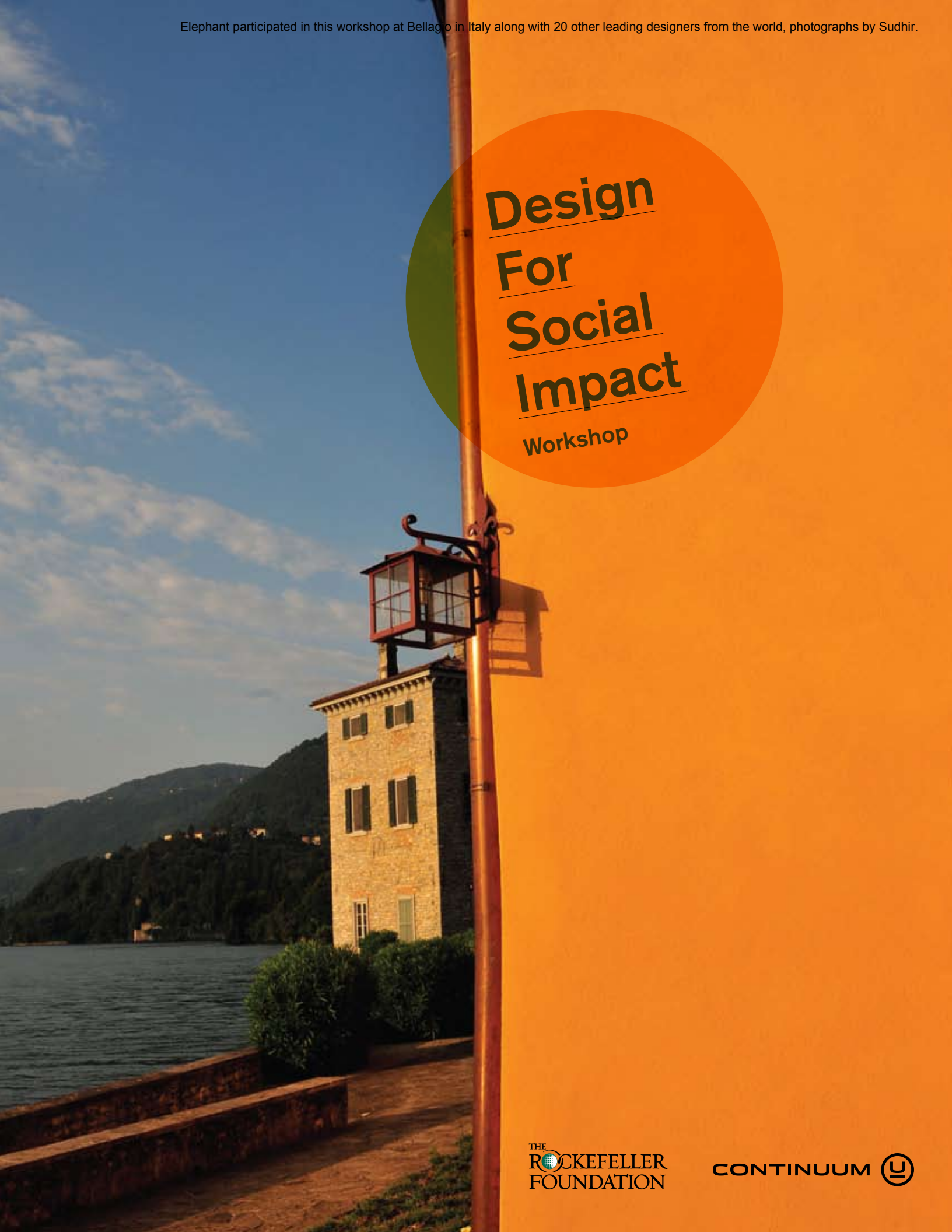
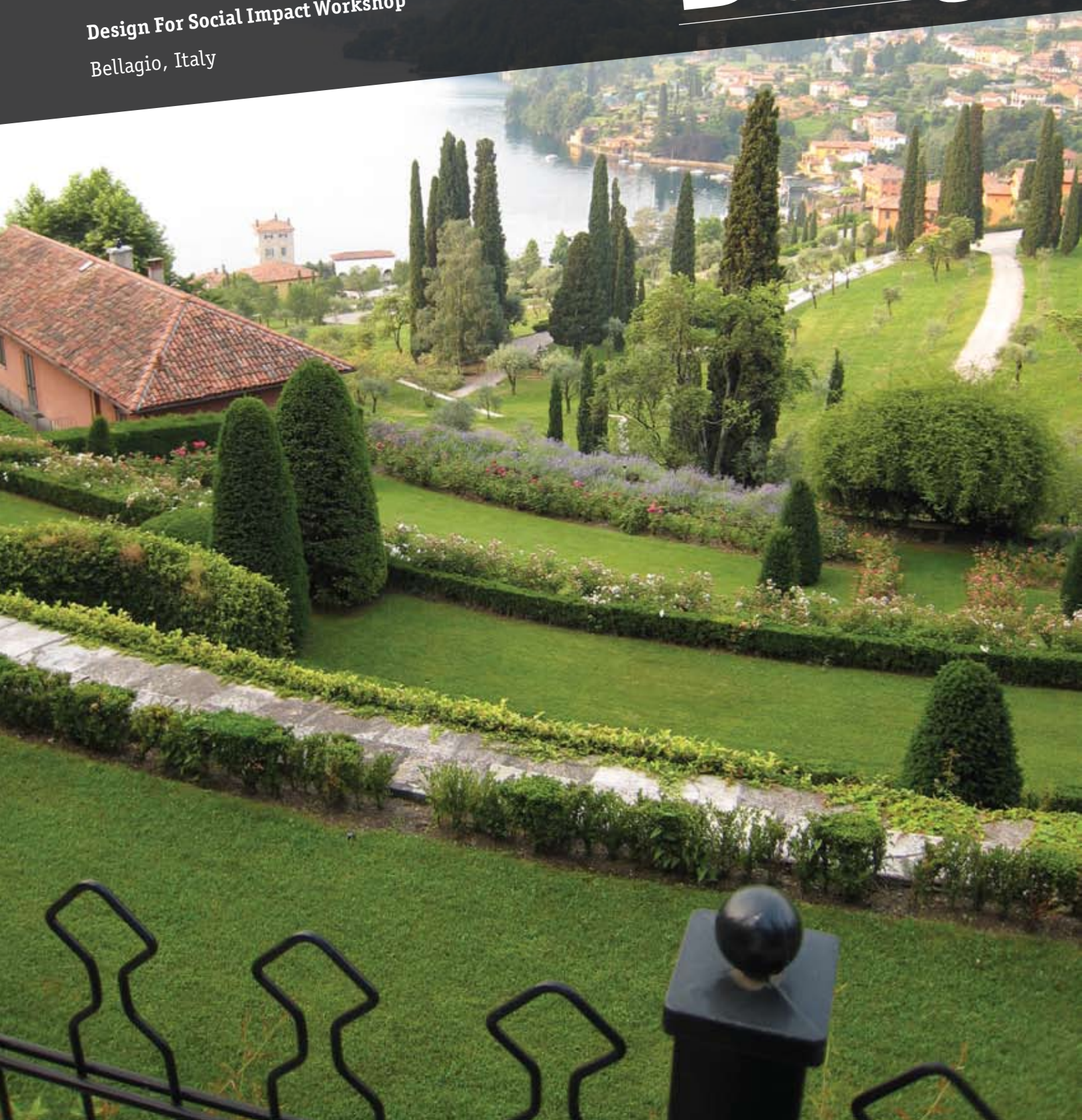


