Island Innovation Lab – a design thinking based immersive, experiential learning platform and program to develop cross-disciplinary collaboration for sustainability.

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Abstract:

The Island Innovation Lab is an immersive, cross-disciplinary, experiential and cultural learning opportunity for postgraduate and undergraduate students from across UNSW faculties. It is delivered in intensive mode focusing on a specific island. It recognises the complexity of the myriad wicked sustainability problems faced at local, regional and global levels and the whole systems, cross disciplinary, collaborative approaches that are needed to identify the lowest impact solutions to them. This critically reflective case study discusses formation of the Lab, its philosophy, aims and the development of the platforms and programs that underpin the teaching model. The tools and resources used, curriculum development and co-creative design thinking methods used by facilitators and students to co-design the course activities will be included.
Island Innovation Lab – a design thinking based, immersive, experiential learning platform and program to develop cross-disciplinary collaboration for sustainability.

ABSTRACT
The Island Innovation Lab is an immersive, cross-disciplinary, experiential and cultural learning opportunity for postgraduate and undergraduate students from across UNSW faculties. It is delivered in intensive mode focusing on a specific island. It recognises the complexity of the myriad wicked sustainability problems faced at local, regional and global levels and the whole systems, cross disciplinary, collaborative approaches that are needed to identify the lowest impact solutions to them. This critically reflective case study discusses formation of the Lab, its philosophy, aims and the development of the platforms and programs that underpin the teaching model. The tools and resources used, curriculum development and co-creative design thinking methods used by facilitators and students to co-design the course activities will be included.

Keywords: Collaboration, Education, Design Thinking, Sustainability, Innovation, Action Learning.

THE ISLAND INNOVATION LAB
The Island Innovation Lab is a collaboration between the author, Selena Griffith and Paul Miller who were introduced by a mutual friend in 2013. Miller had been working on developing a retreat or residency program where creative thinkers could escape their daily distractions and work innovative solutions to broader global sustainability challenges. Miller had located and visited possible sites in Vanuatu on the islands of Tanna and Efate but had been frustrated in starting the Vanuatu Pacifica Foundation project due to logistics difficulties between USA and Vanuatu. Griffith had been iterating courses in, and approaches to teaching, cross-disciplinary collaboration, sustainability and design thinking and wanted to test immersive, experiential, action and community of learning models combining these. With Australia’s proximity to Vanuatu, logistics were relatively easy making sense to collaborate on achieving these goals.

Both had separately been passionate advocates for creative practitioners (design, arts, music, performance, media) to have a seat at the sustainable solutions table. They have been working on opposite sides of the globe testing and refining ideas about this for the better part of 20 years. Miller via creative music, art and performance projects, Griffith through development of courses and capacity building programs in design thinking for innovation, sustainability and social enterprise. They were very interested in identifying ways that creative and cultural sector practitioners and professionals can constructively contribute both individually and in cross disciplinary teams to
addressing global, regional and local sustainability challenges. On meeting, they realised that they should collaborate, amalgamating their skills, networks and knowledge, forming a common project that could deliver greater global impact.

Hawkes (2001) argues that cultural activities influence sustainability outcomes. His four pillar model of sustainability, incorporating social/cultural, environmental, leadership and economic considerations was adopted for the Island Innovation lab.

**Island Innovation Lab Goals**

The Island Innovation Lab goal is to provide space, time, a supportive environment and culture where people from different disciplines can meet to engage in cross disciplinary collaborations for a sustainable global future. It takes the form of a scalable, adaptable, transferable platform with a program for developing skills, knowledge and partnerships to innovate whole systems, design thinking based, collaborative and cross disciplinary approaches to local, regional and global sustainability problems. It is open to practitioners and students and the model is transferable.

