



Launch of the  
Boreal Institute for Civil Society  
November 14, 2005

*The Munk Centre Announces a New Institute*

## **The Boreal Institute for Civil Society**

The Boreal Institute's mission is to advance human development in Canada and worldwide by helping civil society tackle the problem of scale. We see the aim of development as the liberation of human capabilities, so effective work must respect individual difference and be driven by local communities. Yet development work also must serve large numbers of people in need, and tap resources – knowledge, people, financing - available in large institutions, public and private. Our goal is to catalyze a pattern change in the way development assistance works worldwide by connecting the local and the global to achieve large scale development driven at the grass roots.

Boreal defines the problem of scale as the need for development work that (1) is community driven and (2) efficiently and accountably engages the best available institutional resources, with widespread impact. We will seek innovative solutions to this problem by working collaboratively with local and international civil society in two ways: through concrete, practical projects and through knowledge sharing. In our project work we will connect grassroots organizations with larger public and private institutions to tackle specific challenges jointly. Each project will have agreed objectives in a focused area of human development, but will also generate usable knowledge around the problem of scale. We will disseminate the learning emerging from our projects and develop social technology that can be broadly applied to tackle the scale problem.

Throughout our work we will collaborate with and learn from practitioners and researchers at the cutting edge of the problem of scale. Together we will share best practices, explore new solutions and connect previously isolated actors in civil society, enabling voice and engagement and building communities of practice. We will combine this joint exploration with the specific results of our projects to catalyze a structural change in the way development assistance is delivered worldwide.

The Institute's goals are long-term, spanning generations. Integral to its mission is engaging young people so that different generations can address problems of development together. We will recruit young people for our project work and help connect them both with today's leaders and with their peers around the world.

David Pecaut is Chair of the Boreal Institute for Civil Society and James Radner is Executive Director. Mr. Radner has wide experience in civil society and international development, including positions at community health, education and economic development organizations; program and management work at Amnesty International U.S.A.; and consulting assignments for governments, aid institutions, businesses and civic organizations. Before coming to the Munk Centre to found the Boreal Institute Mr. Radner was a Senior Advisor at Hogan & Hartson LLP in Washington, DC. Mr. Radner is a Senior Fellow at the Munk Centre for International Studies, where he directs the International Program on Social Entrepreneurship and Civil Society. Mr. Pecaut is Senior Partner at the Boston Consulting Group. Among his other voluntary activities he chairs the Toronto City Summit Alliance.

<http://webapp.mcis.utoronto.ca/CentresDetail.aspx?pid=58>

*Boreal Institute for Civil Society – Our Early Thinking*

## What is the Problem of Scale?

Boreal is dedicated to advancing human development in Canada and worldwide. For us, human development is about expanding the capacity of all human beings to take control of their destiny and reach their full potential. Thus, each individual must be an essential actor in human development. Boreal’s role is to help all participants in human development work together better by tackling the problem of scale.

### Boreal’s Definition of the Problem of Scale

It is very challenging for development work to BOTH:

1. Help people control their own destiny and flourish as individuals, a task that requires the work to be driven by and accountable to the communities and individuals being served; AND
2. Mobilize sufficient resources – knowledge, technology, finance – to meet *everyone’s* needs, a task that frequently requires engaging larger institutions

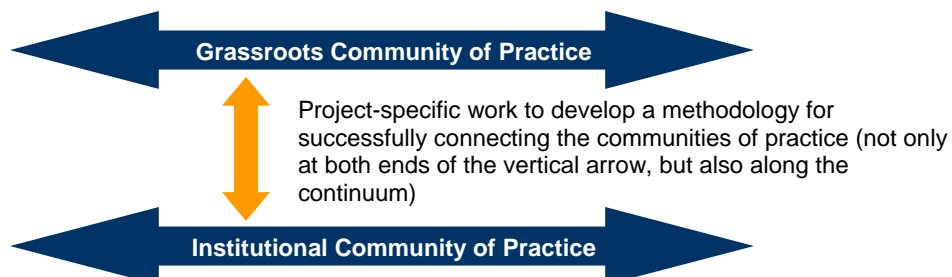
Many excellent community-driven projects accomplish the first goal, but society has trouble broadening the reach of that good work to meet the second (“scaling up”). Equally, society has trouble effectively sharing the resources available at the institutional level with local actors (“scaling down”).

Boreal believes that answers to this twin challenge can be found by *creating tools* that better link grassroots development work with large public and private institutions.

