TelePresence: Takeaways from the SI Camp model, 12.04.2012
Post Session Report

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Takeaways from Social Innovation Camps

This discussion was convened by the Social Innovation Exchange (SIX), on behalf of
Australian Social Innovation Exchange (ASIX), Social Innovation Camp (SI Camp) and in
collaboration with Cisco. Participants from London, Glasgow, Oslo, Prague, Lagos, Sydney,
Melbourne and Adelaide came to discuss the Social Innovation Camp model.

SI Camps bring together software developers and designers with people who understand social problems to help build web and mobile solutions to social challenges. The web and related technologies hold huge potential to create change in many different ways: how people hold those in positions of power accountable; who they rely on to provide the services they need to live healthy, happy lives; or how they make a difference to something that affects them. But for any of this to happen, we have to understand what people really need and start building the technology that can help – which is what Social Innovation Camp is all about. Through unusual, creative events the SI Camp brings together talented software developers and designers with social innovators to prototype effective web-based solutions to real social problems.

Since Social Innovation Camps was created in London in 2008, the SI Camp model has quickly spread all over the world, from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and the UK, to Australia, South Korea and Nigeria. The many new initiatives that have been developed during and after the SI Camps around the world are testament to the effectiveness of this model. However, in order to ensure that the model continues to spread, and in order for more people to run effective camps in their own regions, we must learn from those who already have the experience. We need to capture and communicate the valuable learning that both organisers and participants have gained in the design and development process.

On the 12th April SIX brought together those who created the model, participants and organisers, as well as those interested in learning more about the SI Camp model to come together and start this process.

We addressed questions such as:

What are the successful processes for securing the right group of participants for the Camps? What preparatory work was found effective in order for projects to be ready to make best use of developers and designers? What outcomes have been achieved in getting projects fully operational and what results are these projects achieving? What is the level of resources and sources required to hold an effective SI camp?

Background

TACSI is interested in design thinking to challenge social problems and in discussing where the model has gotten to and what is the future for SI camps.

Foundation for Young Australians is interested in working with technology to achieve a social mission.

ASIX used the Cookbook recommendations. At this point ASIX has not run a second camp, but saw a willingness to engage from the first one.

CoCreation Hub's goal is to apply knowledge to achieve social outcomes. They are also interested in managing projects which come out of the SI camps, getting feedback and going to the market.

Worldwide Narratives is together with Devoteam Da Vinci the pioneers for SI Camps in Oslo. Merete Grimeland from Worldwide Narratives first heard about this method at the SIX Summer School in Poland 2011. The first SI camp which they will organize is scheduled for February 2012. Devoteam DaVinci is interested in a new business model for consultancy - to do it in a more visible and long term way.
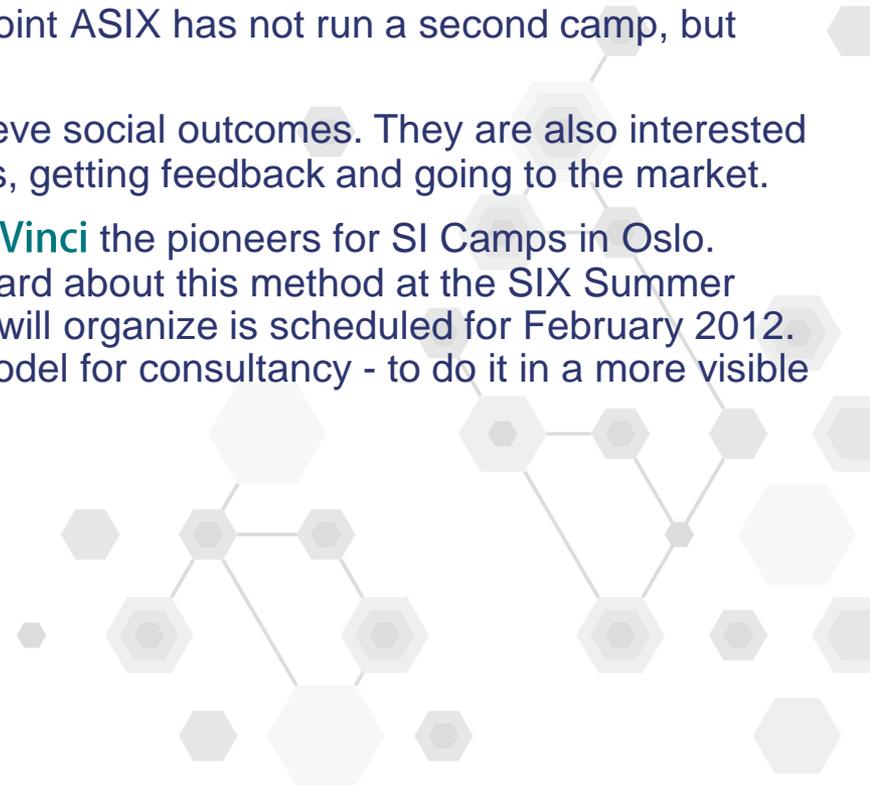
Respekt Institute has done two SI Camps so far, the first of which was only a pilot with three ideas coming out of it, the second one that they did was about a month ago in Brno. They organized the camps following the Cookbook from the London office.