**Why Islands?**

The selection of a remote developing island nation for an Innovation Lab may at first seem incongruous as most people associate innovation with high levels of technology and economic development. Innovation, however, can happen at any level of complexity and technology and in any discipline. Darwin’s very innovative ideas on evolution were influenced and informed by his experiences in the remote Galapagos Islands, Hemmingway’s writing was inspired by his time spent on Islands. Islands conjure romantic notions of the exotic, holidays, treasures lost and found, adventure, romance, isolation, mystery, hardship. They have been the muse of artists, writers, musicians, scientists and explorers. Many view Islands as a place of escape. Somewhere that provides time and space for thinking and reflecting. Somewhere that affords anonymity, seclusion, rest or retreat. Other, like Napoleon, experienced them as a prison. We all live on islands, real or virtual, tiny, remote, large, connected. Island residents adapt to the pace and rhythm of their Islands. They are resourceful, using the limited resources they have to respond to meeting their needs. Innovation and community are necessary for survival. These factors make islands an excellent location for an Innovation Lab.

Islands play a very important role in global sustainability. 2014 was the United Nations (UN) year of Small Island Developing States. In March 2014 the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon wrote

*While small in total, the land size of these island nations does not reflect their importance as stewards of nature’s wealth on land and sea. They are custodians of 30 per cent of the 50 largest exclusive economic zones and play an important role in protecting the oceans.*
In fact, this group of nations makes a contribution to global biodiversity that is out of proportion to their land area. Many are biodiversity “hot spots”, containing some of the richest reservoirs of plants and animals on the planet. They are home to many endemic species -- meaning that they are found nowhere else on Earth.

Yet, despite their wealth of culture, tradition and many of nature’s resources, Small Island Developing States face a range of challenges. For a significant number, their remoteness affects their ability to be part of the global supply chain, increases import costs – especially for energy – and limits their competitiveness in the tourist industry.

And many are extremely vulnerable to the immediate effects of climate change – from the devastating impact of hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones to the threat of sea level rise.

His statement mirrors the observations of the Island Innovation Lab co-founders. That we can learn from visiting islands, sharing experiences and iterating approaches.

Above all, islands are contained environments where impacts of problems or issues are often magnified and can be readily identified and addressed. They are a perfect place to innovate solutions and test ideas in isolation. They are also some of the parts of the planet most affected by impacts of climate change. They are the perfect context for the type of experience the innovation lab cofounders wanted to offer, a metaphor for the entire planet at a manageable size.

DESIGN THINKING FOR PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND SOLUTION FINDING

What are Wicked Problems and how do we navigate Sticky Solutions?

Most sustainability problems are complex. They can be described as ‘Wicked Problems’, complex problems with multiple interdependent factors that need to be considered in their resolution (Rittel, H. 1972). As a result of this complexity and interdependency, they often have solutions that are ‘sticky’, where any solution creates further issues that need to be considered. To explore these ‘sticky’ problems a whole systems (as opposed to linear) problem solving approach is considered best practice. Design Thinking is a whole systems model that has been adopted for the Island Innovation Lab.

Design Thinking as a model for complex problem solving and a framework for the Island Innovation Lab

Design Thinking is an iterative, human centred, whole systems problem solving process being used globally to address complex problems with great success. In it’s simplest form, as described by the British Design council in 2005, it uses divergent and convergent thinking to discover, define, develop and deliver solutions via tools such as ethnography, observation, visualization, storytelling, prototyping, mapping and service design methods in order to gain deep insights into causes of
problems and then develop relevant solutions to them. More complex approaches have arisen through Stanford’s d.school and various practitioner approaches. Liedtka, J, Ogilvie, T and Brozenske, R (2014) outline many of these useful approaches and tools in their book *The Designing for Growth Field Book: A step by step Project Guide.*

Island Innovation lab participants are introduced to various design thinking models and methods in order to assemble a mix that bests suits the opportunities / problems they find. The format of the lab experience follows the simpler British Council Model as illustrated in Figure 1 with the addition of a reflection / learning stage. This was added to encourage in participants reflective practice. The first row outlines the British Council design thinking process. The second the corresponding assessment tasks and the third the participant experience components of the lab.

