

“A Supportive Backdrop and a Warm Embrace”

An Impact Report of the Enspiral Network



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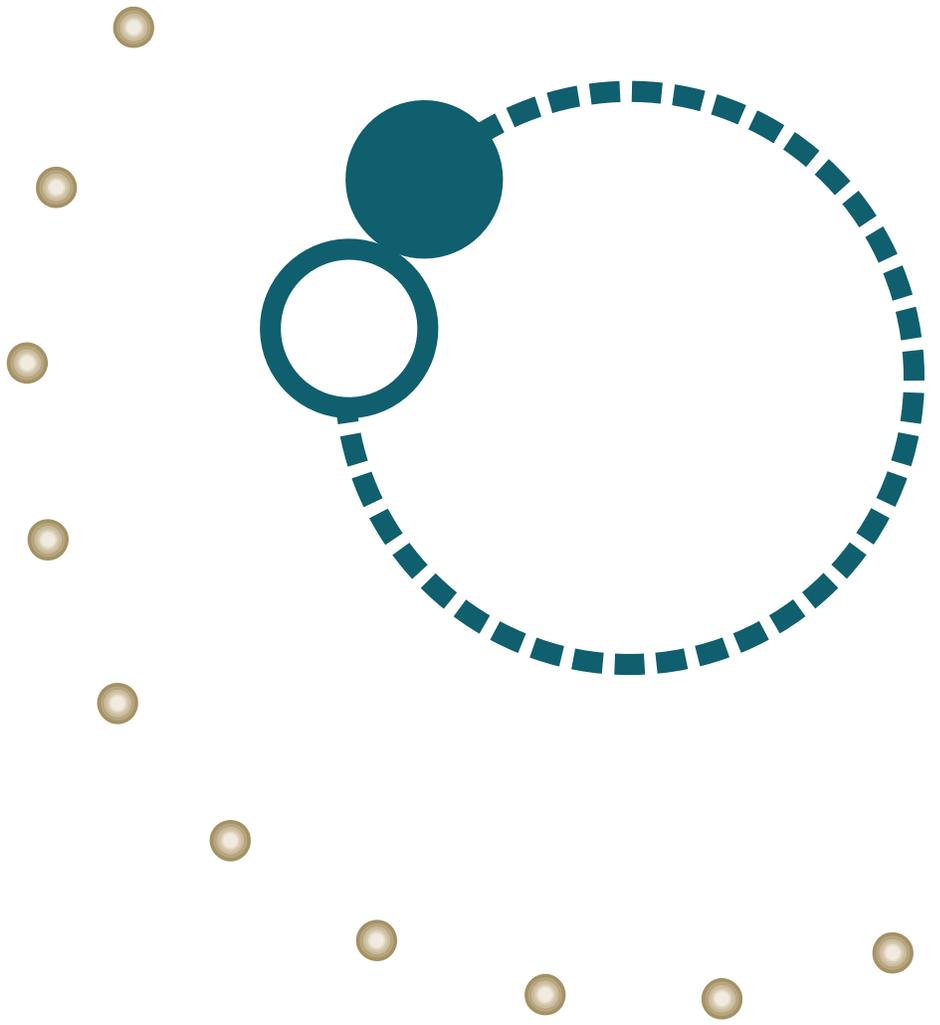




