
Research

For Module 2, we were asked to conduct four types of research:

1. Learn from People
 2. Learn from Experts
 3. Immerse Yourself in Context
 4. Seek Analogous Inspiration
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Design Challenge: How Might We Enable More Young People to Become Social Entrepreneurs?

While more and more youth are interested in social entrepreneurship as a means for tackling some of the world's toughest challenges, many aspiring social entrepreneurs fail to move beyond the initial idea phase because the infrastructure to support them is lacking. Some are unable to gain access to networks or mentors that could provide the knowledge and experience to confront major decisions, while others lack the capital they need to start their venture.

The following document includes the results of our team's research:

- P1. Learn from People: Erica
- P2. Learn from People: Joshua
- P3. Learn from People: Andrew
- P4. Learn from People: Andrew (cont.)
- P5. Learn from Experts: Cynthia
- P6. Immerse Yourself in Context: mHUB
- P7. Immerse Yourself in Context: Startup Weekend
- P8. Seek Analogous Inspiration

Learn from People - HCD Erica Interview:

Nonprofit: Intransit Empowerment Project

Description: Art and education workshops for youth, company open from 2011 - 2017, programming served around 100 - 125 kids total in 30 kid increments, never same kid

Position: Cofounder, board secretary, treasurer, marketing director, executive director

Definition - Chicago defines youth from 14 - 24

Reason she started the nonprofit

- couldn't find other nonprofit work, made her own opportunity
- Friends were refugees
- Interned with Heartland Alliance

Reason it ended

- No money left
- Founder was holding nonprofit back from growing

Challenges

- Paperwork took 6 months to fill out, a lot of work to register company with 901 C3
- Retaining participants - would be more beneficial to have same kids over long period of time rather than different kids for 2 hour session.
- Other non profit groups were against partnering with them due to afraid they were not as serious, not understanding the need for this
- Entirely volunteer based

Needed

- Fundraising help and easy avenues to approach funders
- Idea was too big, they needed to taper it down to make it implementable
- Needed consistent programming with assets

Learn from People - HCD Interview with Joshua:

Experience with Entrepreneurship

- observing very well what's going on and based off of that, formulating a solution to address what you see what's going on
- experience in a new laboratory is a shitty startup; if a startup is creating/gathering knowledge/ research then a lab would be a shitty startup
- example: lab goal: what are people doing that they could be doing (??) strategy and goals

How do you feel like those lab skills have come to serve you

- 14 weeks ago started to change path and go toward going the startup route; What sparked interest: interest in systems – example in transportation / and transportation and how this relates to biology/ measuring impact and figuring out how to improve systems based on those observations:
- In the past 5 years, logistics in transportation has really increased
- Interest in startup: cold calling people off a LinkedIn and asking people what they did
- Read a book about network was like asking for someone directions
- lab skills are about catching errors, paying attn,
- so much of innovation and entrepreneurship is about what you don't know

In addition to cold calling any other steps?

- as he has learned what skills he needs, example – data skills – seeking experiences where he gets experience (example: LinkedIn, certificate in skills)

Other steps?

- Making a python program that approximates flyers/ flight time i.e. would larger or smaller planes would be better for certain routes?
- No clear goal
- Trajectory/ or pathway in mind: idea of joining a larger company or startup

Guidance/Mentors

- UChicago career advisors
- Career transition: from education to consulting
- Hearing that other people taken similar steps

What traits do embody that has helped you in pursuing this?

- bad at impulse control
- taking advantage / being as open as you want and willing to engage with people about your interest / talking to rando's has lead to things / being ok with talking

What resources would be helpful?

- open source / remote skills that would be helpful
- thinks that earlier in life, had the opportunity but went a specific route
- example: @ UChicago, can take whatever classes is helpful to avoid being silo'd or segmented

Barriers

- startups: there are a lot of startups with less than 10 people, but there is no way to get in contact them
- if there was a way to more easily to do projects [ad hoc] quick project that you could solve
- how do you determine what skills you need to work on? Looking at what skills are employing; looking at what skills are solving [the problems that Joshua is interested]

Learn from People - Talking to Andrew:

Personal Details

22, recent UChicago grad, met at cafe in Chicago

Interesting Stories

His experience learning more about his identity

Motivation

Cares most about but doing work that is fulfilling and increasing access to educational resources to youth in Chicago. What motivates a need to love his work and have a sense of purpose

Barriers

His work is very intentional and actually requires a lot of self-reflection and self-awareness about his identity. Because not many people with his identity markers are involved in the type of work he does, he doesn't have any role models to look up to or ask for help

Interactions

He interacted in the social justice space as a strategist and analyst, rather than a outwardly vocal activist, yet his work is still driven by love and a want to do good

Remaining Questions

Would want to further explore how he might mentor a younger version of himself.

