REIMAGINING
RELATIONSHIPS

Highlights Report

How citizens collaborate to change the systems in which they live

February 2014

Hivos
people unlimited

Social Innovation Exchange

REIMAGINING RELATIONSHIPS: HIGHLIGHTS

> "If you want to change a system, you must open yourself. You must work with others and shift your mind-set. You must shift your paradigm."

On the 26th and 27th of November 2014, SIX and Hivos brought together a global group of social change practitioners and innovators in Johannesburg to explore how citizens empower themselves to change, adapt and improve the systems in which they live by sharing cases of best practices, brilliant failures and exploring innovative approaches.

We believe that this event was one of the first of its kind - bringing together the different communities of social innovation and international development to discuss systems change, accelerate thinking, and provide a new forum to inspire thought and action of a different kind.

South Africa's unique history and political landscape made Johannesburg an interesting location for this important discussion. The event was held at the Jozihub- a new co-creation space dedicated to creating sustainable change in Africa.

ABOUT THE TWO DAYS

Through an interactive and diverse programme that included workshops, discussions, case study presentations and site visits to local projects, we examined how we can create systemic change by reimagining traditional relationships.

We looked beyond the fad of technological solutions, and focussed on citizen collaboration at a more systemic level. This event explored the following questions:

- » What can we learn from what is happening already in different parts of the world?
- » How can we build the capacity of citizens to think differently, create new solutions, and adopt and adapt processes and examples from other parts of the world to fit their own context?
- » How can we help shape the right conditions to support innovations to thrive?
- » What are the relationships being reimagined, by whom and how?

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

60 thinkers and doers from around the world came together for two days to explore what we mean by reimagining relationships. 75% of the participants were African- coming from South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. Others came from Europe, Australia and South America.

The participants brought a wide array of disciplines and professional experience - there were academics, designers, psychologists, funders, people with a background as diverse as business, sustainability and everything in between. Some worked in big institutions like governments or foundations, whilst others worked at a local level in their communities. There were people from the arts, housing associations, LGBT activists, social innovation practitioners and, the humanitarian sector.

We believe discussions on innovation should cross silos and boundaries, and all of these different perspectives helped provide rich and interesting discussions, and enabled the participants to learn from other sectors and approach issues in different ways.

WHY SHOULD WE REIMAGINE RELATIONSHIPS?

We live in a time of complex social challenges - local issues are inextricably linked with each other, and with global agendas. When everything seems interlinked in intricate ways, the role of imagination is increasing important. What alternative futures can we imagine? And more specifically, how can we reimagine the relationships that we have with one another in the societies we live in?

In both the fields of social innovation as well as international development, and particularly where these overlap, we see people taking initiatives to do exactly that. They all, in their own ways, boldly challenge the status quo, engage in unlikely partnerships and reframe the way they have approached the issues they work on. With this event, we wanted to allow for these people to interact, exchange experiences and for all of us to learn more about how this reimagining is taking shape.

KEY INSIGHTS

The following four themes reoccurred throughout the event. Each theme offers a unique lens- which should be considered when we are reimagining our existing relationships.

1. POWER

Zaheera Jinnah, a migration scholar at the University of Witswatersrand, kicked off the event by reminding the participants that 'it's naive and unhelpful if we think that all people are treated equal'. According to Jinnah, the current discourse assumes that everyone can influence and change the systems they live in, whereas this is not the case for many, such as migrants. It is important to study power relations and acknowledge informal or formal power imbalances when speaking about reimagining relationships.

Some key questions that were asked throughout the two days were:

> » What underlying contextual and structural dynamics that shape relationships can help or hurt the process of change?
> » Who controls the power to change?
> » How does legal status, social standing, access to resources and power conditions change the ability to reimagine relationships?
> » How can we empower those who might be excluded from the system?

Amani Institute @amaniinst Nov 26 Do power structures actually change? Accounting for #socimpact and when #socinn or #techdev are trending as solutions #reimagine2014

MakingAllVoicesCount @AllVoicesCount Nov 27 "$ isn't always the scarcest problem in solving social problems; there are other obstacles; who do power & resources lie?" #reimagine2014

amisboersma @amisboersma Nov 26 Zaheera Jinnah: "Not everyone is a citizen". Reminding us not everyone can reimagine relationships to change their systems #reimagine2014

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Case study: Constituency Watch, Zambia

What was the relationship?

After becoming frustrated with the slow pace of change and reform in Zambia, Constituency Watch has created a simple and easy way to connect citizens to their policymakers. This digital social innovation uses both social media and face-to-face interactions to connect every single constituency in the country to their elected officials and sources of power.

