



HOW TO GIVE THIS TALK:
THE SOCIAL KIND OF INNOVATION

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INTRODUCTION

We want to make it easy for you share what you learned at the PAFN AGM with your colleagues so we've created this step-by-step guide to giving this talk. Please feel free to use any of the materials we or others have created as long as you acknowledge the source. Please click this link to download the presentation and modify it to fit your needs: http://prezi.com/lujaulk0a_47/the-social-kind-of/#

TALK OUTLINE

WELCOME

Let people know that you aren't an expert but you have some exciting resources to share and discuss with them that might inspire a fresh take on how to achieve your organization's mission.

Share your agenda. It doesn't have to be exactly like this but it should help you deliver a key message (eg. The social kind of innovation is about system transformation based on multiple perspectives that form an understanding of the whole system).

1. **What is meant by innovation?**
2. **How innovative are we already?**
3. **How can we actively pursue innovation or innovative thinking;**
4. **Why the social kind of innovation is collaborative.**

WHAT IS MEANT BY INNOVATION?

Identify why you think this topic is relevant, now and to these specific people assembled before you.

Take the temperature by asking the audience how they feel about innovation: is it just another thing on the to-do list?

Activity:

Ask people to use stickies, call out words, or talk in small groups and share back, depending on the size of the group. The activity needs to give people time to think about how they feel and you a sense of what that is before you get going.

A word cloud could be fun! Try www.wordle.net. If you want to make a word cloud, find an assistant to help you multi-task.

Where do audience members hear about innovation? Suggest answers to some of these question and consider taking input from your audience.

- **How does it pertain to their work?**
- **Is it used euphemistically (for bootstrapping) or inspiringly?**
- **What kind of choices does it present?**



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Social Innovation:

- **An innovation designed to attract resources to address social issues**
- **Not mission OR survival but a better, more sustainable way to achieve your organization's mission.**

Video: www.sigknowledgehub.com/ Find a 3 minute video on the home page that explains social innovation well. While you're at it, explore this excellent site to find forms of social innovation that relate well to your organization and examples that will be meaningful to your audience. These will be useful later!

Take a moment to emphasize the definition of social innovation:

“Social innovation is a process, product, or program that profoundly changes the way a given system operates, changing it in such a way that it reduces the vulnerability of the people and the environment in that system.” (SIG Knowledge Hub)

“Real innovation in social systems requires that change happen across these different levels or scales so that impact is strong and lasting; so that something that seemed impossible to change in the world becomes very different.” (SIG Knowledge Hub)

Examples! What examples of social innovation would speak to your audience? On the www.sigknowledgehub.com you can find stories (and links to more stories) about social innovation. www.socialfinance.ca has great examples of social finance tools in action, and www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca has videos and news stories about social enterprise across Canada, sorted by mission category and other helpful indexing. For local examples of social enterprise, visit www.coin-ced.org, www.habitatpeterborough.ca/restore/, or <http://www.greenup.on.ca/greenup-store/> (this list is not by any means exhaustive!)

- **Use images (and acknowledge the source) to spark some interest in your example initiatives.**
- **Remember, these models of social innovation can be inspiring but they're not one size fits all. Lots of organizations do meaningful work that wouldn't be a good match for social enterprise, or crowdsource funding, for example. The trick is to dedicate the time to find the design that does work for you (more on that soon!).**



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WHAT ARE WE ALREADY DOING THAT IS INNOVATIVE?

How is your organization increasing resilience in the systems that create the problem your work addresses?

Activity:

On a flip chart or board, write down all the programs, initiatives, collaborations, or other activities your organization is involved in. You can do this in advance and then ask participants to add any more they can think of.

Ask participants which of these items has a (potential) transformative effect on a system like the economy, justice, environment, health . . . or maybe more local systems, like a school board, neighbourhoods, housing, etc. and how. Depending on the group this could be a relatively unstructured whole group conversation or small group discussion. Keep the focus on the process of evaluating what it means for a program to be innovative more than the ranking of programs as 'innovative' or 'not innovative' (no dotmocracies here!)

HOW DO WE PURSUE SOCIAL INNOVATION?

How can an organization move from band-aid solutions or reactive programming to addressing the roots of the problem and transforming the situation? And finding the resources to do so?

Systems-thinking:

- **Innovations don't fight the system: they get inside the head of the system and figure out what intervention would alter the will, the drive, or the inertia of the system.**

7 Principles of Systems Thinking:

- **Find these plus more slides and information about systems thinking at <http://sigknowledgehub.com/2012/02/01/introduction-to-systems-thinking/> (principles are in the "Dip" section)**

1. SYSTEMS ARE A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT THE WORLD.

'Systems thinking' describes a perspective and set of methods and tools that help us see the big picture. This perspective helps us understand big, intractable, overwhelming problems like poverty and environmental collapse as created by the systems in which they exist. So if we want to fix them, we have to be able to 'see' the system, not just the problem.



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2. SYSTEMS BEHAVE AS A WHOLE.

Activity:

Become a system. If you have 10 people or more, ask everyone to pick, without indicating, two points of reference from among the people present. Then ask everyone to stand so that they are equidistant from these two people. It doesn't matter how near or far they are from their reference points, just that they are equidistant. There will usually be flurries of activity followed by a slowing of movement, and shuffling, then another flurry of movement. Set a time limit from this activity.