Design For Social Impact Workshop



Design makes a difference

Design For Social Impact Workshop
Bellagio, Italy



The private sector has long since learned this deceptively simple lesson. These days, you can't touch anything—from a vegetable peeler to a toothbrush, a cell phone to a sneaker—without seeing (and feeling) the difference design can make and the commercial success it can help foster.

Recently, this same effect has been demonstrated in the social sector. When design firms collaborate with NGOs, dramatic breakthroughs also emerge. For instance, IDEO worked with KickStart to create the MoneyMaker Pump, a small but powerful small-acreage irrigation pump with hard-to-ignore impact: Since 1991, the pump has contributed to the creation of 64,000 new businesses, generating \$79 million a year in new profits and wages which is equivalent to more than 0.6% of Kenya's GDP. Similar exemplary case studies exist: The LifeStraw, a portable water purifier that looks like a giant straw, has helped prevent common water-borne diseases and Forbes magazine has called it one of the "ten things that will change the way we live." One Laptop Per Child, the brainchild of Nicholas Negroponte of MIT Media Lab fame, was launched through collaboration with design firms Continuum, Pentagram and Fuse Project to create an elegantly designed low-cost computer that could be used as a powerful educational tool. More important, it is an example of the power of design to help elevate, onto a global stage, the importance of investing in education for children in developing countries.

