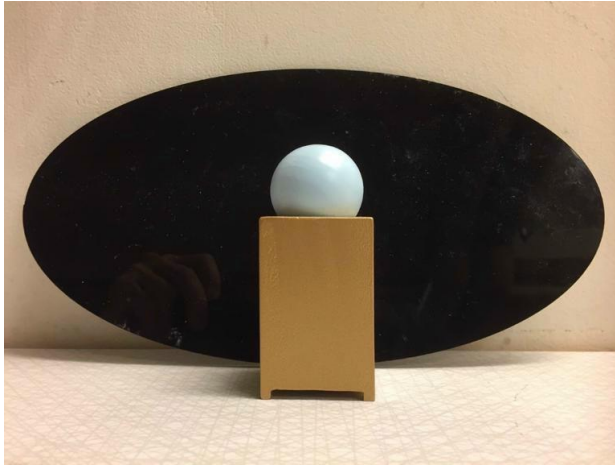


UniPort

If we think outside the box...

Sustainable development is driven by innovation - the process of translating an idea or invention into a product or service that creates value. When **incremental** innovation is good enough for an organization, suggestion boxes can be helpful in known analog, digital and online versions.



In order to improve the suggestion boxes especially for contributions to **disruptive** innovation, it helps also with them to "think outside the box". Existing businesses are hurt by disruptive innovation that thereby can pave the way to global sustainability.

The following lines represent my personal view on what we can learn from history about innovation. A brief description is added about an improved suggestion box connected to an innovation catalyst initiative

called **UniPort**.

Benjamin Franklin's essay "**The Way to Wealth**" has had a great influence although initially limited to North America and Europe. It was published 18 years before the American Declaration of Independence and Adam Smith's book "**The Wealth of Nations**". Franklin became one of the Founding Fathers of the United States and also a successful author, inventor, scientist, publisher, politician, and statesman. The American writer Walter Isaacson calls him "The most accomplished American of his age and the most influential in inventing the type of society America would become".

Franklin and Smith represent old wisdom that holds true even today. Shortcuts to wealth are, however, possible in the modern society. The Internet is now available to any nation on the planet as a channel to all kinds of human resources for developing and upholding wealth. In an early attempt to offer special services for business Intelligence in technology transfer projects, pre-internet solutions were used by me with Apple II and other desktop computers and with access to data banks via the global telecom network.

The role of innovation in developing and upholding wealth is recognized worldwide. A generally accepted investment model is called **Triple Helix**. It focuses on university-industry-government co-operation. The National Innovators Council in Sweden has members who have pointed out that Triple Helix can make a project team react to disruptive innovations as farmers react to wildfire. Briefly explained, disruptive innovations result commonly from pioneering inventions. These are likely to be developed by independent researchers and inventors who are stubborn enough to do unfunded trial-and-error experimental work that can go on for decades. Unsolicited proposals from them are rarely welcome

Mankind has been developing the way to wealth based on ideas or inventions turned into innovations. This is a process that rarely is successful for those who are not rich or at least strong. Adam Smith wrote: "Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the **security of property**, is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all." (Source: The Wealth of Nations, Book 5, Chapter 1, Part 2).

With half-a-century long experience in the field of **Intellectual Property Rights**, I feel sometimes that many of the inventors who I have served as a patent attorney would have been better off following the example of Franklin mentioned in his autobiography: "...as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours, and this we should do freely and generously." However, he was strong and successful with activities in many fields. That is not a common situation for independent inventors who often do unfinanced and unrecognized experimental work with a lot of results that apparently are of no use. After having developed knowledge about wrong solutions, they may find in the end that something works. A pioneering patent can for them become the one and only key to recognition.

Sir Isaac Newton explained in 1675 that he was able to discover so much thanks to having "**stood on the shoulders of giants**". It should then be noted that it has in the modern society become more probable for also the so-called little man (common people) to become the first to discover, invent or propose something useful. However, unsolicited proposals are, as mentioned above, rarely welcome.

Swedish inventors have played recognized roles in the development of modern society. John Ericsson, to take one example, is remembered mainly for helping Abraham Lincoln in the civil war. Sweden is known to have **the world's oldest inventors association**. Nevertheless, it seems here as well as in other countries to be a rule today that national and international organizations do not recognize the resource that is in time of crisis represented by independent inventors and other creative individuals.

In 1988, I presented at an exhibition in Sollentuna an initiative to an ideation support system called **IdéGiro**t. Creative individuals were invited to propose ideas about useful products and services. Prophylactic publishing was here offered as protection **against** patents and theft. They were informed of the advantages as well as of the disadvantages in comparison with possible protection **through** patents and agents. The ideation support was planned to be given without any financial burden on the individual's shoulders thanks to the interest shown by a gambling investor (Ladbrokes) as well as by an information provider (Teleannons) and by the Swedish Board for Technical Development (STU).

IdéGiro was unsuccessful as a **pilot project**. It did not survive the test period, but the time has come to revive it with internet-based technologies and with a proposal to invest in symbolic buildings at popular meeting places. The initiative to revive IdéGiro and also to rename it into UniPort as described below did not come from me. I was told by the initiative taker, who presently does not want to be named, that an investment in new symbolic buildings could make a difference for common people by inspiring to thinking and acting beyond boundaries.

The UniPort Initiative proposes to give useful ideas increased chances to become translated into products or services that create value. It promises to become a **catalyst** for speeding up the process of turning inventions into profitable innovations. The ideas would be welcome from "thinkers without borders". The new symbolic buildings are proposed to have a shape that can become popular for housings of various products found in homes and offices. In comparison, the shape of the Eiffel Tower is known merely as popular for bottles of perfumes.

With the main focus on presenting future visions of various kinds around the well-known "**spaceship earth**" concept, the UniPort symbolic buildings have been proposed to take the form of a rocket-like tower that houses a hall for exhibitions and that carries a sphere equipped inside for short video presentations given to only a few visitors at a time. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a modest such tower was proposed for Stockholm's most popular meeting place (Kungsträdgården) at the location where a store was planned by Apple Inc.

The financing for Gothenburg's 400th-anniversary celebration 2021-2023 includes a considerably larger sphere that will be equipped with 360-degree video projectors and placed on top of the Universeum building. However, the proposed sphere tower in Kungsträdgården is still unfunded after discussions with representatives from the city of Stockholm as well as with several architects and with a most successful builder. Plan B is to find interest in Canada. **The Montreal Biosphere** was erected in 1967 so the UniPort proposal of symbolic buildings with a focus on the spaceship earth concept could there be easier to discuss than in Sweden (nicknamed "Little Canada" by Canadians).

Presently, a decorative desktop model of the proposed sphere tower symbolic buildings is being developed as a "**connected earth globe**" showing the Earth, the Solar System, and the Milky Way. Suitable for both public and private indoor environments. It is prepared to include an extremely cost-effective sensor system for disaster alarms of such a kind that is described in the European Patent EP2880645A2. My intention is here to follow up an initiative that I took in 2010 and that resulted in the so-called "**Connected Tree**" displayed at International exhibitions in Barcelona, Hannover, and Las Vegas as well as until recently at the Ericsson Studio in Kista.

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed much, but visible results of The UniPort Initiative are still possible before an international summit on the environment that will take place on **1-3 June 2022** at the same time as the 50th anniversary of the world's first international environmental summit, the Stockholm Conference in 1972 which resulted in the creation of the UNEP environmental program.

Lars A. Wern