

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LAB

Vancouver Foundation
Community Causes Learning Series



OVERVIEW

- The Local Economic Development Lab (LEDlab) is a social innovation lab embedded in a community context (place-based)
- 3-year university-community partnership initiated and closely supported by [Ecotrust Canada](#) and [RADIUS SFU](#)
- LEDlab works with a broad network of partners from across the system to support community-led innovation and collective action

Program Goal

Build, test and scale solutions that put money in the pockets of low income residents; enhance the capacity of individuals, organizations, and networks; and shift traditional patterns of power and resource use in the community in service of a more vibrant and inclusive local economy in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.



PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

LEDlab is a unique collaboration between [Ecotrust Canada](#), [RADIUS SFU](#), and a broad network of inner city community partners.

Ecotrust Canada is a trusted and respected charitable organization that designs sustainable economic alternatives that benefit people in the places they call home.

RADIUS SFU is a social innovation lab and venture incubator at the Beedie School of Business of Simon Fraser University.



SOCIAL INNOVATION LABS DEFINED

LEDlab is modeled on social change labs worldwide.

Zaid Hassan defines the Social Innovation Lab as Social, Experimental, and Systemic¹.



Social: We bring together a diversity of perspectives and professional capacities from industry, university, government and civil society.



Experimental: We learn by doing. We prototype and test community-designed and driven solutions. Through developmental evaluation we adapt and evolve our processes and strategies.



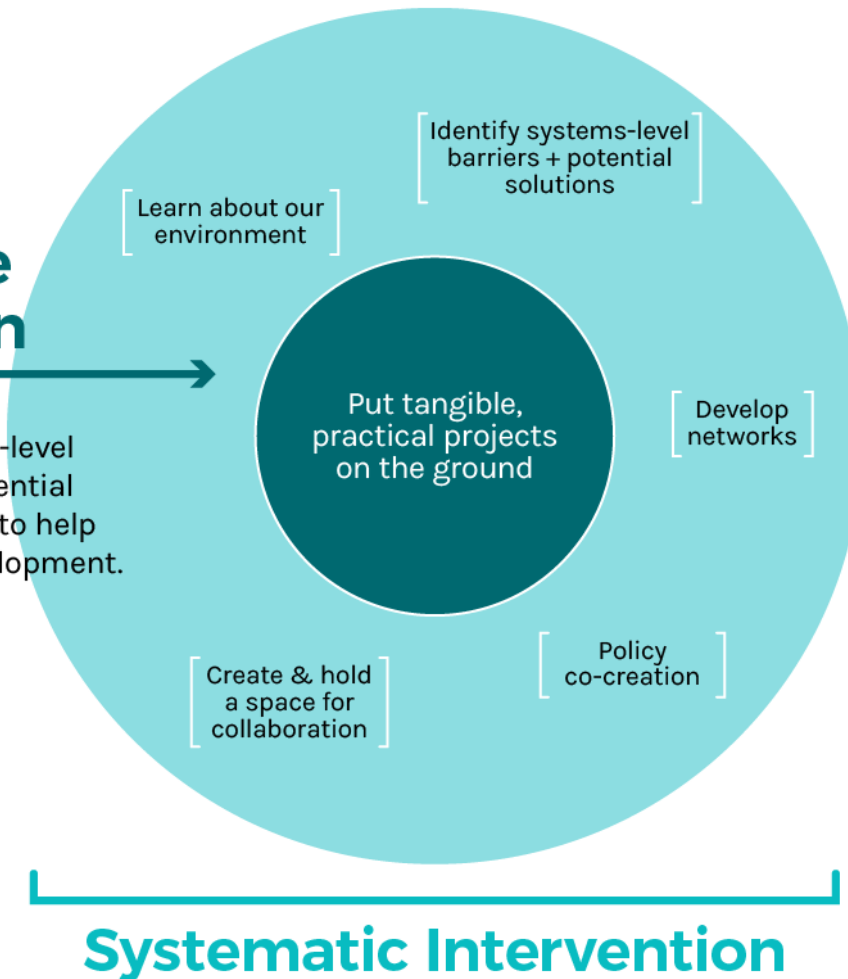
Systemic: We hold ourselves accountable to a systemic framework: identifying the root causes of problems and aiming to fundamentally shift resource, power, and authority flows in support of the community over time.

