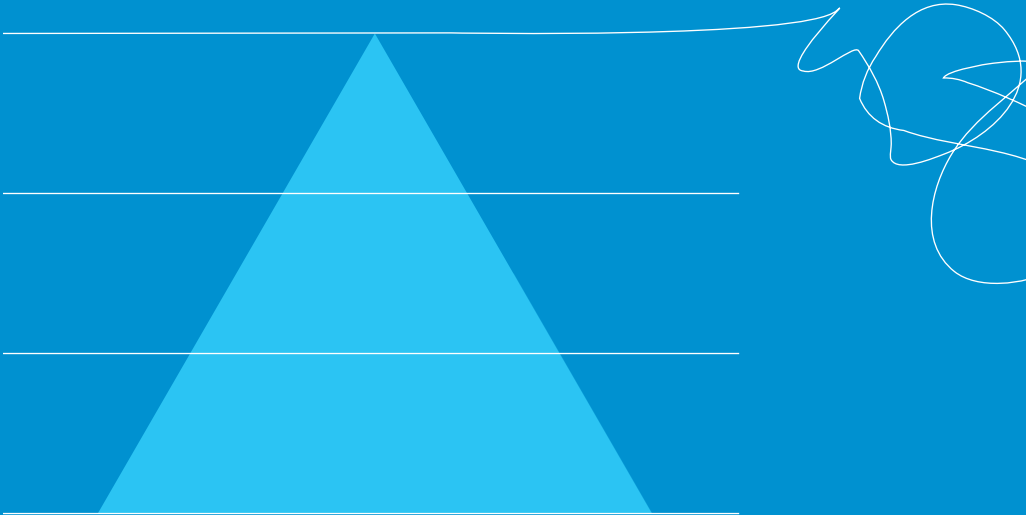


SOCIAL INNOVATION IN CITIES

**BACKGROUND
PREPARATION FOR
THE SIX TELEPRESENCE
SESSION
OCT 2, 2009**





**CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL
INNOVATION**





Based in Toronto, Canada, the Centre for Social Innovation provides shared workspace to over 170 nonprofits, social enterprises, artists, activists and social entrepreneurs. We're an incubator of emerging projects, a community centre for Toronto's social change sector, and a force for social innovation around the world.





INNOVATION

COMMUNITY

PHYSICAL SPACE

CSI has developed a Theory of Change that guides our work, helping us to understand how we spark and support social innovation in our workspace.

We begin at the bottom of the pyramid, focussing on the creation of the physical space. We do this carefully, designing a space that's functional, whimsical, inviting and energizing. The next is community. What begins as a group of people looking for a place to work becomes a community through conscious and careful curating and programming.

These layers form the basis for innovation -- the serendipity that happens when you mix the right people, the right values and the right environment; when you set the conditions for social innovation emergence.

The results are unpredictable. And often astonishing.

THE THEORY HAS SERVED US WELL. BUT WE'VE ALWAYS LIMITED IT TO OUR OWN SPACE.



AS WE BEGAN PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING TELEPRESENCE SESSION, IT SUDDENLY HIT US: WHAT HAPPENS IF WE APPLY THE THEORY AT THE CITY-LEVEL?



**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF URBAN
DESIGN IN FOSTERING SOCIAL
INNOVATION?**

**HOW DO COMMUNITY EVENTS,
HOSTED IN CERTAIN SPACES,
CREATE THE CONDITIONS
FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION
EMERGENCE?**

fig 1. We began thinking about some key, interrelated questions

NOW WE'RE OBSESSED WITH THESE QUESTIONS. AND WE WANT YOU TO BE OBSESSED TOO.

As a participant in the October 2 session, we are asking for two things from each city:

Your Assignment

You are asked to submit these pictures to eli@socialinnovation.ca. During our October 2 session, we'll review the pictures and ask each of you to explain your choice: Why and how does each feature foster or hinder social innovation?

1. A PICTURE OF
A FEATURE IN
YOUR CITY THAT
YOU BELIEVE
FOSTERS SOCIAL
INNOVATION

2. A PICTURE OF
A FEATURE IN
YOUR CITY THAT
YOU BELIEVE
HINDERS SOCIAL
INNOVATION



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Our hope is to begin weaving together the threads of an emerging theory on the relationship between urban design, community engagement, and social innovation.