IRISS works in social services and social improvement in Scotland and funded an SI Camp in Edinburgh.

The NHS did a health camp express – which was a remix on social innovation and health

The Good Gym represents a participant perspective to the SI Camp model. Good Gym is interested in how to adapt the model to more tricky problems such as for example reducing youth offending.

The reason SIX is involved is because it is interested bringing people together and exchanging learning in an effective way. It engaged this conversation in the hope that it is the beginning of a fruitful discussion.
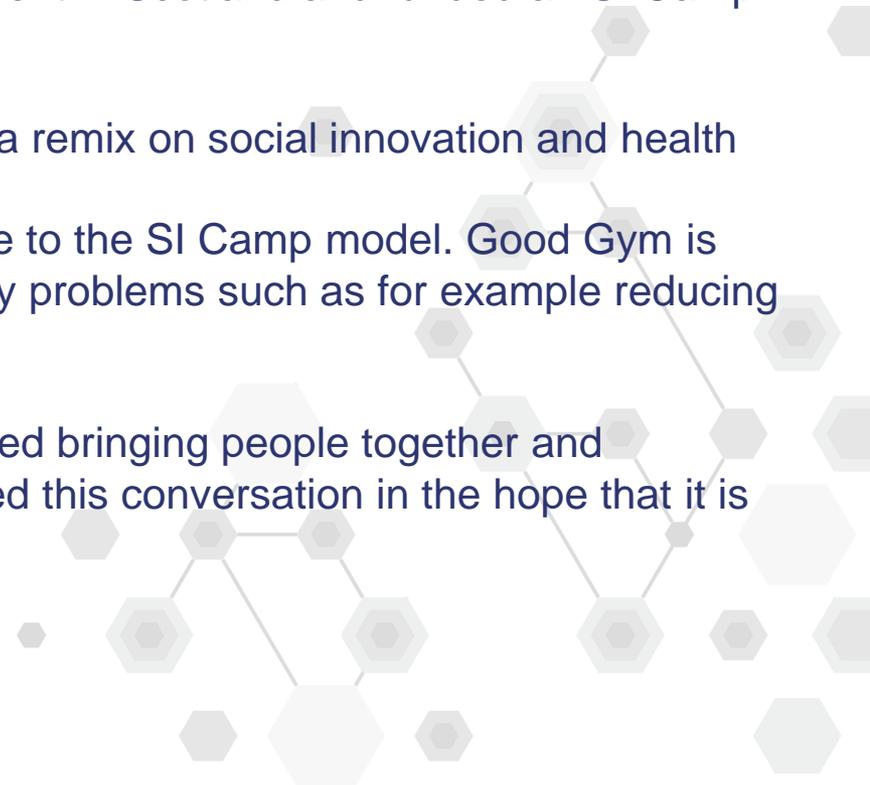
SI Camp

