

# s.lab: Societal Transformation Lab

Co-creating more sustainable and equitable social systems

*An invitation for participation*

## Background

We are at a unique, and indeed, urgent point in time. Facing worsening climatic, societal, and political crises; civilization needs to undergo a radical transformation of unprecedented scale. Profound transformation in our social and economic systems is required.

Communities and organizations across Canada grapple with these realities, their symptoms and their effects. Making their challenge even more complex, public, private and civil society sectors are being called upon to act more collaboratively and courageously. To help our partners move closer to the future future they are trying to bring to life, McConnell is collaborating with the Presencing Institute.

The Presencing Institute works to help organizations evolve from “ego-system awareness” (making decisions based on what’s best for my team / organization / community), to “eco-system awareness” (making decisions based on what’s best for the whole system, knowing my team / organization / community will benefit, too).

How to rapidly facilitate this transformation at scale, is the number one leadership challenge of our time.

The McConnell Foundation is encouraging  
Canadian participation in the Presencing  
Institute’s Societal Transformation Lab (s.lab)

## What is s.lab?

The Societal Transformation Lab (s.lab) responds to

- 1) the critical need for transformation in the way we advance positive change, and
- 2) the absence of any process to facilitate that transformation.

s.lab helps teams, organizations and networks facilitate this shift in their stakeholder systems. Participating teams with a project related to one of the seven key issue areas (listed below) will join a four-month, online and offline innovation journey.

By the end of the journey, participants will have created new collaborative initiatives, or new types of collaboration within existing initiatives, that help bring about more sustainable and equitable social systems worldwide.

## How it Works

The Presencing Institute thinks about the transformation of the economy and society as having seven key acupuncture points. Profound shifts in these areas are most likely to accelerate the transformation of the global economy.

## Issue Areas

1. **Democracy and Governance:** advancing democracy by creating more direct distributed, dialogic and forms of governance locally, nationally, and globally.
2. **Farm and Food:** Food as a medium for healing planet and people
3. **Finance:** using finance as a tool / vehicle for social change
4. **Education:** re-inventing education by putting the learner into the driver's seat of profound societal renewal
5. **Health:** strengthening the sources / roots of health and wellbeing
6. **Business:** mission driven enterprises as a force for good in society
7. **Cross-Cutting category:** Actively co-shaping a critical local-global movement for profound civilizational renewal that serves to bridging the ecological, social, and spiritual divides of our time.

In early 2019, the s.lab will enroll approximately 100 teams from around the world that are working toward solutions in one of these seven areas. These teams will participate in the four-month, multi-local, online-to-offline innovation journey based around an existing project or initiative they are working on.

Teams will have access to s.lab's online platform, which is designed to enable teams from across sectors, systems, and geographies to support each other's learning, facilitation and prototyping.

Although the s.lab supports participants working across geographies, each team must meet with each other at least four times face-to-face.

Initially, the purpose of the s.lab is to help participants build and deepen relationships across stakeholder systems and co-create prototypes for initiatives that could address the root causes of challenges that matter locally / regionally.

Ultimately, the aim is to activate and amplify a locally anchored, globally connected network of hundreds (and over time thousands) of cross-sector change initiatives that are working to build new economic infrastructures that generate well-being for all.

## Partner Organizations

WeALL, Teach For All, UN Country Teams, UNDP, PolicyLink, Ashoka, BMW Foundation, Impact Hubs (Accelerate 2030), The Wellbeing Project, League of Intrapreneurs, and a global network of universities (researchers and students exploring new economic and societal infrastructures).

The Lab also invites participation from teams without any organizational affiliation, or teams comprised of people from across organizations.

The s.lab is funded by Partners for a New Economy and the Kandeda Fund.  
It is delivered in collaboration with HuffPost's This New World.

## Eligibility Criteria for a Team

- › **Applications are for teams, not for individuals.** Each team should have a smaller, core convening team of 2-4 people who take initiative and responsibility for leading a larger team through the Societal Transformation Lab journey.
- › **Your convening team has a prototype idea or initiative** that you are developing, or are looking to develop, related to at least one of the above areas.
- › **Conveners should have previous experience or familiarity with Theory U** (u.lab, Presencing Foundation Program, or experience applying the U process) or related methods of awareness based systems change (Art of Hosting, etc.)
- › **Your extended team should include an additional 5-15 people.** You don't have to have this team confirmed to apply, but will need to confirm their participation by mid-January 2019.
- › **Conveners / teams should be in a position to influence** some element of the system you want to transform (either as a grassroots activist, an institutional leader or through some other mechanism of change (e.g., public opinion)
- › **The whole team should be committed to the whole journey:** February to May 2019
- › **Teams should be committed** to share and learn as part of the global community

## Contact

If you are interested, but don't meet the eligibility requirements, or want to talk more about the program, please get in touch with:

**Kelly Hodgins**

McConnell Foundation (Canadian Contact)  
khodgins@mccconnellfoundation.ca

## Benefits of Participation

- › **Prototyping** your dream or your shared intention within 3 months
- › **Participating** in and co-activating an emerging global movement
- › **Peer coaching** / engage with a global community of changemakers
- › **Support from Presencing Institute** in the form of global facilitation
- › **Access** to resources on the Societal Transformation Lab online platform

## Costs and Commitment

- › Participation is free
- › Teams are responsible for covering all costs incurred during their participation.
- › Estimated time required for teams is 3-5 hours per week

## Timeline

- › Deadline for applications:  
~~November 30<sup>th</sup> 2018~~  
**EXTENDED for Canadian Participants:  
to December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018**
- › Program Launch: mid-January

[Apply Here](#)