



WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR INCLUSIVE INNOVATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

Written by
Yvonne Achieng
Misha Gericke
Gerwin Jansen
Ilari Lindy

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date: September 2020

Authors: Yvonne Achieng (Bopinc), Misha Gericke (SAIS 2), Gerwin Jansen (Bopinc), and Ilari Lindy (SAIS 2)

Contact Person: info@saisprogramme.org, info@bopinc.org

This work is available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Licence 4.0 International. According to those terms, you are free to copy, distribute, adapt, and transmit this work for non-commercial purposes, subject to the following conditions:

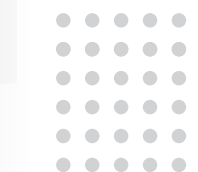
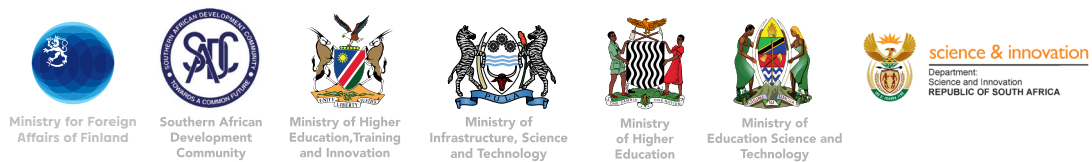
Attribution: Please cite the SAIS 2 Programme and Bopinc, and indicate if changes were made.

License: Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International

Translations: If you translate this work in part or in full, please add the following disclaimer along with the attribution: "This translation was not created by SAIS 2 and should not be considered an official translation. SAIS 2 shall not be liable for any content of or error in this translation."

Adaptations: Adaptations: If you create an adaptation of this work, please add the following disclaimer along with the attribution: "This is an adaptation of an original work by The SAIS 2 Programme. Responsibility for the views and opinions expressed in the adaptation rests solely with the author or authors of the adaptation and are not endorsed by the SAIS 2 Programme Management Office."

SUPPORTED BY:



WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR INCLUSIVE INNOVATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

By Yvonne Achieng, Misha Gericke, Gerwin Jansen, and Ilari Lindy





CONTENTS

6	About SAIS 2
8	About Bopinc
9	Foreword Inclusive innovators: the untapped resource for reaching the SDGs
12	Part 1: WHAT WE DID
13	How we designed and delivered our Inclusive Innovation training approach
18	Our Recommendations
20	PART 2: WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM WHAT WE DID
21	Recommendation 1
24	Recommendation 2
27	Recommendation 3
29	Recommendation 4
33	Recommendation 5
36	Recommendation 6
39	Recommendation 7
41	Recommendation 8
45	PART 3: WHAT NEXT?



About SAIS 2

Knowledge. Networks. Entrepreneurship.

The Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme (SAIS 2) is a regional initiative that supports the growth of new businesses by strengthening of innovation ecosystems and promoting cross-border collaboration between innovation role players in Southern Africa.



Bopinc trainer Yvonne Achieng helping participants of the two-day Inclusive Innovation course to go through one of the exercises

The programme focuses on strengthening early-stage enterprises and young entrepreneurs, connecting innovation ecosystems, and promoting innovations serving socially or economically disadvantaged populations. SAIS 2's overall objective is "enhanced regional innovation cooperation and national innovation systems contributing to inclusive business and development". SAIS 2 is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in partnership with the SADC Secretariat and the governments of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia; with implementation running over four years from 2017 to 2021. The SAIS 2 Programme's implementation is managed

by the SAIS 2 Programme Management Office in Windhoek, Namibia, in collaboration with the SAIS 2 National Focal Points, which are the national organisations mandated to promote and coordinate Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) in the five SAIS 2 partner countries.

The programme's activities are organised into three main components:



the SAIS 2 Innovation Fund;



capacity building for the Innovation Fund grantees; and



knowledge and networking.

Inclusive Innovation is one of the thematic areas for the Innovation Fund and capacity building. Through its Inclusive Innovation training course, the SAIS 2 Programme aims to improve the capacity of innovation support organisations and entrepreneurs to develop new and improved products, processes, and services with and for socially and economically excluded communities. SAIS 2 delivers its capacity building programmes together with world-class experts. The programme partnered with Bopinc for the Inclusive Innovation thematic area.

More information on the SAIS 2 Programme can be found at www.saisprogramme.org



About Bopinc



Connecting today's low-income consumers with the dignified choices of tomorrow.

Bopinc is a not-for-profit organisation that accelerates the impact of market-driven innovative strategies in low-income markets – the “Base of the Pyramid” (BoP). We believe the best products should be available where they matter most, and that fulfilling the BoP’s aspirations and needs is key.


Through the power of entrepreneurship, every new idea is turned upside down and inside out until we find the right innovation for low-income communities. From startups to multinationals, Bopinc helps organisations design and deliver commercially and socially viable business models. Bopinc’s diverse team of global innovators and entrepreneurs bridge the gap between the private and development sectors.

More information about Bopinc can be found at www.bopinc.org.



FOREWORD

Inclusive innovators: the untapped resource for reaching the SDGs



Inclusive Innovation [*in-kloo-siv in-uh-vey-shuhn*] is the entrepreneurial development of new products and services for and with low-income groups that have been largely excluded from the formal economic developments within their country.

In the past decades, many entrepreneurs in low-income markets have been pioneering creative business ideas for reaching the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their regions, such as providing quality education and affordable energy for all. This shows that social impact and profit can go hand in hand when entrepreneurs get the business model right. In areas such as off-grid lighting and financial inclusion, more and more social entrepreneurs are growing their startups into businesses with millions of dollars in turnover. Other focus areas such as water and sanitation don't have as many success stories yet, but are filled with opportunities for inclusive innovation.

Although international awareness of and support for inclusive innovation is growing, the discipline still remains in the early development stages, both as a sector and as an approach. In many low-income countries, entrepreneurs do not have the support systems they need to realise their businesses' full potential to alleviate poverty. In order to support

the next generation of these inclusive innovators, more training and support are necessary at ecosystem level than only improving entrepreneurs' capabilities. Sustainability calls for the adjustment of top-down activities to lead to more favourable policies and improved access to startup and growth capital for inclusive innovators.

Inclusive Innovation thrives when we work together

The SAIS 2 Programme and Bopinc have been collaborating since 2019 on designing and implementing a two-year training programme for innovation support organisations such as universities and incubators along with their communities of (aspiring) entrepreneurs. In this publication, we share our learnings and best practices with the purpose of inspiring others to set up similar programmes and build on what we have achieved. We believe that, if we want to make Inclusive Innovation a mainstream approach, we need to collaborate more and open ourselves up to exchange our success stories as well as the lessons learnt from our failures so others do not need to learn the same lessons the hard way. Inclusive Innovation support programmes and organisations come and go, and it is important to align approaches and build on each other's achievements as much as we can. This way, we can provide continuity to the global Inclusive Innovation community. We hope that this publication will inspire many others to get involved and make Inclusive Innovation the mainstream approach.