**Why focus on cross disciplinary collaboration for innovation and sustainability?**

As discussed earlier, sustainability challenges are complex ‘wicked’ problems with equally complex ‘sticky’ solutions. Each is a unique and intricate combination of Social, Environmental, Economic, Political and Cultural factors. They can manifest themselves in myriad ways and require diverse teams to develop innovative solutions. These teams need to include members with different disciplinary and contextual perspectives and an understanding of local culture, environment and politics to co-design long term, sustainability solutions. With the Island Innovation Lab looking at innovating solutions to complex sustainability problems, collaborative, cross disciplinary teams make sense. Collaborative skills could be developed within participants during the Lab. The challenge for Lab organisers was to attract a cohort with members from a variety of disciplines.

**SELECTING ISLAND INNOVATION LAB PARTICIPANTS JANUARY 2014**

**Encouraging and embracing diversity**

To ensure a cross disciplinary collaboration experience for the first Island Innovation Lab the organisers needed to attract participants from a diverse range of cultural, disciplinary and experience backgrounds. A strategy was formed to attract students from a variety of study areas, stages of study, ethnicity and cultures through writing to the associate dean learning and teaching of each faculty at UNSW as well as various student organisations, informing them of the elective course and requesting they pass the information onto their students and members. 20 students responded from Arts, Fine Arts, Law, Architecture, Commerce, Business, Social Science, Design, Engineering, Aviation, Design, Media, Photography, Theatre, Sustainable Development, Environmental Management, Science, Information Systems, Indigenous Studies, Cross Disciplinary Art and Design and Arts Administration. Students also came from many different locations, Sydney, Perth, remote rural South Australia, Korea, Taiwan and China. For two of these students, this course would be their first experience in a face to face teaching scenario as they were completing their courses on line.
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING / SOCIAL LEARNING APPROACH.

Developing a supportive culture for collaboration.

With a diverse range of participants, used to different learning modes and cultures, most not knowing any of the other participants, it was important to develop a community of learning prior to meeting in Vanuatu. A course website, publishing participant profiles was developed so participants could familiarise themselves before they came. Participant profiles included a photo and a description of why they wanted to be part of the lab and what they felt they could contribute to the lab. Each student was also given a blog page on the website to document their lab experiences and reflect on their learning. This website became a platform for sharing backgrounds, ideas, projects and reflection on the Lab. Social media was also used. A Facebook group was formed for sharing ideas and holding discussions. A Twitter profile (@thevpf), hash tag (#islandinnovationlab) and an Instagram tag (#islandinnovationlab) were a good way of keeping track of the participant experiences and for them to become engaged before the lab and keep connected through and beyond the lab experience.

Bandura (1971) discusses the benefits of learning from direct experience and methods for reinforcing this. He classes this as a social learning approach. Social learning in the Island Innovation Lab was reinforced though a number of activities. At the end of each day participants were involved in reflection sessions in order to develop a culture of continuous, constructive, collaborative feedback within the cohort. This also developed capacity and confidence in sharing learning experiences with peers. Formal presentations by participants allowed them to show a variety of opportunities for collaboration with peers. The result was students gaining a good understanding of each other’s perspectives, skills and knowledge in order to form constructive and complete collaborations in project teams. These also assisted the less social students to get to know the other students and gain confidence in communicating within the cohort. The end result was a cohort wide culture of collaboration and sharing that has extended well beyond the completion of the course.

Island Innovation Lab as a Platform

Platforms are useful constructs to support both collaboration and innovation. Satish Nambisan (2009) discusses three platforms organisations can use to support collaboration for innovation. These are;

- exploration platforms for defining what a problem is
- experimentation platforms to test possible solutions, and
- execution platforms to disseminate solutions.

Figure 2 illustrates how these platforms have all been used in the Island Innovation Lab and are supported by a program as detailed in the next section of this paper.
ISLAND INNOVATION LAB AS A PROGRAM 2014

The Island Innovation Lab program is designed to assist participants in understanding the lab context and to gain knowledge and skills in order for them to become part of a participatory and active community of learning. Its structure can be divided into three sequential groupings of activities, Pre-Lab, In-Lab and Post-Lab as illustrated in Figure 3.

Pre-Lab Activities

With the challenge of engaging students from different backgrounds, learning and teaching styles, pre-lab activities were designed to give context to the Island Innovation Lab experience and ensure participants arrived prepared with a common body of knowledge as well as a position of expertise. Utilising flipped classroom techniques Brame, C.J (2013), and providing an opportunity for lab participants to gain exposure to key topics before the lab, a set of common resources was developed for the lab participants as a background to the lab and the themes participants would be exploring.

