost of crime, recovery from disasters, etc). Ronald Colman's work in Atlantic Canada, and the Quality of Life Index now housed at the University of Waterloo are two examples, but there are others in Europe and some American states. Community Foundations of Canada's Vital Signs reports, now compiled and issued annually by many local community foundations, is garnering increasing attention as a snapshot of community health and an early warning of trends and emerging problems, as well as improvements.

The incoming UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, surprised many this year when he committed 2 million pounds to a project to devise an index of the UK's national happiness by 2012. The Office of National Statistics will lead consultations to identify areas that matter to most people's sense of well-being. On a different plane altogether, Facebook plans to create a Gross National Happiness Index by adding up negative and positive words on billions of messages, and by subtracting negative from positive on a daily, monthly and yearly basis (one not altogether surprising finding already is that most Americans are happier in 2009 than they were in 2008 – and that Thanksgiving and Christmas Days show big 'spikes' in their sense of well-being).

Does it matter if we replace our exclusive reliance on GDP by a more inclusive indicator? Yes, if it reveals underlying issues like economic inequality, environmental deterioration, cultural impoverishment and the impact they have on our mental, physical and social well-being. As Robert Kennedy said almost a half century ago, GDP measures everything except "that which makes life worthwhile".

Isn't it time to focus on what counts for Canadians, rather than just what we have been counting?

Tim Draimin

Executive Director for Social Innovation Generation (SiG)

<http://sigeneration.ca>

Social innovation will be much more visible in 2011. Al Etmanski is the thought leader who advocates that "social innovation needs to be in the water supply", his metaphor for going mainstream.

To put another way, social innovation has to be recognized as integral to the DNA of mainstream "innovation".

I think social innovation will be embraced as the necessary, integrated complement to business-oriented, science and technology, R+D innovation.

To have real impact on the economy and social-environmental well being, innovation needs to be composed of double helix DNA: science & technology innovation intertwined with social innovation.

This is important for many reasons, especially two:

- Society is under pressure to deliver high impact innovation able to tackle large-scale complex problems. This will only be possible if we strengthen our approach to innovation by adding a social innovation lens and practice (e.g. sharpening how we define the questions shaping the process, deepening our understanding of the impacts being sought, involving all sectors in co-production, empowering local innovation capabilities, etc.)
- In order for high impact innovations to be originated, developed, financed and scaled, society requires the appropriate enabling infrastructure training, supporting, networking and financing social innovators and social entrepreneurs.

To date the "innovation agenda" has been largely shaped by business leaders and like-minded policy-makers. This has meant a policy environment fixated on narrowly cast support for business innovation capability. Even defined in its own terms, the business innovation agenda has been running into problems.

Since the 1990s, the alarm has been raised about Canada's growing "innovation gap" resulting from low rates of R+D by Canadian companies.

The latest report from the Conference Board of Canada reinforces that concern, from a science and technology mindset.

The Conference Board gives Canada a failing grade – a "D" – on innovation, and

places Canada 14th among 17 peer countries in the OECD. The report card uses a total of 12 traditional indicators to rank the countries by science and technology research output (articles), patents by population, and high-tech industries (aerospace, electronics, etc.)

As important as those OECD tracked criteria are, they do not extend to social innovation.

In an attempt to close the commercial R+D innovation gap, Paul Lucas, President & CEO GlaxoSmithKline, and John Manly, President & CEO Canadian Council of Chief Executives, spearheaded the new Coalition for Action on Innovation in Canada. CAIC cites the Conference Board's research in making its case that business and academia need "to forge a consensus...behind a focused and achievable agenda to position Canada as a world leader in innovation."

Paul Lucas has said, "For us, innovation doesn't simply mean invention, or the results of R&D. We see it as putting ideas to work, and the work is all about creating economic value. Without commercialization of an idea, innovation is a car without tires – it's not going anywhere."

In response to CAIC and other earlier research reports on the "innovation" dilemma, the Canadian government launched the Review of Federal Support to Research and Development on October 14th. This Review is led by "an independent expert panel to solicit the advice of Canadians and business leaders on how the federal government can cultivate its support of business research and development." (Emphasis added.)

The review addresses the lack of return on public investments in innovation.

"Canadian business spends less per capita on research and development, innovation and commercialization than most other industrialized countries," said federal Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn when announcing the Review, "despite the Government of Canada investing more than \$7 billion annually to encourage business R&D." (Emphasis added.)

An urgent question is: will the Federal Review include social innovation as being part of its working definition of "innovation"? It's obvious to ask that at a time when social innovation is building global momentum as a necessary lever for substantive and positive social change – change that can generate both economic and social value.

