

# Social Innovation and Collaboration. Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders with Power, Purpose, Passion and Presence

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**Abstract:** This chapter explores the link between social innovation and collaboration among change agents and stakeholders. Social innovation is a field on the rise, both practically and theoretically (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014), and involves new ideas for tackling unmet social needs and solving current social problems (Mulgan et al., 2007). Even though social innovation has great potential, confronting uncertainties, risks and resistance are inevitable when engaging in this type of endeavor. Consequently, it may be challenging to mobilize key stakeholders to commit to and engage in relevant actions and collaborative processes (Marcy, 2015). The problem that will be addressed in this chapter concerns how to identify, target and mobilize key stakeholders to collaborate in social innovation initiatives. It is viewed from the vantage point of those initiating and leading social innovation efforts and aims to point out some factors that must be overcome and others that may foster constructive collaborative processes among change agents and stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *Samhandling*, stakeholder, innovation, social interaction, collaboration, leadership, uncertainty, organizational learning, unforeseen.

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## Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the link between social innovation and collaboration among change makers and stakeholders. Social innovation is a field on the rise, both practically and theoretically (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014), and involves new ideas for tackling unmet social needs or solving current social problems (Mulgan, Tucker, Rushanara, & Sanders, 2007). Even if social innovation has great potential, confronting uncertainties, risk and resistance are inevitable when engaging in this type of endeavor. Consequently, it may be challenging to mobilize key stakeholders to commit to and engage in relevant actions and collaborative processes (Marcy, 2015). The problem addressed in this chapter concerns how to identify, target and mobilize key stakeholders to collaborate constructively in social innovation initiatives. It is viewed from the vantage point of those initiating and leading social innovation efforts, and aims to point out some factors that must be overcome and others that may foster constructive collaborative processes among change makers and stakeholders.

## Social innovations involve collaboration

Social innovation is a research field on the rise (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014:42), with the potential to resolve pressing social, economic and environmental challenges (Windrum, Schartinger, Rubalcaba, Gallouj, & Toivonen, 2016). Social innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas to meet previously unmet social needs or solve current social problems (Mulgan et al., 2007). The European Commission (2010, 2013) perceives social innovation as a way to address societal problems like unemployment, poverty, demographic shifts and climate change with innovative solutions of social inclusion and empowerment (Lindberg, Forsberg & Karlberg, 2016). As such, these innovations are social, in terms of both ends (coming up with innovative solutions to social problems) and means (developing innovative solutions in a social way).

Some specific examples of social innovations are the development of online education, neighborhood renewal programs, and efforts to enable elderly people to stay longer in their homes (Sørensen & Torfing, 2014:3). Lindberg et al., (2016) studied how women's networks may contribute

to social innovation. Drake, Ballangrund, Svenkerud & Ulvestad (2017) employ action research to mobilize more women professors at a Norwegian higher education institution, contributing to the promotion of social innovation in academia (see also Ulvestad, 2017).

While social innovation as a way to resolve current social inequalities and unmet needs of groups of individuals appears promising, there are certainly challenges and obstacles that may interfere with and decrease the likelihood of such processes and outcomes. One particular challenge relates to the fact that most social problems and solutions involve multiple stakeholders and a network of people. While change makers and change agents initiate and drive innovation processes (McCalman, Paton, & Siebert, 2016), they depend on other people to contribute, engage and collaborate in various roles and processes along the way (Cels, de Jong & Nauta, 2012). Successful social innovation requires stakeholder acceptance and collaboration, state Herrera (2015).

What, then, is collaboration? Some definitions are comprehensive and describe all the components that are ideally involved in collaborative processes. For example, Torgersen & Steiro (2009:130) define *samhandling* [collaboration] as an “open, equal communication and developmental process that occurs between participants with compatible competencies and who exchange competence, directly face-to-face, mediated via technology, or by hand, work towards common goals, and where the relationship between the participants is built on trust, engagement, rationality and sectorial knowledge”. At the other end of the spectrum are definitions that view collaboration as occurring as soon as there is an action and a response to that action. For example, Wadel (2012) leans on Asplund (1987) when stating that interaction occurs when a person responds to what another person does. Behaviors and outcomes are ‘produced’ as sequences of acts interact with each other. This thinking is in line with Schein (2016), who claims that leaders can never *not* communicate, for even the lack of response is a response. As such, interaction is evident when more than one person is present in any situation and someone takes an initiative to communicate and/or engage with someone else in a conversation or other actions. In contrast, the term *samhandling* implies a more cooperative and socially constructive mindset, approach and relationship between actors

(Gergen, 2015). In the social innovation literature, the terms ‘engagement’ and ‘co-creation’ are used alongside collaboration to denote constructive collaboration between change makers and stakeholders.

