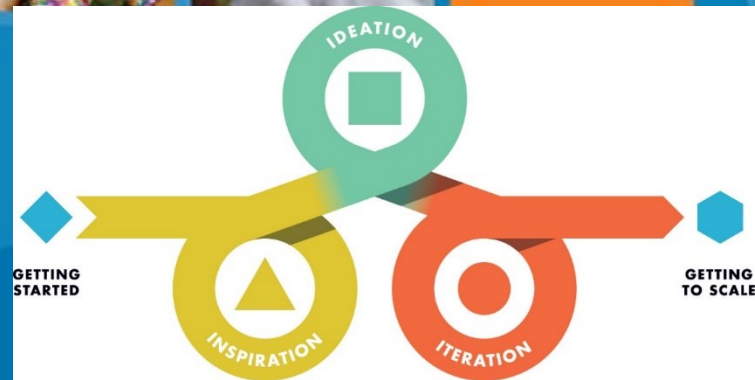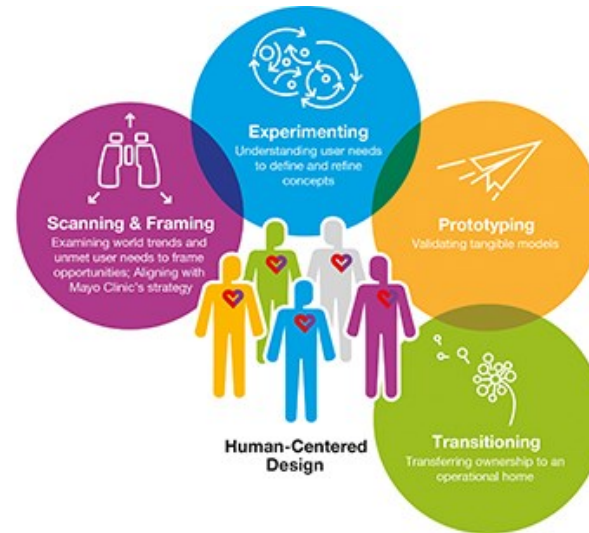# Social Innovation Lab Concept and Process

Social Innovation Lab Concept

What are Social Innovation Labs?

❖ **Platforms for addressing *complex social challenges.***

❖ **Convene *diverse group of stakeholders***

❖ **They are social**

❖ **They are experimental**

❖ **They are systemic**

Innovation Lab Goals & Wins

- **Learning**
- **Collaboration**
- **Safe Spaces**
- **Innovation**
- **Networking**
- **Sustainability**

How Social Innovation Labs Work?

"The power of solutions lies primarily in the people who believe in and own them." — V. Srinavas

Stage 1: Inspiration	Stage 2: Ideation	Stage 3: Implementation
• **Empathy**: Deep dive into the strengths, opportunities and gaps for Somali youth. • **Define**: Identify and make sure we are solving the right issues.	• **Brainstorm**: Create a large number of innovative ideas. • **Prototype:** Demonstrate how our solutions would work and gather feedback.	• **Test:** Create small trials to see if our ideas are viable.

How is This Lab Different?

❖ **Begin with the process not solutions**

❖ **Cultural specific**

❖ **Grounded on data gathered from participating communities**

❖ **Systemic, experimental, and organic**

❖ **Combines design thinking, system thinking, collective impact and human centered design processes**

Social Innovation Lab with the Somali Community

Somali Social Responsibility and Innovation Lab (SRIL)

Mission Impact Council

May and July 2016

Explaining the Innovation Lab

What?

Community and cross-sector partners meet for five sessions to brainstorm and implement innovative ideas to increase opportunity and equity for 12 to 24-year old Somali youth and their families.

So What?

Minnesota is a national leader in the disparity between racial and ethnic groups and will need to provide increased opportunities and equity for all youth to fulfill their potential for the Twin Cities to thrive.

Who Participated?

- The Mission Impact Council (sponsor of the Innovation Lab)
- Non-profit Twin Cities agencies
- Foundations and local funders
- Educational institutions and agencies
- Faith institutions
- Business and corporate leaders

Now What?