The original idea of the SI camp came from frustration during a meeting with the Office of the Third Sector. Someone suggested writing a white paper and it became clear that everyone was frustrated by the conventionality of this solution. Christian Ahlert, Dan McQuillan and Paul Miller became interested in the idea of how to hack together using technology. This idea simmered for a few days, and they began to ask themselves, what happens on the weekends at the Young Foundation? They began to think about running low cost events using Young Foundation office space. Roland Harland at NESTA hired Anna Maybank to design and run the project, trying to design a process that would get the right people there creating new ideas focusing on technology. People with real experience with social problems. They needed an organization behind the idea to develop this. It started with getting inquiries from other parts of the world which in turn lead to the creation of the cookbook, and the organising of SI Camp on various locations around the world.
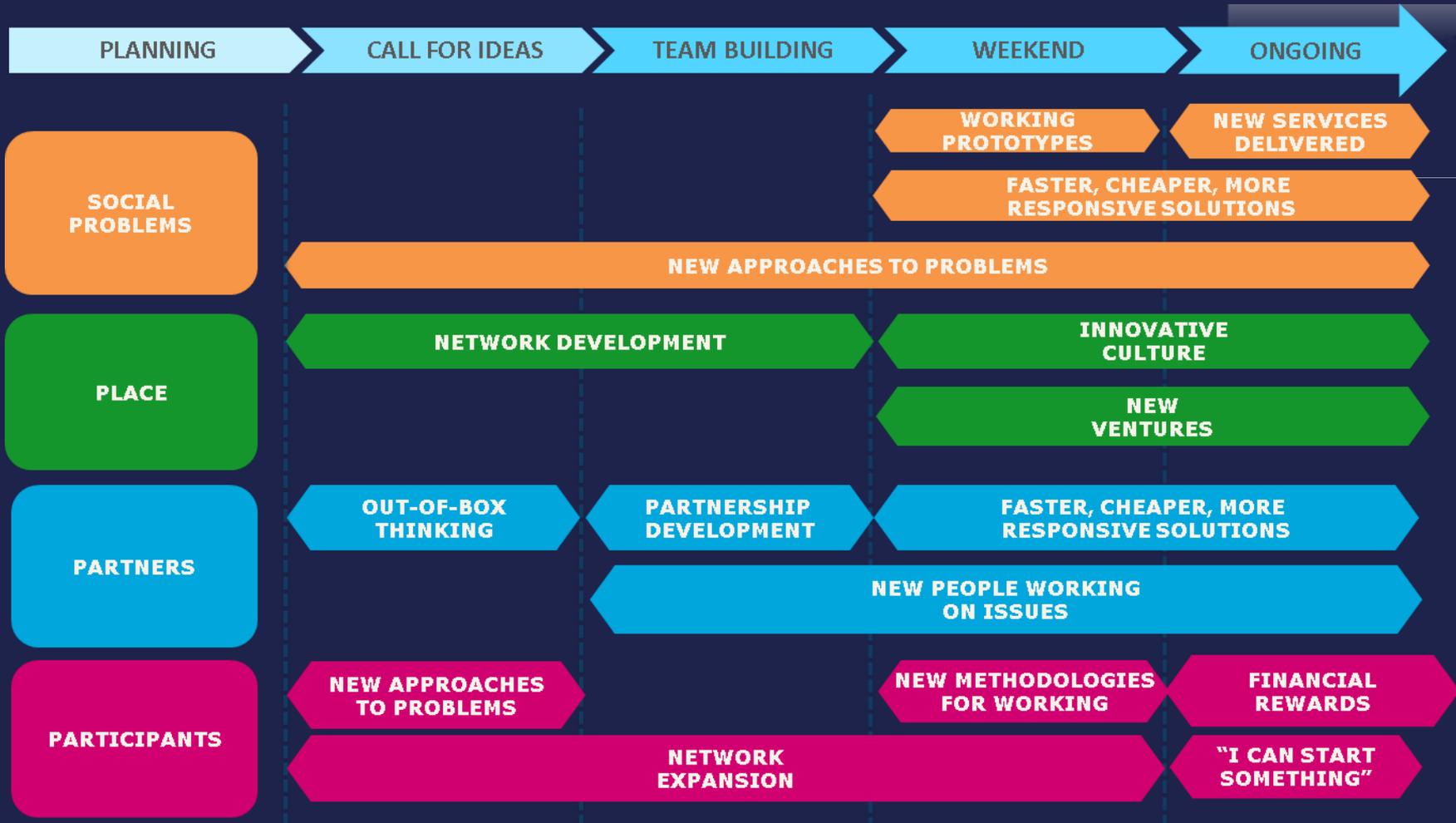
Social Innovation Camp – How it works?

PLANNING • 1 Month	• Logistics • Funding • Theme development	• Stakeholder map • Developing partnerships
CALL FOR IDEAS • 2 Months	• Idea generation workshops • Developing networks • Selecting judges	• Building partnerships • Prize partners
TEAM BUILDING • One Month	Finding the resources that the teams will need to turn the idea into reality	• Capacity development • Network building
WEEKEND • 48 hours	Take the ideas from back-of-the envelope to proof-of-concept in 48 hours	• Business models • Asking tough questions
ONGOING • 1-3 Months	Working with teams	• Cementing partnerships • Assisting with pilots

• 4-7 Months

SI Camp is trying to figure out ways to make the process work better (see the previous slide).