Constituency Watch aims to empower citizens and improve the feedback loops between people and their representatives. They focus on different areas of concern within public services and the community including sanitation, rubbish collection, schools and local clinics. They have begun to photograph and crowd map signs of corruption and mismanagement of public services and challenge the power dynamics between citizens and their elected officials.

How is the relationship being reimagined?

Zambia has a huge rural-based population with limited resources and infrastructure and high levels of corruption. The country has a centralized governance system and many MPs do not regularly visit and interact with their local constituencies. This context and a lack of dialogue and transparency have resulted in many public services that are not acceptable to the local community.

Constituency Watch helps people to learn more about what's going on in their own communities and enables them to upload photos that show community issues that need to be addressed. Through a combination of social media and face-to-face interaction, Constituency Watch is interacting with many different communities.

This allows citizens to become part of the change process and engage in a new form of direct dialogue with their elected representatives, something previously not found in the country.

What is the impact?

There has been a lot of success with this programme and process. The naming and shaming of officials has worked incredibly well as there hasn't been this level of scrutiny before. MP's don't like to be embarrassed in the public domain and have quickly moved in to address the problems at hand.

In the Kamanaga township in Munali, a Councilor had designated a church site to be used as a rubbish dump, despite patrons still attending the weekly service. Using the Constituency Watch Facebook page, the churchgoers photographed the extent of the rubbish and the impact it had on their lives and their community and sent it to the Mayor. The Mayor stepped in and cleaned up the church in a matter of days and is now asking local Councilors and MPs to further participate and use the platform.

By using crowdmapping tools, Constituency Watch is able to aggregate data to show trends and mobilise a critical mass towards active citizens capable of bringing change in their communities.

This is a quick and easy way to effect change in a country where direct engagement with politicians was previously not commonplace. This platform has enabled citizens to influence the political system in Zambia and they hope to continue to make everyone's voices heard and fight for a new referendum on the constitution. They are helping to democratise the ability to publish, disseminate and access information that directly affects the quality of life of citizens and promote more transparency and accountability.

MakingAllVoicesCount @AllVoicesCount Nov 26 @kissabraham on critical consciousness; sometimes the abnormal is normal until someone says "Hey! This has to change!" #reimagine2014

2. TECHNOLOGY

The role and value of technology was highlighted at multiple points over the event - particularly its value in enabling more people to access information and democratize our learning. We heard from different projects and apps that are working to close the feedback loop between citizens and policy makers, expand access to the internet to more people across the world, and improve public services with new technologies.

Whilst many of us know technology does not provide a magic fix, we should be aware 'that technology should be a means to an end and never a goal in itself' – as Loe Schout of Hivos commented.

Loe also reminded us that technology is not always used for social change as we perceive it - but can also be used for negative purposes. Increasingly, terrorists are using ICT to promote their messages, governments are blocking access to information and large companies are collecting personal data about citizens around the world. While operating in this context, the social innovation community should be aware of these developments.

Together, we looked at the following questions:

» How can we ensure that there is equal access to technology?
» How can we encourage governments to take more ownership and responsibility for tech-based public services?
» Are new apps, particularly in the field of mobile health, really transforming society?
» Is there a danger of overestimating the power of technology to solve society's challenges?
» How can technology work with humanity?

MakingAllVoicesCount @AllVoicesCount Nov 27 "It's easy to over estimate the value of #tech, however #tech CAN be a game changer - @Yowzit_com case in point" @loeschout #reimagine2014

Amani Institute @amanlinst Nov 26 Connecting citizens to public entities - @PramodMohanlal presenting @Yowzit_com's work to #reimagine2014 #socent #socinn

Bertha Centre @BerthaCentre Nov 26 New challenge by @gustavp "How can we localize and democratize content?" We need #innovative solutions. #reimagine2014 with @si_exchange

3. LANGUAGE

Another theme that emerged from the event was about the importance of language, particularly the impact and power that language can have.

Not everyone shares the same understanding or definitions of words or phrases; this is especially true across different sectors and regions. As Zaheera Jinnah pointed out, the concept of 'citizens changing systems' excludes some groups, as not everyone is a citizen or has access to different power structures.

Also, the concept of social innovation is a relatively new one for many. During the two-days, the participants took time to familiarize themselves with different definitions and contextualize their own understandings. It is important to understand the need to create a space for discussion to understand what certain terms mean.

Some key questions that came up were:

» How do you define what is social innovation?
» How can we create more spaces to understand each other's language, definitions and understanding?