Individuals and organizations leave with the opportunity to follow-up on the most promising ideas for action and collaboration.
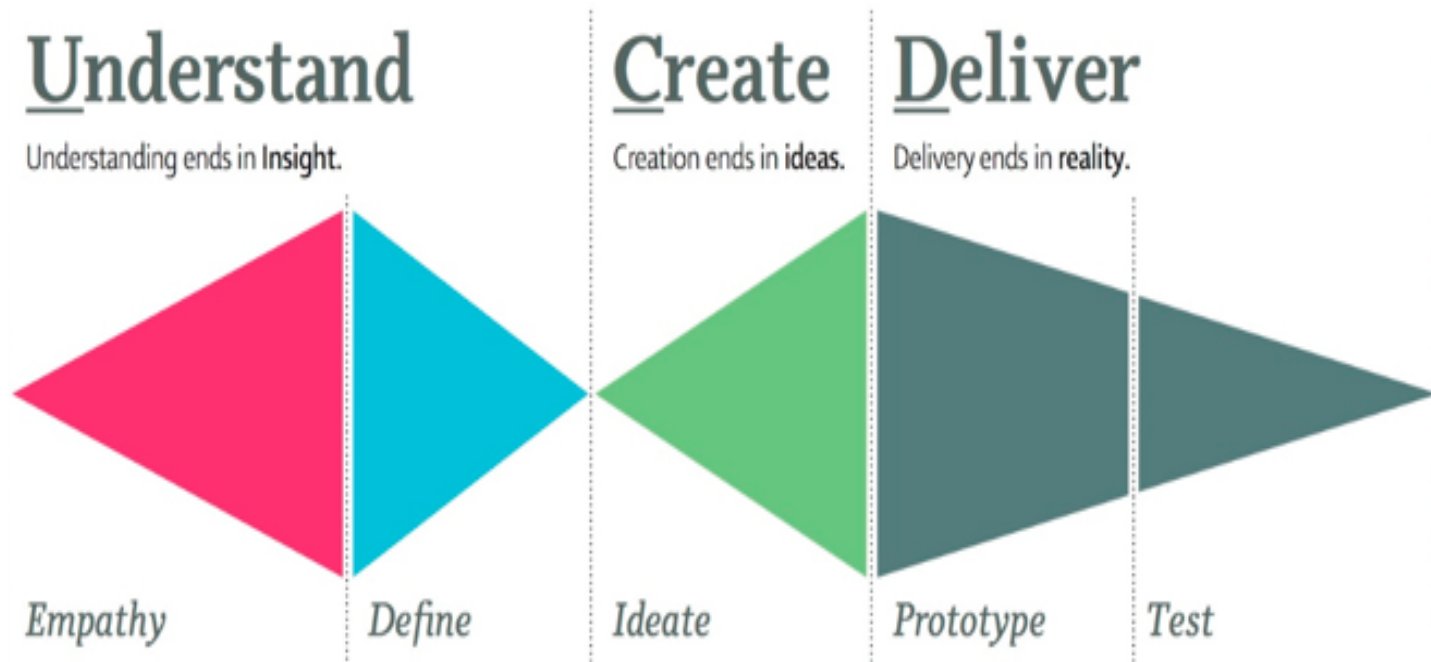
Six Purposes of the Somali Innovation Lab

1. **Mapping Opportunities:** Identify the key priorities to address for the Somali community in the three areas of youth development, employability, and family engagement.

2. **Brainstorming Innovations:** Develop innovative solutions to address unmet opportunities and gaps for Somali youth.

3. **Building Collaborative Capacity:** Advance capacity of participating organizations to work together around common goals.

4. **Encouraging Networking:** Offer opportunities for individuals to meet others that share similar passions and goals.

5. **Expanding Skills:** Explore tools for innovation that individuals can use back in their own organization.

6. **Generating Action:** Share ideas and possibly collaborate for how to implement and follow-up with our best ideas.

The overall process
5-step Design Thinking

Understand
Understanding ends in **Insight**.