From time to time, a design for social impact finds its way into the media spotlight for its fifteen minutes of fame. These powerful but isolated examples cannot be enough. The real challenge is to move from intermittent cases of success to a systemic approach that unleashes and leverages the power of the global design community on some of the world's most intractable problems.



The Challenge At Hand

The problem is that this great form of collaboration between design firms and the social sector is still not affordable and thus, not yet routine. Noted innovation expert Clayton Christensen says that **disruptive innovation**—the kind that makes the biggest impact and goes on to reshape industries and markets—*democratizes scarce expertise*. It makes something that was once rare and costly, **routine and affordable**.

“The Rockefeller Foundation is investing in this conversation because we feel we can accelerate the **systematic contribution** of design firms to the social sector. We don’t want to wait 50 years to wake up and say, “We have to start working with design firms on these tough problems.”

Maria Blair, The Rockefeller Foundation

Today, the most advanced design firms and the most diverse and sophisticated types of design expertise are little known—or accessed—by the average NGO. Similarly, even when design firms, employing first class talent, declare that they want to have “impact,” ultimately they are driven by the underlying economics of their firms. The truth is: Hard reality often trumps good intentions.

How and when can this change? What must be done so that the best design resources can have more routine engagement and vastly more impact on the world’s most pervasive and complex problems: literacy, poverty, affordable health care and housing, access to capital, plus sustainable agriculture, energy and clean water?

To address these issues, the Rockefeller Foundation hosted a group of leading design professionals at the Foundation’s Bellagio Center in Italy, in June 2008. These experts—all attending at their own expense—explored fresh models for active involvement in the social sector.

Where We Started

PHILANTHROPY 101

THE SOCIAL SECTOR GALAXY

Challenging ourselves to construct a system through which the design industry could engage with the social sector in a consistent manner, we spent a few minutes understanding just what the “social sector” world looked like. What did we learn? It’s a vast galactic system, orbiting no central planet, comprised of over a million organizations—a formidable constellation of independent foundations, corporate foundations, community foundations, and NGOs ranging in size, focus, impact, operating standards, and assets. Herewith, our prospective clients, our partners.

In the United States alone there are 76,000 foundations with total assets of \$670B. This nets out to an annual average donation pool of \$43B. The top 25 to 30 foundations—the marquee brands such as Getty, Kellogg, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Ford, Gates and Mellon—comprise .04% of the total number of foundations but yet represent 18% of giving and 20% of combined assets. While this tiny slice of the foundation pool drives a huge percentage of assets and giving, this kind of “professional philanthropy”—with staff, dedicated areas of giving, and complex grant machinery—is, we learned, the exception not the rule.

“We have to stop this dichotomy that says: We do these kinds of projects because it’s our way of ‘giving back.’ Instead, think of it as being a way of learning, of having impact, that will also provide other forms of value for your firm.”

Larry Keeley, Doblin Group

The majority operate under their own gravitational pull and in a tenuous and only very loosely connected “network” labeled, at times, the development community.

The complexity increases when you move into the sphere of NGOs. This system is populated by over one million organizations—groups with 501(c)3 status and with annual revenues of more than \$25,000. Again, here we see an incredible range and diversity (not to mention duplication in efforts) with few or no similar standards. The look and feel of an NGO can run the spectrum from an entirely volunteer organization raising money in \$5 contribution checks to the American Cancer Society with a staff in the thousands and \$1B in revenue.

This short orientation in the social sector helped frame the conversation we engaged in over the next two days—and created a rich context for the type of “user” world we must ultimately embrace, engage and partner with. It also helped us appreciate that in order to best leverage our work through NGOs, we must understand this user base in greater detail. We would also have to develop or adopt a robust set of metrics in any effective system to establish evidence that our actions would be useful. This partial and very incomplete understanding of a complex sector of the economy underpins our work and helped shape the system design that is treated in more depth in this report.

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

GIVING INNOVATION

In order to start to draft a model of collaboration between two sectors, it helped to get a quick glimpse of the work the Rockefeller Foundation is already pursuing to push the boundaries of what innovation models can do if thoughtfully applied to the social sector.

