Testing Change Project Summary 2014-2023

Civil Society & Testing Change
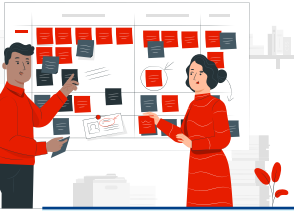
What the project was

Started in 2014 by a small group of colleagues from around the world looking to fill a missing gap in approaches to significant change and be one piece of the 'change' puzzle.

Multi-year testing period, crucial to significant change, a missing piece became our focus.

The goal was to develop and test new ways of operating that could be used by any civil society organization looking at how to adapt their organizational operations to address these significant changes.

Three working groups focused on youth engagement, impact assessment and leadership approaches.

Worked primarily virtually.

12 organizations participated in the community with other participants from NGO support organizations and academia as well.

What we learned

Someone has to be the **'pioneers'.** Focusing on change efforts is now more common but at the time the Testing Change project started in 2014 it was not as 'mainstream'. Be willing to be bold.

Holding space to discuss change initiatives with peers is critical to learning and adaptation but it is hard to find the time to do. Collaborative projects like this provide the space for reflection that day-to-day work doesn't allow.

Bonding a diverse community virtually Is not easy, but it is doable if done intentionally. One-on-one conversations outside the working group meetings and group work on collective online documents can help.

Paradigm change needs practice to change our mindsets and behavior patterns. This may call for strong and creative facilitation to encourage people to not fall into accustomed tracks but continually step off of them.

Needed for multi-year initiatives
- High-level organizational commitment (that is sustained through leadership changes),
- Accountability to multiple stakeholders,
- Resources to make the time for change initiatives
- Ways to bring people in and out of the process
- People who have a focus on keeping the momentum and priority level; efforts valued.

> " Participants in the project noted the importance of shared learning, space to reflect, and having peers and partners outside of their traditional networks all to have been important to strengthening their own work as change leaders.

Anabel Cruz
Founder Director of the
Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD)

> " Reflective spaces and sharing with others going through similar challenges is rare but yet so key. When there is more clarity around our work and systems are improved, new opportunities open up.

Janet Mawiyoo
Former CEO of the
Kenya Community Development Foundation