If social innovations are viewed as a value chain, where change agents with ideas to address and improve a specific social problem represent the start (Young, 2011), there may be numerous stakeholders involved along the way towards implementation. Stakeholders are anyone who in some way has a stake in the success of the social innovation (Cels et al., 2012:13). Razali & Anwar (2011) emphasize that stakeholders can be positive or negative *influencers* and define stakeholders as “all those who have a stake in the change being considered – those who stand to gain from it and those who stand to lose (Macaulay, 1993)”. These *influencers* can be external and internal authority persons, decision makers, employees, professional colleagues and clients, those who control material and immaterial resources, critical information and the like. Clearly, from the point of view of change makers, it will be advantageous to have proactive and collaborative relationships with ones’ stakeholders (Sørensen & Torfing, 2014:4).

A first step, then, is to identify and discover key stakeholders. Empirical research has found that identifying and discovering stakeholders represents a core problem for practitioners (Alexander & Robertson, 2004). This is not surprising, as other research has found more than 100 stakeholder categories in use (Fassin, 2009). Stakeholders are typically identified via broad roles, such as distributors, suppliers, customers, owners and so forth (Freeman, 1984). Researchers have pointed out, however, that this is an insufficient approach (Fiedler & Kirchgeorg, 2007; Wolfe & Putler, 2002). The argument is that people do not behave as representatives of broad group categories, but as individuals with unique preferences, interests, perspectives and needs. Consequently, McVea and Freeman (2005:57) suggest that stakeholders should be treated as “individuals with names, faces and families”. How this is to be done, is however not explained or elaborated on in the article, and has only to a limited degree been addressed in other contributions (Drake, 2014).

Social innovations offer meaning and purpose to those who are personally or professionally engaged in the problem at hand. However, they are also risky, uncertain and likely to evoke resistance and even hostility

among others. How to overcome such obstacles and engage key stakeholders in constructive collaborative processes, including those who might otherwise be motivated to refrain from engagement or actively resist progress, is a key question. This is particularly so in light of the recent trend of “innovating the innovation process” (Darsø, 2012), where stakeholders are being involved and engaged at a much earlier stage in the innovation process than previously. Frow, Nenonen, Payne & Storbacka (2015:3), for example, state that the role of customers has evolved from ‘passive audiences’ to ‘active players’. From this perspective, identifying, onboarding and engaging key stakeholders, may represent both an opportunity as well as a challenge.

## The problem

On this background, the problem that will be addressed in this chapter concerns how to identify and attract key stakeholders to engage in collaborative processes in any given social innovation initiative. It is viewed from the vantage point of those initiating, coordinating and leading social innovation efforts, who will be referred to as change makers or change agents. The literature reviewed ranges from contributions around social innovations, stakeholder identification, engagement and collaboration.

The chapter has the following structure: First, I describe in more detail why social innovation may be perceived as both risky, uncertain and unjust from a stakeholder perspective. Next, I explicate why targeting and attracting the right stakeholders are so important for constructive, collaborative processes. I propose that attracting stakeholders with *power*, *purpose*, *passion* and *presence* may provide change makers with a broad scope of influencers who may move the innovation process forward in a socially responsible way.

Viewing social innovation from a process ontology (Hernes, Hendrup & Schöffner, 2015), may add further meaning to such ambitions. It gives rise to actions and relationship building between change makers and potential or current stakeholders, not only with short-term outcomes in mind, but over the long haul as well. These ideas are briefly mentioned in the last section of the chapter.

## What is risky about engaging in social innovation?

Since the premise of this book is to explore conditions for effective collaboration under situations of uncertainty and risk, it may be fruitful to be more explicit about what kinds of risks and uncertainties that may impose challenges in terms of attracting stakeholders to social innovation efforts.