Readings from a broad range of sources and a diverse range of topics covering collaboration, innovation, sustainability, Vanuatu’s culture, history, economy and environment and design thinking, not only provided context, but also gave students a background to form their own report. It was important to establish a base set of information that they all shared in common. Provided via the www.islandinnovationlab.com website, these resources have a living resource library that can be updated each delivery as new resources come to light. Students were required to read these as a minimum and encouraged to share any additional, relevant, resources they found with their peers. This exercise produced an additional 12 resources that have been added to the library. Promoting sharing of the resources contributed to developing a culture of collaborative learning.

The report is the first assessment task for the Island Innovation lab and will be discussed in detail under the assessment section of this paper. The goal of this activity was to develop capacity though knowledge acquisition, facilitate collaboration though positioning students as content experts and to help students learn how to deliver and receive constructive feedback. Island Innovation Lab Common Resources

In-Lab Activities

The January 2014 Island Innovation Lab in Lab activities ran over 5 days. Each day began with a briefing session incorporating relevant theory, background, contextual information and a-run down of the day’s activities. It ended with a debriefing session where participants could share and discuss things they had learnt, observed, or wanted to question. The experience was designed to ensure participants, whilst dealing with the uncertainty of what their projects may be, had structure and certainty in their activities each day. The briefing, de-briefing and feedback sessions were very important in the development of a community of learning. See Figure 4.
Day 1.

In-Lab activities started with an introductory briefing on the course, its aims and goals and the concept of design thinking as a framework for the lab. Participant creativity levels were measured by Dr Kirsch. Guilford, J.P (1967) Alternative Uses Task and Torrence E.P (1968) Incomplete figures test were used. Students would be measured at the end of the 5 day lab to see if their creativity levels had increased.

Following these formal activities the participants were taken on a series of cultural immersion activities with visits to local produce and craft markets, Port Vila Library, The Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the Port Vila town retail precinct. In the afternoon students presented their first assessment task, a pre-Lab preparation research project which helped to introduce them and their skills, knowledge and interests to their peers. This was an opportunity for discussion and constructive critique between participants and concluded in a debrief of the day and a traditional Melanesian feast for some more cultural immersion to learn about traditional food, dance, music and cultural practices.

Day 2.

In-Lab activities opened with a briefing on a full day tour of Efate Island. This tour was to help participants to understand some of the natural features of the Island, visit the potential site for Island Innovation Lab & Vanuatu Pacifica Foundation, visit the ruins of some failed hotel developments, waterfalls, forests, local villages, WW2 sites and a blue lagoon.

This full day of geographical, historical and cultural immersion delivered intense common experiences for the cohort. During the daily debrief consistent themes began to emerge and some teams were starting to form around these. After dinner an extra reflection and feedback session was held at 7pm to finish off the presentations that had not been given the day before and continue some discussions from the debrief. This formally finished at 8pm. Students chose to continue discussions well past 11 pm debating different disciplinary responses to observations and themes from the day.

Day 3.

In-Lab activities started with a Co-Design session to identify key themes for projects and activities emerging from experiences of the first 2 days. These were used to identify activities relevant to different emerging topics / possible projects that could be pursued over days 3 and 4.

Some participants began shifting into leadership roles, arranging visits to botanic gardens, theatre groups, villages, radio stations, waste facilities, markets, farms, schools, music stores, museums, not for profits, organising a traditional weaving class and a visit from a social enterprise that provides solar powered lights to local families.

At 6pm, before a group dinner, teams were asked to pitch their project ideas. Peer and instructor feedback on pitches were followed by an evening debriefing session. Peer review of pitches
allowed students to contribute to discussions on all potential projects and decide what teams they would be involved with. Nearly all students were interested in contributing to multiple projects. Leaders / Champions emerged for each project and started co-designing specific activities over the remaining In-Lab days with their peers to inform their project development.

Day 4.

