**18. Social Innovation**

**What is social innovation?**

The design and implementation of new solutions to social needs, problems or opportunities that work more effectively than existing solutions.

**Two paths to social innovation**

* Solving ‘wicked’ social problems
* Logical problem solving

**Types of innovation**

* Continuous improvement
* New product or service
* Taking a successful program to a new market
* Process innovation – supply chain
* Disruptive innovation

**Wicked problems:**

* Complex web of problems, which usually become worse not better, with logical solutions.
* Found often in social, economic and environmental problems
* Solutions, when found, can help explain the problem and its causes
* Prisons and welfare payments are examples of solutions wicked problems that can make problems worse

**Defining social innovation – a more logical approach**

* Define the problem as clearly as possible
* Identify stakeholders and their interests
* Understand policy and map social/competitive environment
* Put service users at the centre of the process
* Build cross-sector/cross-disciplinary team
* Frame the problem carefully
* Define success and cost/effectiveness measures
* Search for solutions that work elsewhere
* Complete project design, define competitive advantage
* Execute pilots effectively and track impact

**Social innovation values**

* Diversity- ‘collision of the unfamiliar’
* Fresh thinking, free of fixed ideologies or protecting established interests
* Openness
* Collaboration
* Learning and adaptation
* User empowerment
* Stakeholder engagement
* Evidence of impact, high level of disclosure

**Social innovation approaches**

* Competitions for ideas
* Design processes
* User driven design
* Entrepreneur support
* Fast prototyping
* Crowd sourcing using social networking technologies
* Disparate collaboration/partnering
* Public innovation

**A sample process- poverty reduction for families**

* Defining poverty
* Engaging families, government, communities, employers
* Building a picture of relevant government policy and community attitudes
* Understanding what will engage families
* Build a design team- users, potential funders, designers, delivery partners, government representatives
* Explore options to frame this need area- child or family focus? Income or exclusion?
* Define success measures and design impact tracking systems
* Build communications strategy for stakeholders
* Search for models, assess applicability and cost effectiveness
* Design local program, negotiate policy changes
* Implement pilot and adapt in light of experience
* Mainstream program when best practice, replicable performance is demonstrated

**Draw your own knowledge of process to effectively innovate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** |  |
| Define problem/ issue* Demographic
* Area
* Factors
 |  |
| Understanding stakeholders* Their points of view
* Their Interests
 |  |
| Framing the problem* Media
* Politics
* History
* Social context
 |  |
| What are other people/orgs doing to address problem?* Is it working?
* Are there models you can adapt?
 |  |
| Design a solution that works |  |
| Work out concept of problem* Does the solution lead to a logical solution?
 |  |
| Presentation |  |