



August 2020

Online Innovation Skill-Building Experience

Event Summary



The Problem: eXtension members are working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They need access to professional development online for the major update and revision to the Innovation Skill-Building Experience (ISBE) workshop.

Our Innovation: For 2020, the Impact Collaborative has moved its events to a virtual format to make it more accessible to its members. This learning series was facilitated by Molly Immendorf, Ashley Griffin, and Tira Adelman from the eXtension Foundation and delivered two 90 minutes a week for two consecutive weeks over Zoom conferencing and through Connect Extension. Series description available here. 77 people from 31 institutions participated in this event.

Unlike a traditional face-to-face Innovation Skill-Building Experience, we welcomed participation by both individuals looking for professional development and teams interested in learning and using the ISBE process curriculum to advance a project/program idea to address a local community issue. To accommodate this, all activities within the synchronous Zoom sessions were individual participant-based, utilizing the Breakout Room and Chat features. The facilitators introduced homework activities and strongly suggested that teams meet outside of the sessions to discuss ideas and produce a common team response to the activity outputs (Canvas, Unique Value Proposition, Why Statement, etc.) For this session, we piloted an optional customized ISBE collaborative whiteboard using Miro. The facilitators also introduced new Brain Break sessions that could be done remotely. An ISBE Checklist to identify the specific modules (known as “blocks”) to pay extra attention to was new in the updated workbook and utilized in this training as a pre/post evidence of participant change in knowledge.

What Worked:

100% of survey respondents would or may recommend the virtual Innovation Skill-Building Experience (ISBE) to others (77% Yes, 23% Maybe)

84% of survey respondents noted the topic/content as a positive aspect of the online ISBE.

100% of the ISBE Checklist respondents who completed both surveys (n=11) had at least one significant change in their responses. 82% of respondents reported change in these declarative statements:

- My team has a clear Why purpose statement that we agree upon.
- My team has many project/program ideas to address the issue.
- My team’s project is innovative and we can state how it is innovative.
- My team includes community members and/or partners. Our roles and responsibilities (RACI+F) are clear.

- My team project has documented short, medium, and long-term impacts for each targeted audience AND ways to measure them.
- My team has identified the initial budget components (time, talent, treasures, and ties) for our project/program, including who will fund it (if needed).
- My team has a 1-minute Pitch prepared for our project/program.
- My team has the capacity to implement our project/program.

What We Learned:

What was your biggest takeaway from the ISBE series? (n=69) *Sample Responses*

- I can see where this planning process can fit across many different areas
- About failure--took a new perspective that learning from it isn't failing!
- Developing a project plan based on refining your goals/audience/roles
- Understanding the value proposition--its uniqueness, how to create and sustain it.
- This is broken down into little steps with big ideas and thoughts needed to condense them all.

What participants liked about the series: (n=68) *Sample Responses*

- That these sessions help to bring the workbook to life
- The friendly, community-like atmosphere the facilitators created.
- Breakout groups, brain breaks, the quality of the facilitation, EXTENSION FOLKS!

What participants wished about the series: (n=67) *Sample Responses*

- This class was slower!! More sessions spread out over a few weeks or longer sessions.
- We had a little more time to share or even meet with others in breakout rooms.
- Am I supposed to be wishing for something? I wish COVID-19 would go away, but you know what they say about wishes...

What participants wondered about the series: (n=60) *Sample Responses*

- How I can immediately incorporate this into my work.
- How we look at these model to develop non-programmatic areas of extension
- How many folks across Extension nationally are trying to figure out the same type of problems and how much value would it be to participate on that level more regularly
- If I would be able to do a check-in or follow-up on our plans in 3-6 months together with other ISBE participants?

Next Opportunities:

For 2021, we will double the number of online Innovation Skill-Building Experience workshops which will be offered quarterly. Any member who participates in an ISBE will be eligible to continue their professional development through becoming an Innovation Facilitator. Those opportunities will also be offered quarterly in 2021.