Full Notes

Foray into social activism was tutoring for Friends of Washington Park. He grew up fairly sheltered, went to a high performing HS, "bubble." He always loved US history, because it contextualized modern day issues. This came to life when at Friends of WP because there was such an apparent difference between his childhood experience and at of the students he tutored.

He also worked for Campus Catalyst. He loved the intentionality of social justice work, that people demonstrated so much care. There, he worked for a client, the Chinese Mutual Aid on how to start a college prep mentoring program. He knew from here on out that he wanted to do work with a clear social purpose.

He notes 2 realizations emerged from his early college years- 1) how incredibly hard it was to deliver programs and human support (mentions how much respect he has for teachers) 2) how complicated it was to run a nonprofit and that leadership requires social intelligence. From these, he felt that doing work in this space that gave him so much meaning was a challenge he couldn't resist.

He gave a story to demonstrate this from a school he is teaching at-- teaching reading comprehension to 4th graders: I was going through all of the reading materials alone today in the classroom-- you feel like the hour flies by you realize how important it is.

How would you define social intelligence? It's the ability to communicate with other people, be welcoming, empathize.

How did you develop it? Through Campus Catalyst, tutoring, South Side in Focus (SSIF, the nonprofit he developed) and through TFA.

TFA showed me how different I was from other college students. I am no better than other students but it made me aware of how I could leverage my strengths. It also made me realize my identity as an Asian male and the baggage and perceptions that come with that.

What would have made SSIF easier?

More human capacity, better team coordination, a better balance between having a say and listening to our community partners. Leadership is also really transient but that's bad because relationships are essential to this kind of work

Challenges

I come from a high income family and am an Asian male, so it's hard to identify role models. I realize that this is my identity but I'm trying to do work for black and brown students. I have this feeling of being alone and it creates awkwardness for me a lot of times, because East Asians are often seen as "white adjacent..." I have to do a lot of work to check my privilege and understand my identity.

How do you face these?

I never stop trying. I try to bring people into the conversation. I also need safe spaces. Thankfully I found those at UChicago so I could discuss these things with my peers. I try not to fall into the stereotype of an introverted Asian male or an econ bro, but sometimes I over-compensate, trying to be more comfortable with myself.

Summary

At UChicago I was very lucky, I got the right cards and played them right. I also learned to work very hard. With SSIF, I learned the importance of all human stories
Campus Catalyst: got me thinking about interactions between public and private sectors, tools to do social activism in a way outside of politics. TFA experience taught me that all this work needs to come from love. I wish that social entrepreneurship had more recognition.

Learning from Experts - Interview with Techstars - Cynthia Macias:

About Cynthia:

- Coordinator at mHUB (hardware workspace)
- Involved with Techstars in DC
- Based in Chicago now, but previously DC and Africa, doing social

Background:

- Worked with all age ranges
 - The young part doesn't really matter; more to do with experience, resources (network, financial, time, etc.), timing
- Technology sector heavy in Asian and Caucasian males, but lighter in females and minority
- Noticed effective learning through participation/real-life execution:
 - Knowledge transfer and feedback/insights through talking/mentor programs:
 - Mentor programs usually work best when the cause or industry is similar because both can learn from each other; find more lasting relationships than when industries are different
 - Utilize "picking your brain" conversations
 - Co-working spaces and being surrounded by other innovators, motivators, entrepreneurs help keep momentum, as well as support and feedback
 - Learning from failure and hearing about other people's failures
- No formal structure around how to approach starting a startup but people use: articles, online spaces, talking, just doing
 - The most structured would be online courses in entrepreneurship, but still requires hands-on activities to effectively learn
- Basically design thinking framework can be applied
- Starting a startup is a position of economic privilege

Challenges:

- Biggest issue: understanding the market/consumer needs, as well as existing competition
 - Identify a valuable problem and understand the market needs and fit
 - People typically try to sell a solution but do not take as much time to validate the solution or solve for the problem