Berhane Wheeler (15) pitching his educational app, The Lab, at SAIS 2's BOOST UP 2019 final. The Lab is an app that enables students (especially those in schools that don't have a laboratory) to run simulated science experiments in line with their curriculum.

Why Inclusive Innovation support programmes are so important

"In the practical implementation of human rights, it is not enough to simply hear the voice of the local population. The opinions of the local population and their representatives must also have a genuine/ meaningful influence on the goals and modes of operation of development cooperation work..."

– Guidelines on implementing the human rights-based approach in Finland's development policy, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for Finland, SAIS 2's donor and leading member of the development cooperation field.

What you can expect from this publication

This publication features insights from the training activities that the SAIS 2 Programme and Bopinc delivered to inclusive innovators in Southern Africa. Despite our programme's geographic scope, the recommendations apply to other regions as well.

We start this publication with a brief description of the Inclusive Innovation training that Bopinc and SAIS 2 delivered in 2019 and 2020. This is not solely intended to provide you with an exhaustive how-to guide for you to replicate our approach. Instead, we hope to give you just enough context to understand how we have arrived at the eight recommendations presented in Part 2, which makes up the largest part of this publication. In Part 3, we present our call to action to everyone we believe can and should play a role in making Inclusive Innovation a mainstream approach.



Who are the users of this publication?

Whether you are running a startup incubator in Nigeria or you're a donor setting up an Inclusive Innovation support programme in India, this publication is relevant for you. Perhaps you represent donors and you are tasked with setting up a support vehicle for inclusive markets, or you are part of a research organisation preparing to tender for an open call for proposals. If you are active in the field of Inclusive Innovation, especially in training others to apply Inclusive Innovation to their operations, you will find this publication useful.



NOTE: Our Inclusive Innovation programme was designed and mostly implemented before the COVID-19 pandemic, which means some of our advice might need to be applied to vastly different circumstances compared to what we experienced. We decided to share all our learnings in this publication because the good practices we have found might still be relevant, regardless of the changes brought about by the pandemic.

PART

WHAT WE DID

How we designed and delivered our Inclusive Innovation training approach

SAIS 2 and Bopinc's Inclusive Innovation training programme was designed to provide innovation support organisations and their entrepreneurs with an opportunity to access training on the fundamentals of Inclusive Innovation and to join a support network of business coaches.



Our training topics covered the following topics:

How to prototype and test a new product or service idea

How to make products and services affordable for consumers with cash constraints

How to create a solid business case that can be pitched to impact investors

The course design process started in late 2018. Training activities started in early 2019 and continued until mid-2020, directly benefitting eight SAIS 2 Innovation Fund grantee organisations as well as 300 individuals from their communities. The training's set-up was very well received, with almost all representatives from the participating innovation support organisations agreeing that the course builds essential competencies necessary for them to improve the capacity of their own team and community in the long term.



“Going into the Inclusive Innovation on-site training and subsequent online training; my expectations were not only to learn about regional and international best practice within the Inclusive Innovation arena but to learn about practical and implementable frameworks, as well as tools that we could use in the work we do at the Mmabontle Circle. I am pleased to say that my expectations were surpassed. A eureka moment for me was the aspect of co-creation or partnership between us as the service provider and the various roles our target market could take on in ensuring the sustainability of our business model. One of the fundamental benefits of being part of the SAIS 2 Inclusive Innovation training was the regional links I was able to make with other like-minded innovators and entrepreneurs.”

– Tirelo Ramasedi, founder of Mmabontle Circle, an innovation support organisation for women based in Gaborone, Botswana

The course design process started in late 2018. Training activities started in early 2019 and continued until mid-2020, directly benefitting eight SAIS 2 Innovation Fund grantee organisations as well as 300 individuals from their communities. The training’s set-up was very well received, with almost all representatives from the participating innovation support organisations agreeing that the course builds essential competencies necessary for them to improve the capacity of their own team and community in the long term.

The online Inclusive Innovation course especially shows exceptional results. Over 200 people were asked to rate the online course, and the average score came to 4.5 out of 5. About one third of all online course participants completed the seven modules in the time period that was given to them. This does not sound like a lot, but it is significantly higher than the average completion rates seen by many other (massive) online courses. These courses’ completion rates average around 12–13% (source: 2015 article from the MOOC Research Initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).



Story from one of our training participants

Elizabeth John from Namibia can be considered to be a true believer in Inclusive Innovation. Not only did she complete our SAIS 2 training course, but became an Inclusive Innovation mentor for the second cohort of trainees.



Her experience with Inclusive Innovation started when she was tapped to become the project manager for Dololearn, a project funded by the SAIS 2 Innovation Fund under its Inclusive Innovation window. She explains, “Dololearn is a pilot project that was initiated between two partner countries, Namibia and Finland. The project mainly focuses on education in Namibia and exposing children to entrepreneurship early on.”

However, she felt like her academic background didn’t really prepare her for running an Inclusive Innovation project like Dololearn. “My second degree’s main modules were Project Management and Strategic Management for organisations, but I never worked on a project before. When I was asked to be part of Dololearn’s project management, I thought that would be a good experience to add to my academic knowledge, but in the beginning, I didn’t feel sure about how to implement this project,” Elizabeth says. “I was thinking that the traditional project management methods I was taught at university were simply not enough for the Inclusive Innovation aspects required as part of SAIS 2’s funding.”

The Inclusive Innovation training course was an eye-opener. “When I first heard I had to attend the course, I first looked at it as a funding requirement I had to fulfil, but if it wasn’t for the Inclusive Innovation training, I wouldn’t have known the necessary steps in implementing the project. Especially with introducing a new innovation – that required mind shifting and understanding!” Elizabeth says. “Applying Inclusive Innovation techniques to Dololearn helped me focus on the impact we wanted to make, while incorporating feedback from our beneficiaries in how that impact could be achieved. Nowadays, I apply Inclusive Innovation thinking to all aspects of my life and career, and not just project management. It’s an approach of not taking anything at face value, but looking at something from multiple angles. Get out there, see, and observe what is necessary to do, then do it.”

Part 1: What we did

According to Elizabeth, the mentorship she received as part of the course made a huge difference in learning these skills. “I had a very good mentor, Tendai Mazhude. He was someone who guided me through the course step by step, letting me see how to use Inclusive Innovation to strengthen my project.”

