

# INNOVATION EXCHANGE

## Supporting third sector innovation through brokerage

By Innovation Exchange. Learning support from Margaret Bolton and Jean Barclay. Edited by Marta Maretich.

# CONTENTS

- 3** Headlines
- 5** Introduction and background to Innovation Exchange
- 11** Innovation Exchange activities:
  - 12** Festivals of Ideas
  - 19** Next Practice Programme
  - 29** Innovation Exchange website
- 31** Conclusion and next steps
- 32** Endnotes

# HEADLINES

From recruiters to estate agents to bankers, brokerage is big business. Within the private sector, innovation brokerage – bringing people together to innovate – is well developed. But what is the power of brokerage to drive social innovation and support much needed social change? These questions are at the heart of Innovation Exchange.

Innovation Exchange is a pilot programme primarily funded by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office. In its work to 31 March 2010, the Exchange is aspiring to demonstrate the effectiveness of brokerage in supporting third sector innovation through its three core programmes:

**1. Festivals of Ideas** are events where third sector organisations, commissioners of public services and social investors come together to focus on solutions to pressing social problems.

- The Exchange has developed, refined and successfully tested the Festival format and facilitated three events so far, with four more scheduled to December 2009.
- Key features of the format include partnership with public sector bodies ensuring that specific priorities are addressed and the right decision-makers are gathered in the room. A national Call for Ideas surfaces high-potential innovators from the third sector. Strong event design, high-quality facilitation and follow-up support cross-sector conversation and the development of next steps.

- Participants from the third and public sectors are enthused by Festivals and their potential to support collaboration around new ideas. Innovation Exchange is monitoring the development of relationships formed at Festivals to assess their impact.

**2. Next Practice Programme** brings together 15 innovative third sector projects and offers them intensive brokerage support to help them grow. Projects are working in two priority areas: supporting independent living and excluded young people.

- Projects were selected from a pool of over 200 applicants for their potential to develop and grow innovation with possible system-wide significance.
- While funding has been granted to some projects, the programme emphasises support and sees the main benefits of participation as non-financial.
- The programme is trialling brokerage practices, including: connecting project leaders to expert consultants, coaches and mentors for short periods of development work; creating opportunities for peer networking within the programme; linking projects to other individuals, agencies and sources of support; designing and facilitating meetings, seminars and workshops to address common needs across the programme; and engaging participants, supporters and collaborators in the programme's innovations.

- Though it is early days, participants suggest the programme is helping them to draw attention to their work, open doors and gain leverage with potential supporters and funders; spot opportunities and build networks; and connect productively with like-minded peers. In some cases, new partnerships and service offers have been developed with the support of Innovation Exchange.

**3. Innovation Exchange website** is an online forum that seeks to harness the power of social networking for social innovation. The site is a place for innovators, commissioners and investors to share thoughts, ideas and contacts for social innovation, supporting them to collaborate on new projects. Highlighting people's interests and work, the site aspires to become a who's who of third sector innovation.

- Launched in May 2009, the website is in the early stages of its community development. The Exchange is actively working to support its growth and integrate its use into other work strands.

Innovation Exchange is now focused on delivering a larger number of Festivals of Ideas, expanding the use of its website and supporting its Next Practice projects to grow their work. As it does so, it is continuing to develop and test innovation brokerage practices which have the potential to support the creation of significantly better public services.

# INTRODUCTION

Innovation Exchange is a consortium led by The Innovation Unit (an independent innovation consultancy) in partnership with the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) and Headshift, a website company. Its aim is to demonstrate the effectiveness of brokerage in supporting innovation in the third sector.

Innovation Exchange acts as a broker between third sector organisations, commissioners of public services and social investors to try to ensure that high potential innovative third sector ideas are supported and developed. Its work is based on the premise that a major barrier to third sector innovations coming to market is the lack of connection between the third sector and the bodies that could commission and fund an innovation. To address this it runs:

- **Festivals of Ideas:** Events where third sector organisations, commissioners and social investors come together to focus on finding solutions to pressing social problems.
- **Next Practice Programme:** A programme that brokers support for 15 innovative third sector projects to help them grow.
- **Innovation Exchange website:** An online forum for sharing and developing ideas for social innovation.

Practical in approach, Innovation Exchange is also establishing an evidence base around the role of brokers and brokerage for third sector innovation. As it tests and refines its three core programmes (Festivals of Ideas, the Next Practice Programme and Innovation Exchange website), it is developing

tools, methods and models that can be adapted by other brokers to foster and sustain social innovation.

This paper charts the progress of Innovation Exchange so far and captures some of the key lessons learned from its engagement with third sector innovators, public service commissioners and managers, social investors and policymakers. It explores the techniques used by the Exchange to make its brokerage events (Festivals of Ideas) occasions where participants from different sectors can form robust relationships that nurture innovation. It details how the Exchange has used coaching services, consultancy and access to networks to support the third sector projects in its Next Practice Programme. And it looks at the practical challenges of establishing an online community – the Innovation Exchange website – that encourages the free exchange of ideas and information.

## Background to Innovation Exchange

The Government's 2006 publication, *Partnerships in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement in public services*,<sup>1</sup> set out a vision for the role of third sector organisations as catalysts for service transformation. It recognised their potential to change public sector services through campaigning, advocacy and by modelling more effective approaches. In 2007, the Cabinet Office tendered for a partner to pilot new approaches to “fostering, exchanging and replicating third sector innovation”. A consortium led by The Innovation Unit won the contract. Innovation Exchange was launched in October 2007 and its first full-time director started work the following January. The main funder of the Exchange is the Cabinet Office.

The original design for Innovation Exchange was based on work undertaken by The Innovation Unit. It adapted core methodologies trialled by The Unit to strengthen innovation in education in a major project for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). These included two primary approaches developed by The Unit:

*Innovation Networks:* Practices encouraging social relationships between a large number of actors – innovators, public service commissioners and managers, social investors and policy makers – who were seeking innovative solutions to a specific problem.

*Next Practice Programmes:* Programmes which identify, develop and support a select group of high potential innovators.

Innovation Exchange carried important learning from The Innovation Unit into the new field of third sector innovation brokerage. Overall, the Exchange has found that the basic premises of The Unit's design remain relevant to its work. However, there are important differences between the educational and third sectors that call for a different approach to supporting innovation; one in which brokerage emerges as the most important practice.

**Diversity:** In contrast to the education sector where schools are monopoly service providers, the third sector is characterised by diversity: there are many different kinds of organisations providing many different services. The challenge for brokers is to identify high potential innovations arising from a multitude of third sector organisations.

**Disconnection:** There are often weak relationships between third sector innovators and public service commissioners – both lack the capacity and incentive to come together to develop innovation.

**Competition:** Third sector organisations operate in a market where they compete for funds in the form of grants, contracts and income from sales.