In-Lab activities started with a morning briefing. This one differed from the others as each team briefed the cohort on what their activities would be relative to their emerging projects. They included visits to a Church service, the produce markets, Port Vila library, local villages, a traditional drum and music shop, museum, theatre company, arts centre, art galleries, a kayak exploration of an estuary, helicopter flight over VPF site, tour of sports stadium and other unused buildings, snorkelling on the reef, a VPF site visit and an evening visit to a local music venue. The goal was to give teams flexibility to determine their own activities to support their project development. The projects were developing quickly now as well as a strong community of learning supporting collaboration between teams and individuals who were sharing each other’s individual teams experiences and offering their perspectives freely. Students were informally extending the formal debriefing sessions late into the night.

Day 5

In-Lab day 5 started with a briefing session followed by a visit Parliament house to meet with Deputy Prime Minister Ralph Regenvanu for a Q & A session and a tour of parliamentary facilities. Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister allowed students to ask questions about what they have observed over the preceding days, and to get feedback from a key decision & policy maker with regards to their projects. Students received great feedback and offers of project support from this process. After the visit to Parliament House students teams chose to participate in various activities which would support their projects. These included a visits to a waste facility, a wind farm, a coffee plantation, a market garden farm, VPF site, various not for profits (solar lighting, foreign aid, education, medical). There was also a visit to Digicel headquarters, the supplier of a technologically advanced satellite based mobile phone and internet services across all the islands of Vanuatu.

At the end of the day, in the final student debriefing, creativity levels were measured a second time to determine if the Island Innovation lab experience had increased student creativity. Although the sample size of this evaluation is too small to be definitive, the tests showed all student creativity levels had increased substantially.

Whilst day 5 debriefing was the last formal In-Lab activity, students carried on their discussions well into the night and as many of them were staying on at least 1 – 3 more days they continued to instigate and engage with self initiated Lab related activities over that time.
Post Lab

Island Innovation Lab participants were given 4 weeks, after the last day of the In-Lab experience, to formalise a problem or opportunity they identified into a project then develop a team and approach to address it. Results would be presented at a public forum. Students self organised into a number of cross disciplinary collaborative teams. No limit was placed on the number of teams students could be involved in. Consequently a number of students worked across multiple teams.

Individuals were asked to continue to work on updating their Island Innovation Lab online blogs and reflections (assessment task 3) and to seek feedback from the broader lab community through publishing details of their projects, as they were developing, on the website and Facebook group. Formal feedback was given to students for all tasks during this period to assist with refining their personal perspectives and their team projects. Opportunities for other feedback came through a peer review processes via meetings, the website and a Facebook working group page the students created to facilitate working on projects across locations in Sydney, Japan, Perth, Adelaide, China and Taiwan. Student feedback indicated they felt very supported and encouraged by the mix of peer, community & facilitator feedback.

A formal presentation session of the projects outcomes (task 2) was held in Sydney exactly 1 month after the end of In Lab component of the Island Innovation Lab. The participants opted to invite possible future participants, project partners, interested public, friends and family to join the final presentations and sought external feedback from them. They felt they benefited from feedback via formal assessment, peer review and public scrutiny with the variety of inputs giving more rigour to their process and multiple sources of validation for their projects. All the projects that were presented have since been adopted by students to develop further, post course.

POST COURSE

At the time of writing this paper (6 months past the end of the course) all the projects that were started in the lab have been developed further. The community of learning is still strong with students meeting regularly and keeping contact via Facebook. Some of them are pursuing their projects personally as social enterprises, some in teams via ENACTUS UNSW, through other courses such as SDES6790 Nexus, Collaboration, Creation and in their honours and final year research projects. The incoming July 2014 Island Innovation Lab cohort were briefed by the alumni of the first Island Innovation Lab on existing projects that could be continued in the second delivery. Some of the alumni joined the new cohort in Vanuatu for the second delivery as project mentors and leads.

