

WE ARE CONTINUALLY
FACED WITH A SERIES OF
GREAT OPPORTUNITIES
BRILLIANTLY DISGUISED
AS INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS.

John Gardner

Social problems like unemployment, youth crime, and family breakdown are messy and stubborn. Over and over again, we've seen how these problems defy top-down policies and outgrow bottom-up services.

Over the next year, we'll partner with a government department and a local community in South Australia to try an alternative problem-solving approach. We'll take a social problem; work with the people experiencing that problem; redefine the problem in terms of outcomes; prototype new practice and policy; and build mechanisms and capacity for scale. Not everything will work. Some things will downright fail. But, in the process, we'll learn something about how and how not to enable new ways of living and doing.

We're Chris and Sarah, and we've come on board to facilitate TACSI's first radical redesign project. We've worked in the UK and US with MPs, older people, young people, socially isolated and lonely people, and the chronically ill to co-design and prototype new kinds of social services. In this, the first of a series of just-in-time project papers, we want to preview our next year of work in South Australia. We hope you'll come along for the journey and send us your feedback and ideas along the way.

Chris & Sarah, Project Leaders

	What you'll hear about...
In 3 months...	Our community project partners Stories from people we've met Insights into 'good living' Opportunities for doing different
In 4 months...	Scenarios of practice that enables 'good living' International best practice
In 8 months...	Images from prototyping Everything that's not working Everything we've iterated
In 9 months...	A movie of the prototyping story A blueprint for new practice & policy A business case
In 12 months...	A start-up campaign A plan for the first-year of scale

PROBLEM

Problem-solving starts with problem definition. Typically problems are defined from the policy or the service perspective. Take drug use. Policymakers tend to define the problem as 'too many people engage in harmful & illegal drug use.' Practitioners tend to define the problem as 'not enough people have access to prevention and early intervention services.'

We start with people, with understanding what they want from their lives. Problem reduction is not the same as getting the most from life. First we work to redefine problems in terms of positive (and measurable) outcomes. Then we partner with practitioners and policymakers to figure out how practice and policy can enable those outcomes.

METHODS

Moving from problems to outcomes, and from outcomes to practice and policy, requires a different kind of toolbox. Our approach uses social science to make sense of people and practitioners' motivations and behaviors; design to visualise, make real, try out, and document different practice and policy; and business to develop an investment case and vehicles for scale.

All along we learn from what doesn't work, and iterate in context. Two cities may seem to have the same teen pregnancy problem on paper - but talk to young people and you may find that the causes and potential solutions are quite different. Working in context and with people, rather than in offices and for people, enables us to have an immediate sense of what will work locally and what just won't.

SOLUTIONS

Success isn't coming up with a good solution to a problem. Success is sustaining a good solution to a problem. Good sustainable solutions don't just contribute to outcomes; they also create new resource. We don't just mean monetary resource. We try & bring people together in new and surprising ways: cultivating relationships and harnessing the power of social networks. We look at resource flows over time: at people's life trajectories and service pathways and how investment at one point of time can garner social payoffs later down the line. And we think beyond organisational structures to how we spread ideas and approaches without having to create new infrastructure and machinery.

THE RADICAL REDESIGN APPROACH



THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

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