**Insecurity:** For public sector organisations such as schools, a clear barrier to innovation is a lack of freedom. In the third sector, however, the problem is lack of security – not red tape from above but a lack of a safety net below. Innovators in the third sector lack the security of income to ensure that innovation can be funded and sustained.

To successfully broker innovation for the third sector, Innovation Exchange has had to continually review, evaluate and refine its approach and deepen its understanding of the sector's culture and situation. It has also had to cultivate a deeper understanding of the public and third sectors and stakeholders who work with the programme. The emphasis on a disciplined approach to methodology and evaluation, carried over from The Innovation Unit, has helped the Exchange conduct this development process effectively. Innovation Exchange staff members who worked on the team for the evaluation of the Next Practice in Education programme brought significant expertise in the methodology underpinning the original programme.

## Brokering between the third and public sectors

Innovation brokers have existed for many years in the areas of science, technology and private sector business. Although they are relatively new to the third and public sectors, there is growing recognition of the role of brokers in supporting the development of innovation to meet social needs.

Matthew Horne, in his publication *Honest Brokers: Brokering innovation in public services*,<sup>2</sup> identifies a growing number of social innovation brokers, including Innovation Exchange. The variety of their work and involvement shows how the idea of innovation brokerage is taking hold and being adapted to new sectors and situations.

### SOCIAL INNOVATION BROKERS — SOME EXAMPLES

**The Young Foundation** undertakes research to identify and understand unmet social needs and develops practical initiatives and institutions to meet them. For example, it runs the Health Launchpad, a social venture fund that develops promising ideas into ventures through intensive hands-on support, financing and access to strong networks. The Young Foundation works on a wide range of social policy issues including, health, education and housing.

**Futurebuilders** is a Treasury fund that provides investment to help voluntary and community organisations that work on high priority issues to win contracts to deliver public services. It provides loans and quasi-equity. It offers consultancy support as part of its investment packages and gives development grants to organisations not yet investment-ready.

**UnLtd** provides individual social entrepreneurs with small amounts of funding and support to develop their enterprises. UnLtd Ventures, the in-house consultancy division, provides business support to selected social entrepreneurs, helping them to scale up or replicate their organisations. While no finance is provided, UnLtd brokers investment relationships between its clients and a range of funding providers.

**Ashoka** funds a global network of 1700 elected social innovators with system-changing ideas. Each entrepreneur is provided with a three-year living stipend, top quality business, legal and communications support plus access to a worldwide network of Ashoka Fellows. All Ashoka's funding comes from private sources.

Innovation Exchange is distinct among social innovation brokers in its commitment to transforming public service delivery by harnessing the creative force of third sector innovation. It works in the space between sectors with an aim to bring third sector innovators into contact with the social entrepreneurs and public bodies that can fund and support innovation.

*Honest Brokers* argues that innovation brokers are particularly needed in the context of public service delivery because of:

- the difficulties of forming relationships across institutional, sector and geographical boundaries, particularly when the issues are complex and cut across public sector silos
- the barriers created by monopolies or quasi monopolies in public service provision which are difficult for individual innovators to overcome
- the difficulties of raising capital for investment in social innovation.

These challenges have been evident in the everyday work of Innovation Exchange. For example, experts involved in discussions with the Exchange on brokerage have pointed to the difficulty of promoting innovation:

*Fitting innovation into a public service delivery context is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.*

*The way the system operates, procurement processes and committee cycles rub up against innovation.*

Innovators and other brokers taking part in these discussions have said that they experience public sector processes as slow and cumbersome. At an Innovation Exchange event which simulated the co-production of a service specification with commissioners and providers, innovators found the language and approach taken by commissioners alienating and difficult to understand. Meanwhile commissioners lacked confidence about how to best identify good provision or work with providers to develop new services.

In contrast to the public sector, the third sector has significant potential for innovation in service delivery because third sector organisations:

- are generally formed and governed by those requiring services and/or their carers
- are independent and therefore often have greater scope for experimentation and risk
- often provide highly personalised services which may achieve better outcomes
- often provide services that cut across public sector service silos.<sup>3</sup>

However, as this paper points out, third sector organisations often lack the capacity and resources, including the knowledge and skills, to fully exploit this potential. Perhaps because of this, much innovation in the third and public sectors is incremental (an adjustment in a service or product that achieves better outcomes<sup>4</sup>) rather than systemic (something that changes the way the system operates).

The Office of the Third Sector argues that innovators in the third sector face a number of challenges in developing and scaling up innovation:

*First, without good intermediaries, innovators within the third sector can be isolated from each other, missing out on vital inspiration, shared intelligence and collaboration. Second, there is often a significant disconnect between those with resources facing problems that need solving and the third sector innovators with solutions... Third sector innovators can lack the practical knowledge and experience to take innovations to the next level and lack the advice and dedicated support they need. Lastly, third sector innovators can lack the financial resources to grow their work.<sup>5</sup>*

The lack of intermediaries is a particular issue in this context because third sector organisations and public sector commissioning processes alike are diverse and disconnected. There are 171,000 general charities in the UK and 45,000 public authorities.<sup>6</sup> As a result, as it can be in other sectors with these characteristics, it is difficult for people to come together around innovation. Investment is a particular challenge for the third sector because it lacks both the flexible, core funding from which many public institutions benefit and the ability to raise money through equity in the way of private companies.

In one of the few academic studies on the subject, Osborne, Chew and McLaughlin<sup>7</sup> argue that the most important factor in the third sector's capacity to innovate is its relationship with the public sector. This is hardly surprising – the public sector procures around £125bn worth of goods and services each year, so the effects of this money can dwarf other initiatives.<sup>8</sup> This is why the predominant approach of the public sector to supporting innovation is to demand it; to create incentives for innovation and hope innovators respond.

## **Special brokerage role of Innovation Exchange**

Innovation Exchange has found that, for the third sector, demand from the public sector isn't always enough. The sector needs support and partnerships to make innovations that change the way public services are delivered. It is clear from the Exchange's activities to date that the complexity of the environment and the fact that it is in flux creates significant opportunities for an innovation broker to help the public and third sector innovate together by:

- providing a translation service between third sector innovators, commissioners and social investors since each group, to one degree or another, has their own language and distinct way of operating
- creating occasions for problem solving conversations between third sector innovators and commissioners to seed ideas
- championing particular ideas with real potential (the crowded third sector market is difficult for commissioners to negotiate)
- modelling for commissioners the role that they might develop in the future as innovation brokers
- influencing the market and making it more conducive to third sector innovation.

To fulfil this role effectively, Innovation Exchange has put energy into developing its own strong networks. Organisations which have worked with our programmes have observed that the Exchange has the power to reach beyond the usual suspects through its connections with think tanks, policy experts, consultants, community and social enterprise organisations and others working in and around the third sector. Team

experience of working in local government similarly brings an understanding of public sector bodies and an ability to negotiate them effectively to find the right contacts.

