



MOVEMENT BUILDING COMMUNITY DESIGN

A REPORT TO THE SURDNA FOUNDATION'S
INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
APRIL 2021



Surdna
Foundation



COMMUNITY PLANNING TIMELINE

Since July 2020, ThirdSpace Action Lab has had the pleasure of engaging with the Surdna Foundation's Inclusive Economies (IE) program staff in discussing how the foundation might advance the development of inclusive economies by facilitating greater collaboration and synergy between Grantee Partner (GP) organizations. During the past nine months, through biweekly meetings, a three-day design sprint with program staff, and GP surveys, polls, and focus group discussions, we have co-designed an Inclusive Economies Grantee Partner cohort strategy. As this engagement draws to a close, we are pleased to report the input given by both GPs and program staff, and our final recommendations. This document is an executive summary of a more extensive set of ideas.



ABOUT THIRDSPEACE ACTION LAB

ThirdSpace Action Lab is a grassroots research, strategy, and design studio based in Cleveland, Ohio. We were created to disrupt the vicious cycle of disinvestment and displacement that exploit low-income communities and communities of color.

We use human-centered insights to prototype creative solutions to socioeconomic problems, with an emphasis on creating more liberated spaces for people of color.

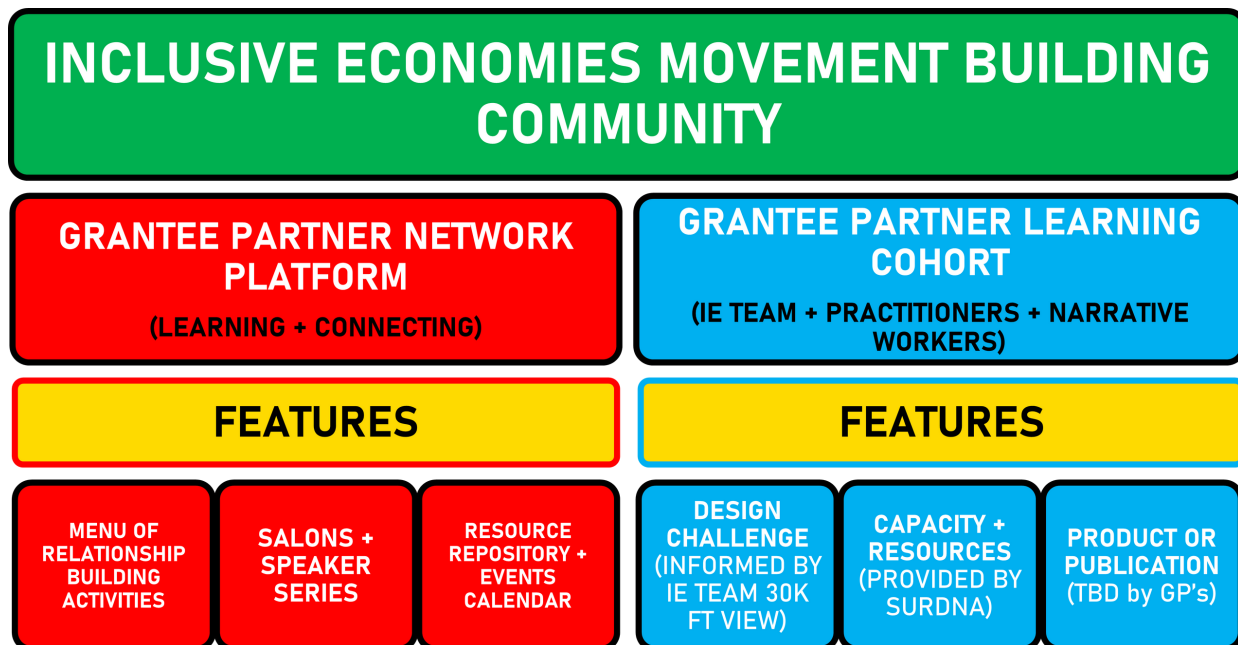
We are dedicated to prototyping creative place-based solutions to actualize racial equity.