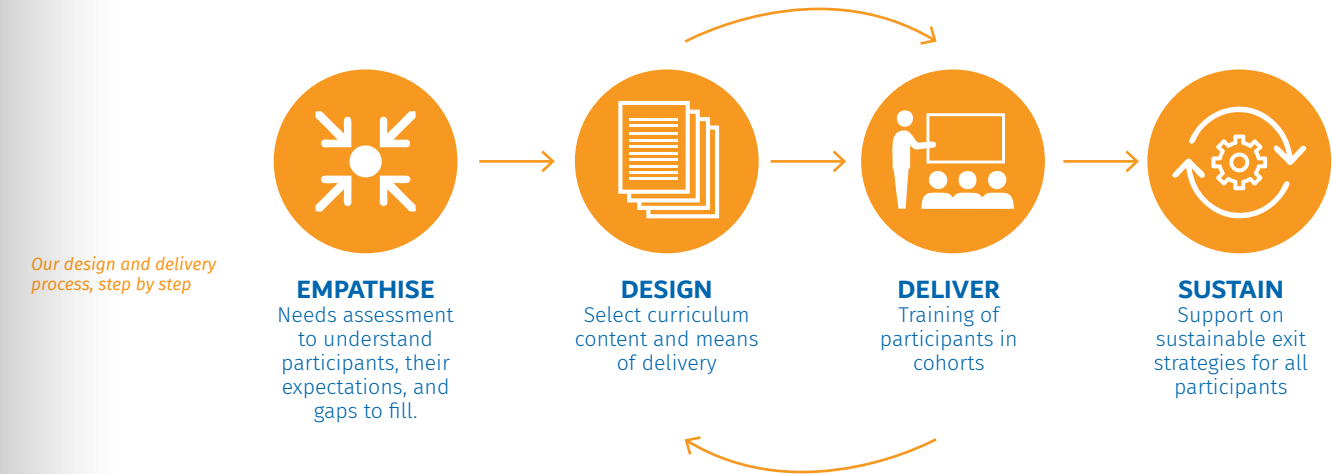
The experience made her want to mentor others. “I thought, let someone else learn what I have learned and see what I have seen. I have seen so many entrepreneurs who end up not delivering sustainable solutions. I wanted to provide them with the knowledge I have gained so they can also build up strong solutions that last. So many people have an idea, but don't know how to execute it, and that is where Inclusive Innovation adds value – helping ideas become reality. That made me decide I want to help entrepreneurs in my country.”

Believing that Inclusive Innovation can make such a difference, she has the following advice to share with Inclusive Innovation practitioners: “Pass it on. Don't keep your knowledge to yourself. Teach others in your network how to use Inclusive Innovation. Reach out. Teach. Create. And aspire to inspire.”

Part 1: What we did

The training programme we delivered was built on many best practices, including those of Bopinc experts who have trained and supported over 500 entrepreneurs to cope with the business challenges in underdeveloped markets. As shown in the above diagram, the process for implementing our training programme appears to be linear and rather straightforward.

It had a clear start – we assessed the needs of the training participants – and it had a clear end at which we wanted to make sure that participants had a clear plan for how they would continue to build their capacity after our journey together.



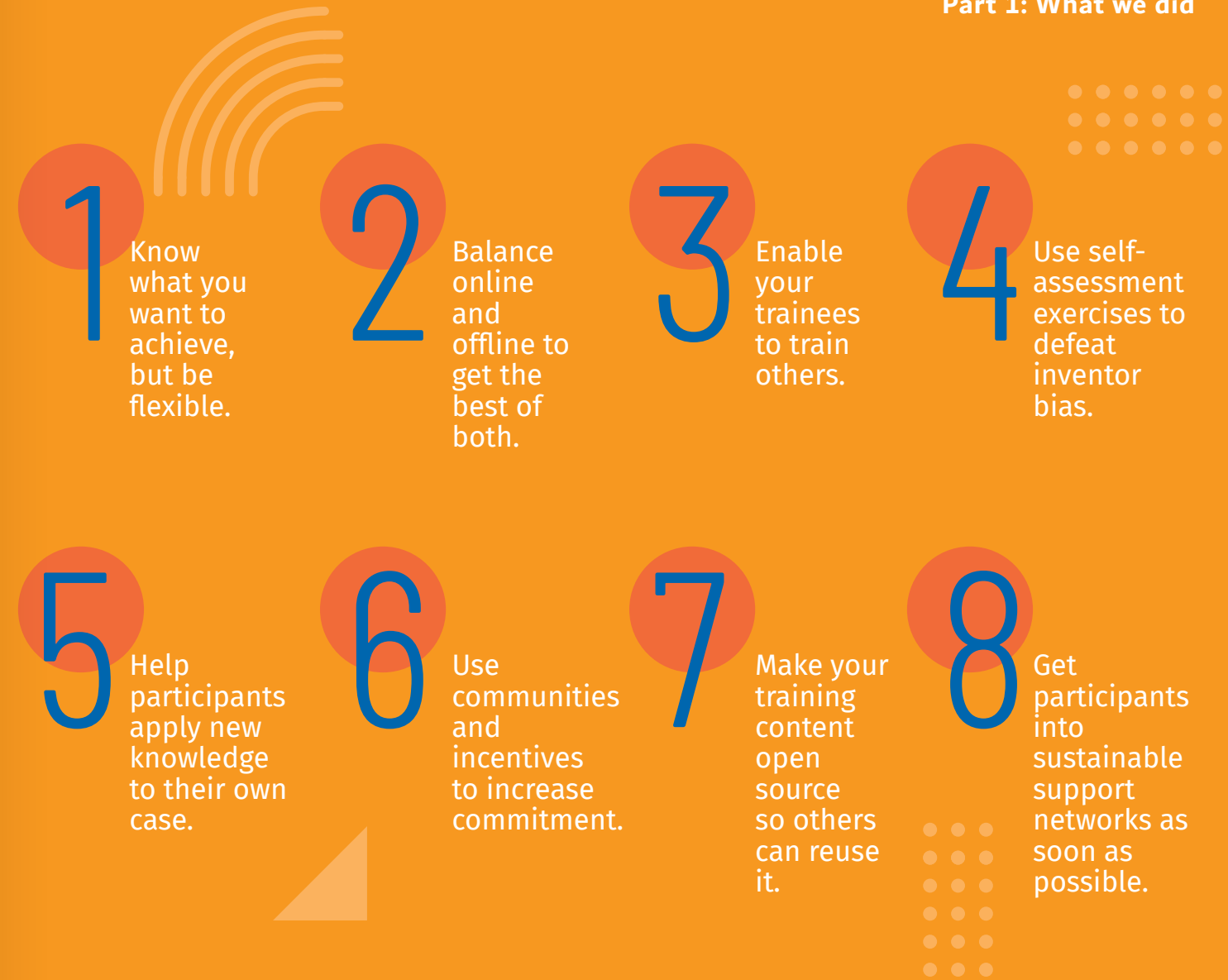
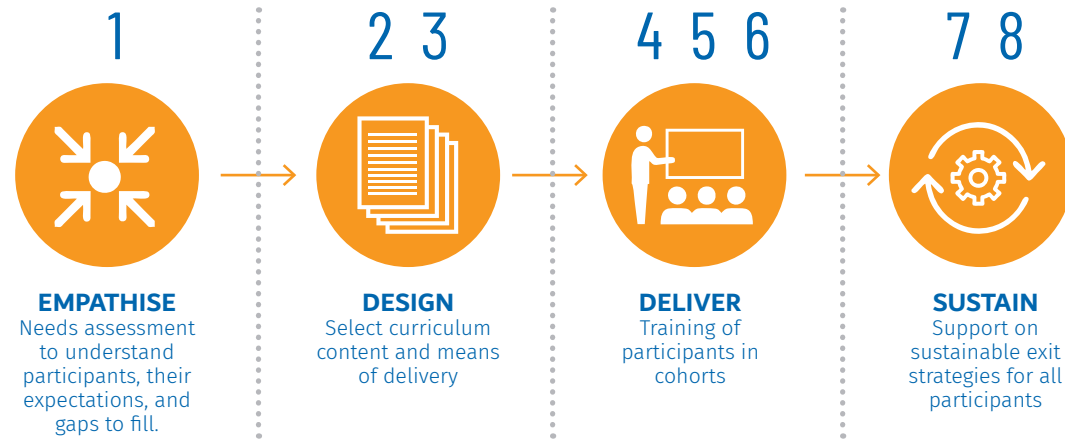
However, the execution of this process included several iterations. For example, we optimised the course's design based on the learnings from the first group of participants and adjusted the engagement of individual learners as per their specific needs. Also, we tried out various approaches that were new to us, such as the use of podcasts in the online training course as well as the recruitment of voluntary business coaches.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned earlier, this publication does not provide a how-to guide for others to replicate what we have done, but rather acts as an incentive to explore further. If you are looking for detailed guidance on how to design your own training programme, you may want to consult other resources available on the internet.