¹ Hassan, Z. (2014). *The social labs revolution: A new approach to solving our most complex challenges*. California, USA: Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

OUR APPROACH

Social Enterprise Incubation

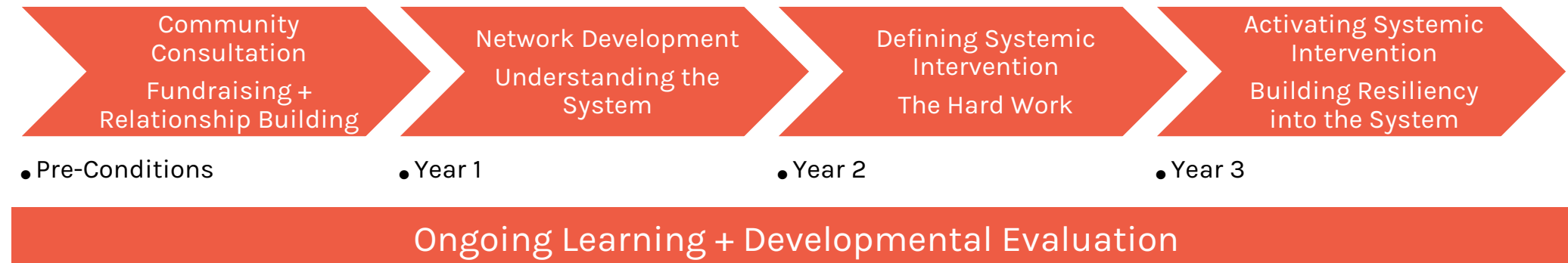
We place skilled and resourceful graduate-level students in high-potential community projects to help accelerate their development.



- **Graduate student project coordinators** add capacity to community-led projects and de-risk innovation and collaboration
- Use a **cohort model** to enable cross-pollination of ideas, and identify systemic barriers and leverage points
- **Work at multiple scales** to align grassroots innovation with government and institutional strategic priorities

OVERARCHING LAB PROCESS

The LEDlab model includes an overarching 3-year lab process, supported by ongoing learning and Developmental Evaluation.