### Boreal’s Approach to Addressing the Problem of Scale

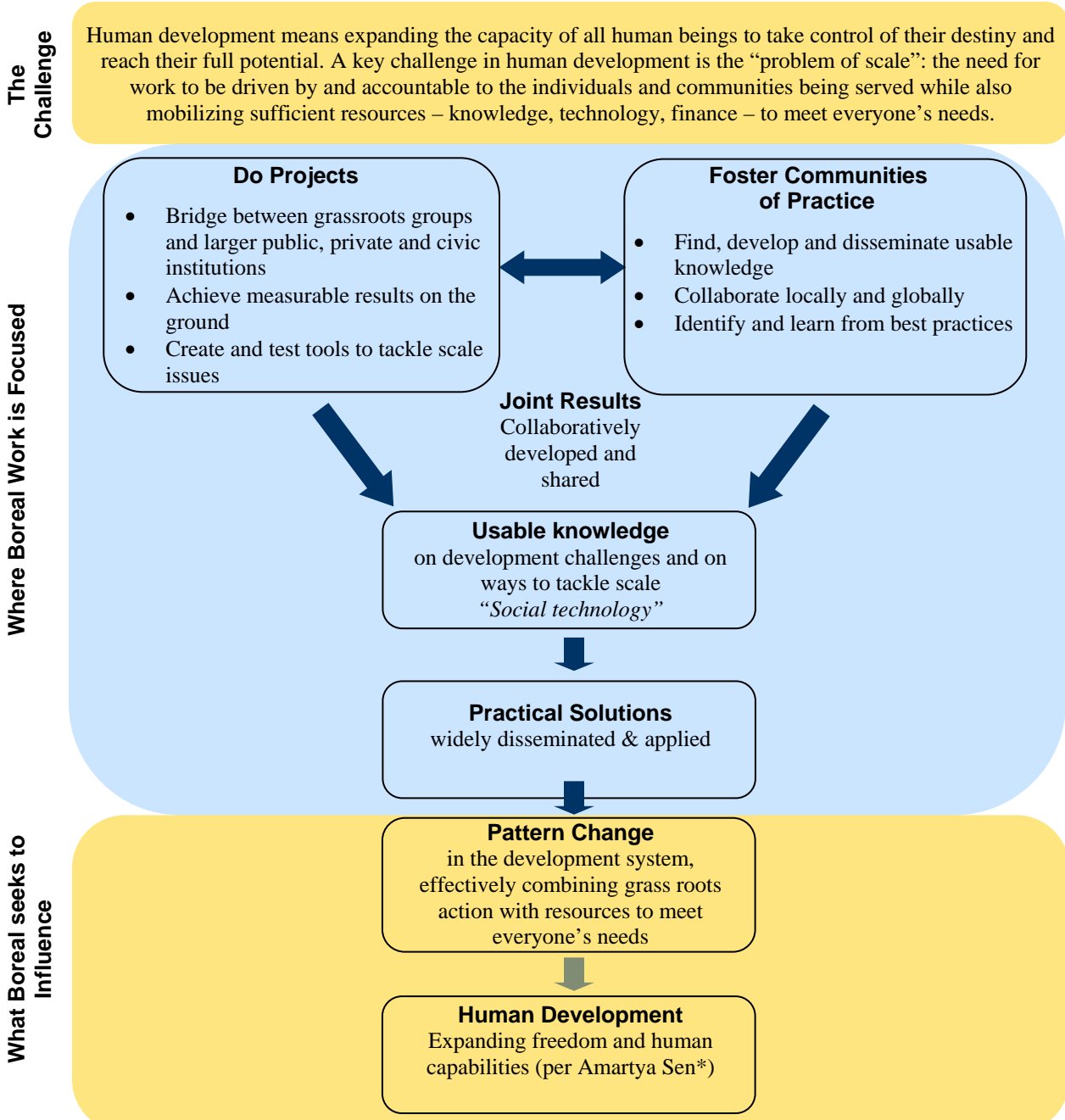
Boreal will work with others who are interested in jointly identifying, developing and disseminating practical solutions to the scale problem – locally and globally. We will do this through concrete, practical projects whose lessons can be applied broadly, and through collaborative exploration and learning.

Boreal works both horizontally and vertically – horizontally strengthening communities of practice at both the grassroots and institutional levels, and vertically making connections between communities of practice working at different levels. We work through results-driven, mutually respectful collaborations across civil society.



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## Boreal’s Collaborative Work: A Theory of Change



\*Amartya Sen received the Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 1998. His work places individual freedom at the center of a comprehensive analysis of today’s global economy. He sees freedom both as the basic end and as the most effective means of sustaining economic life and countering poverty and insecurity in the contemporary world.



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## Boreal Contacts

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### Founding Partners

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*We wish to express our deep gratitude for all those who have made our work possible.*

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