Create
Creation ends in **ideas**.

Deliver
Delivery ends in **reality**.

Empathy *Define* *Ideate* *Prototype* *Test*

Where we started on May 17th

East African Youth Development Opportunities
How Might We Collaboratively Address These Issues?

|	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Program Access	Funding	Create added funding to support already successful programs.	Successful community-based programs can't scale widely.
	Communication	Better inform families about existing youth opportunities.	Informal social networks may be one avenue to share about YD options.
	Transportation	Eliminate transportation as a barrier to youth involvement.	Can be a basic and important obstacle to participation.
	Space	Find more spaces for after school and summer activities.	Big obstacle to equity. Perhaps East African Community Center in TC.?
	Sustainability	Find ways to sustain successful youth programs.	Many past examples of successful efforts that disappeared.
Program Fit	Family Involvement	Find better ways to include, involve, and support families lead role in youth development.	Families sometimes only trust Faith Centers. Need to be involved and earn their trust. Need child care.
	Cultural Competence	Bridge gaps and understanding between East African community and mainstream programs.	Can experience exclusion, cultural discrimination, stereotypes, racism by appearance or differences.
	Professional Development	Promote added professional development for emerging leaders working with EA youth.	Strong core of youth leaders that could benefit from added training.
	Mental Health	Educate community and give more skills to deal with this issue.	Need professionals with cultural competencies. Reframe PTSD as health issue versus racial issue. Break code of silence around issues.
	Special Needs	Want programs to serve all needs (e.g. mental health, autism).	Essential to increase capacity to provides services in complicated areas.
	Faith Center Partnerships	Grow Faith Centers' capacity to support youth development (act as Mosque and Community Center.)	Faith Centers cautious after 9/11. Partnerships with others could bring knowledge, credibility and trust.
	Leadership Development	Support East African youth becoming creative problem solvers and leaders in their personal and civic lives.	Youth sometimes disconnected and need to develop commitment to wider community good. Who will be the next generation of leaders?

41 pieces of data gathered from the Somali community around the themes of

- Youth Development

- Cultural Competence

- Employability

The Three Innovation Lab Work Groups

Participants self-selected into one of the three design groups shown below. The slides that follow summarize how each group: 1). defined the opportunities and needs of Somali youth in their focus area, and   2). Identified creative ideas for addressing those issues.

