What and why?

The McMaster Social Innovation Lab (MSIL) is a space for students who want to use their knowledge to solve real problems – big and small.

MSIL helps students act on their ideas, using what they are learning or already know. We validate their capacity, push for smart risk-taking and connect them to each other. We want to prove that students can have fun doing serious work.
What does it look like?

Our space is a basement room in H.G. Thode Library. Inside, you’ll find:

• whiteboards
• trained volunteers
• outlets
• members at work
• cardboard prototypes
• rollable furniture
• sticky notes
• craft supplies

And more!
How does it work?

FIRST, a member (or team of members) comes with a question or selects something from the MSIL Problem Bank.

All members, volunteers and exec learn the MSIL process by making a part of their life better. We call it SELF-INNOVATION.

Example projects:
- A system for using empty classrooms to create study space on campus.
- Making CNIB cards (identification for the blind) more visible to bus drivers.

THEN, guided by volunteers, they carry out the MSIL process:
1. Identifying who is involved and what has been done.
2. Generating a simple, innovative solution (after rounds of brainstorming, prototyping, criticizing and refining – the fun part!)
3. Piloting the refined idea in ‘real life’.
4. Making final adjustments and sharing the solution.

OR

20% of a volunteer’s time is spent doing an activity they love but could not normally justify, like writing screenplays or learning German.
What’s a typical day like?

10:00
A volunteer signs in and opens the space.

10:12
Jeff and Danielle come in to prototype their recycled water bottle planter. The volunteer asks hard questions and shows them where they can find the scissors.

12:00
Volunteer shifts change over. A log is made of the morning’s activities. Mark arrives and wants to register as a member. He receives the self-innovation challenge.

14:00
Closing time. Jeff, Mark and Danielle leave, choosing to store their prototypes in the cubbies. The volunteer records relevant numbers from her shift and locks the space.

Sorry
WE'RE
CLOSED
## Who is in charge?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Chef</strong></td>
<td>Tracks numbers and analyzes them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Tracks money and dispenses it.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resourcer</strong></td>
<td>Uncovers resources and info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space and Tool Guru</strong></td>
<td>Makes the space safe and functional.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Media and Promotions</strong></td>
<td>Shares our stories in a beautiful way.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Event Planner</strong></td>
<td>Makes big things happen.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Co-Directors</strong></td>
<td>Steer the ship, adjust the sails.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication and Outreach</strong></td>
<td>Interface to external groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anthropologist</strong></td>
<td>Studies and reports on us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website Guru</strong></td>
<td>Posts, edits, tracks and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Member and Volunteer Coordinators</strong></td>
<td>Track, listen to, guide their constituents.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteers</strong></td>
<td>Help members, learn skills, have fun.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All executive positions are held by STUDENTS!

Others have a voice too: MSIL’s Board of Advisers is comprised of members of the University and local community.
MSIL’s 2013 at a Glance?

**September**
- Recruiting the right people and spreading awareness.

**October**
- The space opens! Work on projects begins.

**November**
- MSIL is the first Canadian host of the Global Sustainability Jam, 48 fun hours of prototyping solutions to global problems and communicating with like-minded people in different time zones.
- Also, a term-end showcase of member projects.

**December**
- Holiday hours. Closing for the term!

**January**
- Space opens again. More projects, more work.

**February**
- Discussions about MSIL’s future (will there be one?)

**March**
- Final showcase of member projects.

**April**
- Exam time! Space closes.
How is this project supported?

What we get...

- Forward With Integrity (McMaster University) and Student Life Enhancement Fund (McMaster Student’s Union) Grants

In-Kind

- Legal support (McMaster Industry Liaison Office), mentorship (OASiS Social Innovations Laboratory, India), advice space and more...
- Volunteer, executive and members’ time and effort.

How we use it!

- 330 paid hours of concept development, supplies for the space, event costs, promotional materials, website maintenance, insurance and an emergency fund.

- These resources are solicited and used as needed. They are always appreciated and recognized!

- Running the space, tackling projects, sharing results.

We strive to use our resources responsibly and keep accurate, transparent accounts.