Firstly, all innovation processes are of their very nature uncertain, as they involve creating something new (Cels et al., 2012). This ‘newness’ may involve new ways of doing things, as well as new outcomes<sup>1</sup>. Clearly, engaging in something without knowing what will come out of it, if anything at all, may lead some stakeholders to resist getting involved in the first place.

Uncertainty may be particularly profound at the outset of an innovation process. Viewing innovation processes in terms of stages is quite common in the literature (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Herrera (2015:1469), for example, addresses the various stages involved in issue of ‘corporate social innovation’. At the initial stage, the core tasks are about active problem sensing and idea generation. More specifically, this include exploring and identifying the problem, necessary input and resources, processes and stakeholders, probable by-products, variations in outcomes and so forth. All of these may involve blurry perceptions, multiple interpretations and unclear goals which in sum creates a high level of uncertainty. At later stages, such as the implementation stage, the level of uncertainty is substantially reduced and may appear less daunting. It may therefore be useful to keep in mind that individual stakeholders may be more or less tolerant and anxious about uncertainty (Moxnes, 2012). Those with low tolerance of ambiguity, should probably not be targeted at the earliest stages of the innovation process.

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1 The differences between change, invention and innovation are often addressed in the literature. Sørensen & Torfing (2014:2) explain that all innovations involve change, but not all changes qualify as innovation. Only those changes which disrupt existing practices and the common wisdom in a particular area, should be considered innovations. The difference between inventions and innovations, is that inventions are ‘new to this world’, but innovations are only new to the local situation (Cels et al., 2012:4). Hence, it is not the source of innovation but the local context of implementation that determines whether something can be considered an innovation or not (Roberts & King, 1996).

When it comes to problem identification, a particular kind of uncertainty is pivotal to address, namely, whether there actually is a problem that must be dealt with in the first place. “The problem is that people don’t notice the problem,” stated Deborah Rhode, in a panel debate on women and leadership at a global leadership conference in 2016<sup>2</sup>. When it comes to social inequalities or situations where minorities experience unequal or insufficient circumstances compared with the majority, it may not be easy for those who do not themselves confront the problem, to see that there actually is one (Drake et al., 2017).

Another challenge relates to the fact that in order to restore equality between certain groups of individuals, some individuals must be provided advantages, and not others. In fact, when solutions to social problems are implemented inside current organizations, the effect may be that some employees win at other employees’ expense (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014:44). Thus, social changes may be seen as an improvement by those who support or belong to the favored group and as a regression by others. Stakeholders who are affected negatively or who do not receive the same advantageous treatment as their co-workers, may build up resistance and eventually decide to sabotage the initiative. Others, who are not negatively affected themselves, but foresee such resistance from other powerful participants or stakeholders they positively identify with, may refrain from supporting the initiative.

The possibility of such a response may be partly explained by the fact that social problems primarily become visible and are accrued at the collective level, while solutions often must be instigated at the individual and organizational levels (Phills, Deiglmeier & Miller, 2008). Those having to give way to underprivileged group representatives may thus lack the motivation to do so.

Taken together, even if not all of these forces come into play during one particular social innovation initiative, resistance and hesitancy by potential and actual stakeholders should be expected when embarking on a social innovation process (Marcy, 2015).

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2 Global International Leadership Association, 18th Annual Meeting, Nov. 2016, Atlanta USA. The author was present at the panel debate and took notes.

At the same time, when stakeholders do become engaged in such projects, there may be plenty of upside. Finding meaning, purpose, taking responsibility, and participating in mutual collaboration and co-creation of new solutions to unmet needs, underline why individuals may be motivated to engage in social innovations at a personal level.

## Identifying and discovering stakeholders

Before engaging in problem identification and exploring solutions to current social problems, stakeholders who may influence or be influenced by the initiative should be identified (Wagner, Alves, & Raposo, 2011). As already mentioned, the most common approach to stakeholder identification is the application of a 'role-perspective' (Freeman, 1984; Fassin, 2009). One tries to identify, through either empirical analysis or theoretical reasoning, which are the most central roles influencing, or being influenced by, an issue or problem in question. This points to the importance of the *power* of stakeholders (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood 1997). Let us look a bit more into this notion, followed by the issues of stakeholders' purpose, passion and presence.