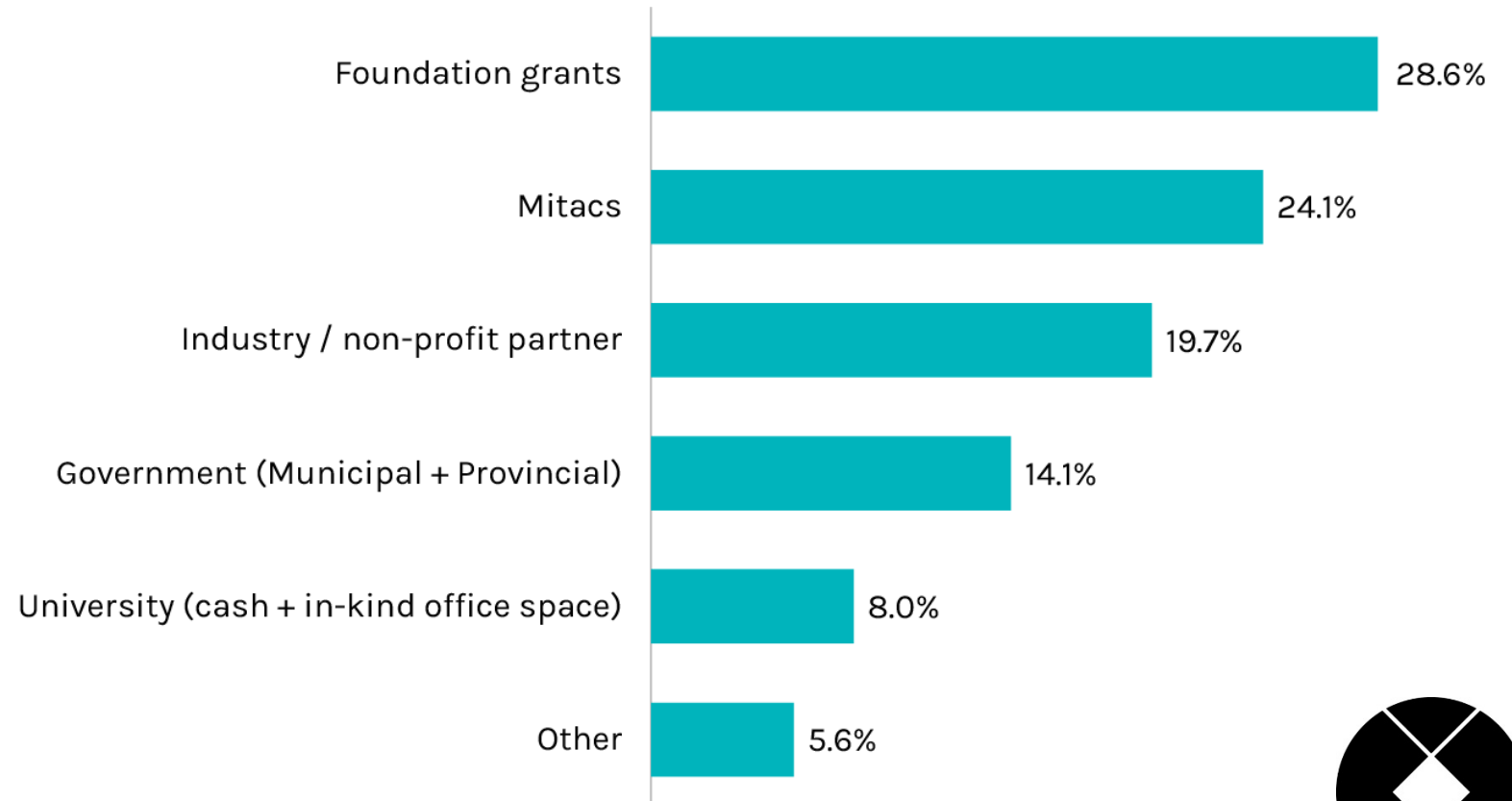
Within each year, there is an annual cohort of project incubation, placing graduate student project coordinators into community-driven social innovation initiatives.

Each year the learnings from the annual cohort are used to design the next year of work, in collaboration with community partners.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR

The total cost of the LEDlab over 3 years is approx. \$900,000.

The program model brings together multiple sectors and multiple sources of funding.



OUTCOMES TO DATE



- ▶ **We catalyze economic activity** by pairing paid full time graduate student project coordinators over 8 months with under-resourced organizations

- 8 social enterprises incubated



- ▶ **We develop networks** by fostering and supporting high trust relationships that lay the foundation for future collaborations

- 191 hours of strategic facilitation



- ▶ **We build capacity** for social innovation among local leadership, organizations, and networks through workshops and experiential learning

- 538 person hours of workshop training



- ▶ **We illuminate complexity** by helping collaborators map systems and identify areas with high potential for change

- 2 research projects informed policy creation

INCOME GENERATION CONTINUUM

FOUNDATIONS

basic necessities -
healthcare - safe space

CAPACITY BUILDING

life skills - training - unpaid
volunteering - childcare

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT & SELF-EMPLOYMENT

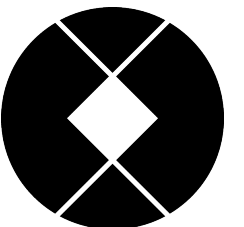
street vending - binning
paid volunteering