We decided to present our learnings as actionable recommendations that should help others design a better Inclusive Innovation training programme. As much as possible, we took into account how training on the subject of Inclusive Innovation might be different from training on other topics related to innovation and entrepreneurship.

In this publication, we present our recommendations in a chronological order, according to steps we took in our design and implementation process, which we assume other programmes are also likely to follow. We present at least one recommendation for each of the steps.



PART



WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM WHAT WE DID

Recommendation 1

1

Know what you want to achieve, but be flexible

Any training organiser or donor backing a training programme has an agenda of outcomes, especially when accompanied with a robust plan for how to evaluate whether these outcomes are being accomplished.

In our case, SAIS 2's vision for the Inclusive Innovation track of the SAIS 2 Innovation Fund was to support the collaborative development of inclusive innovations by inviting organisations from different countries to apply for grant funding in partnership. Such a regional approach would not only benefit a disadvantaged group in a single country, but allow the exchange of innovative ideas and learnings and license others to replicate the innovation in their own countries.

However, once the coordinators from the projects selected for funding joined the Inclusive Innovation training programme, it became apparent that some of them were concerned about making the business case work in their current country first before scaling into other countries. This meant that the Inclusive Innovation training could provide direct value to the earliest project implementation stages if it started earlier in the project lifetime. Following the request of several project coordinators, we decided to make the course materials and support networks available to the next cohort at an earlier time so they could always apply it to their own business cases first.



"If the training programme had started when we commenced our project, it would have given us more time to go through it."

– Project coordinator of a Namibian support organisation for young entrepreneurs. This and other similar comments made us rethink how early we needed to start providing our training.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 1

Before you put a pen to paper and design the training programme, it is important to empathise with the people you want to benefit with the training. We always tell inclusive innovators to put their target group at the heart of the innovation process. Similarly, you should take a participant-centric approach when organising a training programme.



Because our initial training group was not too big, we chose to have introductory meetings with each individual participant. Despite the larger time investment, we found this to be a better way to empathise with them than through surveys. Also, the meetings helped to build an initial relationship between the trainers and the participants. During these meetings, we tried to understand what their real priorities were, which in some cases changed after they enrolled in the training programme. As we finalised the training curriculum's topics and learning goals, we verified whether these were still relevant to the participants



In the end, not all training topics suggested by the trainers were as popular as expected. In many cases, a trainer had to strike a balance between what they wanted participants to learn and what the participants themselves wanted to learn. If you ignore the participants' wishes and expectations, you risk ending up with a group that is not fully committed.



Even the best needs assessments that you conduct with your training participants will not necessarily guarantee your training programme's success. Things change. To be able to observe and respond to unforeseen changes, you need to talk to participants often, and not just at the start and at the end of your course. Besides that, you will need to create a culture in which your participants are comfortable with sharing opinions and ideas on how you can improve the programme, even when you are already halfway in.

Recommendation 1



When there are a lot of new elements in your training programme or when it is your first programme, **it is a good idea to first deliver the training to a smaller group and collect their feedback in order to optimise for the bigger group.** Alternatively, training two or more consecutive cohorts provides a good opportunity to make design iterations between the cohorts, which is what Bopinc and SAIS 2 did. After extensive evaluations with the first participants, both through interviews and anonymous surveys, we made various refinements to our approach. These ranged from simplifying the course language and using more visuals to help them understand the theory better to more substantial changes such as changing the timing of when we made the course available.

On a different note, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions put in place from late March 2020 triggered us to make many more adaptations to our training approach when we were already halfway through the training with the second cohort of participants. Within the first two weeks after restrictions hit the participants' countries, we got on a call with the participants to understand how the crisis would influence their project or business activities as well as their ability to continue the training programme with us. We soon realised that many participants struggled to connect to the internet from their homes and decided to immediately **make the online course available through a download link.**



2

RECOMMENDATION

Balance online and offline to get the best of both

Education is shifting to e-learning thanks to the increasing availability and use of the internet in the markets where inclusive innovators are operating. Our training programme was no different. We put a large part of our training online.

However, we did not eliminate all face-to-face activities. We decided to hold on to a couple of activities that participants would physically attend. Our six-month training journey started with a two-day kick-off workshop, in which the team members enrolled in the training could meet each other and the trainers. A face-to-face meeting at the initial stages of a training offers significant benefits, and our participants appreciated the opportunity to physically attend a meeting together at the start of our programme.

Online training methodologies are the future, but we believe it is important to keep a human touch. Therefore, we consider blended training models as the way to go, with at least a face-to-face event at the start of the programme. Although we did not measure this, we believe the participants' commitment and the course progress they made in the months afterwards would not have been the same if we had done the kick-off workshop online. Most trainers will confirm there is nothing like having participants in the same room for one or more days, asking them to leave their computer (or anything else that might distract them) outside the room. This creates a level of engagement that cannot be achieved with the best online classroom or training webinar.



Our online course is published on the VC4A Academy and optimised for low bandwidths and smartphone usage.



"In Windhoek [at the kick-off workshop], the passion was ignited. Let's keep the fire burning!"

– Project coordinator of a University in Namibia

If you decide to organise your workshop or event offline, make sure to get the most out of it. It would be a pity to opt for a typical classroom setting whereby the trainer presents hundreds of slides (leading to "death by Powerpoint"), only to allow participants to catch some breath and meet each other during the brief coffee breaks in between. **Training workshops should be a two-way street**, even when you have participants who wish to lean back in their chairs. Make the training workshops as interactive as possible, whereby the trainer is more of a

facilitator than an instructor. It is the facilitator's role to guide the participants through their learning process as they present various exercises in which participants can practice new concepts. In these interactive sessions, participants sometimes learn more from each other than they would from a trainer.