1. Positive Youth Development Design Group

2. Cross Cultural Competence Design Group

3. Employability Design Group
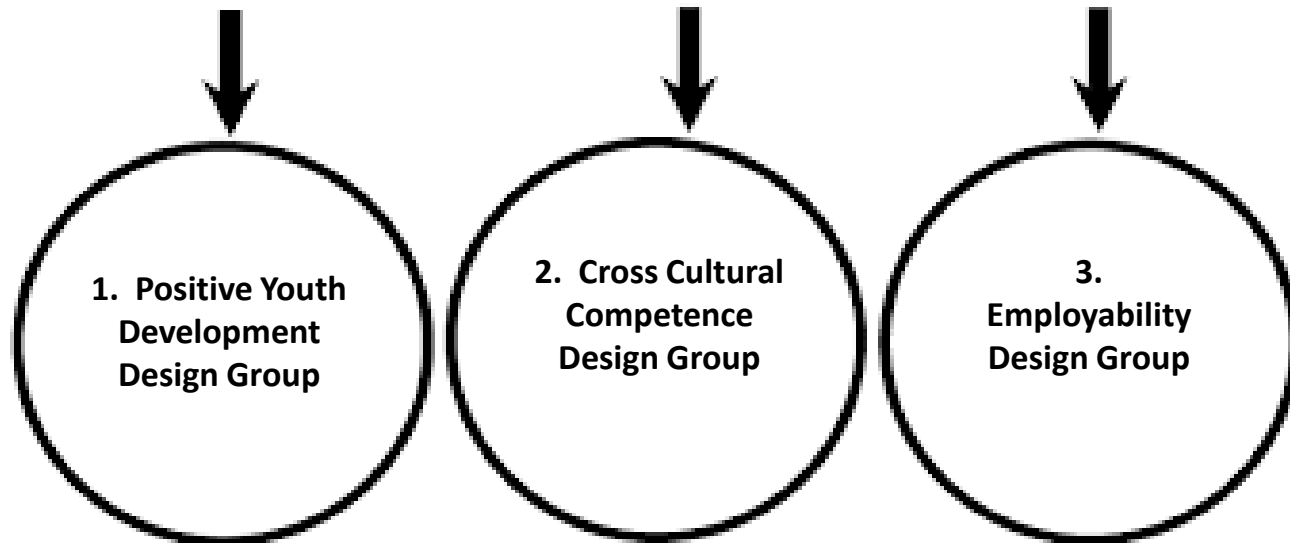
1. The Positive Youth Development Group

Priority Design Challenge: How might we strengthen Somali families?

Opportunity/ Need Statements

• Need to strengthen Intergenerational ties and cultural understanding *within* Somali families.

• Need to build strong relationships *with systems and organizations* to respect, respond to, and build the capacity of Somali families.

Because…..

Strong families are the key to strong youth and a strong community.

2. The Cross-Cultural Competence Group

Priority Design Challenge: How might we build greater intergenerational and cultural understanding?

Opportunity/ Need Statement: Need to build/find a Somali culturally specific space to provide a place to learn, meet, exercise, improve communication, and learn about our culture.

So as to…..

help close the intergenerational gap and build strong family relationships while keeping our youths out of trouble**.**

3. The Employability Design Group Challenge

Key Insights

- GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGE: Somali youth live in different places spread throughout the Twin Cities and region.

- ROLE MODEL CHALLENGE: It is not culturally "normal" to focus on these professional role models such as engineers, lawyers, etc. Historically the two types of role models have been only teachers and parents.

- SOCIAL NORM CHALLENGE: Social volunteerism is also not the "norm" – the professional role models don't necessarily have the mindset to "give back" or to volunteer for anything other than activities related to their faith

Priority Design Challenge: "How might we grow Somali youth employability?"

Opportunity/ Need Statement: Need to increase accessibility to professional Somali professional role models to Twin Cities Somali youth

So as to….