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CONCEPT OVERVIEW



PARTICIPANTS

- **GRANTEE PARTNER NETWORK PLATFORM**
 - Staff + Board Members of All Surdna Grantee Partner Organizations
 - Surdna Staff + Board
 - Philanthropic Peers (limited access)
 - Subject-matter Experts + Thought Leaders
- **GRANTEE PARTNER LEARNING COHORTS (organized by Narrative Theme/Strategic Priorities)**
 - IE Program Team
 - Grantee Partners (Nominated by Surdna Point-of-Contact)
 - Facilitator—TSAL or Rep from Inclusive Economies GP or Thriving Cultures GP
 - Narrative Change Grantee Partner: Most—if not all— Narrative Change GPs subscribe to the philosophy of 'Solutions Journalism'. They are uniquely positioned to distill insights that arise with the interdisciplinary team of Thought Leaders + Practitioners/Experts, as well as interview fellows cohort members to fill out the emerging storylines they identify.

IE MOVEMENT BUILDING COMMUNITY

We have drawn on discussions of Grantee Partner insights and observations shared during our design sprint to imagine how providing a menu of activities—sourced by and featuring the work of IE Grantee Partners—might serve as an impetus and point of departure for deeper engagement around areas of alignment and opportunities to complement their respective strengths.

GRANTEE PARTNER NETWORK PLATFORM (STRUCTURE)

Framing: This is a hub for all grantees to connect, convene and discuss the movement-building priorities to realize a collective vision for an Inclusive Economy.

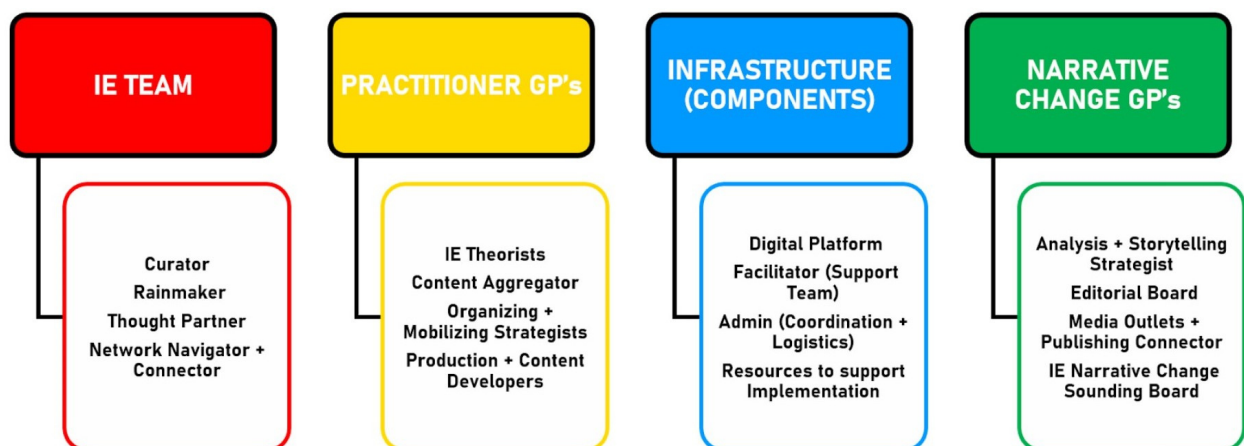
- To support organic relationship building through shared experiences, we propose inviting Surdna GP's—IE and other program areas—to propose and participate in a menu of activities that can be produced/facilitated/consumed virtually.
- The IE Team should also supplement these informal Soul Work (intellectual + spiritual engagement) spaces with more formal and/or structured (still virtual) settings that provide a platform for GP's to solicit feedback from their peers on active projects, works-in-progress, insights gleaned from completed projects, and burning questions/observations/hypotheses.
- Consciousness Raising Spaces might include:
 - “TEDx Surdna Inclusive Economies”
 - Skill-sharing Sessions and Practice-oriented Workshops
 - IE Salons: discussions among a select group of thought leaders—curated by Surdna IE Team—reflecting on a “big picture” theme/question related to IE priorities. Examples:
 - Urban Consulate—useful example of the kind of free-flowing conversations a multidisciplinary group of thinkers can have in response to an open-ended question. Less structured and outcome-oriented, value comes from the quality of conversation + interlocutors.
 - Ethical Redevelopment Salon Series (i.e. Place Lab Chicago)—more structured/focused conversations intended to solicit contributions from subject matter experts on emergent definition of the development framework. Requires more direction from convener.
 - Salon Participant Reflections - (i.e. Place Lab Blog)
- Further, the exchange of ideas, frameworks/best practices, funding (and other strategically advantageous) opportunities should be considered a unique benefit of IE Grantee Partner designation. We recommend memorializing knowledge production within a repository or archive that serves multiple purposes, including (but not limited to):
 - Democratizing Knowledge Production and Critical Engagement
 - Aggregating “good” opportunities (from trusted sources)
 - Creation of GP-sourced Inclusive Economies Canon