Similar to how you would need to get the most out of your offline activities, the online environment provides some unique benefits that you should leverage. It would be a shame to present a very long story of an entrepreneur in plain text, for example. Why not publish a video or podcast in which you let the entrepreneur tell the story themselves? This would inspire many more participants. When you want to explain a complex theory, for example how certain revenue models might be better for an organisation's cash flow than others, online training platforms provide great options, such as games or simulations. Imagine the participant toggling between different revenue models and instantly seeing the effects each model has.



Recommendation 2

Other features that participants may appreciate when you take your course online are:

- having a place where they can chat about the training content (for example: Slack, Microsoft Teams, LinkedIn Groups, or a dedicated discussion board on your own course website)
- testing their newly acquired knowledge with fun quizzes
- keeping track of and rewarding participants for what they have learned (these rewards can be as simple as a GIF)

Online courses also provide unique benefits to training organisers. The biggest opportunity it gives is the opportunity to reach much larger audiences at no or limited additional costs. Also, many training course platforms, such as the VC4A Academy, allow organisers to track each participant's progress and generate reports with important insights.

OFFLINE

Benefits of offline training activities:

- Establishes trusted relationships between trainers and participants
- Creates buy-in at the start
- Increases attention and eliminates distraction
- Allows for side activities such as “field trips” to let participants immerse themselves in the local markets and practice with real-life exercises
- Accessible for groups that are not online

ONLINE

Benefits of online training activities:

- Use of new media such as videos, podcasts, and games
- Reaches large groups at lower costs
- Compatible for cross-border cooperation due to lower participation costs
- No travelling required, which reduces a training programme's costs and environmental footprint
- Gives participants a chance to go through the course at their own time and pace
- Possibilities for personalised learning by, for example, providing additional reading sections for more advanced participants

Recommendation 3

3 RECOMMENDATION

Enable your trainees to train others

The SAIS 2 Programme's set-up allowed us to target two different groups with the same training programme:

1. staff of innovation support organisations such as universities, incubators, and community centres
2. entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs who are supported by those organisations

Knowledge gained by the first group can cascade down to members of the second group due to the nature of innovation support activities. While the course materials were primarily designed to directly support entrepreneurs with their inclusive innovations, it was important to make sure that those working at innovation support organisations were also familiar with the content.

Innovation support organisations themselves are often run by an entrepreneur or group of entrepreneurs, and thus it is crucial for them to understand the challenges faced by inclusive innovators in their own community when operating in low-income markets. The insights innovation support organisation members get from our training course allows them to point entrepreneurs in the right direction when they are looking for a solution.

These train-the-trainer activities create an important spill-over effect in your training programmes. **Train one participant and you help one. Train one new trainer and you help many more.**



“The online course allowed us to expand the reach of this programme to a much wider community”

- Project coordinator at a Tanzanian IT incubator for girls



Recommendation 3

Although our programme was not primarily designed as a train-the-trainer programme, we made sure to have regular conversations with participants who could fulfil a trainer role in their communities. These conversations helped us understand whether they felt comfortable to take the training content onwards as they would train their own people. On several occasions, we brainstormed with them about how they could reuse some of the training content for their own training programmes. (Also see Recommendation 7 to learn why it is beneficial to make course materials open source.)

The staff from universities and incubators trained in our programme play an important role in making sure the knowledge and expertise remains available to entrepreneurs. We recruited another group to provide ongoing support. This group consists of small consultancies and philanthropic business coaches who have a passion for supporting startups and SMEs at affordable day rates or at zero cost. In total, 20 business coaches were trained on the theme of Inclusive Innovation, although many already had some prior knowledge on the topic. We then matched them with the training participants. The matchmaking was done very carefully, and we would first ask the participants what coach profile (male/female, location, expertise) they would appreciate. In most cases, we were able to find coaches from the same country, which allowed coaches and training participants to meet face to face. A few others had to interact with their coach online. The coach's main role was to help participants go through the online course and give feedback on their assignments.



“After completing the training programme, I feel more competent on the subject of Inclusive Innovation to capacitate others, including those in our project community.”

- Project coordinator at a Namibian support organisation for grassroots innovation

But our objective was bigger than that. With few exceptions, the professions of coaching and mentoring are only now starting to enter the innovation toolkit in Southern Africa. We facilitated the establishment of relationships that could benefit participants in the long term. In the end, more than half of the participants expressed their interest to continue working with the coaches they had been assigned, and several participants had already come to agreements with their coaches about ongoing assignments, which happened without SAIS 2 or Bopinc having to broker this.

Recommendation 4

Use self-assessment exercises to defeat inventor bias

Many innovators make the mistake of falling in love with an idea and not truly testing it before investing time and money on bringing it to market. They are too close to their idea or creation, and often cannot see problems with it, instead assuming that it is perfect as it is.



It is easy for innovators to fall into the trap of assuming that everyone wants their idea, that they can easily start selling the first hundreds and then go to large-scale, globally sourced production at low cost. However, success isn't about how much you like your idea, but whether your customers like it and whether they really are willing to pay for it. We see many young entrepreneurs spending much of their time sitting behind a computer at their university or surrounding themselves with like-minded people in a coworking space. Although these places provide great facilities, they can become safe havens for wannabe innovators who never connect with the real-life conditions where their solution is supposed to be used. Only when they step out of these places can they and their idea be put to the test.

If inclusive innovators are not taught the ability to be critical towards their ideas and open to the opinion of others, it is likely that they will overestimate their idea's potential and waste a lot of time and money chasing it.



A business idea being successful in one market does not guarantee the same success when taking it into another. African markets are different to those in Europe, and markets between

4 RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4

African countries differ just as they do in countries on any other continent. Success requires proper contextualisation based on an understanding of how the local market works and why consumers might require a different execution of that same idea in different localities. Innovation support organisations working with entrepreneurs, such as those trained in our programme, are the trusted partners to advise not only to show the bright and fun side of social entrepreneurship, but also to challenge the (aspiring) entrepreneurs in their communities on their ideas.

To help our group of trainees assess the ideas of others, and to help entrepreneurs assess themselves, SAIS 2 and Bopinc introduced an Inclusive Innovation self-assessment tool. This tool is based on Bopinc's five checks.

For any inclusive innovation to become successful, it needs to be:

1. Impactful

2. Desirable

3. Feasible

4. Viable

5. Suitable

Leave out one of these checks and the chances of failing and not arriving at a sustainable and scalable solution increase substantially. In our Inclusive Innovation training's kick-off workshop, the participants were asked to take a step back from their idea and give a very honest score on each of these checks. This scoring exercise was guided by questions asked by trainers and other participants, which each participant had to answer about their idea.

For example, to score the feasibility of an idea, participants were asked questions like whether they had identified reputable suppliers and whether they studied the legal requirements for selling the new product in their country. The role of the "outsiders" joining this self-assessment exercise was to test the participant on each score they would give themselves. The unbiased "outsiders" would ask questions like "why are you sure you got that right?" and "what have you done to collect evidence for this?"



