

The first piece of it is to start to think about categories of innovation. Now, when we look at technical innovation, we can argue that, "This is a new thing." In technical innovations, there are innovations that are just inventions, that are just extensions of a particular new technology. Think of new apps for an operating system on a computer. There are also innovations that create a whole new domain such as the internet, and they're going to have a profound impact.

When we talk about what a social innovation is, it becomes a little bit more problematic. What do we mean by a social innovation? Social innovations can be products as we mentioned earlier. Microcredit, which is quite famous, is a product. It's a way of constructing credit so that people who have never been able to get credit before can get it. It's quite different from we had before. The other, which was mentioned in the small video you saw, was the Registered Disability Savings Plan. Let's spend a few minutes just looking at that.

Registered Disability Savings Plan hasn't been around for very long. It was initiated by Plan Canada working with the BC Law Foundation. For it to get to the point where it's something that most Canadians can have access to, it requires also the participation of

a number of governments—BC and Ontario leading the way—but, also, of the main line banks who took this on as a product that they were prepared to offer to anyone who qualified for disability. That includes people with physical disabilities, with mental disabilities and even with mental illness, i.e. any of those who qualify.

At the moment, to get disability status, one has to show evidence that due to this disability one cannot work and that one will not be able to work for any foreseeable future. The payments are quite similar to welfare payments. In that sense, it's a subcategory of the welfare system. The Registered Disability Savings Plan challenges some of that. It comes from Plan Canada's point of view from a basic belief that people who are disabled should not just be the *recipients* of services but should be given some opportunities to *participate* more fully in the economic and social life of this country to the best of their ability.

They've also worked on new kinds of processes and programs to allow people with disabilities to engage more socially. They felt it was key that they ought to have some kind of an economic clout, essentially; that they ought to be able to participate like everyone else in the economy as well.

Welfare payments keep everyone below the poverty line and give very few additional resources. There's a philosophical belief behind that: the notion that most welfare recipients are people who *could* work and, therefore, you don't want to make this so lucrative that they just can't be bothered to try. However, people with lifelong disabilities are not in that category; and so all it does is doom them to poverty. And, even if they're able to get some additional funding from their families or from a little bit of work they can do, there's a tendency to claw that back, just as they would in welfare.

The Registered Disability Savings Plan really challenges that, because what it does is to say that not only people with disabilities, themselves, but family and friends can put aside money in a savings for people with disabilities. There's a \$200,000 lifetime contribution limit, but that can go up. Most importantly, there are matching funds to be provided by the federal government at the level of 2:1. So, for every \$1,500 that a family or friends put together, the government will put in \$35,000 or \$3,000, in addition. So, you end up with \$4,500/year up to a maximum of \$200,000.

So, it raises the asset limit of what anybody with a disability can own, while still having

the disability payment. But, probably even more importantly, it eliminates claw-back so that, while you have to keep these funds in the bank for up to 10 years, at that point, you can draw them down without any impact on your disability payment.

Doing so opens a space for a whole new set of innovations because it, in some ways, directly challenges the welfare act. It also creates possible pull for investments of \$160 billion—by his calculations—which could, in fact, be used to fund other innovations in this disability domain if, in fact, the fund could be engaged or managed in that kind of way. It does challenge. You can see that it's a product which challenges, certainly, the regulatory regime governing the economy of the disabled. It, therefore, also challenges the economic system and it challenges some basic assumptions which have lumped people with disability with people with welfare, and which suggest that they could work if they wanted to. So, it starts to shift a number of the structures that we talked about.

So, it has all these potentials for challenging the legal definition of disability, challenging the welfare system, and allowing for some other pull of resources. In fact, it was initially built under the assumption that people with

disabilities had this right, which has characterized all the plans work to engage them much more fully.

The other one is the Grameen Bank, one that most people are pretty familiar with. At the heart of this innovation was a definition of collateral which allowed access to credit for the poorest of the poor and solidarity groups. It was combined with a structure which, after a while, became a cooperative; and it had a huge influence on the mainstream because most of the major banks in the world now have added micro credit to their portfolios, and it really changed the way in which the poorest in the world could get access to resources that could change their future and change their standard of living considerably.