

International workshop

Facilitating Social Innovation: Appreciating critical junctures in multi-stakeholder processes for development

ECDPM, Maastricht, the Netherlands: 15-16 November 2016

Introduction

At the heart of social innovation are social actors, stakeholders who find innovative ways to relate, communicate and act in order to address “entrenched social challenges”.¹ Social innovation is a well-known phenomenon: it is people trying to organise themselves in effective ways to achieve (some of) the objectives they see as vital to their lives and the future of their children. It is governments, institutions and civil society engaging to secure human rights are respected. It is companies engaging the government to improve the business environment. And it is companies, governments and civil society engaging in public-private partnerships to achieve common objectives.

Facilitators of social innovation support multi-stakeholder processes in order for these to be effective and to achieve sustainable results. Facilitators may be insiders or outsiders who facilitate process enhancing: dialogue, networking and learning; knowledge brokerage, meeting moderation e-exchanges and problem solving amongst the stakeholders who are driving the process. Over the past decades professionals engaged in facilitating multi-stakeholder processes have gained a good deal of practical knowledge and experience in process facilitation. They have done so integrating different schools of thought into their approaches, instruments and tools.

We are convinced that facilitators of social innovation today can benefit from the art, craft and science developed by those who have facilitated multi-stakeholder processes for development. Furthermore, bringing together professional facilitators from a variety of backgrounds, who use different approaches in diverse areas of work will enhance individual as well as collective learning processes. For this purpose we propose to organise a workshop where participants will have the opportunity to discuss what they do and how they do it, share what they know, and interrogate the kinds of results they achieve.

Objectives of the workshop:

During the workshop the participants *will gain a better, practical understanding of:*

1. How social innovation occurs and the necessary conditions for it to flourish.
2. The various roles facilitators can play and how to play them.
3. Critical situations that might occur during processes of social innovation and the various options that exist for dealing with them.
4. The diverse professional space they are operating in and its status amongst process owners and sponsors.²

Social innovation for development will be considered at two different levels. The first level spans policy and institutional innovation that aims to create an enabling policy and regulatory environment for national and regional policies to be effective in contributing to the achievement of development objectives. The second spans community and (local) institutional innovation, which aims to create enabling conditions for communities to achieve their (development) objectives.

¹ The JW McConnell Chair in Social Innovation at University of Waterloo, Canada.

² RR: “I have often been asked to ‘facilitate an event’ and had a feeling I was seen as a moderator or master of ceremonies, not as a designer of a learning process. Even wedding planners get more respect (or some left-over cake)....”

Participant selection

All participants invited to the workshop will be professionals who have gained at least five years of experience in facilitating complex multi-stakeholder processes for social innovation at one of the two levels mentioned with concrete experiences to share that are relevant to the others. Participants will include a mix of senior professionals from ECDPM, MSM and ISG and a selected number of senior professionals from other organisations with strong and complementary track records and a number of young professionals with a proven interest and emerging skills for facilitating multi-stakeholder processes for social change. Care will be taken to select participants from a variety of different thematic areas and levels at which facilitation takes place.

Participant contributions

Upon registration, each participant is expected to put forward at least **two short stories** for presentation during the workshop. Each story is to narrate one critical moment or juncture in a particular process the participant (helped) facilitated; how it was dealt with and, as to how far the intervention was considered a success. The choice of critical moment or juncture is up to the participant. In view of time constraints, the organising committee may not select all stories submitted for formal presentation during the workshop. If selected for presentation, in advance of the meeting the participant will contribute a brief **PowerPoint presentation for each story**, providing the essential background necessary for others to understand them. Each PowerPoint will have a maximum of 6 slides: (1) the common drive and purpose of the exercise as understood by the process owners; (2) presentation of relevant stakeholders involved, their diverse motives and expectations from the process and their engagement at the time; (3) summary of the socio-political and economic context in which the process was set; (4) the critical moment identified by the facilitators and why it was deemed so by the facilitators; (5) outline of the actions undertaken by the facilitator(s) and, (6) summary of the insights gained and lessons learned from the facilitators' point of view. Please note: the presentation is not meant to be a comprehensive analytical piece but a brief overview (using bullet points) of the most important elements relevant as background to the story. (Use large letter type and a limited number of brief sentences). A format can be provided by the organisers.

Programme of the workshop

The workshop will build on the presentations of the participants. It will be comprised of two days of laboratory sessions, plenary and networking sessions. Laboratory sessions are parallel sessions of two hours each, with 12-15 participants in each of two groups, during which 6 people will be given 10 minutes each to elaborate on one of their PowerPoint's. A group moderator will keep time strictly so that at least half the time is dedicated to discussion. The organising committee and moderators will make an inventory of all contributions and organise the presentations in advance in such a way that complementary ones are discussed in the same session/lab.

Parallel sessions will be organised around one of two themes/process experiences

Session	Tuesday a.m.	Tuesday p.m.	Wednesday a.m.	Wednesday p.m.
Plenary	09:00-10:30			
Laboratory 1	11:00-13:00			
Laboratory 2		14:00-16:00		
Market of approaches & practices		16:30-18:00		
Networking dinner		18:30-20:30		
Plenary: where are we?			09:00-10:30	
Laboratory 3			11:00-13:00	
Laboratory 4				14:00-16:00
Plenary: consolidating a diverse professional space				16:30-18:00
Closing dinner				18:30-20:30

[OBS: 25 participants; 4 sessions of two hours with 2 parallel groups; could accommodate up to 50 stories/presentations.]

Outcomes of the workshop

1. Notes will be taken at each lab session; and presented to the other group during plenary work;
2. Participants will be asked to convert their 2 PowerPoint's into 2 brief stories of 1000 words each within three weeks after the workshop.
3. During the workshop participants will be video-interviewed to document the stories they submitted.
4. The organising committee and moderators will summarise the arguments and lessons learned during the plenaries and lab sessions, and link these to specific experiences (critical moments) presented.
5. A workshop report will be published (20 p.p.) summarising the critical moments brought forward, the main issues discussed and main lessons learned.

Book proposal: documenting and communicating practical lessons for professionals

Besides the report, based on the inputs, proceedings and outcomes of the workshop, an open-source book will bundle a number of significant practical stories brought forward by participants, including their videos; the introduction and conclusion of the book will be written by the organising committee, with support from participants. Drawing upon the rich group of professionals in the workshop, the book will provide a practical update to professional facilitators as well as a valuable introduction to those endeavoring to improve their practical knowledge, skills and the instruments they use as facilitators of social innovation.

Organisation

The workshop will be organised by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the International Support Group (ISG).

The organising committee consists of: Paul Engel, ISG/KPI, chair and editor-in-chief; Jean Bossuyt, ECDPM Head of Strategy, editor and moderator, multi-stakeholder processes at policy/institutions level; María Fernandez, ISG, editor and moderator, multi-stakeholder processes at the community/institutions level, Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez, ISG, moderators and editors, open source publications, Monique Salomon, Independent, moderator and editor, professional networks' liaison. The committee will be supported by Eunike Spierings, ECDPM, policy officer, researcher, moderator e-groups.

The workshop will be held in Maastricht where ECDPM will provide workshop facilities and logistical support to participants.