One Next Practice project in early stage interviews referred to Innovation Exchange as: *Like an extended professional team, supporting us with broader consultancy... an office next to ours spotting opportunities.*

## **UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT**

Innovation Exchange has undertaken a number of activities to enable it to understand the environment in which it operates:

- A *Meet the Innovators* event at which commissioners and innovative third sector projects were asked to develop a specification for a particular service
- Scoping research ahead of Festivals of Ideas, interviewing commissioners about key barriers to and opportunities for collaborating with the third sector
- Two two-day Insight Journeys, which brought commissioners, innovators and investors together to develop ideas on how they could work better together
- A meeting on brokerage at which innovative third sector projects and innovation brokers discussed commissioning processes
- Partnership work with commissioning agencies to develop Festivals of Ideas
- Bilateral meetings with key commissioners and their representatives
- Ongoing research activities and network building in the third sector and public sector

# INNOVATION EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

From its starting point in learning from The Innovation Unit's education work, Innovation Exchange has taken core ideas and, using input from participants and experts, developed practical methods of innovation brokerage for the third sector.

Engagement has centred around three basic types of activities:

- Festivals of Ideas
- Next Practice Programme
- Innovation Exchange website.

# FESTIVALS OF IDEAS

A Festival of Ideas is a structured event where public sector commissioners and social investors are invited to meet third sector innovators and learn about their projects. These events are carefully planned by Innovation Exchange and are designed around a core theme. Participants are hand-selected to produce the right balance from the various groups. Skilled facilitators shape the day and special techniques are used to create the optimal environment for participants to network, learn and form productive relationships.

The purpose of Festivals is to facilitate networking, ideas generation and collaboration between the third and public sectors. They are participatory, energetic and creative events, hence the title *festival* rather than *seminar* or *conference*. Designed to be stimulating and engaging for participants, they also aspire to be “more than an event”. They are designed and facilitated to help participants make new connections and build alliances around ideas that will continue to grow after the event is over.

Unlike many third sector events, the emphasis of a Festival is not on facilitating funding discussions but on supporting “upstream” engagement around the design and delivery of public services. Innovation Exchange wanted to create a purposeful and productive process that would enable the public sector to connect and

work collaboratively with the best of third sector innovation. Though conversations about funding are intended to be part of the mix, Festivals aspire to unlock resources in a much broader sense: to mobilise collective knowledge and energy of their participants towards developing better solutions to pressing social problems.

## Evolving the Festival format

Innovation Exchange has so far run three Festivals of Ideas and used each to refine its approach. The first two events were national in scope and addressed the Exchange’s priority areas: independent living and supporting excluded young people. Both were attended by between 60-70 people, a mix of commissioners, social investors and third sector innovators, from around the country.

Two national Festivals of Ideas were largely popular with participants, who enjoyed the distinctive event design, the mix of people and the energy it created. Participants commented:

*Great to push ideas sharing for the sector.*

*There was a sense of excitement about the different format and the mix of people.*

*A good and welcome start that will prove its real worth over time as relationships mature.*

## FESTIVAL OF IDEAS TIMELINE

**30 April 2008:** Festival of Ideas: Independent Living: National Event: London

**7 May 2008:** Festival of Ideas: Supporting Excluded Young People: National Event: London

**November 2008 – April 2009:** Review and development with Live I Work

**24 March 2009:** Festival of Ideas: Addressing Young People’s Challenging Behaviour:  
Regional Pilot with Education Leeds: Leeds

Innovation Exchange collected participant feedback from the first two events using response forms and follow-up phone calls. This feedback gave a clear direction for strengthening the format. The Exchange took this to Live|Work, a service designer, who helped develop a tighter, more effective format with the following features:

**A regional focus:** The national Festivals were popular and drew high quality participants from around the country, but the strongest strain of feedback was, *This is great, but can you do it in Bristol?* The national scope made it difficult for commissioners to think through how they might collaborate with innovators, even informally. A regional approach supported collaboration and was a cornerstone of the new format.

**Co-delivery with a public sector partner:** The networks and influence of a public sector partner, along with their identification of the most relevant priorities, ensure relevance and secure engagement in the Festival process. Planning the first two events, Innovation Exchange found it hugely time consuming to locate public sector decision-makers and successfully encourage attendance. Working with a partner made this much easier.

**Surface existing ideas:** The national Festivals sought to generate new ideas on the day using a group facilitation technique known as Open Space Technology. However, there are already a lot of great ideas in the third sector and it is more efficient to identify these ahead of the event using a Call for Ideas. The strongest respondents are invited to pitch on the day, a process that allows commissioners and social investors to learn about well-developed and even operational projects with a focus on further development.

**Provide more support for networking:**

Participants at the first two events offered the clear message that creative conversations needed more discipline. A loose format allowed certain groups to dominate and encouraged commissioners and innovators to cluster in safe, culturally similar groups. The event format is now structured to ensure that participants engage with the range of people in the room. Seating plans and discussion groups are carefully designed to promote mixing while still giving participants freedom to work with their favourite ideas and people.

**Draw out collective wisdom:** Innovation brokers don't have to be experts in the issues to make Festivals successful; this was an important lesson for Innovation Exchange. The trick is to identify the real experts and invite them to contribute to the event. For the national events, the Exchange commissioned research and conducted immersive fieldwork to learn about the challenges of independent living and supporting excluded young people. The improved design calls for Innovation Exchange to use in-depth conversations with participants to develop an Issues Map before the event. This is used on the day to focus thinking about key challenges and share common understandings.

**Get the right balance of participants:**

Feedback highlighted the importance of achieving a balance of numbers between innovators, commissioners and social investors: a roughly even representation from these groups was the ideal. The Festival revamp called for more energy to be devoted to engaging commissioners and social investors and to shaping and targeting the offer to increase attendance from these groups.

## WHO WAS THERE?

	Enabling Independent Living (National event, London)	Supporting Excluded Young People (National event, London)	Addressing young people's challenging behaviour (Regional event, Leeds)
Commissioners	8	9	12
Innovators	37	38	22*
Social Investors	8	8	10
Total	67	63	44

\* 22 innovators were present, representing 14 separate third sector projects.