"The Inclusive Innovation self-assessment tool was great. I never take time to sit and reflect. The learnings were mind-blowing for me"

- Project coordinator of a South African incubator

Recommendation 4

At the end of this exercise, it became clear that many entrepreneurs had overlooked some fundamental things for their business idea such as estimating a realistic market size by looking at their competition, accounting for distribution constraints, and judging the speed of adoption among customers. Others realised they would not generate insufficient revenues to keep the business afloat and were triggered to think of cost-saving strategies and/or alternative revenue models. Exposing these improvement areas at the start of the course created a stronger need and focus for participants as they progressed through the training modules.

The principle of consumer-centric design formed a red thread in our training programme.

Whether a new idea is desirable for the target group can really make or break an inclusive innovation. Social entrepreneurs and others in the development sector are often occupied with wanting to establish a positive impact first. However, the right intention of making an impact should not be compromised by poor execution of the idea to bring about that impact.



Say you want to sell a sanitation solution to low-income groups. You could take SDG 6, "How might we make sure everyone has a safe latrine", as a starting point and search Google for toilets that cost less than 20 USD to make it affordable for low-income households. Another approach that we recommend would be to first go to these households and find out what SDG 6 means to them. Why have they not purchased a latrine yet? Is the availability of low-cost solutions really the problem? Or are these people simply not satisfied with what is currently offered to them?

The difference between the first and second approach is that, as development practitioners and inclusive innovators, we often have preconceived ideas about what people NEED, which might be different from what people would tell us they actually WANT – not to mention what they can afford and how their available budgets are prioritised. By acknowledging that your target group consists of consumers with their own aspirations and priorities in life, and by putting these at the heart of your innovation process, you can arrive at solutions that are truly desirable to them.

Recommendation 4

In our training programme, we presented several cases that failed to combine good intentions with great design, and that consequently had to cease their business as consumers would not pay for an unattractive offering. Giving such examples will open the eyes of training participants. To help them improve the desirability of their own idea, innovation tools such as customer persona and value proposition creation are great.



Going back to the example with selling latrines, collecting consumer insights for the value proposition exercise might have triggered a lot of creative and desirable service offering ideas such as a home upgrade saving plan that lets farmers put aside a bit of income every season and spend this on a beautiful bathroom.

Recommendation 5

“I have been practicing social entrepreneurship for three years now, and I must say, had I known what I have learnt from this module, we would have avoided at least one or two roadblocks!”
- Project coordinator of a South African incubator

5 RECOMMENDATION

Help participants apply new knowledge to their own case

Despite having supported inclusive innovators for more than ten years, the trainers at Bopinc still cannot provide silver bullet answers when entrepreneurs ask questions such as what sales channel they should be using in their territory.

The markets in which inclusive innovators operate are often unknown and dependent on context. The macro-level data that can be collected from the internet, such as governmental census or World Bank reports, will not give the granularity you need and, with the informal sector being so prevalent, much of the necessary information is not documented.

This means that entrepreneurs often need to collect the data and insights themselves. Besides these markets being largely unknown, they tend to be volatile, complex, and ambiguous. That is why we often say that the only way to find out what works is to actually do it. Principles such as “fail fast, learn faster” can therefore be at the heart of the training. It is important that entrepreneurs, particularly those who are just starting their venture, are told that it is acceptable to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them. Experimenting with new ideas, however, can be very costly and something that many starting entrepreneurs cannot afford. You cannot expect entrepreneurs who are cash strapped to pay the price of experimentation, so try to help entrepreneurs access resources they would require for this. SAIS 2, for example, established a specific Inclusive Innovation track in the Innovation Fund to help organisations try out new business ideas and partnerships with the support of grant funding.



Recommendation 5

It is necessary **to match the timing and content of your training to the development phase(s) of your target beneficiaries.** Why would you train someone on how to prototype their ideas when they have passed that stage? We also gave our participants early access to our training modules. While it took them six months to go through all the training modules,



they were able to access the knowledge and tools they needed more urgently. In the end, we found it more important to make the training materials available for each individual at the right time, instead of having all participants go through the course modules at the exact same pace. A training course on Inclusive Innovation is only as good as the extent to which it allows the innovator to put the lessons into practice.

“If it was not for the coach, I would not have understood the course as he enabled me to have a deeper understanding of the course in the context of our project.”

- Employee of a Namibian startup incubator

If you want people to learn about Inclusive Innovation, present practical and actionable lessons instead of lengthy and abstract

pieces of written theory. You can always provide additional reading to those who want to learn about the underlying theories. To bring the lessons home to your participants, you may want to end each training module with an exercise that lets them apply the new knowledge to their own case. This allows them to internalise the knowledge but also gives an opportunity to use the course to make progress with their own business. To get participants into the right mode for the exercise, you can present an inspirational story from an entrepreneur about how they had gone through a similar exercise. In our case, we presented this story in the form of a podcast (with a transcript).

Because they take time and effort, training exercises can be easily skipped by participants when they are not incentivised to do the work. One of the most important incentives is to tell them they will receive feedback on the outcomes of their exercise. SAIS 2 and Bopinc also made business coaches available who would look at the exercises and provide guidance and feedback.



Participants of the Inclusive Innovation course testing their creativity and determination as they were asked to make a bridge out of plastic straws in just 10 minutes

These coaches volunteered out of a passion for social entrepreneurship and because of the profile that SAIS 2 would raise for Inclusive Innovation. Many of the coaches were a much-appreciated sounding board for the participants. Participants without coaches were recommended to peer-review each other's assignments. Some of them invited participants from their community to meet every other week and discuss the latest module completed.



Recommendation 5

6

RECOMMENDATION

Use communities and incentives to increase commitment

The participants in our inclusive innovation training programme were either SAIS 2 Innovation Fund grantee organisations and/or their beneficiaries. SAIS 2 and Bopinc have learnt a lot about how to deal with the participants' motivation and abilities to commit.

The hardest thing for any training programme is probably to ensure that participants reach the finish line. This is particularly true when there is no real cost of failure when they drop out, for example losing a thousand-dollar training fee (SAIS 2 offered the course free of charge). In hindsight, many of the problems with course completion rates were the result of how the training programme was organised. **Presenting your training programme as a fully voluntary activity leads to low show-up rates. Making it mandatory, however, will only solve part of the problem and creates new problems instead. It is best to start with finding intrinsic drivers for participants. The extrinsic drivers can follow later.**

For the project coordinators who received the SAIS 2 Innovation Fund grant, the Inclusive Innovation training programme came on top of their "regular" project activities that were agreed upon with the fund manager. Although the training programme was designed to be supportive of their project activities, many coordinators prioritised their regular work when they were busy. The result was that many project coordinators would drop out the course halfway.

“There was no clear incentive why the beneficiaries needed to do the course. And not much accountability for them to complete”.

- Project coordinator in the first cohort



To change this and to have participants commit even when they were working around the clock, we had to make clear the value of the training course to each participant. Going into the second cohort, we invited a project coordinator from the first cohort to share how the training helped him. At the same time, we gave the new participants in the second cohort a heads up in terms of the expected time investment so they could plan their participation accordingly. Knowing this, a few project coordinators suggested that someone else from their team take over their role in the training programme. We granted this request after careful consideration.