> **Case study: Sauti Ya Mtaa, Kenya**
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> ### What is the relationship?
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> Sauti Ya Mtaa is helping to change the relationship between citizens and the systems in which they live in two slums in Nairobi- Kibera & Karobangi. Slum dwellers often lack resources and access to forums for public dialogue, which means that these citizens are the least likely to have the tools to record or report their life experiences or change their communities.
>
> ### How is it being reimagined?
>
> Sauti Ya Mtaa aims to improve the right to access to information for slum dwellers by supporting citizens and creating new forms of engagement. By combining artistic communication and innovative journalism technologies, they aim to establish a communication system that supports networks of civically engaged youth across Nairobi. Sauti Ya Mtaa has a journalist training programme and a programme that supports artists to express their voices as well as community engagement events such as slum talk shows. These different activities allow young people to be the drivers and leaders of the change to the public system and foster civic engagement and public action.
>
> ### What is the impact?
>
> Their slum talk show provides a space for citizens to speak openly and honestly with their elected officials. These talk shows have been very well received and topics discussed include good governance, community development, youth and women empowerment, security and resource availability within the community. These forums also help to foster a culture of transparency and accountability. Sauti Ya Mtaa hopes to build on this culture and encourage citizens to continue to change their community and support young people to run for office in the next general election.

4. TRUST

Another theme that emerged was trust, particularly in relation to the process of reimagining relationships. Cedric de Beer, of the Soros Economic Development Fund, spoke about relationships having both emotional and intellectual attributes and explained that trust is a vital component of both, particularly when developing new relationships or reimagining existing ones.

Angelique Edmunds, from the School for Creating Change and the University of South Australia, reflected on the importance of trust for reimagining relationships and the need to acknowledge and nurture its presence. Particularly, when working with complex groups consisting of different partners, it is important to build trust by identifying common ground to help enable better collaboration.

One important element, which is often lacking in building trust, according to Edmunds, is vulnerability. Angelique noted that many entrepreneurs had embraced openness, learning and failures, but that many sectors, particularly in the development sector, were still wary of this vulnerability. How can we better encourage practitioners to choose to create a culture of openness, trust and vulnerability?

Alan Fowler, of the International Institute of Social Studies, identified the need for brokers to help bridge trust. Although brokers are never neutral, they are able to bridge gaps between different actors and help to change and transform systems. Alan defined these brokers as *interlocutors*. These are individuals and organisations that are able to resolve conflict, build trust, are aware of different power dynamics, can effectively communicate and are sovereign enough to mediate between different interest groups.

Key questions that were asked in relation to trust were:

» How can we create a culture of openness and trust to better learn from each other?

» How can we create more spaces for people to come together and learn from each other?

» How do we better identify and support these brokers to bridge together groups of people?

» How can you embed a collaborative approach in a competitive situation?

Case study: Izindaba Zokudla, South Africa

What is the relationship?

The Soweto Region D Farmers Forum along with the new DESIS lab at the University of Johannesburg are trying to change the food system in Soweto and reimagine society's relationship with food and farming.

How is it being reimagined?

Izindaba Zokudla (Conversations about Food) is a new multi-stakeholder engagement project that aims to create opportunities for urban agriculture in a sustainable food system in Soweto. The project creates a space for engagement between urban farmers, stakeholders and the city- something previously unheard of.

Izindaba Zokudla together with the Region D Farmers' Forum have created the Soweto Imvelo Market at the Soweto Theatre where farmers sell their own food and in this way, keep the largest share of the profit. Agriculture is not seen as a viable or modern livelihood by urban residents - but rather something done out of desperation. By working with designers and the trendy new Soweto Theatre- this project aims to shift thinking and culture and establish urban food production as a vital and attractive livelihood in the city and community. By promoting organic food- they also hope to change the culture of junk food in the community.

The project is also exploring new participatory technology development with the farmers, including organic methods of supporting seedlings and a wind-powered water pump.

What is the impact?

It is still early days in the project; however, the project is creating an opportunity for dialogue with multiple actors within society including the city, farmers, citizens and academics to have important conversations about the sustainability and quality of food. It is also an interesting project to see how design and the use of the right methodologies can be used to reimagine society and empower non-traditional actors like farmers.

Start Network @StartNetwork · Nov 26
Multi stakeholder collaboration methods used to bring a sustainable food project to life in Soweto #reimagine2014

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT SYSTEMS CHANGE?

There are different views on how best to create sustainable systems change. Some believe that change can occur incrementally, where the cumulative effect of several small innovations at the edge can collectively change the way a society operates. Others believe in order to create change, we need to be disruptive and evoke change from the core of a system.

Whichever approach is taken, we need to change they way we think, act and approach social challenges, rather than just fix what is broken. Taffy Adler of the Housing Development Association reminded the participants that there are three important things to remember when we are trying to change systems:

Context matters

Some methods or processes that worked in one situation may work in another, but only if context is taken into account. Therefore, spreading innovation is about replicating the process but adapting it to the context.