### Stakeholders with power

In practical terms, identifying stakeholders may start with those formal roles, which have the power to influence or be influenced by an issue in question (Power, 2010). In some cases, these may be formal gatekeepers who control access to information, decisions or other resources necessary to move an idea forward. Young (2011) provides an illustrative example: an individual who invents a new form of legal contract cannot simply institute it on his/her own. Rather, the implementation process is dependent on involvement and coordinated efforts among stakeholders who have the authority to accept and instigate the application of the legal contract in a particular domain or in society in general.

Investigating leadership constructions within a corporation, Drake (2011, 2014) suggests that combining *functional role* and *hierarchical level* may lead to a more refined and practically applicable classification

of stakeholder groups. Those who have similar roles, such as leaders, HR staff and labor union representatives, but operate at different hierarchical levels, may exhibit quite different levels of decision-making power, social capital, and strategic concerns (Hooijberg & Denison, 2002; Tsui, 1987). Thus, it may be useful to ensure representation from stakeholders who function at appropriate authority levels in the organizational hierarchy.

Stakeholders may have access to power in more indirect ways than functional roles, for example via ones' networks, reputation, experience, competencies and so forth. Young (2011) emphasizes how power may derive via networks, and suggests that both *social capital* and *relational abilities* are important when identifying which individual stakeholder representatives to invite or attract into a social innovation process. Not only are people's first-level connections important (so-called 'strong ties'), but their 'weak ties' (the people their contacts are in contact with) are also relevant (Granovetter, 1973). If the change agent or change maker herself does not have the decision-making or informational power needed to move a project forward, it may be sufficient to mobilize the engagement of stakeholders in ones' network who do.

Networks can be valuable in ways that are more indirect and provide necessary legitimacy to an initiative (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014:47). This is particularly relevant in public-sector innovations, as legitimacy involves securing support for the initiative in one's authorizing environment (Cels et al., 2012). In practice, this may be done by involving stakeholders more explicitly in the project as a form of sponsor, ambassador or mentor. Empirical research has, for example, demonstrated how successful social innovators typically reach out to people with a certain status or power. By creating some kind of role for powerful people in their project, they hope to generate necessary credibility and legitimacy from other key stakeholders (ibid.:30).

## Stakeholders with purpose

What makes someone see something as a problem worth engaging in? As Weick (1995:9) points out, problems do not present themselves as givens.

They must be perceived or constructed from problematic situations that seem worthwhile to look into. When a problem or a problematic situation has gained the attention of someone, there may be sufficient motivation to engage in collaborative processes to help fix it. If so, one becomes a stakeholder through one's purposeful engagement.

Oftentimes, however, needs are not so blatantly obvious, and may in fact not be recognized by stakeholders at all (Mulgan et al., 2007). In these situations, argue Cels et al., (2012), the change maker should not aim to create an overall purpose that all stakeholders must share or agree with. Instead, one should explore what key stakeholders find meaningful and important at an individual level, and address how the problematic situation relates to these concerns. In other words, one should try to carve out a clear purpose, which will resonate with individual stakeholder concerns and values. McCalman et al., (2016) note that as long as all parties with a stake in the change see a mutual benefit in moving the project forward, it is not necessary that they all share the same perception about why this is a good idea.

Combining information about stakeholder power with exploration of stakeholder purpose, may help change agents in deciding where to put in sufficient time and energy in terms of onboarding the right mix of stakeholders. In stakeholder analysis, one tries to map the degree of interest as well as the power/influence each stakeholder has regarding a project/initiative (Kuenkel, Gerlach, & Frieg, 2011). This becomes input for developing strategies of stakeholder engagement. People with high power and high interest in an issue should be managed closely and given a lot of attention, as they represent a high potential stakeholder group (Muhammad & Mustafa, 2013). Another important stakeholder group are those with low interest in an initiative, and at the same time high influence/power to affect its success. Finding ways to activate a sense of meaning related to tackling a specific social problem, may help moving stakeholders from low to high interest stakeholders.

One way to increase the likelihood that stakeholders will find it purposeful to engage in a particular social initiative, is to appeal to the notion of becoming your neighbor's ally. Young (2011) found that the value of the adoption of an innovative idea by a given individual increases according

to the number of his ‘neighbors’ who adopt it. In other words, there is likely to be a mechanism of contagion involved, where people see the value of valuing what the people close to them value. To this end, it may be useful to attract potential stakeholders by pointing to the social commitments by their colleagues and acquaintances.