### Festival of Ideas regional pilot

Innovation Exchange piloted its new approach to Festivals of Ideas at a regional event in Leeds. Third sector innovators in general enjoyed the event and left enthused by the opportunities that exist for the third sector to work in collaboration with the public sector. They reported making useful connections with commissioners and potential funders and were particularly buoyed by:

*The opportunity for funders and commissioners to talk to projects and ask key questions as well as meet open, passionate people.*

*The opportunity to talk to some key players and people with a lot of experience in the field.*

*The potential for partnerships.*

Innovators also reported that the feedback they received at the event had been very useful in developing their thinking and building support for their projects:

*All the feedback on our project was extremely positive. I'm sure it will be helpful in marketing this project further in the region.*

*We gained new insights to develop the project in new ways or sectors.*

*We made good connections with local authorities. This is often difficult for us.*

Commissioners and social investors also reported leaving with greater levels of enthusiasm about the potential to work with the third sector on innovative projects. Many commented on the excellent work being delivered by the third sector and were inspired by the quality of conversation the event enabled. As one commissioner commented:

*It was refreshing for me as I've never been to an event like this before. I really got into the pitching and responding session and it made me wonder whether local authorities could do something similar to engage with the third sector. I do see this fitting into our work.*

For some commissioners, the event has led to new relationships. Commissioners had praise for particular projects and post-event phone calls revealed that three commissioners had already been in touch with some of the innovative third sector projects at the event to examine possible opportunities and were also linking these projects with other public sector colleagues. One who praised the Festival highly has already agreed to become a commissioner mentor to an innovative third sector project and has invited another project to participate in a professional development workshop for teachers, which will help it to make more valuable connections across schools in the region.

The function of Festival of Ideas as a marketplace was underlined in a number of ways in Leeds. Firstly, the social investors present made it clear that they were looking for good projects to finance. Secondly, participants were allowed to choose which innovative third sector projects they heard more from in the afternoon. The sessions that some projects offered were swamped and generated significant enthusiasm and commitment. Others had no takers or very few takers and discussions lacked energy. Notably those whose sessions were not well received tended to recognise that this was important learning and that they needed to reconsider either their project or their pitch.

### **FESTIVAL FEEDBACK AT A GLANCE**

- All participants met at least one new person whom they wanted to contact after the event.
- 86% met more than three such people and 29% met more than five.
- Follow-up calls two weeks after the event revealed that 74% of participants interviewed had already been in contact with people they had met at the event to initiate work.
- Enjoyment ratings were consistently high: participants gave the experience a median score of 4.5 out of a possible 5.
- Participants consistently reported that the event had made a positive contribution to their work: a median rating of 4 out of 5.
- Innovators reporting on the extent to which Festival of Ideas had helped generate interest in their projects and the extent to which feedback and challenge would enhance their projects, responded with a high median rating of 4 out of 5.

### **COMMENT FROM CHRIS EDWARDS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION LEEDS**

“The Festival of Ideas was a brilliant way to bring together public, private and third sector colleagues to explore and share innovative approaches to dealing with one of our really difficult issues. We have been able to explore ideas and solutions that have a positive impact on some of our most challenging young people. Our thanks go to Innovation Exchange.”

## Attention to detail

Because Festivals are all about building relationships, their success depends on Innovation Exchange's attention to every participant. By focusing on individuals and fostering detailed knowledge of who they are and what they need, the Exchange is able to help innovators, commissioners and social entrepreneurs alike get the most out of the experience. Here are some examples of small but important actions:

- Innovation Exchange develops a photo gallery and contact list of participants with summary information about their responsibilities or innovation projects. Participants highly value this who's who list. One even suggested that it's worth coming to the event for this document alone.
- Particular attention is paid at events to ensuring that people are warmly greeted and to checking during the day that they feel they are getting what they wanted from it. The Exchange contact invitees in advance to explore priorities going into the Festival and use various ways to help them achieve these goals during the event. Afterwards they follow up to be sure expectations were met.
- Innovators attending Festivals of Ideas use a presentation format developed by Innovation Exchange and Live|Work in consultation with commissioners and social investors to help them prepare five-minute pitches for the Festival. Pitches are filmed at the event so that they can be made accessible on the web and to a wider range of stakeholders afterwards.
- Innovation Exchange tailors its communication to the various participants. There are different processes for engaging innovators, commissioners and investors. It has also developed a set of 'Rules of Engagement' in consultation with previous event participants. These help commissioners, social investors and innovators have more productive conversations. Advice includes: 'Tell it straight,' 'Don't assume that everyone knows the jargon or shares your network'.
- The Festival format encourages participants to identify next steps in the development of relationships and work by the end of the day. Participants are invited to share this with the Exchange, so that it can consider ways of supporting the budding relationship.
- Innovation Exchange systematically calls participants two weeks and then three months after the event to monitor the development of relationships, ideas and projects. These calls also have the effect of prompting participants to pursue leads generated at the event.

## UNIQUE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ON FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

“The Festival of Ideas was a great opportunity for Unique Social Enterprise to have a forum in which to present its ideas. The event allowed us to present our Unique Young People’s Project to service commissioners, funders and fellow social enterprises, many of whom we would not have had the opportunity to meet with outside of this context. This resulted in much valuable feedback and contacts being made. Following on from this event we were able to set up meetings with commissioning organisations such as the Foyer Movement who were interested in the potential for youth cafes being set up within their facilities. It led directly to Unique building on a contact we made at the event with the Tudor Trust. This resulted in Unique submitting a funding bid to the Tudor Trust which, after a lot of hard work, was successful.”

### Festival of Ideas – Next steps

Feedback from the first follow up calls with participants of the Leeds regional pilot suggests some other ways to improve the Festival:

- Better briefing in advance for innovative third sector projects, commissioners and social investors about their role at the event and what contribution they are expected to make. Third sector innovators referred specifically to the need for clarity about the format and what was expected of them and for ideas for questions they might ask participants to enable them to prompt high quality feedback on their project.
- Inviting more large, well-established third sector organisations who might be able to share resources or develop projects in partnership with smaller innovative third sector organisations.
- Greater use of the knowledge and skills of innovative third sector projects – some would welcome more involvement in running the event.
- Greater clarity about how Innovation Exchange will support relationship and project development after the events.

This final point about follow-up support to participants is an area that Innovation Exchange regards as particularly important. While serving learning objectives, post-event phone calls also seem to be playing an important role in facilitating communication between participants and prompting actions. Programme co-ordinator Raj Cheema, who is making these calls, reflected:

*I find myself saying to people, you might want to call so and so because they're really keen to get in touch with you. In one case, a commissioner was trying to get in touch with an innovator and the email kept bouncing back. We sorted that out. I spoke to the innovator that afternoon to check that he'd received emails from the three individuals I'd spoken to already who said they'd tried to contact him. But I'll be encouraging him to be a bit more pro-active as there's a lot of interest in his project and he needs to take advantage of it.*

One innovation project made the same point in a follow-up call:

*I think more of what I would term 'active brokerage' by Innovation Exchange would be highly desirable... Some of the things you fed back to me today, I simply could not have known otherwise. It also acts as a valuable prompt and can make the difference between contacting some one and not.*

This experience is strengthening the Innovation Exchange's thinking about the importance of follow-up with event participants and prompting reflection on what more it might do to help develop relationships and projects after the events. With its new website up and running, the Exchange is exploring its potential to support the work of Festivals. In the future, it will give innovative projects a web presence and establish an online forum for participants to reconnect, as well as develop and publicise work. In preparation for its next scheduled Festival on Better Mental Health in Manchester in September, the Exchange is developing its practices for post-event follow-up.