Certificates can help incentivise participants to complete the online course



With the buy-in of a more committed project coordinator, we could leverage their position to increase the motivation of all other training participants in their community. For example, SAIS 2 and Bopinc provided the project coordinators with promotional materials such as a digital and printed flyer so they could promote the online course in their own communities. Given the authority and influential role of the project coordinators in their areas, this boosted course sign ups. We engaged with project coordinators to find other practical solutions that would help increase participants' engagement in the course. An example of a solution that came up was to organise regular meet-ups to let participants discuss the latest training module, or creating Facebook or WhatsApp groups for the same purpose.

We have learned that **when people are part of a community, they are likely to commit to a common goal.** This is particularly true when the members know each other, when the group is not too big, and when members share similar traits.



Other ways to create incentives

For other Inclusive Innovation trainings not related to SAIS 2's activities, Bopinc has set up vibrant micro-communities on WhatsApp for women in business leadership positions. Another benefit of group participation in training courses is that you can add competition elements. You can create fun leadership boards, for example, and reward participants who are the first to complete the course. Even better, you can organise a celebration for everyone when the last person has received his or her certificate.



7

RECOMMENDATION

Make your training content open source so others can reuse it

Although SAIS 2 and Bopinc shared the same vision for making our training materials open source, the importance of this was underlined once we commenced our training programme.

Various participants who work at entrepreneurship support organisations such as universities and incubators requested permission to use our training materials for their own curriculums. We not only gave them this permission under a Creative Commons license, **but we also supported them to adapt the materials to their purposes** as long as they would adhere to the license conditions we chose **(the Creative Commons “Attribution-Share Alike” license allows others to create and distribute derivative works, but only under the same license)**. To make it easy for others to adapt our materials, we shared a downloadable file package with all online course materials in their original formats, including Word documents, JPEG images, and the MP3 files of the podcasts.



Examples of commonly suggested changes to the course materials are translations, creating printed versions and adding more practical and local examples to the training modules. **A Tanzanian business coach started a Swahili translation out of his own initiative because he felt this would make the knowledge accessible for a much larger group.** A team of participants from Botswana that trains grassroots innovators in rural communities created their own printed copies with simplified explanations of key concepts, such as how grassroots innovators can develop effective marketing and sales strategies for their prototypes. They also suggested adding more examples from their own sectors or territories to make sure the people in their project communities could better relate to it.

Recommendation 7

These are all great examples of adaptations of our training materials and shows how using a Creative Commons licence can improve the longer-term relevance of your curriculum. For this reason, we recommend other training organisers to follow the same approach and join us in creating a bigger wealth of cumulative knowledge on Inclusive Innovation. **Go to the Creative Commons website to find the most appropriate license for you and consider sharing your work on platforms such as Wikipedia, Youtube, Facebook, or LinkedIn so people can actually find it.**

”

“The online course materials are not relevant for our community because of connectivity and language. We need an adapted programme with printed modules in simple language.”

- Project coordinator of an agripreneur programme in Botswana

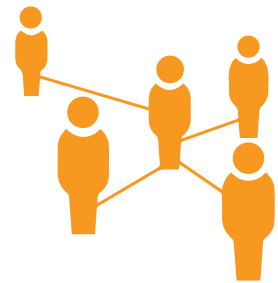
As a final note, something equally exciting about making your training materials open source is that it opens up opportunities to leverage your networks and communities to create derivative works such as translated versions. Where possible, SAIS 2 and Bopinc have been keeping track of organisations and individuals that adapted our materials so we can help circulate these new versions to benefit more people with derivative works that are relevant to them.

Recommendation 8

Get participants into sustainable support networks as soon as possible

For inclusive innovators to benefit from a training programme in the long run, there should be no definite goodbyes when they leave the (virtual) classroom. Internalising the principles of Inclusive Innovation takes time and new questions might arise as participants apply the new knowledge to their own businesses.

Therefore, training organisers should think of ways to provide participants with support after the training comes to an end. When SAIS 2 and Bopinc developed the exit strategy for the training participants, we prioritised a few support mechanisms based on both organisations' best practices as well as the ideas shared by participants themselves.



8 RECOMMENDATION

These support areas include:

helping participants to join online communities where they can meet and exchange with peers

establishing lasting relationships between participants and business coaches

raising the profile of the participants' ventures so that investors, funders, and new trainers can find them and offer follow-up opportunities

Recommendation 8



When it comes to fostering an online community, there are many platform options – from LinkedIn and Facebook to the more bespoke platforms for our sector such as VC4A and InclusiveBusiness.net. Instead of creating our own online platform, we chose to work with an existing platform to allow the participants to join an already existing, thriving network. We decided to go with VC4A based on previous experiences and because VC4A is also a partner in some other SAIS 2 projects. Another benefit to using VC4A was that it caters to entrepreneurs and innovation actors across Africa, where SAIS 2 was active. VC4A provides a lot of services to inclusive innovators operating in low-income markets, which would benefit the training participants outside of our training programme. These services include investor matchmaking, mentor consultation, and accessing more online courses on relevant topics such as how to develop investment-ready business plans.

It is better to get participants slotted into a community from the start of your training, rather than at the end. Participants are likely ignore an invitation to join a network in a goodbye email if it didn't add value to their training experience already, and they might also have questions about the benefits of the platform and how to use it. Moreover, it is important to facilitate the participants' access and first experience with the network, especially if it is large and complex. Giving them a guided experience within the training course will increase the chances of participants remaining active after your training ends.

SAIS 2 and Bopinc decided to put our training course on the VC4A Academy to facilitate the participants joining the VC4A network. For participants to attend the course, they had to sign up to VC4A at the start of their training journey. This improved the likelihood that they would further explore the platform while they were learning. We took this a step further and helped participants to get the most out of the VC4A platform by inviting the VC4A team to host a training webinar.



“On the discussion boards, I got to see the opinions of other people and felt that I was not alone.”

– Participant in the online course.

Recommendation 8

This helped participants to understand what was on offer as well as to optimise their experience on the platform, for example by improving their profile and placing mentor requests. Our trainees confirmed that, after the guided introduction to VC4A, they felt excited and competent to continue to use the website. With our training programme coming to an end, we are confident that we have created a lasting impact on the participants' growth into becoming successful inclusive innovators.



PART

WHAT NEXT?



We hope that this publication has given you a strong overview of our experiences with training entrepreneurs and innovation support organisations in the art of Inclusive Innovation. However, it is likely that you might have some questions regarding what you should do with what you have learnt, or how to get involved. This section serves to provide you with some suggestions to guide your further journey in this exciting new sector.

With that in mind, it is necessary to first start with making a case for Inclusive Innovation.

All governments in the world, regardless of their geographic location, are struggling with increasing demands for service delivery without a proportional expansion of their tax base. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly crucial to ensure that economic growth reaches all segments of society, including socially and economically marginalised populations. Inclusive Innovation provides a way out of the dilemmas posed by economic inequality by creating a relationship of mutual benefit between innovators and the people who need their products, services, and processes the most. As it encourages marginalised communities to become directly involved in the development of solutions for their own challenges, the discipline of Inclusive Innovation has massive and still largely untapped potential to make a significant and lasting impact in alleviating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it is necessary for more organisations, communities, and even individuals to take up Inclusive Innovation as the go-to method when developing solutions before this can become a reality.