Challenges Specific to Social:

- Funding is slightly trickier for social entrepreneurship, and even for hardware, because the focus is usually on software as there's fast return and low-cost scalability
- A lot of hardware startups require entrepreneurs to rely on savings for initial funding; initial investment for hardware is higher than software and needs a lot of prototyping that takes time
- Recently there are more VCs with social/civic mindset
 - Investment funds specific to social issues

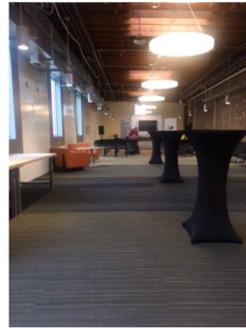
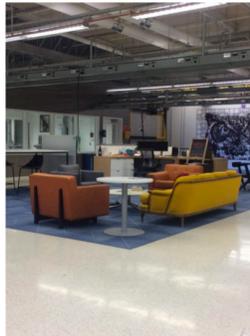
Immerse Yourself in Context - Visiting MHUB:

Summary

West Town, Near IIT, innovation hub

Observations

Very open, a lot of passionate discussion about technical details, public venue



Banner that says: Make, Manufacture, MEntor Membership, Midwest, Machines, Markets, Momentum
Discussion about future potential for blockchain and IoT, the possible use cases.

Knowledge sharing, a lot of discussion and networking- someone asked if there were open job positions, etc

Immerse Yourself in Context - Startup Weekend @ mHUB:

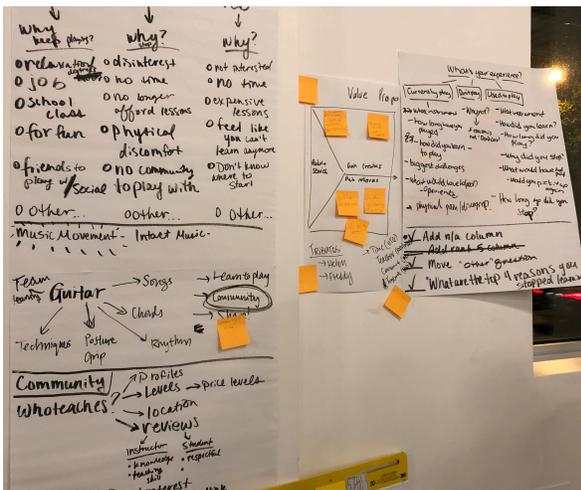
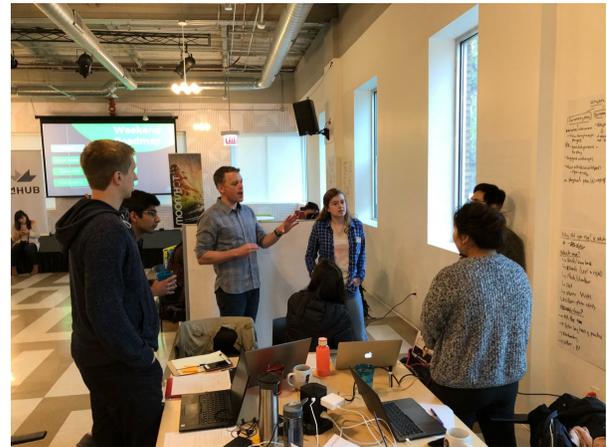
Observations:

- Open space with a lot of wall space, whiteboards, amenities (wifi, outlets, markers, coffee, snacks, etc.)
- Each team had a designated area, so no need to move around/stress about workspace
- People had to seek out and actively take initiative to talk to specific mentors that were available
- Organizers were very hands off with teams, so teams have to reach out
- Organizers provided frameworks and resources throughout the weekend, but no formal training or lecture-type programs at the start of the weekend, only a few speakers
- Groups were of all different age groups, levels of experience, areas of expertise
- Teams were encouraged to use frameworks (value proposition, business model canvas)
- In the first stage, ideas that seemed very popular still had a hard time recruiting when participants chose teams

Photos:



TEAMS WORKED WITH MENTORS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR UPCOMING PITCHES



NOTES & FRAMEWORKS TEAMS USED TO VALIDATE IDEAS/SOLUTIONS



AT THE END OF 2 DAYS, TEAMS WENT UP TO PITCH THEIR IDEAS

Seek Analogous Inspiration - Dating Apps

