



INTRODUCTION TO INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

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DEFINITION OF INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

„An innovation is the implementation of a significant change in the way your organisation operates or in the products it provides. Innovations comprise new or significant changes to services and goods, operational processes, organisational methods, or the way your organisation communicates with users. Innovations must be new to your organisation, although they can have been developed by others. They can either be the result of decisions within your organisation or in response to new regulations or policy measures.“ (Carter Block, *Measuring Public Innovation in the Nordic Countries*:14)

INNOVATION

- Incremental – small steps in progress
- Radical – transformative – new ways of doing things

Innovation can be:

- ✓ New services, new products. Improvements in skills or equipment.
- ✓ New methods of organizing or planning at the workplace.
- ✓ New methods of communicating with the public (radical improvements)

WHY NOW?

- Austerity after the financial crisis. Governments have less money to spend.
- New digital technology and social media.
- New problems f. ex. ageing population, global warming.
- “Never waste a crisis”

INNOVATION PROJECTS

- Thinking outside of the box.
- Frontline staff and users crucial in innovation. They know better what works and what services don't work as well as it should.
- Small projects often change a lot.

Examples:

- **Fredericia model, Denmark.** Offering strength training to elderly citizens. (thinking out side of the box)
- **Trappa, Iceland** – teaching children with speech difficulties in remote areas via computer. (New technology can save money for municipalities)
- **“Keeping the window open”.** Police in Iceland trying to battle domestic violence. (It can take years to see the success in the project)

WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN ICELAND

- Website
- Public sector innovation awards 2011-2015



WHAT HAVE I LEARNED FROM WORKING AND JUDGING THE ICELANDIC INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT AWARDS

- Little things can make a big difference. (Runner up 2012 - The chicken palace)
- People in government are passionate about their job and have many ideas that can help municipalities and government organization do a better job.
- Little organizations/ municipalities in Iceland were more likely than big ones to send in projects to the awards.
- “Steal” or recycle ideas from other countries and municipalities. You don’t always have to invent something totally new. Then you can also learn from other people’s mistakes.

WHERE TO LOOK?

- Danish Mindlab (mind-lab.dk)
- Australian Public Sector Innovation Toolkit (innovation.govspace.gov.au)
- European Union: Powering European Public Sector Innovation: Towards A New Architecture (Horizon 2020)
- Innovation in American Government Awards (ash.harvard.edu/innovations-american-government-awards)
- OECD - OPSI database (www.oecd.org/governance/observatory-public-sector-innovation/home/)
- Other interesting websites: NESTA (uk), IDEO (usa), Innovation unit (uk), Bloomberg Philantropies (Mayors challenge- completion for cities in Europe)

THANK YOU