Time is relevant

Systems change takes time and commitment from both parties. Changing the way a society has operated for a long time doesn't happen overnight, so systems change takes patience.

Trust is essential

Relationships sit at the heart of social innovation, and they are built on trust. Both parties must be honest and open about what they can give and take from the relationship.

Moving forward:

For the participants, this event provided a unique opportunity to collaborate, make new connections and for further thinking. At the end of the event, we asked each participant to think about what they would like to exchange more, explore further and experiment with. Here is a snapshot of the responses:

EXCHANGE

-Failures and learning
-Ideas and networks
-More personal experiences particularly on what worked, what didn't, and what was the role of the organisation
-Between people from comparable contexts, particularly with a developing country focus
-More ideas with development practitioners outside of my organisation
-Methodologies particularly participatory approaches to social innovation

EXPLORE

-Innovations in the African continent and the global South
-Ways to effectively measure and evaluate the level of trust in relationships
-More social innovations in South Africa
-Reimagine the relationships between the global and the local

EXPERIMENT

-With the role of brokering opportunities between sectors
-The idea of interlocution
-With different coalitions of actors for different outcomes
-Designing technological and institutional innovations
With drawing parallels in cultural thinking

NEXT STEPS

Providing more examples, methods and inspiration:

For SIX and Hivos, we want to continue to add value to this field in the region. That means ensuring that it is as simple and as easy as possible for people to find different resources, examples and inspiration easily. The goal of SIX is to reduce the number of steps an innovator takes to achieve their goals. Our value comes from being able to connect people with global thinkers and doers, and cases, and help communities to grow and learn from real examples.

Over the next year we will continue to build a bank of cases, examples and projects from across Africa and around the world, which demonstrate new ways to reimagine relationships and change systems. We will collect resources and ideas, and work with more organisations to think about how we can improve the systems that govern society in better ways.

> "I learnt so much and met some great people. Thank you for opening our minds to different ways of doing things, new approaches and to new possibilities." - Liz Kilili, Creative Garages, Kenya

Providing more forums for a different kind of interaction:

Many of the participants commented that they had never been to an event with so many different experiences, people and perspectives, and several have started to collaborate with each other already. We tried to ensure that the event was curated in a unique way, with a strong emphasis on the experience of the participants and providing a space for meaningful interactions and learning.

> "It was nice to meet with people who wanted to open up new ways of doing things, people who consider imagination a pathway to realising progressive social change." - Kiss Abraham, KBA Innovations, Zambia

Supporting further collaboration and continuing the conversation:

SIX and Hivos are committed to supporting and sustaining the valuable connections made during the event. For this reason, we are planning to host similar events across Africa in the next year, to further develop more knowledge and connections. At the end of the Africa series, we will combine our learning and cumulative knowledge gained into a report, which will 'take the pulse' on examples, trends and issues for social innovation in the African context.

> "There is a wealth of experience in this room- I am grateful and thankful to be here. I would love to see this move forward and continue to connect with everyone." - Francois Bonnici, The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship

If you would like more information or would like to join us, please email jordan.junge@socialinnovationexchange.org

PARTICIPANT LIST:

Name	Organisation	Country
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Amis Boersma	Hivos	Netherlands
Angelique Edmonds	University of South Australia and The School for Creating Change	Australia
Angus Campbell	University of Johannesburg	South Africa
Bushra Razack	Islamic Relief	South Africa
Carla Cipolla	DESIS Network	Brazil
Cedric de Beers	Soros Economic Development Fund	South Africa
Claire Nerenhausen	Concern Worldwide	Mozambique
Clarissa Maracci	Sauti Ya Mtaa	Kenya
David Lewis	Corruption Watch	South Africa
Deus Mukalazi	Twaweza	Uganda
Dieter van den Broeck	Living Lands	South Africa
Dr Francois Bonnici	The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship	South Africa
Geraldine Hepp	Amani Institute	Kenya
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Mark Lewis	Photographer	South Africa
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Naude Malan	University of Johannesburg	South Africa
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Patience Mkhosana	Corruption Watch	South Africa
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Pramod Mohanlal	Yowzit	South Africa
Rachel Jones	Reos Partners	South Africa
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Remko Berkhout	Hivos consultant	Austria
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Sakhile Skhosana	Region D Farmers' Forum, Soweto	South Africa
Sharad Sapra	UNICEF Innovation Centre	Kenya
Stuart Bartlett	Industrial Development Corporation	South Africa
Taffy Adler	Housing Development Agency	South Africa
Tegan Rogers	Start Network	UK
Tricia Sibbons	Sophiatown Heritage and Cultural Centre	South Africa
Zaheera Jinnah	African Centre for Migration & Society	South Africa