



Annual Trudeau Foundation Conference

Château Laurier, Ottawa, 12-14 November 2015

Fail, Adapt, Innovate: Institutions for a Changing Society

Humanity has transitioned through monumental disruptions in the past. The changes unleashed by the printing press and the industrial revolution fundamentally transformed beliefs, values, and norms, as well as economic, political, and social structures. Institutions in all sectors were put to the test: some failed, some adapted, and some innovated themselves into new existence.

The disruptions of our era are monumental as well. And events have shown that 21st-century problems cannot be addressed by 20th-century institutions.

Global power is shifting from the West to Asia and the Global South, but our multilateral institutions still largely reflect a post-World War II order. Hierarchical organizations exist uneasily alongside a multiplicity of horizontal networks that are demanding a greater voice in determining the future. The primacy of states is being challenged by public-private partnerships and mega-multinational firms – some of which are now larger than countries – even as porous borders erode sovereignty and physical notions of geography. And new information technology has shown itself able to both increase democratic participation – and reinforce authoritarian regimes.

We are more interconnected than ever, yet our institutions seem incapable of bridging the solitudes, silos, and stovepipes that impede progress on issues like climate change, health system reform, and the future of the labour market in the face of information technology. The biggest challenges we face require a long-term perspective, but governments are more and more preoccupied with reacting to the 24-hour news cycle.

This year's Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Conference is about the future: the future of new governance arrangements, of new civil society initiatives, of innovative technologies, of leadership. It is about institutions' capacity to overcome their innate resistance to change in order to adapt in the face of disruption.

Join us to hear social innovators discuss their successes and failures at developing community-based initiatives and building social trust. Come learn about Canadian, European, and American experiments to revitalize national institutions, whether by re-invigorating democratic participation or reimagining the public service. Ask questions of experts on multilateral organizations' innovative strategies to persuade the world to pull together in common purpose. And through it all, help us consider the question of leadership. What qualities, values, and capacities characterize strong leaders from different sectors today?

Join the conversation from 12 to 14 November 2015 in Ottawa, Ontario. Learn more at [\(website\)](#).