Innovation Exchange is also thinking of testing an online version of Festival of Ideas and developing the Festival into a model that it can sell as a product or service to public sector bodies or large charities and foundations who want to bring together different groups around an innovation challenge.

# NEXT PRACTICE PROGRAMME

Innovation Exchange is testing its most intensive form of innovation brokerage through its Next Practice Programme. Based on The Innovation Unit's Next Practice Programme in Education, Innovation Exchange's programme was launched in November 2008. Currently it provides tailor-made support to 15 innovative third sector projects working in two priority areas: independent living and supporting excluded young people.

The Next Practice Programme is different from the majority of third sector funding programmes run by charitable foundations or public sector bodies in that it focuses on supporting innovation projects with potentially system-wide significance. The programme trials a range of brokerage practices for their effectiveness in helping third sector leaders to grow innovation, including:

- Connecting project leaders to expert consultants, coaches and mentors for short periods of intensive development work.
- Creating opportunities for peer networking within the programme, online and face-to-face.
- Linking projects to other individuals, agencies and sources of support and spotting opportunities as they arise.
- Designing and facilitating meetings, seminars and workshops to address common needs across the programme.
- Engaging participants, supporters and collaborators in the programme's innovations.

The Next Practice Programme is also distinctive in that it emphasises support rather than funding. Funding has indeed been provided to some projects (the bulk of which was made available through NESTA, with a small grant from the Department of Health) but Innovation Exchange promotes the main benefits of participation as non-financial. Participants are offered "a little bit of funding and a lot of support". For some organisations familiar with traditional grants schemes, the advantages of involvement were not initially clear, but all projects have since acknowledged that participation is providing valuable benefits.

## Selecting Next Practice projects

Innovation Exchange issued a call for expressions of interest in the Next Practice Programme in June of 2008. This was sent out to innovative third sector projects working in Innovation Exchange's two initial priority areas of independent living and supporting excluded young people. Over 200 expressions of interest were received by the deadline. Innovation Exchange's Director, John Craig, did a first sift through the many responses and came up with a long list of potential candidates. This was scored against established criteria by an assessment team including John Craig, Valerie Hannon (The Innovation Unit) and Siobhan Edwards and Richard Braham (NESTA).

The projects were assessed on how well they met the following criteria:

- degree of innovation
- scalability
- degree of collaborative working
- evidence of need and market opportunity
- sustainability
- feasibility.

Interesting points to note are:

- To achieve top scores on **innovation**, proposals had to have the potential to be compelling innovation with system-wide significance.
- To achieve top scores on **evidence of need and market opportunity**, projects were expected to have a clear strategy for taking the work forward.
- To achieve top scores on **feasibility** projects were expected to be such that Innovation Exchange brokerage support could make a real difference to their success.

A scale was developed to aid scoring and the highest scoring projects from each theme, 16 for each, were then invited to attend a Discussion Day in London.

At Discussion Days, projects pitched their innovations to two expert panels, one made up of specialists in innovation, the other of experts in the focus area (independent living or supporting excluded young people) including commissioners, service users or their representatives. Projects made two separate presentations and worked in pairs to encourage learning between sessions and projects. “Hosts” were organised on both days to facilitate connections between the projects. The intention was that the day would prove useful to projects regardless of whether or not they were eventually chosen for the programme. Participant response forms showed that projects valued the day for the quality of feedback and the networking opportunities it provided.

At the Discussion Days panel members scored projects on the basis of:

- how innovative they were
- the potential importance of their work to the theme
- the appropriateness of the work to the people it was designed to help
- likely demand
- potential to generate learning about third sector innovation.

Having taken into account the feedback provided by panels, the assessment team then chose the projects which would be invited to join the Next Practice Programme.

1

<b>Next Practice projects</b>	<b>What is the project doing?</b>	<b>What support is Innovation Exchange offering?</b>
<b>Enabled by Design</b>	Building an online community to contribute to the development of more functional and attractive assistive technology.	Coaching and consultancy in the form of business development support and mentoring. Allocated financial support from the Department of Health.
<b>Slivers of Time – Slivers: Person-to-Person support</b>	Using the web to enable individuals to contract directly with one another to provide social care services.	Coaching and consultancy to help build knowledge and connections for the project in the social care sector. Allocated financial support from NESTA.
<b>Food Access UK – East London Food Access</b>	Supporting community health and wellbeing by delivering fresh fruit and vegetables to estates with no other access to fresh food.	Coaching and consultancy to support service development and branding. Allocated financial support from NESTA.
<b>Hi-Tech Family – Brandon Trust and Symbol Family Support Services</b>	Using assistive technology to enable parents with learning difficulties to be safe, loving parents.	Coaching and consultancy for product development and marketing. Allocated financial support from NESTA.
<b>Life:unlimited – Speaking Up</b>	Harnessing the power of co-production and peer-support to provide a sustainable brokerage service to personal budget holders.	Coaching and consultancy for business planning and cost modelling. Allocated financial support from the Department of Health.

<b>Next Practice projects</b>	<b>What is the project doing?</b>	<b>What support is Innovation Exchange offering?</b>
<b>Clean Slate Training &amp; Employment</b>	Creating work opportunities for people often excluded from the labour market.	Coaching and support to undertake research to enhance its understanding of issues related to the employment of workless people.
<b>Back to Life – TimeBank</b>	Providing mentoring to young men recovering from mental illness.	Coaching and mentoring.
<b>horsesmouth.co.uk</b>	Connecting people seeking support and guidance with others willing to provide it freely through an online mentoring network for life, work and learning.	Brokering and relationship building to help to attract new charity partners.
<b>The Academy – Dance United</b>	Using dance-based alternative education to build the self-confidence and self-discipline of young offenders.	Coaching and consultancy focusing on marketing and social franchising. Allocated financial support from NESTA.
<b>InLiving – Creative North</b>	Developing mobile phone games to engage young people and help them to learn life skills.	Coaching and consultancy for product development and sales.

## 3

<b>Next Practice projects</b>	<b>What is the project doing?</b>	<b>What support is Innovation Exchange offering?</b>
<b><i>Making the case – The Prince’s Trust and the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation</i></b>	Creating a campaign to turn mentoring for young offenders from sporadic provision to a universal service across the country.	Coaching and consultancy support to facilitate and develop the partnership driving the campaign. Allocated financial support from NESTA.
<b><i>CyberMentors – BeatBullying</i></b>	Tackling bullying in schools by training young people to work as online peer mentors.	Coaching and consultancy for strategic marketing and franchising. Allocated financial support from The Innovation Unit.
<b><i>58:12 Properties – Aquila Way</i></b>	Bringing together private landlords and trained volunteers to help vulnerable people to find and retain rented homes.	Coaching and consultancy for business planning and formalisation of practice.
<b><i>Get the shout out! – ESSA and Phoenix Education Trust</i></b>	Working with young people not in education or training to support youth leadership and build young people’s confidence.	Coaching and mentoring.
<b><i>Community Banking Platform – Riverside Credit Union</i></b>	Providing financial services to people unable to access basic commercial banking facilities, strengthening a community from within.	Consultancy to find and engage investors.