Through its Accelerating Innovation for Development initiative, the Rockefeller Foundation has been exploring a range of innovative models to increase impact and scale. Their first move into the “innovation space” was to consider broadcasting “A Prize”—taking a page from the famous Ansari X Prize, a space competition offering \$10 million for the first non-government organization to launch a reusable manned spacecraft into space. The Foundation’s intent: We’ll prize our way into solving intractable global problems. The realization: People who offer prizes generally have the least understanding of the problem—and that most prizes don’t lead to on-the-ground implementation.

An internal recalibration led the Foundation to a new challenge area: How to motivate and support the organizations they work with to adopt proven models of innovation. This led to their partnership with Innocentive, an open innovation community of smart people from around the world who solve tough private sector problems. The logic: Get a fair share of this community focusing on social sector problems, like designing an affordable solar powered device to prevent the spread of malaria or a 100% plant-oil cooking stove to replace Kerosene (an Innocentive challenge through one of the Rockefeller Foundation's grantees that has already been solved and had money awarded). With its fair share of hurdles, this experiment in crowdsourcing is still ongoing—but has been successful in one critical aspect. It has begun to reveal the power of open innovation, important mind shifts, to the grantee community.

Other experiments have led the Rockefeller Foundation to explore the power of user-based or user-driven innovation by partnering with the Rural Innovation Network (RIN) in India. RIN is fueled by an understanding that people in rural areas don't lack ingenuity; they lack access to the skills, networks and other resources to take their innovations to market. The mission the Foundation is backing is an "incubation" model to transform ideas with potential into reality, to spur local wealth creation through micro-enterprises—an idea with potential large scale impact.

Similarly, through the Foundation's partnership with Positive Deviance—an organization with a culturally appropriate development approach—the Foundation is testing, again, the power of scaling up "small," locally based solutions. The big takeaway for the group assembled was twofold: First, that the Rockefeller Foundation is demonstrating a real commitment to exploring ways of accelerating innovation for development. Secondly, that the Rockefeller Foundation holds a genuine understanding of the power of design—and the capacity to test different models *from the design community* if they're scalable, replicable and involve collective action from the industry.