- See a path to employment possibility and success

- Have potential access to career paths, internships, and training

- Give hope about longer-term opportunities

- Create relationships for potential mentors

- Set a new "norm" or expectation

ideas into

3

1

The Three Design Groups

Strengthen Families

Create a Somali Cultural-Specific Space

Engage Somali Professionals with Youth
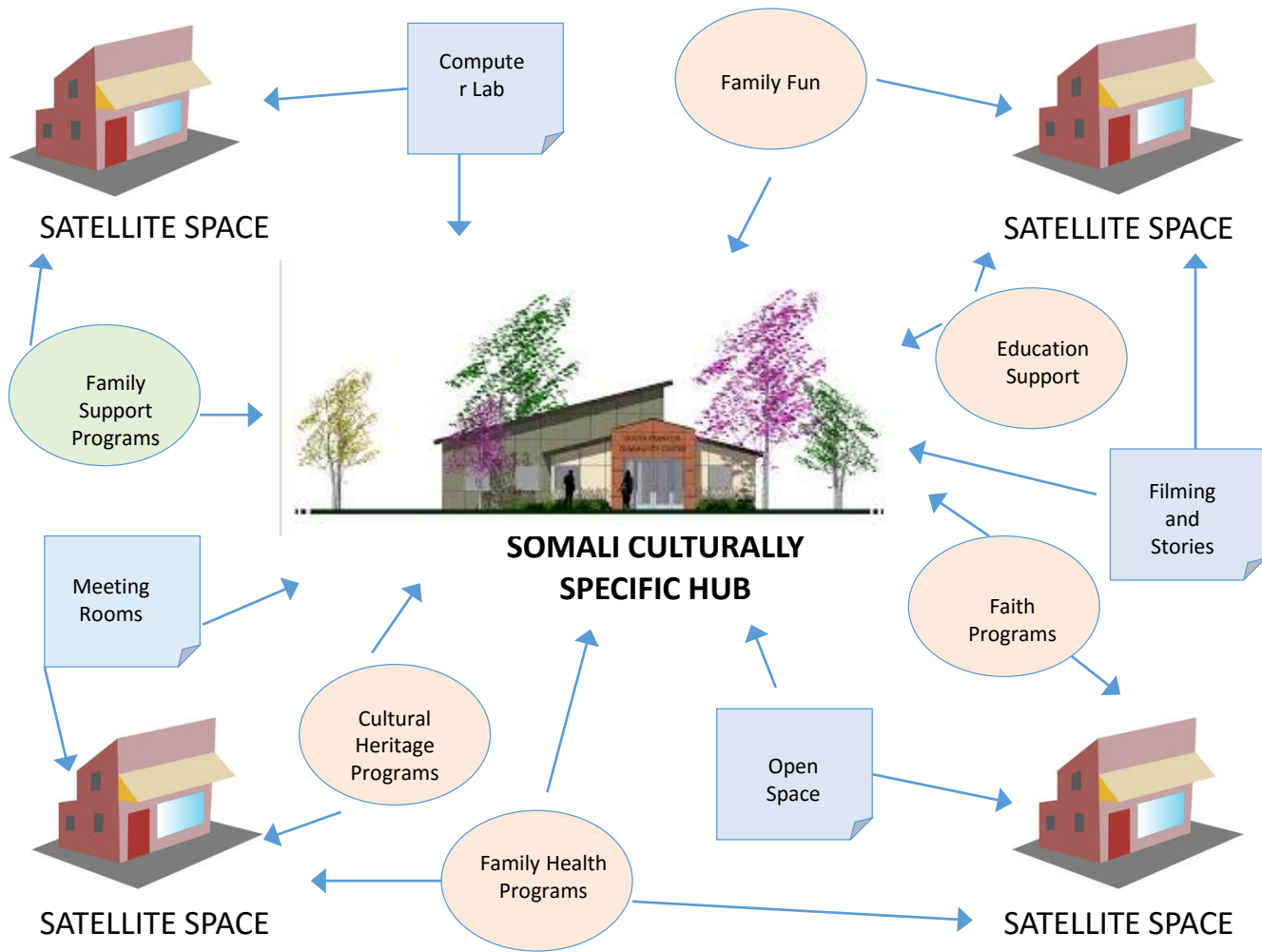
Final Recommendation

Create or find a dedicated, Somali-specific building that would house staff and dedicated programs to benefit Somali youth and families; and to hold these same programs at various satellite spaces throughout the Twin Cities. Program examples might include:

- Strengthening intergenerational ties and cultural understanding within Somali families;

- Building strong relationships with systems and organizations to respect, respond to, and build the capacity of Somali families;

- Connecting Somali professional role models and Somali youth to increase employability;

- Offering appropriate exercise opportunities;

- Support Cultural heritage

Where we ended on July 26th

Recommendation: Create or find a dedicated, Somali-specific building that would house staff and dedicated programs to benefit Somali youth; and to hold these same programs at various satellite spaces throughout the Twin Cities. Programs to be focused on:

- Strengthening intergenerational ties and cultural understanding within Somali families;

- Building strong relationships with systems and organizations to respect, respond to, and build the capacity of Somali families;

- Connecting Somali professional role models and Somali youth to increase employability;

- Exercise opportunities;

- Cultural heritage; and others.

SATELLITE SPACE

Computer Lab

Family Fun

SATELLITE SPACE

Family Support Programs

Education Support

SOMALI CULTURALLY SPECIFIC HUB

Filming and Stories

Meeting Rooms

Cultural Heritage Programs

Faith Programs

Open Space

SATELLITE SPACE

Family Health Programs

SATELLITE SPACE

Next Steps

- Easy, moderate, and longer-term steps
- Group concluded that having a dedicated, full-time space would be a longer term vision
- Shorter term steps would be to develop and implement the program ideas in existing spaces of partners who align with our ideas and are willing to partner