## Tailored support schemes

Innovation Exchange's support plans for projects in the programme have common elements, but each one is tailored to the special needs of the project and its people. The participants identified their own development needs and the funding they required in their initial applications to the programme. The Discussion Days gave the selection panels the opportunity to explore these more deeply and in more detail. At the point of invitation, Innovation Exchange negotiated and agreed packages of support with each project. For some projects this included grants of up to £50k from a total fund of £225k, and an intensive period of expert consultancy. All projects were granted leadership coaching, access to Innovation Exchange's programme of events and other brokerage support.

## Coaching

All 15 projects have been given access to coaching to bolster confidence levels in leaders of complex change. Coach in a Box, a company that provides cost-effective executive coaching by telephone, has been working with Innovation Exchange to design coaching programmes specifically for third sector leaders. A focus group was held at the end of July 2008 with five leaders of third sector organisations. It resulted in the creation of two new coaching products:

- *Third sector entrepreneur* for leaders of start-up enterprises who may be leading or innovating for the first time.
- *Third sector leader* for leaders with significant experience, and often significant organisational responsibility, who want to develop their leadership skills.

Two people from each Next Practice project (in most cases the project leader and the CEO of the organisation) are currently receiving coaching.

## Consulting

The external evaluation of the Next Practice in Education Programme<sup>9</sup> found that one-to-one consultancy strengthened innovation projects in a number of ways. Project leaders valued external consultancy focused on innovation because it supported them to:

- develop confidence to take risks and lead in uncertain territory
- keep focused and maintain momentum through the pressures of their day job
- clarify thinking, see new possibilities and identify opportunities
- design, lead and implement change
- create new partnerships and connect to new ideas, knowledge, networks and support.

Learning from the Next Practice in Education Programme, Innovation Exchange has matched its projects with consultants who have expert skills in areas where support is needed, for example, marketing, service development or business planning. Consultants have also been tasked to work as "connectors" linking projects to the knowledge and networks they need to develop and grow.

Not all Next Practice projects receive consultancy support: 11 of the 15 projects are working with consultants. Though The Innovation Unit showed that both consultancy and coaching are effective interventions, consultancy is expensive and is therefore being tested alongside other less resource intensive support methods. In most

cases, Innovation Exchange selected appropriate consultants. In one case, the project nominated experts they would particularly like to involve in developing their work.

Working with Next Practice projects, consultants address very particular developmental needs. For example, Riverside Credit Union was teamed with a consultant who is helping them strengthen the story they tell to potential investors and has brokered in an ethnographic film-maker to describe the challenges facing the community and highlight the needs their service meets. In another example, East London Food Access were teamed with two consultants, one an expert in service development, another an expert in branding, to help them scale up a national offer for supporting community health and wellbeing through the provision of fresh food.

Though project needs and consultancy support are individual, there are common themes:

- Many projects are being supported to develop new products and services or to understand, develop and take advantage of new markets.
- Consultants are helping organisations clarify their offer and how best to present it to potential purchasers.
- Some of this work is about stimulating new thinking in the organisation, helping leaders to develop ambition and raise the bar, even in areas where they already have expertise.
- The most valuable element for some projects has been the capacity of consultants to broker the right connections and make links

using their own strong networks and sector expertise. Interviews with projects after the first month of consultancy support re-enforced the role consultants are playing as “brokers” as well as the value of their contacts and connections to projects seeking to innovate.

## Outcomes so far

It is too soon to comment on the success of the first phase of the Next Practice programme: some consultancy assignments are still running and many projects have not yet completed their coaching programme. However, early stage interviews with projects in January and February 2009 indicate that they already consider that their involvement in the programme is delivering benefits.

Projects are reporting that the programme drew attention to their work and validated it:

*Being chosen for the programme is like stamp of approval or a badge of honour.*

*Next Practice Programme support helps us say to funders, this has been identified as excellent innovation. It encourages trust. It says, take a risk on us!*

*The ability to say we are part of Innovation Exchange and the Next Practice Programme cuts through the noise, it says these people are worth listening to, ears prick up.*

Participation in the programme was found by a number of projects to open doors and gain leverage with potential supporters and funders:

*We want to influence the national agenda. The programme has helped us to get a toe in with a key Cabinet Minister. Being able to make introductions and make connections, more than anything that really helps.*

*The biggest thing the programme provides is leverage.*

Projects commented on how valuable it was to meet and make connections with their peers:

*It's great to be part of something collectively. We loved finding synergies within the programme.*

*It has been good to meet and share ideas with other projects. It's inspiring.*

A couple of projects suggested that peer networking should be a greater focus for the programme:

*It would be a shame if we didn't form strong co-ordination across the members of the Next Practice Programme. It is great to be part of something together. There are certain things we could offer... We could help other projects.*

Already, two projects, Creative North and Time Bank, are working collaboratively having met for the first time at the programme launch (see box on p.27).

Next Practice Programme participants reported that consultants are helping them to spot opportunities and build networks:

*Work with our consultant has brought in new ideas and is challenging our direction... the meeting changed the way we thought about marketing.*

*The mixture of support, advice and funding offered is acting as an accelerant. This work would have happened slowly and maybe would not have happened at all without the programme.*

*Our consultant is having conversations independent of us which are opening doors.*

As a result of support from their consultant, one project, Slivers of Time, has developed a new service offer that a number of local authorities have already expressed an interest in purchasing (see box on p.27).

It's worth noting that some of the projects participating in the programme are not receiving support in the form of consultancy or funding. This suggests that, even without these attractions, participation provides value by enabling access to Innovation Exchange's networks. Early stage interviews indicated that projects appear to recognise the power of brokerage. When asked to identify their main development needs going forward, all referred to brokering new relationships and building partnerships. Of the other issues mentioned, connecting to funding opportunities, enhancing marketing efforts and evaluation were other distinct priorities.

## **TIMEBANK and CREATIVE NORTH**

TimeBank and Creative North are working with T-Mobile on a project called The Spark. T-Mobile commissioned TimeBank to deliver the project, supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training to develop mobile phone applications that tackle important social or environmental issues. When TimeBank met Creative North at the Next Practice Programme launch event, they recognised that Creative North had the experience and skills to help them deliver the project effectively. Creative North will work with the young people to help turn their ideas into mobile phone applications. The young people will simultaneously work with TimeBank's Junction49 team to develop and run their own community projects.