Another strategy could be to appeal to the potential of developing a team spirit among stakeholders who may otherwise not see themselves as part of a group or team. While knowledge workers are often sufficiently self-leading and operate quite independently in contemporary workplaces (Kristensen, 2011:130), they may nonetheless be highly motivated by being part of highly engaged teams that are collaborating on a shared, social cause (Kuenkel, 2016).

## Stakeholders with passion

Identifying stakeholders who feel a *passion* or *compassion* related to the problem at hand, involves recognizing emotional aspects of stakeholder engagement. Solem & Pedersen (2016) state that engagement involves the investment of (personal) physical, cognitive and emotional energy (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Physical energy points to the ‘hands’ of the individual (their behavior), cognition to the ‘head’, and emotions to the ‘heart’ (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995:110).

The topic of ‘heart’ is, however, not much understood nor researched in the field of social innovation, in spite of the fact that passion is deeply embedded in the practice of entrepreneurship (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009), as is compassion in social entrepreneurship (Miller, Grimes, McMullen & Vogus, 2012). Dating back to Schumpeter’s (1942) early writings, researchers and practitioners have pointed to passion in order to explain innovative behaviors that cannot be explained by rationality and reason, such as unconventional risk taking, intensity of focus, and believing in a dream in spite of setbacks and resistance.

Mulgan et al., (2007) write about how personal motivations play a critical role in social innovations, particularly in the sense that people want to solve their own problems or are motivated by the suffering of their friends, family or fellow citizens.

Gouillart & Hallett (2015), who describe a successful co-creation effort that took place at an employment office in the United Kingdom, offer an illustrative example. The new leader of the office had envisioned it as a venue where employees and outside service providers, along with the constituencies that they served, would develop new community-based approaches to the challenge of unemployment. Because the rate of unemployment among young Somalis was particularly high in the region, and many of the advisers were eager to support young, at-risk Somalis, they decided to target the Somali community. However, the suggestion that this subgroup might get special treatment caused some people in the bureaucracy to raise objections. Staff members, therefore, had to campaign for the right to tailor a specific approach to young Somalis. Ultimately, they received permission to proceed with a five-step co-creation project, of which a core idea was to mobilize and facilitate community members' engagement with each other. The authors write (*ibid.*), "Passion is the currency of co-creation, and the energy that comes with allowing employees to engage with members of a specific community can be powerful".

Passion is not only a positive driving force, as illustrated above, but can also be activated by negative emotions and intentions. When someone is passionately negative about tackling a social problem, or feel negatively about a specific solution that is being developed, they may seek to sabotage or prevent it from coming to fruition (Huxham, 1996). Occasionally, such negative forces may cause a preliminary delay to or completely terminate a social initiative.

However, if handled constructively, negative resistance may come to play a productive role in co-creational, collaborative processes (Huddart, 2010). Nilsen, Dugstad, Eide, Gullslett, & Eide (2016) identify various forms of resistance that appeared after the implementation of new technology in a healthcare setting, such as resistance against participating in collaborative processes, resistance connected to the IT infrastructure, and resistance arising from ethical concerns. However, the study showed that resistance changed character over time and that it was not solely a negative phenomenon. When viewing implementation as a co-creation process, note the authors, resistance may contribute positively to the development and innovation process through the friction it creates.

In other words, negative feelings and active resistance may provide energy that can strengthen a change effort or help reframe it, if only managed wisely. Tapping into negative energies and voices as early as possible, may enable change makers to embrace and/or reframe opposing viewpoints that might otherwise come to create obstacles, setbacks or lead to a final stop of the innovation process.

## Stakeholders with presence

Being present to engage in social innovations has to do with both a willingness to prioritize and invest one's time and physical energy into it, as well as the ability to be alert and cognitively and emotionally present in collaborative processes as they occur. Kahn (1990, 1992) addresses engagement relative to work roles, and as noted above, he suggests that engagement is related to the following three types of energies; physical, cognitive and emotional. Full engagement requires mobilizing all three simultaneously, such as in the case of experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). However, all three conditions are also important in and of themselves. When it comes to presence, the following three questions may tap into the concerns that stakeholders may have prior to personally engaging or disengaging in a problem situation (slightly adapted from Kahn, 1990:703);

- How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this?
- How safe is it to do so?
- How available am I to do so?