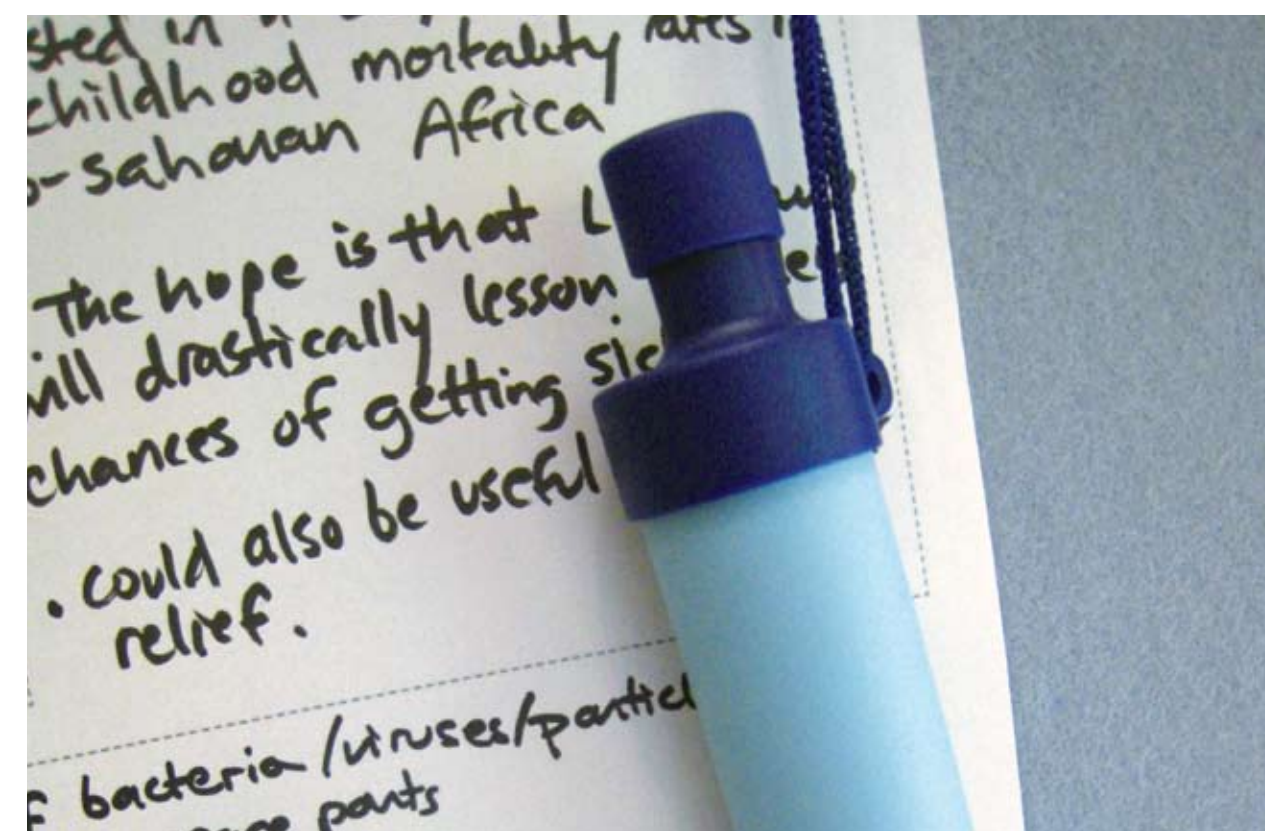
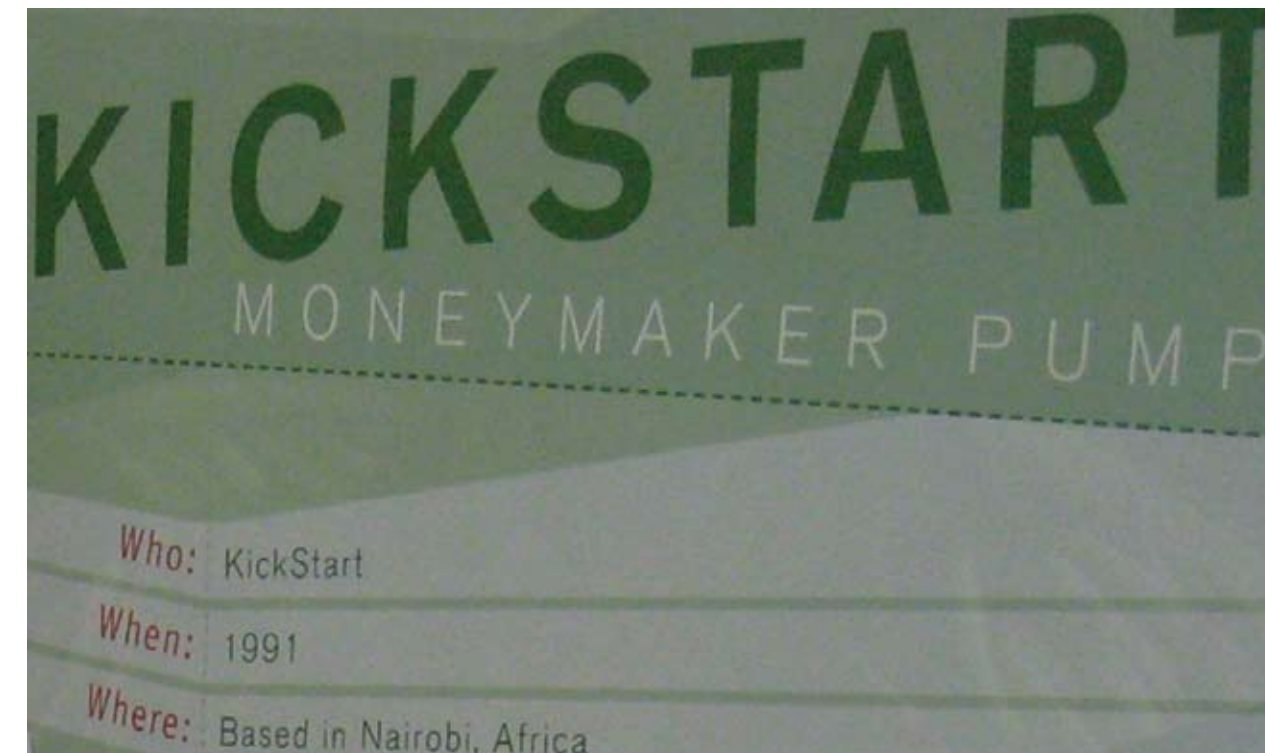


EXISTING MODELS WE SCANNED**MoneyMaker Pump/Kickstart****The Daily Dump/Poonam Bir Kasturi****Hippo Water Roller & Q-Drum****Healthy Cookies/Project Delta****Design That Matters****Lifeline Radio/Freeplay****GAME-CHANGING MODELS WE SCANNED****AdCouncil****Teach for America****Grameen Danone Foods/Social Businesses****Accenture Development Partnerships****Financial Sector/Low-Income Customers**