## **SLIVERS OF TIME**

With the help of the consultant provided through the Next Practice Programme, Slivers of Time has developed a new service proposition that offers both the methodology and the technology that puts people looking for practical assistance, such as help with the gardening or shopping, in touch with people who can provide it. This new service proposition is based in large part on skills, expertise and technology the organisation developed by matching people with small amounts of time available for work with employers requiring flexible temporary workers. Slivers of Time is already helping a number of local authorities in London launch person-to-person support marketplaces.

## **Next Practice Programme – Next steps**

By March 2010, Innovation Exchange hopes to have strengthened a set of individual high-potential innovations and, moreover, to have developed brokerage practices that might be more widely and systemically deployed to support innovation in the third sector.

The first phase of support in the Next Practice Programme ended in March 2009. In practice coaching courses are now nearing completion and some consultants have continued to work with projects pro bono. Innovation Exchange's next learning paper will examine evidence of impact from this first phase.

A second phase of support is currently underway and will operate until March 2010. While the first phase was intensive and often one-to-one, the second is comparatively lighter in touch and more group focused. Innovation Exchange is designing a variety of workshops, special seminars and facilitated meetings which will address common developmental priorities across the programme, and create opportunities for projects to connect and engage with supporters within and beyond the programme. Particular plans include:

- **Support workshops** to address the most compelling needs identified across the programme. A workshop focused on

sustainability and resilience designed and delivered in partnership with Futurebuilders and including bespoke support sessions with experts was held in June 2009. A second workshop will focus on monitoring and evaluation.

- **Peer networking** to unlock expertise and support connections within the Next Practice Programme. Innovation Exchange's recently launched website provides a forum for online connection and its events will create face to face opportunities. With feedback from projects suggesting they would like more opportunities to network with each other, Innovation Exchange is keen to develop this area of work.
- **Brokerage of high level contacts** to stimulate interest in projects and programme learning. The Exchange has interviewed projects about the individuals they'd most like to engage in their work. It is now creating opportunities for groups of projects to meet with ministers or key officials or commissioners. Specific plans include a Learning Day in November 2009 which will both share stories of progress and support engagement.

Having a portfolio of innovative third sector projects in the form of the Next Practice Programme has made a huge difference to Innovation Exchange's credibility with service commissioners. The Exchange has recently set up mentoring relationships with public service commissioners for two Next Practice project leaders. Acting on feedback from projects

about what might enable them to connect and collaborate with public agencies, the Exchange has matched project leaders with commissioners towards mutual professional development. Working with commissioners in a mentoring relationship, the Exchange hopes project leaders will:

- increase their understanding of the commissioning process
- gain a greater awareness of market needs and development opportunities
- bolster their confidence to develop and pitch work to commissioners
- widen their professional networks and develop new relationships with potential collaborators and supporters of their work.

Innovation Exchange hopes commissioners will also benefit from a mentoring relationship with leaders of third sector innovation projects. Benefits might include: insight into the commissioning process from the point of view of the service provider, new knowledge of innovative projects and an enhanced understanding of the possibilities for working collaboratively and innovatively with the third sector. The Exchange has just commenced testing this approach with two projects and is interested in learning about the impact of a cost effective form of one-to-one support.

# INNOVATION EXCHANGE WEBSITE

[www.innovation-exchange.org](http://www.innovation-exchange.org)

One of the deliverables in Innovation Exchange's contract with the Office of the Third Sector is to "design, develop and deliver an innovative website capable of providing Innovation Exchange with its primary public interface and... enabling peer-to-peer interaction". In part, this simply reflects the embedding of the web in contemporary approaches to organisation, but in making the web a priority, there is also an implication that the medium has particular potential for innovation brokerage.

Innovation Exchange's first website went live at the programme's launch on 8 October 2007. Created by Headshift, the website company in the Innovation Exchange consortium, it was a simple multi-user blog grounded in off-the-shelf technology, which enabled quick development work and helped the Exchange to begin its online work immediately.

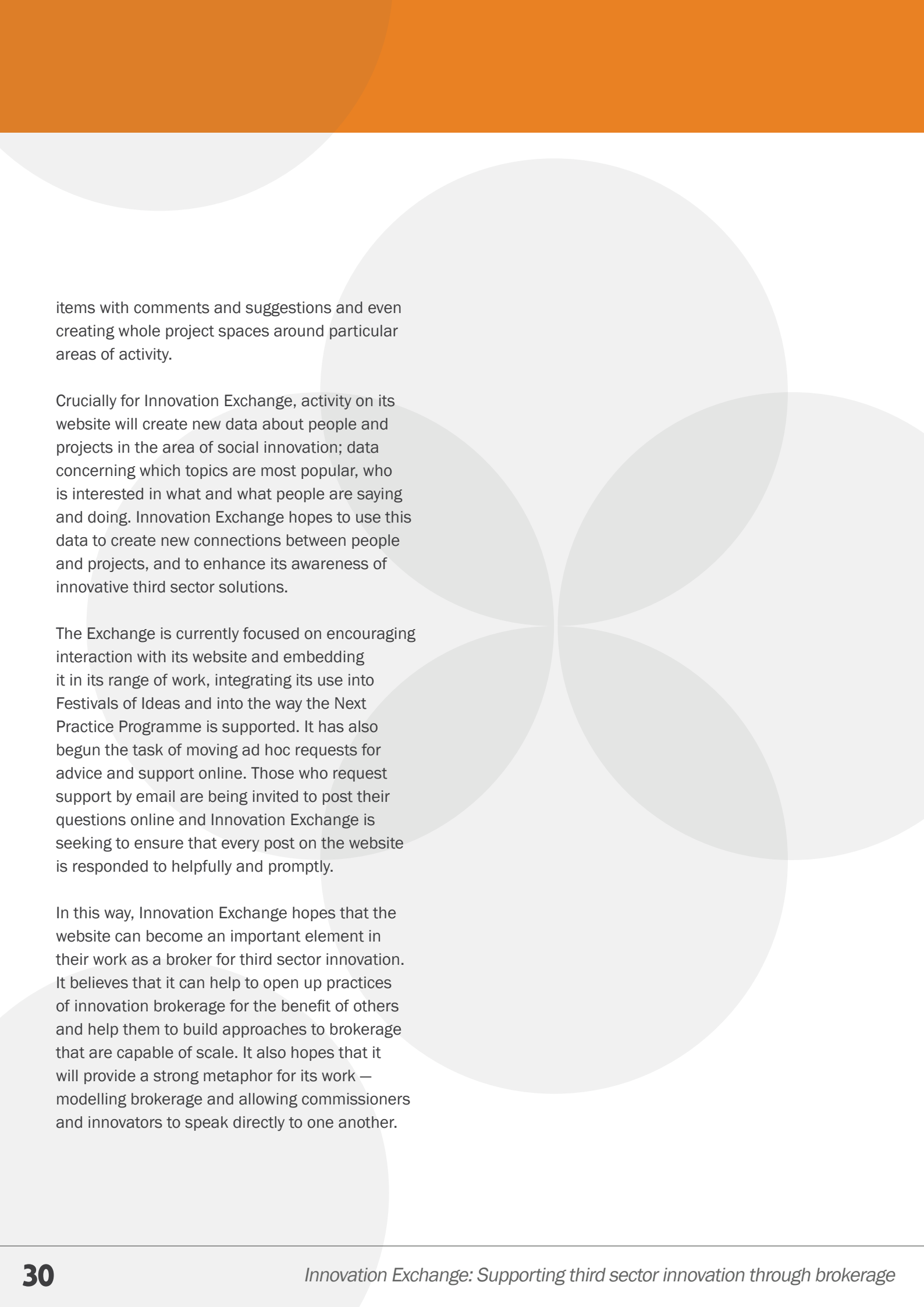
The site was designed to carry regular blogs from key figures in the third sector about third sector innovation as well as to promote Innovation Exchange's own work and initially worked well as an interim solution. Those responding to Calls for Ideas in advance of Festivals of Ideas were encouraged to post their ideas online, and more than half did so. This helped to build interest in the events and clarity about their focus, and in a small number of cases generated connections and relationships in its own right.