ISLAND INNOVATION LAB ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

When designing the Island Innovation Lab assessment tasks care was taken to closely align outcomes to both developing the desired graduate attributes of the participants and the outcomes of the course. Innovation often occurs at the nexus between disciplines. Graduates are increasingly
required to have skills for working collaboratively within cross disciplinary teams to deliver innovative solutions to a variety of challenges, opportunities and problems. The three assessment tasks give students the opportunity to position themselves as a content expert, collaborate with peers to find an opportunity and then develop a team project to address it.

**Task 1. Individual Preparatory Report.**

Task 1 is completed before leaving for the lab and presented on the first day of the lab. Students are asked to research local, regional and global sustainability issues that interest them and discuss how their disciplinary skills and knowledge could be used to solve them. Students are given a comprehensive reading list to get them started on this task and the opportunity to bring in their own perspectives. Completing this task, students become prepared for being active and knowledgeable participants in the Island Innovation lab, better understand the key sustainability issues and the role they, and their peers could play in addressing them. Peer presentation and review component allow for knowledge sharing and participants to get to know each other and the knowledge and skills individuals bring with them. Rice J (2011) writes on the importance of creating and sharing knowledge to drive collaboration for innovation.

*Within organisations, innovation is intrinsically related to the effective creation, management and diffusion of knowledge. As industrial knowledge has become more complex across industries, firms have been driven to collaborative mechanisms to share the challenges and risks associated with knowledge development and diffusion.*

**Task 2 – Team Collaborative Project**

The second assessment task is broken into two stages. In stage one students are asked to use feedback from task 1, their in lab experiences & the connections they have made during the in lab experience to identify a project or projects to collaborate on. In stage 2 participants form teams and work solutions to the opportunities identified in task 1. The outcomes are presented in an open forum.

**Task 3 – Individual Reflection Task**

Evelyn M. Boyd and Ann W. Fales (1983) suggest that 

*reflective learning is the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective. ... and that ... this process is central to understanding the experiential learning process.*

As much of the Island Innovation Lab model is based on experiential learning, it was considered appropriate to include two reflective tasks in the assessment strategy. The first an online blog or online journal where students could document their lab experience and reflect on how it is changing...
their practice and / or perspectives. The second a written reflection on their collaboration experience and their lab learning experience.

**ISLAND INNOVATION LAB STUDENT FEEDBACK STRATEGY**

Providing timely, relevant and diverse forms of feedback for students of the lab was a priority. Set assessment tasks provided opportunities for students to receive feedback, in a continuous flow, from multiple sources. Traditional formal summative feedback from the course facilitator, which students expect, was delivered verbally, via a rubric structure and in writing. This was supplemented by formative feedback from peers, instructors and lab collaborators via daily briefing and debriefing sessions and was valuable in creating a culture of continuous, collaborative and constructive feedback. It resulted in accelerated project development assisted by the continuous refining of ideas through multiple sources and perspectives of feedback. In particular formative feedback from Vanuatu Deputy Prime Minister Ralph Regen-Vanu gave students validation and confidence in their projects they could not have received from anywhere else. This also assisted in refining the projects to be more realistic in their aims and practical in their application.

Formative feedback from the www.islandinnovationlab.com community on projects, ideas and blog entries also assisted in refining project outcomes and boosting student ability to think critically and give constructive feedback. Peer review was vital in establishing a positive feedback culture and open ideas exchange for collaboration and innovation between students from various disciplines and stages of education. All of the projects are still being worked on by the students, well past the end of the Lab. They are keen to have them adopted by future Lab participants and to act as champions and mentors for the projects via attending future labs. There is a great opportunity for another layer of feedback from this scenario that the author would like the opportunity to test.

**ISLAND INNOVATION LAB PROJECTS**

Projects that came out of the first lab include:

- A Fair Trade Social Enterprise establishing and supporting women to engage with traditional skills allowing them to produce woven goods in situ in their communities supplementing family income and facilitating micro entrepreneurship. An ethical fashion online retail venture www.sundaytracker.com
- A partnership social enterprise with Port Vila library to supply the library with much needed, relevant books via an experience exchange program with tourists. This project was carried over to the second lab and the ENACTUS UNSW students are now working on delivering it.
- A Living Building Challenge project brief in response to planning and developing an Island Innovation Lab residency facility in Port Vila. This is providing the backbone of the brief for the development of the VPF site.
• Emergency response planning education kits for climate change induced extreme weather scenarios. This project has been carried over to the second lab and is being delivered by ENACTUS UNSW.