1. *Planning and logistics*

2. *Call for ideas* – which consists of developing networks, understanding who it should be talking to, building new partnerships, reaching beyond the usual suspects and generating a wide range of ideas / wacky ideas

3. *Team building* – SI Camp is focusing its research around this – building a stakeholder approach, figuring out what kind of people are needed, to continue to expand its network and ideas. After the initial call for ideas, the process becomes more complicated. The pre-work phase is quite intensive

4. *Weekend* – how to go from a concept to a proof of idea in 48 hours

5. *Ongoing* – once finished, the question emerges, What next? There is the critical "90" day period which often continues much longer than that. SI Camp provides on-going support, it is a kind of 'running start'

Social Innovation Camp Impact & Outputs

PLANNING	CALL FOR IDEAS	TEAM BUILDING	WEEKEND	ONGOING

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- WORKING PROTOTYPES
- NEW SERVICES DELIVERED
- FASTER, CHEAPER, MORE RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS
- NEW APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS

PLACE

- NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
- INNOVATIVE CULTURE
- NEW VENTURES

PARTNERS

- OUT-OF-BOX THINKING
- PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- FASTER, CHEAPER, MORE RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS
- NEW PEOPLE WORKING ON ISSUES

PARTICIPANTS

- NEW APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS
- NEW METHODOLOGIES FOR WORKING
- FINANCIAL REWARDS
- NETWORK EXPANSION
- "I CAN START SOMETHING"

"SI Camps enable partners to be exposed to new ways of working. Participants also learn new methodologies, but one thing that the previous slide does not capture is the importance of agency." – SI Camp

Soft skills are very important to SI Camps as well, how to create an atmosphere and choosing the right people is pivotal.

An Update on SI Camps

1. CCHUB has run four events. A key learning from these is the need to create a support system. It is important how you pick the ideas, and it is critical that the person has an interest in following up on the idea afterwards. How easy they are going to be to work with is also very important. At the testing and development stage, it is easier for organizations to develop if they see something concrete. The focus of the project is to develop a prototype and build upon it. Thus it is important to have meetings at regular intervals. One of the problems after the first camp was writing cheques out at the beginning. None of the ideas turned out to be fruitful and this caused them to rethink and change their method.

IRISS has noted the importance of idea leaders and their network. Those ideas which have a network for funding tend to be more successful. Therefore it is important to prime people in advance. Serendipity is important.

ASIX found that a lot of ideas were not well thought through at the beginning, due to a lack of investment into the preparatory work. Sometimes this has to do with understanding the problem. For example, in work with family child abuse families the focus should be on how to strengthen families so that abuse doesn't happen in the first place, as opposed to dealing with the issues after they arise.