However, although the site functioned adequately, it did not attract traffic independently of offline work. Blogging partners simply did not participate once their initial enthusiasm had dissipated. With

the front page of the site built primarily around the blogging content, rather than drawing visitors into all the work of Innovation Exchange including events and the Next Practice Programme, it served as a barrier to access to all the Exchange was doing. As a result, Innovation Exchange, led by Headshift, worked to develop the more sophisticated website that has recently replaced the interim one.

Innovation Exchange's new website seeks to harness the power of social networking for social innovation. The site retains a blog for practical information about its activities, but its main website is a platform for user interaction. Users can post their ideas about areas of need and opportunity for innovation directly to the main page, in answer to the provocation "Wouldn't it be good if...". The site enables 'thoughts' to transform into practical 'ideas' and 'projects' as its users interact. It also shows users which innovations are most similar to their own, and which are popular and active, so that they can easily make connections relevant to their own work.

With considerable improvements on the previous site's functionality, Innovation Exchange's new site also allows people to suggest feeds from other sites from which content can be 'grabbed'. In this sense, the site now works as an aggregator, drawing relevant content together from across the third and public sectors. The site then enables users to interact with this content. Users can make responses to items at varying levels of intensity, from simply clicking 'I like it', to tagging items with key words, to responding to



items with comments and suggestions and even creating whole project spaces around particular areas of activity.

Crucially for Innovation Exchange, activity on its website will create new data about people and projects in the area of social innovation; data concerning which topics are most popular, who is interested in what and what people are saying and doing. Innovation Exchange hopes to use this data to create new connections between people and projects, and to enhance its awareness of innovative third sector solutions.

The Exchange is currently focused on encouraging interaction with its website and embedding it in its range of work, integrating its use into Festivals of Ideas and into the way the Next Practice Programme is supported. It has also begun the task of moving ad hoc requests for advice and support online. Those who request support by email are being invited to post their questions online and Innovation Exchange is seeking to ensure that every post on the website is responded to helpfully and promptly.

In this way, Innovation Exchange hopes that the website can become an important element in their work as a broker for third sector innovation. It believes that it can help to open up practices of innovation brokerage for the benefit of others and help them to build approaches to brokerage that are capable of scale. It also hopes that it will provide a strong metaphor for its work — modelling brokerage and allowing commissioners and innovators to speak directly to one another.

# CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

It is early days for Innovation Exchange, but it is already clear that the methods and approaches it is developing have potential.

**Festivals of Ideas:** The three events run so far to refine and develop the approach show that it has the capacity to model brokerage for public sector bodies, supporting and encouraging commissioners to make connections with innovative third sector projects and to link other public sector colleagues with projects that might be of interest to them. Innovation Exchange will be following up with participants to see if the links made at these events result in joint working or funding relationships which support the development of innovative third sector projects providing more effective means of meeting social needs.

**Next Practice Programme:** Projects are already reporting benefits from their participation in the programme particularly in relation to how it has opened doors for them, helped them make connections and encouraged them to be ambitious. As the Exchange supports projects through the programme it will seek to understand what sorts of funding and support innovative third sector projects need at different stages of their development and how this might best be brokered/provided by intermediaries and crucially the difference such support makes to project and beneficiary outcomes.

While it will take time for Innovation Exchange to demonstrate the impact of its work, it can already point to two early success stories: examples where its intervention has resulted in service delivery partnerships being formed. In one case, TimeBank and Creative North, both Next Practice projects, met at the launch of the programme and in the other, Slivers of Time developed a new service provision for the social care sector with the support of Next Practice consultancy.

In developing its work in the near future Innovation Exchange has a number of priorities:

1. Integrating the different elements of its work – the new website, Festivals of Ideas and the Next Practice programme – to make them mutually reinforcing and more productive.
2. Influencing public sector structures with an innovation remit to model effective innovation brokerage, perhaps through consultancy.
3. Developing models, tools or services that others can use to effectively broker third sector innovation in their area.

Broadly, Innovation Exchange is considering how, based on research and learning, it can scale up its work and thereby increase its impact.

## ENDNOTES

1. OTS/Cabinet Office (2006). *Partnerships in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement in public services*.
2. Horne, M. (2008). *Honest Brokers: Brokering innovation in public services*. The Innovation Unit: London.
3. HMT/Cabinet Office (2007). *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: final report*.
4. Moore, M.H. (2005). 'Breakthrough Innovations and Continuous Improvement: Two different models of innovative processes in the public sector.' *Public Money and Management*, 25:1, 163-77.
5. OTS/Cabinet Office (2007). *Innovation Exchange: Application pack and bidding guidance*.
6. NCVO (2009). *The UK Civil Society Almanac*.
7. Osborne, S., Chew, C. and McLaughlin, K. (2008). 'The innovative capacity of voluntary organizations and the provision of public services: A longitudinal approach,' in *Public Management Review* (Special Issue on Innovation in Public Services), 10:1, 51-70.
8. Mahdon, M., Visser, F. and Brinkley, I. (2008). *Demand and Innovation* (NESTA).
9. Aporia Consulting Ltd. (2008). *Incubating Innovation: Exploring Next Practice in the Field*. Bulletin 2 from the External Evaluation of The Innovation Unit's Next Practice in Education Programme.

© Innovation Exchange 2009

For more information about Innovation Exchange's learning programme contact Perrie Ballantyne on 020 7259 1231 or by email at [perrie.ballantyne@innovation-unit.co.uk](mailto:perrie.ballantyne@innovation-unit.co.uk)

Keep in touch with Innovation Exchange at [www.innovation-exchange.org/blog](http://www.innovation-exchange.org/blog)