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

social enterprise -
peer work

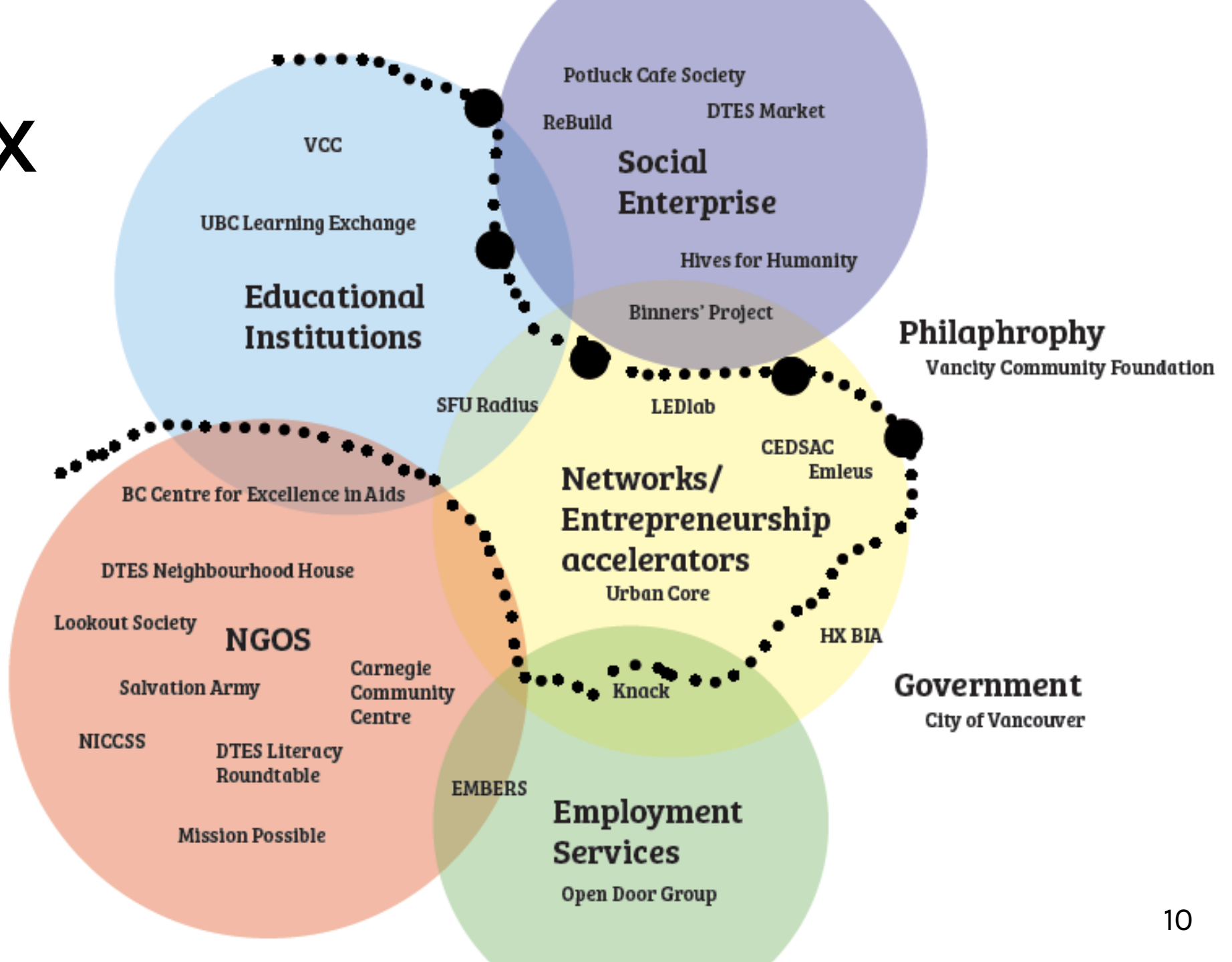
FORMAL EMPLOYMENT & SELF-EMPLOYMENT

part or full-time
employment



LEDlab

THE LUX



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit our website for more information

LEDlab.ca

Sign up for the LEDlab Newsletter

LEDlab.ca/newsletter



LEDlab