SI Camp has found that there is an art in getting the balance right between rigorousness and open idea making. People have deep personal ethnographic insights. It is better to have a mediocre idea and work on it with the right person because you can make it a good idea. It is more important to build a solution to the problem instead of catering to what the Planning Commission wants. Furthermore, levelling the playing field is important. Part of the reason as to why people have such a good time at the SI Camps is that people are working on the problem collaboratively and at a level playing field where all of the ideas are relevant.
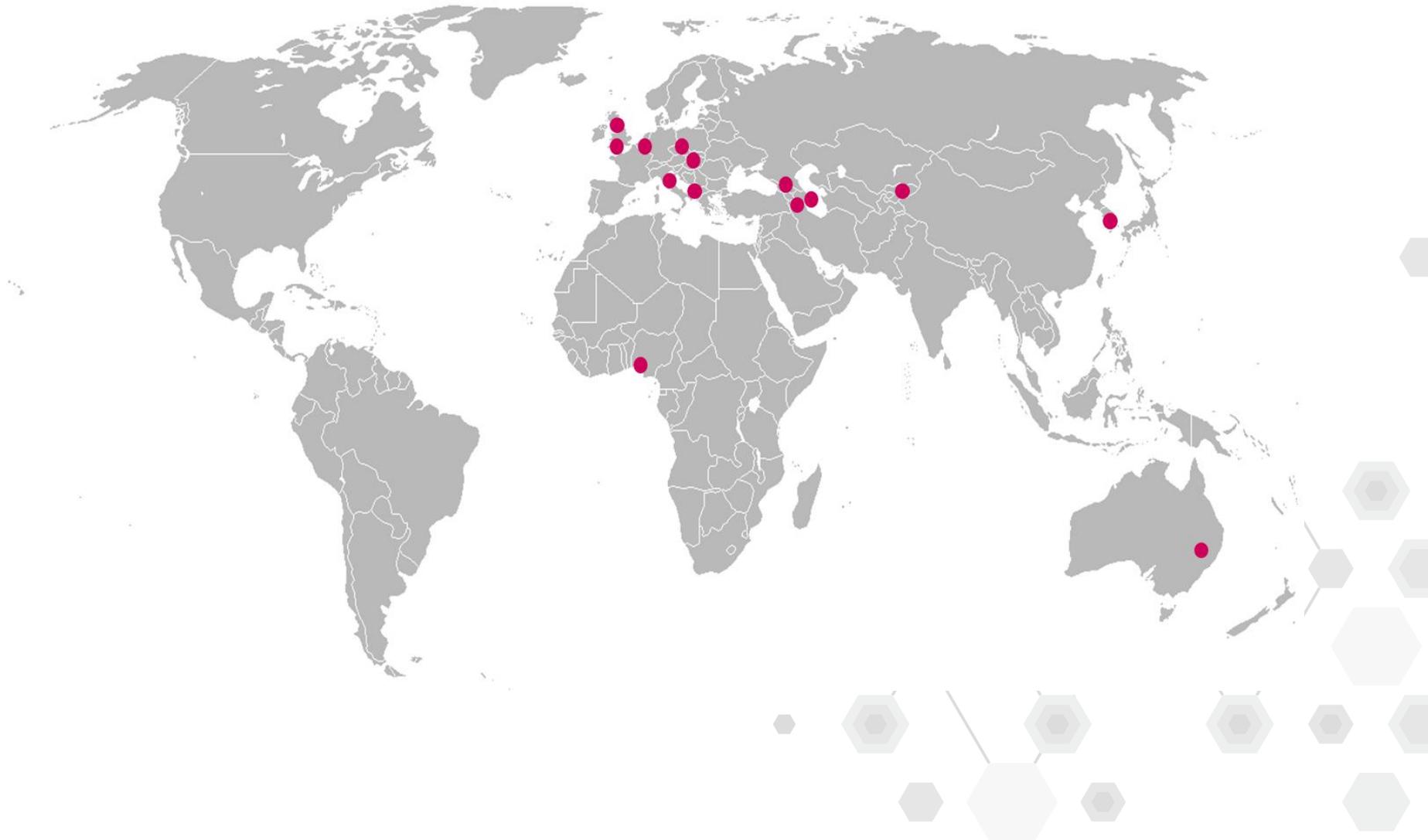
Outcomes and Impacts

A good SI camp well done is not so easy to do

CCHub's approach is becoming increasingly about getting those involved to create change and create impact as well as attracting government interest. Ministers in Nigeria are currently talking about SI camp projects and about applying a business model to solve social problems. Camps are most effective when there is a defined prototype – especially when looking for funding as these provide grounds to pitch from. CCHub provides coaching on how to pitch their ideas, which has been quite successful. There is space opening up for seed funding and social innovation funding within Nigeria.

An ecosystem for social innovation in Norway is developing, but the government is not interested yet.

IRISS, looking at the impact of SI Camps from a health perspective has identified three outcomes. The first is that SI camp gets people who would never start a business to do so. Secondly, there is not a huge mind-set regarding social innovation in health but people are slowly starting to realize its value. The third is that SI camps offer very good value for money. There is not a huge mind-set regarding the opportunities which social technologies offer but people are starting to realize the benefits.

How does it work?

Social Innovation Camp

- 6-10 days of consulting + expenses
- We intensively coach you through the process via skype/phone and in person
- We provide methodology, templates, etc.
- We come to the final weekend

Local partner

- Responsible for fundraising, visas, etc.
- Needs to have local networks to draw on in the local technology & social communities
- Wants to work hard – a full-time job for 4-7 months
- Flexible, adaptable, good communications skills

One outcome that SI Camp has found is that there is a debate emerging about getting social enterprises to replace social services which are not well done at a lower cost. However cost saving is a difficult argument as it can be difficult to show in work dealing with social issues, for example in the case of Good Gym.

How do we secure the right participants? What are successful processes for projects? How do you assess the rigor of the theory of change?