Ask:

What does it mean for a system to move as a whole? What does this mean for someone who wants to affect the system in a specific way?

3. SYSTEMS UNDERSTANDING IS OBSERVER OR PERSPECTIVE DEPENDENT.

If you have a *mostly homogenous* group, in terms of role in the workplace, ask them to share, with the group or with a neighbour, about a part of a system that they understand really well.

Ask them to define the rules of this system through an example. Eg. Ask communications people about how to get a story picked up by the media or bankers about how to invest money you can't afford to lose. Then ask them about how someone who is marginalized by that system would get people to treat their story as news or how someone who has very limited and inflexible income can make choices to increase economic security.

If you have a diverse group, ask them about a time when they have felt empowered by a system and a time they have felt vulnerable and unserved by a system. What did they learn about the system through that experience?

Be careful not to put anyone in a situation where they feel pressured to explain to others what it's like to be marginalised. That's not their job.

4. A SYSTEMS APPROACH REQUIRES MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES.

Emphasize that no one person can experience a system in all its dimensions because systems reflect dominant values and don't treat everyone equally, but also because systems are animated by people who have biases, limitations, and compassion that affect them consciously and unconsciously.



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5. WHERE WE DRAW THE SYSTEM BOUNDARIES AFFECTS THE SYSTEM.

A video called “The Power of Networks” created by RSA Animate using a talk by Manuel Lima is very helpful in illustrating this point and the next. It’s also 10 minutes long so you might want to select a clip to use. <http://www.thersa.org/events/rsaanimate/animate/rsa-animate-the-power-of-networks>

Here Manuel Lima shows the jump from thinking about the brain as having “a nose department” and an “ear department” to being more like the score of a symphony with much greater dynamism and interaction. We can only begin imagine the implications of such a change in perspective to the potential for health system-transforming innovators.

6. WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE THE SYSTEM BUT ALSO OUTSIDE.

This is also well illustrated by “The Power of Networks”. When we consider a system such as the human body, we are simply choosing what to put in the foreground of our analysis, but bodies are not closed systems. Human bodies exist against a background of natural and built environments, food systems, social systems, penal systems, etc. that can alter what happens inside the body. The 90% of the body that is composed of bacteria extends well beyond the boundaries of the body system, connecting it with all other life.

7. SYSTEMS ARE ‘NESTED’.

We should always think about the system we’re looking at as being made up of smaller systems being part of larger systems. Nested systems influence each other with their inputs and outputs.

WHY THE SOCIAL KIND OF INNOVATION IS COLLABORATIVE

If you learn to approach your mission with a systems approach, you are going to find you can’t do it alone because you need:

- **more perspective**
- **more influence,**
- **more reach,**
- **more impact.**

Instead, consider a collective impact model. Find out more by looking at these pages:

- **Innoweave modules on Collective Impact** <http://www.innoweave.ca/en/modules/collective-impact>
- **FSG Knowledge Exchange** <http://www.fsg.org/tabid/191/ArticleId/211/Default.aspx?srsrpush=true>
- **Tamarack Audio Seminars** http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s61_2012j.html
- **Vibrant Communities Canada Resource Library** <http://vibrantcanada.ca/resource-library/collective-impact>



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WHERE TO START WITH COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Convene a team from across the system.

It is not enough to have the perspective of non-profits. You need to involve a diversity of stakeholders. If you want to see the whole system you need to get as much of the system in the room as possible.

Observe what is happening in the current system.

Don't just focus on symptoms and problems. Who does the system serve effectively? What values does it reflect?

If we just focus on problems and immediate solutions, we will not be able to anticipate how those solutions might cause other problems in the system:

In our game earlier each person's attempt to address the problem of staying equidistant from two reference points created a problem for others, where before there was none.

Construct relevant, plausible and compelling stories about what could happen in the future.

How can your group imagine a more inclusive, resilient system? What values would everyone like to see the system reflect? Develop a common agenda.

Discover what can and must be done to move forward on the desired future scenario(s).

What actions can stakeholders take to transform the system and how will they be mutually reinforcing? How can each organization work within their sphere of influence to advance the agreed upon change? How can all stakeholders participate in a shared measurement strategy and contribute data consistently and sustainably?

Act (individually or collectively) to transform the system... and evolve and adapt the actions over time.

Keep up communication and create a forum for open communication that builds trust, reasserts mutual objectives.

This is collective impact. Current thinking in this field suggests that having a coordinating or 'backbone' organization dramatically increases the chances of success. (<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/learn.html>)



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WRAP-UP AND EVALUATION

Activity:

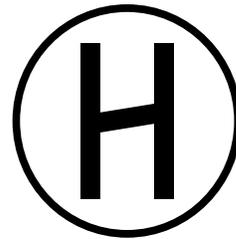
Ask participants¹ to answer two questions –

1. What is the most useful take away today?

2. In a word, how are you feeling about ‘innovation’?



Community | Opportunity
Innovation | Network



HATCH

¹ In a larger group, ask people to share the answers with the person beside them. Participants can jot answers down on sticky notes or report back so you can find out what was most useful. In a smaller group this might be a go-around.

