

Transformation Literacy Conference

INNOVATION AND REGULATION WITH

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**"Investing and incubating for innovation:
Building trust and equity in the social impact ecosystem"**

Investing and incubating for innovation:

Building trust and equity in the social impact ecosystem

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What led us to today?

History

- Villgro started in India 20+ years ago
- *Incubated about 350+ enterprises*
- *Trained about 6+ incubators:*
 - *2 with deep handholding and support – led to Villgro Kenya and Villgro Philippines*
 - *4 in India with training, mentoring and funding existing incubators in SoCent incubation*
- What is the path to Scaling Impact? – **3X Impact in 1/4th the time**
- Villgro USA was formed as a ‘hub’ to coordinate global activities and support
 - *Inspire, Incubate, Invest – through training programs, thought leadership and peer learning sessions*
- But Global?
- Needs to be built bottom-up – for the incubators, by the incubators, of the incubators!

What led us to today?

Context: *Collect Stakeholder voices - surface key issues - especially reading between lines*

- It's estimated that **more than 7,500 business incubators** operating globally, with most run as '**not-for-profits**'.
- **High competition** for limited funding fuels a more competitive environment **as opposed to collaborative** amongst incubators.
- The complex and nuanced environments that incubators exist within have resulted in **challenges with the overall quality**, efficiency, and effectiveness of programming delivered by incubators which is compounded when considering the **human capital constraints** of an incubator.

Trust:

Collect Stakeholder voices - surface key issues - especially reading between the lines

- 10 Trained Villgro Incubators
- 7 Villgro Hubs team members
- 5 Board Members
- 2 Villgro U.S. team members
- 8 Non-affiliated incubators
- 6 Funders
- 6 Member-based Network Leaders
- 2 External Ecosystem Players

Systemic Challenge:

- The majority of incubator ***operating models are not sustainable*** which reduce their likeliness of achieving the long-term impact they strive for within the communities they serve.
- The majority struggle to gain the ***visibility*** or to build the ***credibility*** required to access ***consistent funding***.
- They also face ***external and internal talent challenges*** and require access to affordable (customizable) resources to deepen and grow their quality programming.

Trust:

Give up control - facilitate, hold an empowering space for emergence - secretariat

Who we are & what we do

changed...

- Entrepreneurial driving vs Guided emergence
- Completely transparent about your intentions
- Consistent message
- Focus on value delivery
- Understand their vulnerabilities and institute guardrails

The Opportunity Reframed:

Funding:

- Bringing new partners to the table
- Facilitating better and more relevant conversations with funders around early-stage incubation
- Expanding the resource base for impact incubators overall
- *Boosting collaboration among incubators which has been limited in part due to competition of resources*

Human Capital:

- Engaging team members at incubators more deeply in ongoing learning and professional development
- Expanding overall capacity and talent across the field
- Growing the talent pipeline (Mentors/Advisors and incubator staff)

“Next” Practices:

- *Encouraging the co-creation of business/incubator transformation tools*
- *Exploring forward-thinking “future of incubation” research, methods and models that address sustainability*

Equity:

Bottom-up building – in spite of risk of failure - ok to start with a hybrid

How we do changed...

- Involve diverse stake holders
- Doesn't mean cant use existing players - but use them differently - let them dream
- Own and leverage tensions at the interfaces
- Be patient, facilitate and hold space for network emergence

The Ecosystem:

Stakeholders:

- Impact Incubators
- Entrepreneurs
- Other ESO's
- *Funders / Donors / Impact Investors*

Geographies:

- Africa
- S Asia
- S E Asia

Levels of Involvement.

- *Core Design*
- *Co-design*
- *Consult*



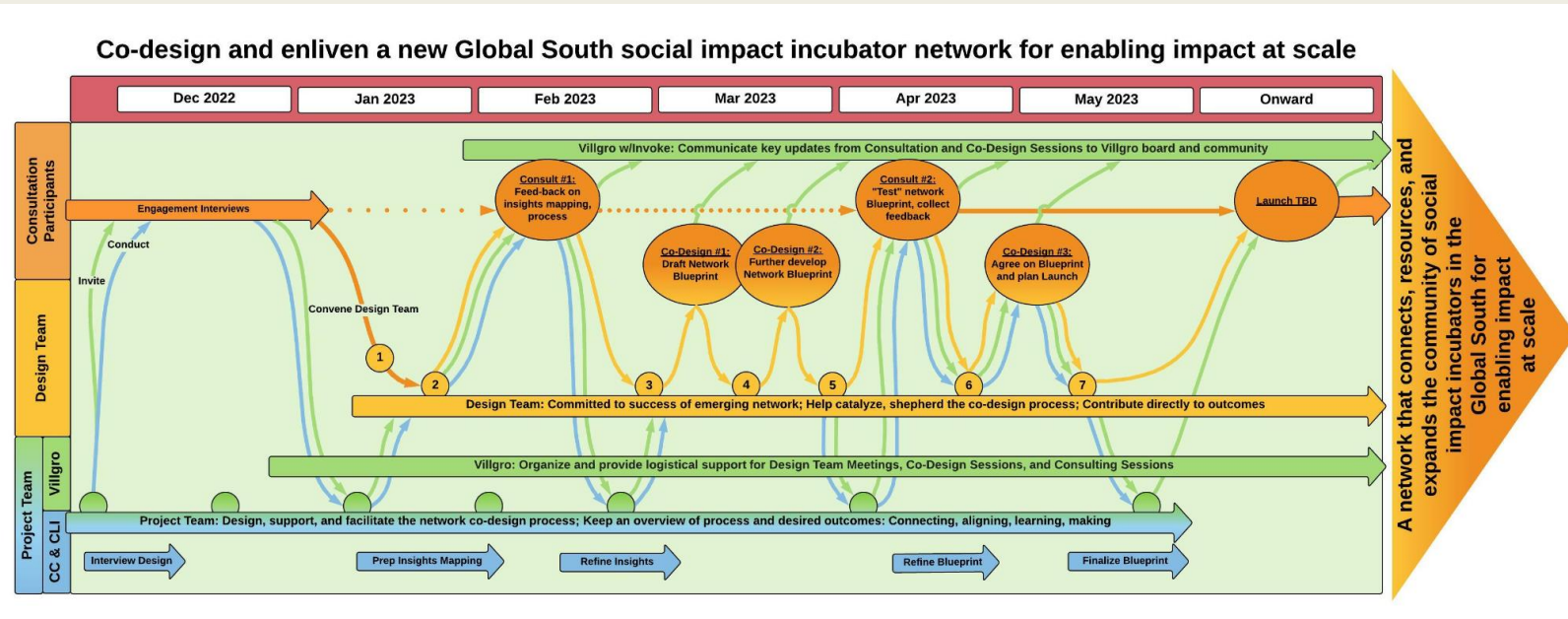
Equity:

Maintain Neutrality - Precipitate Co-design - Emphasize Collaboration front and center

Who will do with us changed...

- Get process stewards (aka consultants/experts) to maintain neutrality
- Proactively catalyze participation - 2 sessions for different time zones
- Individual updates as necessary
- Diversity can be chaotic, but a defined process and framework lets insights emerge
- 150 Contributors till date!
- Design team – 5
- Facilitation Team - 8

The Process:



Learnings:

Trust the process, participants, yourself and the shared purpose

If you want different results –
change your:

- *Self – reinvent into dream self*
- *What – from drive to facilitate*
- *How – convene, collaborate, catalyze*
- *Who with – bring diversity and acknowledge differences*