GRANTEE PARTNER LEARNING COHORTS

The second element of the Surdna IE Movement Building Community focuses on creating space for GP organizations to BUILD something together: an illustrative example of what it might take to realize our collective vision(s) of a truly Inclusive Economy. TSAL has distilled the insights gleaned from our design sprint into a cohort strategy intended to:

- Foster connections between economic justice practitioners within the Surdna IE Family
- Mitigate the operational barriers to deep work for both GP's and IE Program Team
- Test concept for GP collaboration that can be replicated and scaled across the foundation
- Use Surdna's funding for the cohort strategy as leverage for GP's to develop collaborative and catalytic interventions that attract additional resources and attention



Key Decision/Consideration:

Surdna will need to determine the appropriate balance between prescriptive and responsive position on the work produced by the Cohorts—note: once the work has been framed (parameters and expectations established), Surdna will return to its role as a participant within the cohort.



SUMMARY

Inclusive Economies is more than a notion. In an era of intense political polarization, widening socioeconomic inequality, and heightened sensitivity to racial injustice, TSAL believes that a movement orientation is essential to accomplishing the goals outlined in the IE program strategy.

IE Grantee Partners are among the foremost thinkers on how we might galvanize the resources and public support necessary to change the very nature of our economy: from extractive to regenerative; from exploitative to equitable; from competition-focused to community-focused. But resistance is exhausting, and being The Trailblazer is very often a lonely, precarious journey.

We know that the dramatic social changes we have seen throughout history have always depended on dedicated people struggling together to disrupt an unjust status quo, against all odds. Although The Actions (e.g. marches, manifestos, election results, etc.) receive much of the attention, these events obscure the essential—though often messy—relationship-building and consciousness-raising work that unifies the base change agents. Movements—social, artistic, intellectual, etc.-- require rigorous study, critical discourse, inspiration, and imagination.

TSAL's recommendations have been guided by a desire to support the IE Team in creating a collaborative, soul-restoring space—a refuge within the chaos of This Moment—for its critical thought partners to establish and strengthen the relationships upon which This Movement will depend. This Movement Building community is a virtual third space (outside of work | outside of home) programmed to foster connections between a uniquely dynamic and multidisciplinary group of individuals that represent the leading edge of justice-focused social impact innovators.

We are proposing an overall design framework that enables IE GP's to “get in where they fit in”—contributing to and consuming the content compiled within the body of knowledge to emerge from this community. We propose utilizing platforms/technologies that facilitate the fluid, bidirectional flow of information and ideas. These platforms should also serve as a repository for resources created by IE Grantee Partners, as well as the sources of inspiration and study that inform their work. Furthermore, the menu of activities and experiences featured on this platform should nourish the minds and spirits of GP Leaders--both the visionaries at the top of the organization and the emerging leaders within their ranks.

The Surdna Inclusive Economies Movement Building Community is envisioned as the Foundation's contribution to the vital work of its Grantee Partners to mobilize their respective constituencies around a new--more equitable--vision for our society and economy. We know that the details of how the platform and cohort strategy will be developed and implemented will be refined (subject to internal decisions about funding, timing, etc.). Our hope is that this summary of findings and recommendations provides direction for the IE Team's work to organize the resources and institutional buy-in necessary to bring this important idea to fruition.