• Mosquito borne disease non language specific visual education tools. Now collaborating with UNSW Museum of Human Disease and prototyping www.youtube.com/watch?v=60mzHQy1dAg

• Project to record traditional instruments and music practice and develop interactive tools to allow musicians globally to learn about, play and adopt these sounds. Carried over to second lab and under production.

• Abandoned spaces creative pop ups program to utilise the many abandoned buildings in Port Vila for art, design, theatre and music. Collaborating with local arts groups in Port Vila.

Sharing outcomes develops capacity

Ezio Manzini, when developing the DESIS project, advocated value in project outcomes being shared for greater learning impact and knowledge sharing. The Island Innovation Lab outcomes and solutions are shared via exhibition, public presentation and the website in order to build an ongoing body of knowledge and tools for cross disciplinary collaborative practice. Lab Participants keep blogs of their experiences and publish these on the www.islandinnovationlab.com website. They also publish their individual research reports here.

Small Islands amplify broader sustainability issues making them perfect living laboratories and testing grounds for innovating solutions using iterative, whole systems, design thinking methods. By working with local communities, in real time, on location we can co-design relevant, community led approaches informed by them and cross disciplinary teams of practitioners and students providing opportunities for local, regional and global learning.

Island Innovation Lab, through developing local capacity for focused design thinking based cross-disciplinary collaboration allows for different disciplinary input into any issue identification and solution finding activities. This human centred approach facilitates a deep understanding of both social and cultural elements of sustainability challenges and looks past business as usual economics into social economies and custom cultural hierarchies which can deliver long term, sustainable and relevant positive outcomes through appropriate levels of technology (soft, low, high) to social, ecological, and economic issues. Challenging disciplinary assumptions changes the way we perceive and do things and can deliver game changing innovative approaches to long-term ingrained problems. We provide opportunities that change perspectives.

ISLAND INNOVATION LAB FUTURE PLANS

The Island Innovation Lab has a long-term goal of developing a global network of effective collaborators who can draw together cross-disciplinary teams and apply whole systems thinking approaches to solving local, regional and global sustainability challenges. Alumni of the lab will be
able to introduce this way of working into the various organisations they work for and engage with. This will lead to an active community of collaborators and collaborations. We hope this will start a movement towards more collaborative and innovative approaches to sustainability issues from both an anticipatory and a remedial perspective. Our global community of cross-disciplinary collaborators, as a network, will share and promote local projects and solutions through documenting successful case studies on our platform.

The result should be a scalable capacity building model that can be adapted and used in a variety of different contexts globally with a broad support network. This is currently being trialed on a community based arts / sustainability project via www.onislandseramboo.com.

Ultimately, beside the local labs, we aim to develop a residency program that gives recipients space and time to develop individual deeper thinking and practice around sustainability. The outcomes would be promoted and shared across the Island Innovation lab community and anyone else who is interested.
References


Figure 1. Island Innovation Lab model based on British Council Double Diamond model for Design Thinking

- pre lab preparation task
- pre lab readings
- action learning / experiential lab field trips

Figure 2. Island Innovation Platforms after Nambisian (2009)

- design thinking as an iterative approach to problem solving
- peer and expert feedback for iteration of ideas

- publication of projects on www.islandinnovationlab.com
- public project presentations post lab experience
- public exhibition of works
Figure 3. Island Innovation Lab Program structure

- Pre - Lab
  - pre lab preparation report (knowledge and context)
  - pre lab readings (knowledge and context)
  - pre lab introduction (community building)

- In - Lab
  - design thinking tools & theory (skills)
  - teamwork & collaboration tools and theory (skills)
  - formal activities (context, knowledge & experiences)
  - informal activities & experiences (context)
  - continuous constructive feedback (community of learning)

- Post - Lab
  - publication of projects on www.islandinnovationlab.com
  - public project presentations
  - exhibition or performance of project outcomes
  - other forms of publication

Figure 4. Island Innovation Lab in Lab experience