Innovation Scanning

The group spent the morning learning about the complex social sector world and the Foundation's current attempts to tap proven models of innovation to accelerate impact. To start constructing new ways to engage with the social sector, we reviewed a representative set of "existing models"—ways that the design community currently engages with this arena. This allowed us to focus our conversation around the components or "building blocks" that would be essential for what we would draft. We extracted instructive insights from examples such as Kickstart's MoneyMaker Pump to Poonam Bir Kasturi's Daily Dump in Bangalore, a product and service innovation to address the problem of compostable waste in dense urban areas. Analyzing what contributed to the successes and failures in various endeavors advanced our understanding in many ways.

Equally helpful was reviewing a set of "game-changing" models from other industries. For example, we analyzed the Ad Council's model of engaging the advertising industry, and its top talent, in the creation of some of the most iconic public service campaigns in advertising history—and in the process, developing a self-sustaining model that has endured for seven decades. We explored how the management consultant giant Accenture, through its relatively new Accenture Development Partnerships, is experimenting with a "low cost delivery program" that allows the deployment of their talent and services into the field (through a 3–6 month stint) to collaborate with partners in an ongoing manner. What we gained from this scanning was a clear-eyed understanding of key elements to consider—from the importance of a powerful talent attraction mechanism akin to that of Teach for America to an open innovation component in line with Innocentive. These became some of the key pieces that would ultimately inform and be included in the teams' ideas as we moved into developing our own concepts.





Concepts Developed

The group self-formed into working teams to address challenges and create new **innovation directions**. Four distinct ideas emerged—a combination of a big systemic plan and a set of micro actions to get there. Among the **range of ideas**, there were many consistent components, confirming a shared understanding of what was important.

Still, what emerged was less of a clearly defined and delineated Action Plan than a set of rough sketches of general direction and intent. More than anything, this helped the group understand and then articulate what actions (big and small) they could undertake to help advance, slowly but surely, practical involvement in the social sector. These commitments are outlined in more detail in the subsequent section, “Where We’re Heading: Participant Commitments.”

TEAM 1
DESIGN FOR SOCIAL IMPACT LAB

Concept in a nutshell:

The idea of a Knowledge Bank, archive or information clearinghouse became a clarion call in all the teams’ ideas and shorthand for a robust global archive of activities, knowledge and progress around topics.

The idea that emerged from several teams to different degrees was that of a Global Design Lab. An “in field” compact, powerful system of advanced design tools (ethnographic, prototyping, team work) that would permit visiting designers to be productive in the field.

The notion of efficacy was essential:

A rating system to track progress and impact of initiatives over time—to increase objectivity and transparency.

The creation of an ecosystem that combines an information hub, skill and knowledge transfer mechanism, and metrics that help measure the validity of outputs. The main idea: Create a continuous feedback loop of knowledge, experience and best practices from the Design Core “center” and among different actors in the system—NGOs, design firms, academia, corporations and the broader development community.

At the core is a “design capability,” an organizing body with a set of appropriate values that oversees a variety of issues, research, knowledge sharing—to gain a macro view of what works and what doesn’t work. Its focus is to identify key resources to solve specific problems, akin to the function of the AdCouncil, which oversees its network of stakeholders (media outlets, advertising agencies, “seeker” organizations). This model includes a significant “social impact index”—to monitor efficacy and develop a set of metrics for better communicating value.

And finally, the notion of the importance of transparency and ease of use became paramount. The resounding sense from the group as a whole was that the primary obstacle to engaging with the social sector is often the cumbersome amount of red tape, burdensome grant making bureaucracy, and phone book sized proposals that have to be drafted to secure institutional funding. Through the Knowledge Bank, a transparent and streamlined process would have to be developed.

Ultimately, the goal of this model is to provide thought leadership on the pioneering best practices of engaging in the social sector. To advance the pool of knowledge through many systematic PR efforts: articles, conferences, case studies, reality TV shows. To develop powerful collaborations. And to demonstrate, vividly and practically, that design can have measurable impact.



“It’s a fallacy that NGOs aren’t willing to spend money for design. Some can afford to pay 80% of our rates and some of us are willing to work for 60% of our rates. The challenge is: How do you put a structure around that? A first step is to see how many engagements we can make happen, put them together, make it an initiative and start to share the information.”

William Drenttel, Winterhouse/Design Observer Blog