Our suggestions in Part 3 mostly focus on creating an enabling environment for the wider adoption of the Inclusive Innovation approach. We want you to get involved, so we will show you the variety of roles you can play.



Take our learnings, build on them, and then share your learnings as well

We have put our learnings in this publication so others can apply them and build upon their own experiences, while side-stepping at least some of the pitfalls we encountered. We hope other organisations implementing Inclusive Innovation training programmes will do the same as no one knows better how services, products, or processes can be used than the people who are actively using them. If we want to make sure that inclusive innovators get the best possible support, it is important that we seek collaborations and exchange information about what works and what does not.

Sustaining and scaling up Inclusive Innovation initiatives requires a strong ecosystem backed by supporting policy and adequate regulations. Instead of abstract discussions on the importance of Inclusive Innovation, entrepreneurs and last-mile delivery organisations need decision makers who listen and learn from their experience. With Inclusive Innovation still in its nascent stages, the implementation of initiatives is a trial-and-error process. Good practices and models do exist, but adapting them to local circumstances is a key challenge.

An important element to scaling up Inclusive Innovation programmes worldwide is the need to understand monitoring and evaluation (M&E) not only as a method to detect and correct mistakes in order to improve policies and interventions, but also as the opportunity to document and catalogue learnings for further dissemination and adoption. With the support of data, the promise of Inclusive Innovation can be translated into more systemic policy and subsequent measures yielding outcomes that tangibly benefit marginalised societies. Therefore, the gathering of data as part of monitoring and evaluation and the active dissemination of that data is crucial.



Support Inclusive Innovation and make it mainstream

Entrepreneurs, especially those with inclusive innovations, play a vital role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and relentlessly innovating to improve people's lives through market-based solutions. Despite their potential to contribute to local economies as well as the global Sustainable Development Goals, many entrepreneurs cannot enjoy favourable conditions to scale their inclusive innovations in the markets they operate in. SAIS 2 and Bopinc have found that many entrepreneurs struggle to access state-of-the-art knowledge, networks, and finance. We invite you to reflect on what you can do to help existing entrepreneurs in your country as well as to inspire and train a next generation of inclusive innovators. Whether you are a policymaker, donor, financial institution, or accelerator, there are various actions you could pick up as you design and implement your own training and support programmes for inclusive innovation.



ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

We learn more every day about how to commercialise inclusive innovations, and we discover all kinds of new use cases for emerging technologies in underserved markets. However, many of the learnings, best practices, and disruptive ideas that surface in one market do not reach entrepreneurs in other markets. Entrepreneurship support organisations must play an important role in capturing and disseminating the latest knowledge. This way, entrepreneurs can build on what peers in other markets have tested, instead of starting from scratch and wasting a lot of time and effort on things that have already been done. SAIS 2 and Bopinc have tried to put as many recent case studies in our training materials as possible. Many other international support organisations have taken other approaches to document and disseminate knowledge amongst entrepreneurs. From CTA's list of business success drivers for agriculture technology startups to Accenture's snapshot of inclusive business, from World Bank and OECD studies and reports to Akvo's repository for safe water innovations. We encourage more (local) support organisations to contribute to this knowledge base.

ACCESS TO NETWORK

It is important that entrepreneurs, particularly those who are just starting, can meet with peers so they can inspire and help each other while going through the challenges of Inclusive Innovation. They also need to be able to find mentors or affordable consultants who have expertise on very specific topics such as how to register a business in a new country. These mentors can often play an important role in making new connections as well.

Local governments and international donors can open up networks for entrepreneurs. Large entrepreneurship/innovation support and development programmes similar to SAIS 2 can enhance existing networks instead of starting their own.

Such programmes should not work in silos, but should tap into what is already there so they do not compete with good, working concepts out of the market. For that reason, SAIS 2 has not been running its own events but instead teamed up with other event organisers to bring together different networks. It is important that entrepreneurs and stakeholders are able to meet in new places, outside the networks they are already familiar with. When entrepreneurship support programmes seek collaborations, there is a chance to provide better continuity for the entrepreneurs they support, instead of having programmes come and go. Given the difficulties around Inclusive Innovation, entrepreneurs benefit from ongoing, handholding support.

ACCESS TO FINANCE

Early-stage entrepreneurs with inclusive innovations often struggle to raise (private) capital, which they need to grow their business. This is often due to the “pioneer gap” that exists between high-risk, promising early-stage enterprises and impact investors willing to take those risks. Therefore, there is a need for more funders and investors who are willing to take risk, for example through blended financing methods (grants combined with debt finance), when an inclusive innovation’s financial returns are not as certain as the social returns it offers.

If we want to see more inclusive innovations scale up, we need to catalyse private sector investment into early-stage enterprises and identify innovative models or approaches







GET IN TOUCH

that help entrepreneurs bridge the pioneer gap. This should become a development that gives equal opportunities to local and foreign-owned enterprises operating in low-income markets. So far, the latter group has been more successful in raising (private) capital, but local enterprises could provide further opportunities in terms of a deeper understanding of local conditions and a passion for solving local challenges.

As we come to the end of this publication, we cannot stress enough the importance of fostering collaboration and networking between innovation support actors involved in Inclusive Innovation. However, we know it can be difficult for new entrants to the discipline to find others in the beginning, and that most of the more established role players are searching for new connections.

We would therefore like to invite you to get in touch with us to find out what we are doing and how you can get involved. You can contact SAIS 2 until the programme closes in June 2020 at info@saisprogramme.org, or Bopinc at info@bopinc.org.

Thank you for reading and all the best with making Inclusive Innovation the mainstream approach!

-  SAISProgramme2
-  SAISProgramme
-  Bopinc
-  BoPInc



8 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR INCLUSIVE INNOVATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

It is an exciting time for Inclusive Innovation. As international awareness grows on the need to include low-income communities and underserved groups in the development of products and services, new business opportunities arise for entrepreneurs who want to combine profit with making a social impact.

However, many startups and SMEs in low-income markets struggle to find the support they need to turn their ideas into viable business solutions. For this reason, the SAIS 2 Programme and Bopinc have collaborated to design and deliver an Inclusive Innovation training programme for local innovation support organisations in Southern Africa and their communities of entrepreneurs.

In this document, we wish to present some of our biggest learnings about how to effectively train others on the topic of Inclusive Innovation. We hope these will inspire incubators, accelerators, donors, policymakers, and other organisations to set up similar programmes and build on what we have learned. Inclusive Innovation is an exciting new discipline to teach to entrepreneurs and innovation support organisations alike, but providing training to these stakeholders comes with its own challenges. We hope this publication will assist readers to understand what works, what doesn't, and why, so that they can strengthen their training programmes or perhaps even feel confident enough to build new programmes of their own.