In reference to the latter question, it may be crucial for the change maker to determine whether stakeholders in fact intend to and have available time to engage in the project, or if they only pay 'lip service' to it. Muhammad & Mustafa (2013) suggest that one way of ascertaining this information is to study carefully whether there is convergence in what stakeholders say and do. For instance, a stakeholder may be verbally supportive of the project in numerous project meetings, but does little in between projects meetings to aid the project in practical terms. If so,

the stakeholder may lack cognitive and/or emotional commitment to the project, even if he/she is physically present.

Being willing to spend time and energy on a social innovation effort does not entail being available at all times; it can vary from a one-off effort, to infrequent encounters or a more continuous role (Frow et al., 2015). Being present can indicate physical presence or virtual presence via technology. It may also be an option to delegate occasional meetings to another person or stakeholder representative.

Presence can also refer to the qualitative dimensions of a situation, aka *mindfulness*. Fairhurst (2011:132) define presence as the ability to connect authentically with the thoughts and feelings of others. When individual stakeholders are authentically present and engaging in constructive collaboration with others, a collective intelligence may emerge that is far beyond what may be otherwise planned for (Kuenkel, 2016; Wheatley & Frieze, 2006).

## Summary

This review has attempted to offer a broad, but by no means exhaustive perspective on how to identify and engage stakeholders in any given social innovation effort. In sum, stakeholders may be targeted and attracted from amongst those who: i) hold functional and/or hierarchical roles with the power, authority and networks to influence or be influenced by the problem in question, ii) see the purpose of engaging in collaborative processes that may propel the initiative forward, iii) feel passion and/or compassion related to the issue, and iv) offer their presence to the process; physically, cognitively and/or emotionally.

## Stakeholder engagement and collaboration: A long-term perspective

My idea in this chapter is to link social innovation with research related to stakeholder identification, engagement and collaboration. Social innovation is a promising field with great potential to contribute to positive

social changes and/or alleviating current social problems. However, social innovations are also challenging, complex and uncertain endeavors. On this background, the overall problem that is addressed involves how to identify and engage stakeholders in social innovation initiatives and efforts.

Onboarding the right stakeholders from the outset may be the most important of all thresholds. Early identification and ownership tends to increase the probability that a change will be seen in an opportunistic and therefore, less threatening manner (McCalman et al., 2016). Thereafter, it may be more a matter of escalating and accumulating commitment (Hernes et al., 2015; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Weick & Quinn, 1999) and providing the necessary means to allow for collaborative and co-creational processes underway (Gouillart & Hallett, 2015). If a strong enough *why* is established in the case of each individual stakeholder, the remainder of the innovation process may be more concerned with the ways in which stakeholder engagement may follow (Cels et al., 2012). As Wheatley & Frieze (2006) assert, "...the world doesn't change one person at a time. It changes as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and a vision of what's possible."

The roles of change makers are undoubtedly demanding, and are likely to change throughout the process. Change makers may assume functions as communicators, facilitators, teachers, catalysts, conveners, and more (Darsø, 2012; Klev & Levin, 2009; Sørensen & Torfing, 2014:6). Laying the grounds for constructive collaborative processes among stakeholders may take (more) time and creativity in the initial phases of social innovation initiatives. Some people onboard easily while others need time to process arguments, assess risks and uncertainties and become acquainted with the other people involved. If a process-ontology is adapted (Hernes et al., 2015), there is never wasted time or 'failure' incurred – only new learning and experiences that can benefit future encounters and lead to more advanced collaborative relationships over the long haul (Torgersen & Steiro, 2009).

Social innovations appeal to people's desire for progress, combined with their longing for meaning (Kuenkel, 2016:265). The magic that may arise as change makers and stakeholders engage with each other and

contribute to help solve the current social problems of our times, may serve as a valuable source for continued relationship building and collaborative efforts. This may also explain part of the *why* that keeps change makers finding meaning in maneuvering through the resistance, hesitations and uncertainties that are bound to be a part of any social innovation effort. What it is that motivate change makers to take on the role of problem owner, and becoming the driving force vis-à-vis stakeholders, is an interesting question that may be the topic of a continued conversation about social innovation, stakeholders and collaboration.

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