An ideal situation in an SI camps is to have
• Project Managers / Facilitators
• The Idea Owner
• 1 – 2 Designers
• 2 – 3 Developers
• 1 – 2 Business people
• 2 – 3 Experts on the problem
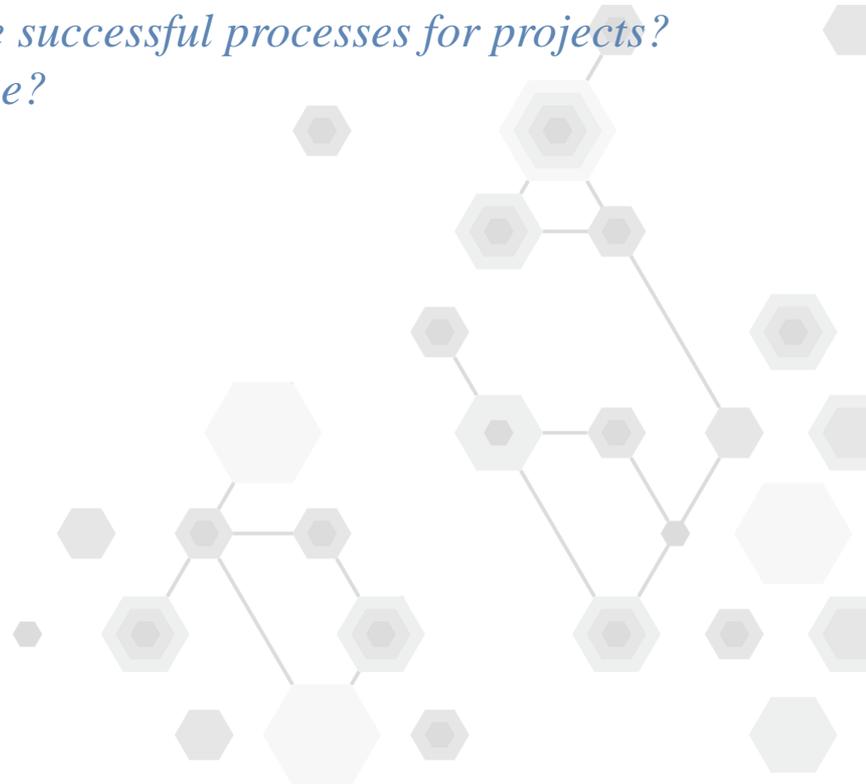
There is a trend that were SI camps are new, there tend to be a lot of university students to early career professionals. In the UK, there is a now an equal division of mid career, experienced and new professionals, which tends to work well. An important part of the SI Camp process is to put the idea on paper and then see what is needed. The aim is to get 12 people in a team, at the end 3 to 4 people tend to be actually committed to taking the project forward. That is why it is important to have more than one of each, because you get attrition.

"What is the evidence that life changing has been sustained? Has it been? How do we sustain it? This is hard to measure."

The first themed event for SI Camp was on youth offending, which was a hard issue, as it involved trying to engage with people who oftentimes are working in acute situations. There is also an issue of red-tape. The SI Camp involved potential commissioners during the process to ensure that no major issues came up. There was a problem involved in getting people to take risks and encourage them to think outside the box. Before the camp it was hard to work with commissioners as they tend to be more conservative. For commissioners who had never worked with young offenders before this experience was attitude changing and valuable. It is important to make events not just 'fringe' experiences but part of the system, not institutionalizing either but rather an experience that gains support after the camp. SI Camp is getting better at providing this kind of support.

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The Future of SI Camp

SI Camp at the moment is only really operational in Europe. There is talk of starting it in Chile, Mexico, Canada and the United States but none of them have panned out yet. 11 countries have run SI camps so far. Czech Republic and Nigeria have organised SI Camps more than once. In Egypt, in one week's time, the first SI camp on cultural and creative economy will be organized with the British Council. There have also been SI Camps on topical issues, for example in Denmark an SI Camp was run around the theme of poverty alleviation. SI Camp has also provided training with a licensing fee, which includes a week by week follow up and training on how to do idea generation workshops.

Will SI Camps still keep open design?

SI Camp is a small organization with no core funding. However the current model as it exists is not the final way. SI Camp wants to move towards a self organizing global network to facilitate communication and education. It also would like to examine further: What are the similarities and differences between SI Camps? What works well at a localized level? What doesn't?

Trademarking?

