Public Engagement Issue Area Networks

Design Thinking Session | Workshop 1
December 13, 2013
(REPORT EXCERPTS)

OFFICE FOR
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Design Thinking
@ COLLEGE OF DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
INTRODUCTION
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University of Minnesota Office of Public Engagement Issue Area Networks (IANs)

The University of Minnesota Public Engagement Issue Area Networks is a University-wide initiative designed to strengthen the internal alignment of the various public engagement activities focused on a particular societal issue, but which are currently operating independently across various offices, units, and departments.

With more than 200 units that conduct community-engaged work across a broad range of topics, there are many opportunities for the University to play a greater leadership role in making substantial and significant impacts on important societal issues. Because societal issues are inherently complex and multifaceted, no one office, unit, or center alone can address them fully.

This Issue Area Networks initiative is intended to link and encourage synergy among existing engagement projects, partnerships, and activities in ways that can leverage greater collective action and overall impact. A primary goal of this initiative is to encourage the building of a more coordinated, systems approach to public and community engagement by networking existing community-engaged research, teaching, and public service efforts that are focused on large-scoped societal challenges and issues.

The Issue Area Networks are focused on key societal issues including: arts, economic development, youth & education, health, poverty, environment & sustainability, transportation, food, and diversity & inclusion. Any individual (or unit) affiliated with the University who is involved in community-engaged research, teaching, and/or public service/outreach work on the issue area is welcome to participate in the networks.

Design Thinking

Design Thinking is an emerging field applying the tools and processes from the design disciplines to complex, system-wide problems. It applies design processes to engage individuals and groups on specific creative problem solving, and changing the status quo by making systems change while having fun with human creativity!

Design Thinking @ College of Design is a collaborative that provides design thinking research and outreach services across sectors, including within the university. Our audacious goal is to unleash the creative potential of individuals and organizations across all sectors to innovate in fulfilling their mission at the local, regional, national and international level. We are located at University of Minnesota's College of Design on the Twin Cities campus and can be found online at: dt.design.umn.edu.
INTRODUCTION

Public Engagement Issue Area Networks Design Thinking Series

The goal of the design thinking workshops is to continue to build the Issues Area Networks, as a next step to the meetings hosted by the Office for Public Engagement on the issue-focused themes with community-engaged faculty, staff, students, and others who are interested in taking action in shaping and advancing a University-wide agenda for each issue area.

The design thinking workshops offer a process/means and a space for creative synthesis and production by each IAN themed group to set goals based on needs and users and create their vision and work plan. The outcomes of the design thinking work over the three sessions are intended to accomplish goals of the initiative by networking existing research, teaching and public service efforts, setting the agenda for collective action and creating a design for assessing cumulative overall impact over the various individual engagement efforts.

The Public Engagement Issue Area Networks Design Thinking Series is composed of three sessions, which together, are intended to advance the building of a more aligned institutional approach to addressing challenging societal issues through community engagement.

The first session (December, 2013) focuses on “network building”. This session will engage participants in envisioning and designing what an internal public engagement “network” for each of the nine societal issue area might look like. The expectation is that each issue area network will be unique and look different.

The second session (February, 2014) focuses on “agenda building”. With the network conceptualized, what are the key issues, questions, and goals that each issue area network will address. The agenda for each area network will form the basis for funding support that will lead to the implementation of activities that will help the network achieve its identified goals and secure the network’s strength as an internally aligned collaborative composed of many units but all contributing to and working toward a common set of overarching goals.

The third session (April 2014) focuses on “action planning and implementation”. With the network conceptualized and the designs for each network’s goals designed, the third design thinking session address focuses on building a design for the community engagement activities, the internal alignment efforts, and other activities that will form the basis for action to move the agendas forward in ways that will achieve the network goals identified in session two. The action planning and implementation work will identify specific steps that each network will take to move the network’s work forward. These action plans will be eligible for funding support.
INTRODUCTION

Issue Area Networks (IANs)

ART
DIVERSITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENT
FOOD
HEALTH
POVERTY
TRANSPORTATION
YOUTH & EDUCATION

Office for Public Engagement Issue Area Networks (OPE IANs)