Canadian thinking is changing.

MaRS Discovery District, Canada's leading innovation hub, is now one of the

very first global innovation systems to integrate social innovation into its DNA.

The same integrated mindset embracing social innovation was the hallmark of the November 30th report by the blue ribbon Canadian Task Force on Social Finance, entitled "Mobilizing Private Capital for Public Good".

The Report proposed linking hitherto separate spheres, stating that:

"Canadians have long relied on governments and community organizations to meet evolving social needs, while leaving markets, private capital and the business sector to seek and deliver financial returns. However, this binary system is breaking down as profound societal challenges require us to find new ways to fully mobilize our ingenuity and resources in the search for effective, long-term solutions.

"Mobilizing private capital to generate, not just economic value, but also social and environmental value, represents our best strategy for moving forward."

The Task Force focused its 7 recommendations on building a new, social innovation approach to finance, referred to alternatively as "social finance" or "impact investing". Social finance will be a key requirement for a robust Canadian social innovation ecosystem to develop.

Bringing social innovation into the mainstream is the opportunity for 2011.

Vickie Cammack

Co-Founder of PLAN and CEO of Tyze Personal Networks

<http://www.tyze.com>

Research repeatedly verifies the old adage – a faithful friend is the medicine of life. When it comes to our well being there is no disagreement, things go better with belonging. There is bountiful evidence that we live longer, get sick less often, heal more quickly when we have a supportive social network. We have more academic success, better employment opportunities, healthier diets and happier lives because of the people who love and care for us.

Our formal systems of health and social care frequently operate in isolation from the powerful human ties that care for us and help keep us well. These systems are constructed on a professionally dominated paradigm that is focused on doing things for us and to us, as quickly and efficiently as possible. This paradigm, so very effective in acute and emergency situations, is ill suited to our growing complex health and social challenges.

An aging population and an increasing incidence of chronic illness are examples of intractable challenges that reveal both the fiscal and human limitations of our formal systems of care. There is simply not enough money to provide the care needed over time. Even more importantly, the spiritual and emotional nourishment, the daily monitoring and support, and the deep knowledge of our personal preferences and needs that are required to achieve true well being, cannot be provided by health and social care practitioners working in prescribed hours, away from our homes and our loved ones, and often for our rural citizens, away from their communities.

Our challenge is to find ways for our formal and informal systems of care to collaborate and actively co-create health and well-being. We need services that strengthen not supplant our human bonds. This requires deep shifts in the culture of professionally provided services to focus on assets versus pathologies, to expect contributions versus compliance and to cultivate resilience versus short-term solutions. Over the long term, policy and shifts in resource flows will be required to scale and sustain early efforts.

As a starting place I would like our formal systems to make visible their inability to solve their fiscal and human resource challenges without the contributions of the individual, their families and friends. In turn, I would like those of us on the informal side of the care equation to value our knowledge, accept our responsibility and see our power to contribute to solutions.

Victor Lachance

Former President and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, a former Chairperson of the True Sport Foundation Board of Directors, and is actively involved in the multi-partner True Sport Movement.

<http://www.truesportpur.ca>

I have always been a fan of space exploration, of discovery, of extending the human experience beyond the boundaries of where we have already been and what we already know. It gives me a sense of wonder unlike anything else, and oddly enough, a sense of hope for the resolution of humanity's complex earthly challenges.

At the heart of space exploration is inquiry, the desire to know, the quest for knowledge about where we came from and where we are going. It relies on a fascinating array of scientific disciplines to help us understand, to build, to discover and to ultimately succeed in the most remarkable ways imaginable.

For this and many other reasons, I draw a tremendous amount of comfort in knowing that we have what we call science as one of humanity's major assets.

Not surprisingly then, I have become preoccupied by the increasingly worrisome promotion of claims that conflict with scientific progress, and actions that diminish the value of science for future generations.

I suppose that I have grown somewhat jaded with politicians and others who eschew or reject evidence-based decision making. But I find myself unable to ignore what seem to be intentional attacks on the very nature of science and its remarkable contributions to the flourishing of our lives.

There are various ways in which such threats can be addressed by those who share this concern. In 2011, I would like to see a more concerted effort to counter this war on scientific progress and to emphasize the importance of science to humankind. We would see an increased appetite for scientific inquiry in contrast to non-scientific explanations of our world, and a greater appreciation for what science has to offer.

I know if this were so, I would, more easily continue to marvel at the astounding stories of our progress in space exploration, and how it is extending the reach of humanity beyond the historical, theological, philosophical and scientific frontiers.