Thus far SI Camp has an EU Trademark. Expanding its trademark is a question of time and organization – IP law can be a nightmare to do.
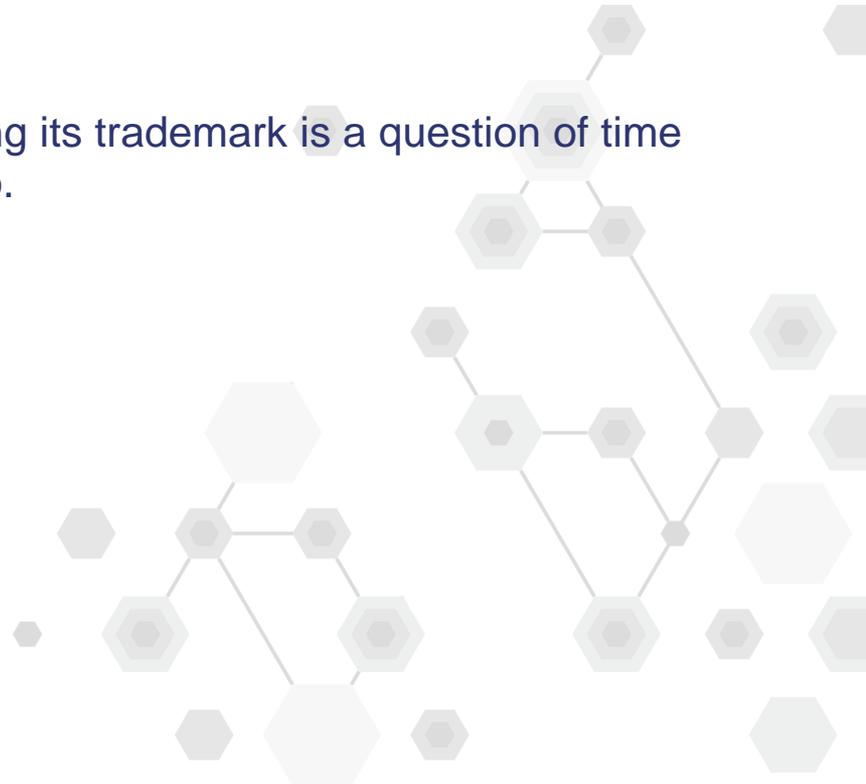
Where to go from here?

1. Collaboration opportunities via SIX to add value to what we are trying to achieve – a lot of us have not yet collaborated together.

2. Global idea sharing via SIX with an aim to improve the chances at getting successful start-ups off the ground.

3. CCHUB has created a web blog of ideas, challenges, failures and successes of start-ups. It is very detailed, with key learning from organising Camps and useful materials. Others can also share reports for funders and such.

4. SIX could nest something like this. We can discuss how SIX can take up some of the work load, in enabling the sharing of knowledge and experience. We can take suggestions about the best solution and develop an agreement between us.

5. We have to remain sensitive to the IP of the SI Camps. Guidance from SI Camps is needed on how to manage that in a good way.

6. Is it possible to create a living Cookbook? Perhaps one where everyone can contribute.

7. It has been suggested to have an instantly replicable website.

8. Connecting people up to SI Camp site as resource.

Social Innovation Exchange

Participant list

City	Country	Name	Organisation
London	UK	Glen Mehn	SI Camp
		Paul Miller	School of Everything
		Alice Casey	Good Gym
		Cassie Robinson	Agency
		Eleanor Cappell	NHS
		Ivo Gormley	The Good Gym/ Enabled by Design
		Louise Pulford	SIX
		Kine Nordstokka	SIX
		Jasmine Toor	SIX
		SoJung Rim	Young Foundation
Glasgow	Scotland	Lucy Robinson	IRISS
		Sarah Drummond	Snook (via webex)
Prague	Czech Republic	Sarka Hastrmanová	Respekt Institute
		Veronika Trachtová	Respekt Institute
Oslo	Norway	Merete Grimeland	World Wide Narrative
		Thomas Berman	Devoteam daVinci
Lagos	Nigeria	Femi Longe	Co- creation Hub
		Tunji Eleso	Co- creation Hub
Sydney	Australia	Steve Lawrence	ASIX
		Martin Stewart-Weeks	ASIX/ Cisco
		Raul Alberto Caceres	ASIX
Melbourne		Andrew Brough	Foundations for Young Australians
Adelaide		Brenton Caffin	TACSI