DESIGN
DECEMBER 13
WORKSHOP 1
NETWORK BUILDING

DEVELOP
FEBRUARY 19
WORKSHOP 2
AGENDA BUILDING
RFP (Request for Proposal)

BUILD/IMPLEMENT/MEASURE
APRIL 25
WORKSHOP 3
IMPLEMENTATION

MAY
RFP Results Announced

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PROTOTYPE PRESENTATIONS
TEAM 5 - POVERTY

PROTOTYPE 1 - B of Bureaucracy

Team members: Sharon Fischlowitz, Katie Peacock, Amanda Furst, Thomas Hart, Marilyn Bruin, Megan Gunnar, Dick Senese, Salma Hussein, & Jarrett Gupton

This prototype demonstrates an existing system where a central institutional administration is not connected to other systems that are doing fascinating work on issues of poverty. This disconnection is due to the difficult policies and procedures, different attitudes and dispositions of people which creates barriers between communities, and institutions. This makes working with the issue of poverty difficult because there is no coherency or consistency. In this system, you are left to deal with the problems without being able to see through the barriers, the richness of the community, or the potential strategies and solutions that are there.

Design Features
- Red Tape represents obstacles, disconnected system
- Pow wows static
- Barriers, walls, silos
TEAM 5 - POVERTY

Team members: Sharon Fischlowitz, Katie Peacock, Amanda Furst, Thomas Hart, Marilyn Bruin, Megan Gunnar, Dick Senese, Salma Hussein, & Jarrett Gupton

This prototype envisions a natural living systems cake working around the issues of poverty with focus on boosting healthy lifestyle in economically repressed communities. It also reaches the richness and depth of the community. The future network is seen working in green light ethos that eliminates barriers to solutions of poverty. Here, people will be working as advocates to make sure that individuals in extreme poverty doesn’t spend time waiting for solutions.

(For additional material generated by the team, see Appendix page 00-00)

Design Features
- Non-static
- Operating in cohesive system
- Fruit represents natural systems (impermanence)
- Green Tape represents connectivity v. red tape obstacles
- Wheel/ circle/orb — porous area of ‘work’ v. inside a box
Next we're onto poverty

Fuzzy nodes covered in red tape
From policies, attitudes, and procedures grew barriers
Then all you're really left with is dealing with the problems

Natural living systems - we have more dimension in our model
Connected to richness and depth in community
And the time spent waiting is replaced by advocacy with speed
Through which dynamism and fluidity abounds.

-Jennifer Hegland
TEAM 5: POVERTY

TEAM NO: 5-POVERTY

PROTOTYPE 1

CREATIVE TITLE: Bureaucracy

1-2 SENTENCE DESCRIPTION:

DESIGN FEATURES:
- Red tape
- Paper: static, small

TEAM NO: 8-DIVERSITY

PROTOTYPE 2

CREATIVE TITLE: Equity Diversity is Superior Growth

1-2 SENTENCE DESCRIPTION:
- Pockets of activity are interconnected, reciprocal relationships, rooted in community relationships, knowledge where different ways of knowing are valued.

DESIGN FEATURES:
- Everything is interwoven
- Possibility mostly uncomfortable
- Failure is O.K.
- "Roots" should connect to another issue area
TEAM 5: POVERTY FEEDBACK

I LIKE
- Your representation of the issue
- Your understanding of the way this issue is dealt with
- Red tape going in different directions
- Realistic representation of poverty: Waiting and Scattered
- The recognition of the “fuzziness” of connections and no coherence
- Time matters

I WISH
- We could work together for common goals
- We could provide rewards/funds/connections to people in poverty without using a weakness frame

WHAT IF
- We could get the depth out of our work?
- More of us became advocates for justice + opportunity
- People recognized all issues can fall within poverty issues
- The current systems were effectively disrupted/reframed
- Time is money — resource of the poor!

THIS MAKES ME THINK OF
- Conversation among entities doing the same work
- Empathy, systems failure
- The real/hard work that needs to be done
- How systems can be healthy/living systems
- How does this play out over time — reduce poverty — reduce resource to solve the problem?
- Dr. Who — more beneath the surface than meets the eye!

- The lovely green fruit filled life was easy to make happen
- Barriers identified would be eliminated
- I knew more about issues of poverty — “Waiting is part of poverty”