Special Track

Arts-based initiatives in innovation and organisational development

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Description

The track will explore the process of arts-based initiatives, ABIs, (Schiuma, 2011; 2013) in the context of practice-based innovation (Melkas & Harmaakorpi, 2012). According to Schiuma (2011, pp. 2–3), an ABI is the planned managerial use of art forms to address management challenges and business problems with the aim of developing employees and infrastructure that affect the organisational value-creation capacity. ABIs integrate the traditional rational-based perspective of the organisation with the emotive-based perspective of organisational life and its components. The organisational knowledge creation process depends on the integration of "technical knowledge" with emotive knowledge. The arts provide approaches and innovation action tools to handle emotional and evocative dynamics within and around organisations.

Knowledge is considered to be performed in everyday interactions, which links knowledge to practices and makes it robust, but not rigid (Moustaghfir & Schiuma, 2013). A similar understanding of knowledge is expressed by Scharmer (2001, 2009) in his work on leadership and management praxis. This implies that knowledge can be possible subject to change, but also reason for resistance (Pässilä, 2012; Pässilä, Oikarinen, Parjanen & Harmaakorpi, 2013). Acknowledgement of different forms of knowledge (selftranscending, tacit and explicit; Scharmer, 2001) also challenges traditional approaches to innovation. Inclusion of different forms of knowledge into an organizational innovation process necessitates the development of a process that is participatory, action-oriented and during which issues can be dealt with together in a safe environment and in a bottom-up style – giving time not only to imagination but sometimes also to odysseys and lingering. The need to linger highlights multi-temporal elements in knowledge creation with implications also for social evolution in general. This flexible temporality is still a relatively weak signal, but an important issue that is gradually being understood better and has much future potential (e.g., Baungaard Rasmussen & Wangel, 2007). Lingering may also be associated with presencing, a holistic way of being present; the blending of sensing and presence that Scharmer (2009) finds crucial in leadership and management. Could this also be understood as a socially and economically sustainable approach to organisational development?
Knowledge creation processes like these cannot be forced into the format of basic innovation management procedures (i.e., defining a problem, generating possible solutions, testing them, selecting and implementing the best available one, and measuring it). The three forms of knowledge necessitate a fundamentally different kind of knowledge creation process to take place; a creative process that is focused on finding and creating, aiming to transform something not yet existing into existing, and to give it a figure or a voice. It is about finding possible worlds and building up a community, where workers can be (active) actors, who are creating a meaning together. (Pässilä, Uotila & Melkas, 2013; cf. Melkas & Harmaakorpi, 2012) How can the arts be of help in such processes?

The track offers a space for discussing what arts-based initiatives actually mean in organisational contexts when employees, managers and customers are trying to find out how to improve and renew practices, services, products, organisational culture or organisational climate, or find out how they can survive in crisis, in perplexed situations and complex relationships (see Pässilä et al., 2013, Owens & Al Yamani, 2010; Owens, 2004).

We conceive ABIs as cross-cultural encounters, because employees speak of the difficulties and rewards that come from grappling with bringing artists into their organisation (Larsen, 2011; Pässilä, Oikarinen, & Kallio, 2013). Artists, too, usually perceive it as entering a foreign world, with its own rules, codes, languages and history. These cultural encounters between the world of the arts and the world of organisations, like other kinds of cross-cultural encounters, have the potential to create new knowledge by making people become aware and reflect upon their own ways of seeing and doing things (Pässilä & Melkas, forthcoming; Pässilä, Oikarinen & Harmaakorpi, 2013).

In the cross-cultural encounter conception we emphasise the importance of space for dialogue between participants that is safe, secure and supportive. We associate this with the concept of the third space (Greenwood & Manaaki Wilson, 2006) where the intention is to create a community of commitment (Kofman & Senge 1993) and a community of creation (Sawhney & Prandelli, 2000). These do not centre around targets, objectives and rational negotiations about how goals can be achieved, but on ‘what people care about and want’ to create together, about ‘the formation of a shared will’ through a range of conversations of complexity ‘in which participants form and articulate a common intention’ (Scharmer 2000).

The idea of the track is to explore what happens at the cross-roads of arts and organisation and to discuss this with the help of the following questions:

- What values and ethics – shadows and lights - lie in sustainable organisational development under the umbrella of arts-based initiatives?
- How can we understand the nature of the artistic contribution?
- What kinds of changes do arts-based initiatives bring about in organizations and in managers, employees and artists' knowledge construction?
- What kinds of knowledge and understanding are influential in organizational innovation processes?
- How can we understand, assess and evaluate effectiveness of arts-based initiatives?
- What kind of novel measures can be utilized to evaluate their effectiveness?
The approach invites scholars and practitioners to think through what would be a sustainable and human centered approach to creating socially and economically sustainable change in organisational settings.

The track is itself an exploration; it links experimental, participative and performative presentations as well as traditional conference papers in order to enrich dialogue and encounters by inviting both researchers as well as artists, arts-based facilitators and entrepreneurs to join in.

Are you interested in...?

- joy, play, imagining, sensuous knowing, laughing, experimental playful exploration, creative inspiring leaps
- becoming familiar with what is happening in the field of arts-based initiatives
- broadening your expertise into ABIs and organisations
- sharing your own skills and knowing with practitioners and researchers
- experiencing what is happening in other countries in the field of ABIs and organisations
- being part of an international ABIs network and meeting like-minded people

If you find any of the above interesting – you should submit a proposal

**Guidelines:**

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an extended structured abstract (in Word format) of 1000-1500 words by January 20, 2014. The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice. Authors are encouraged to follow the guidelines for both extended abstracts as well as full papers that will be made available on IFKAD site.

**Deadlines**

- Abstract submission: 20 January 2014
- Review decisions sent to authors: 20 February 2014
- Full paper submission: 15 April 2014
- Registration to the conference (for at least one author of the paper): 20 May 2014
- Conference sessions: 11–13 June 2014

**For further information**

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