Table of Contents

Executive Summary, page 1

Explaining the Impossible, page 2

Box 1: So, what is Enspiral?? page 4

Who We Are, page 6

How and Why, page 7

Box 2: Glossary, page 9

Box 3: But...what is a venture? page 11

Results, page 12

About the Initiatives, page 13

Return on Investment, page 15

Impact Evaluation, page 17

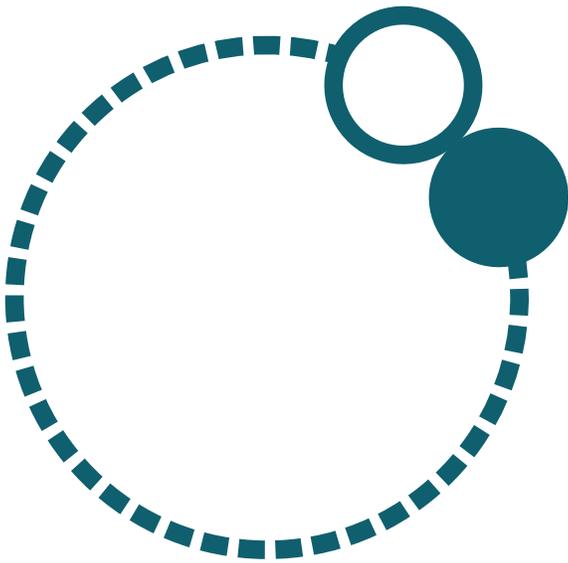
Loomio: A Standout, page 18

Words and Stories, page 19

Box 4: Impact of the Initiatives, page 20

Dream Big, page 21

Conclusion, page 23



Executive Summary

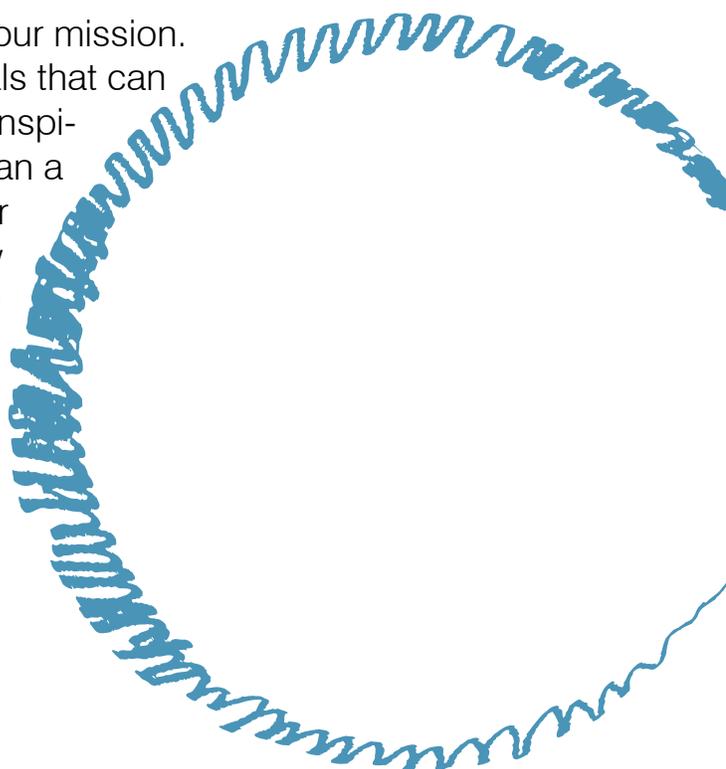
We surveyed 27 initiatives in the Enspiral landscape, interviewed around 20 individuals, and maintained various online discussions around impact evaluation of Enspiral. Enspiral provides a fertile ground for exchange of resources, experience, and support in various forms. Its primary impact is in helping individuals get connected to each other and collaboratively experiment with new forms of organizing projects and ventures. The more measurable impact has to do with how Enspiral helps various initiatives to achieve their impact through things like increased access to goods and services while also helping to cultivate new ideas. This report helps outline the varied impacts of this complex social organism.

Explaining the Impossible

Enspiral defies simple explanation. It is many things to many people at once. It is a mutual-aid network. It is a social impact entrepreneurial incubator. It is a future of work and new economy catalyst. It is a collection of channels on different mediums punctuated by meet-ups and retreats. It is a network of colleagues and friends. It's none of these things and all of them at once. You'll get a different answer for what it is from each person you ask. Doing impact evaluation on an organization like this is far different and more complex than on anything else we've worked on.

Enspiral believes in a paradigm shift in how we all think about work and social impact and is trying to create utopia and prepare for collapse at the same time. Much of the work that an organization like Enspiral does is intangible and personal, defying the logics of traditional qualitative and quantitative methodologies in its subtle approach to transformative subversion. Impact reporting requires finding the thread through an organization's theory of change and seeing how it lines up with the data. To understand Enspiral, we started from the catch phrase, "More people working on stuff that matters." From there, we began by building a bottom-up understanding of what that looks like, engaging in around 20 different preliminary conversations and meetings around the question "What is Enspiral?".

In a traditional organization, you start with your mission. That mission breaks down into different goals that can be evaluated against in some form. Since Enspiral is an "ecosystem of purposes," rather than a traditional non-governmental organization or social impact venture, making sense of how Enspiral is contributing to the social change it envisions is difficult. Enspiral is not just building one better world. Enspiral is trying to help nurture a range of experiments all with their own unique, and even



contradictory, theories of change.

At each possible point of entry into thinking about the impact of Enspiral, we encountered differing views. Some members think that Enspiral is primarily offering a value proposition to those seeking to create next-generation ventures. Others believe that ventures are essentially fictitious entities and that all that really matters are the people and the various forms of initiatives they take. To address this tension, we ultimately decided that it was easiest to look at a wide range of initiatives-- not just those that would be considered “ventures.” We then began to attempt to map the relationship between the impact of those initiatives and what roles Enspiral played in that process.

By choosing this thread among many, we tell an incomplete story, but it's a meaningful snapshot nonetheless. We hope this report will continue to open the door to other glimpses and reflections around both Enspiral and of the landscape of other next-generation organizations charting similar unmapped terrains.

Box 1: So, what is Enspiral??

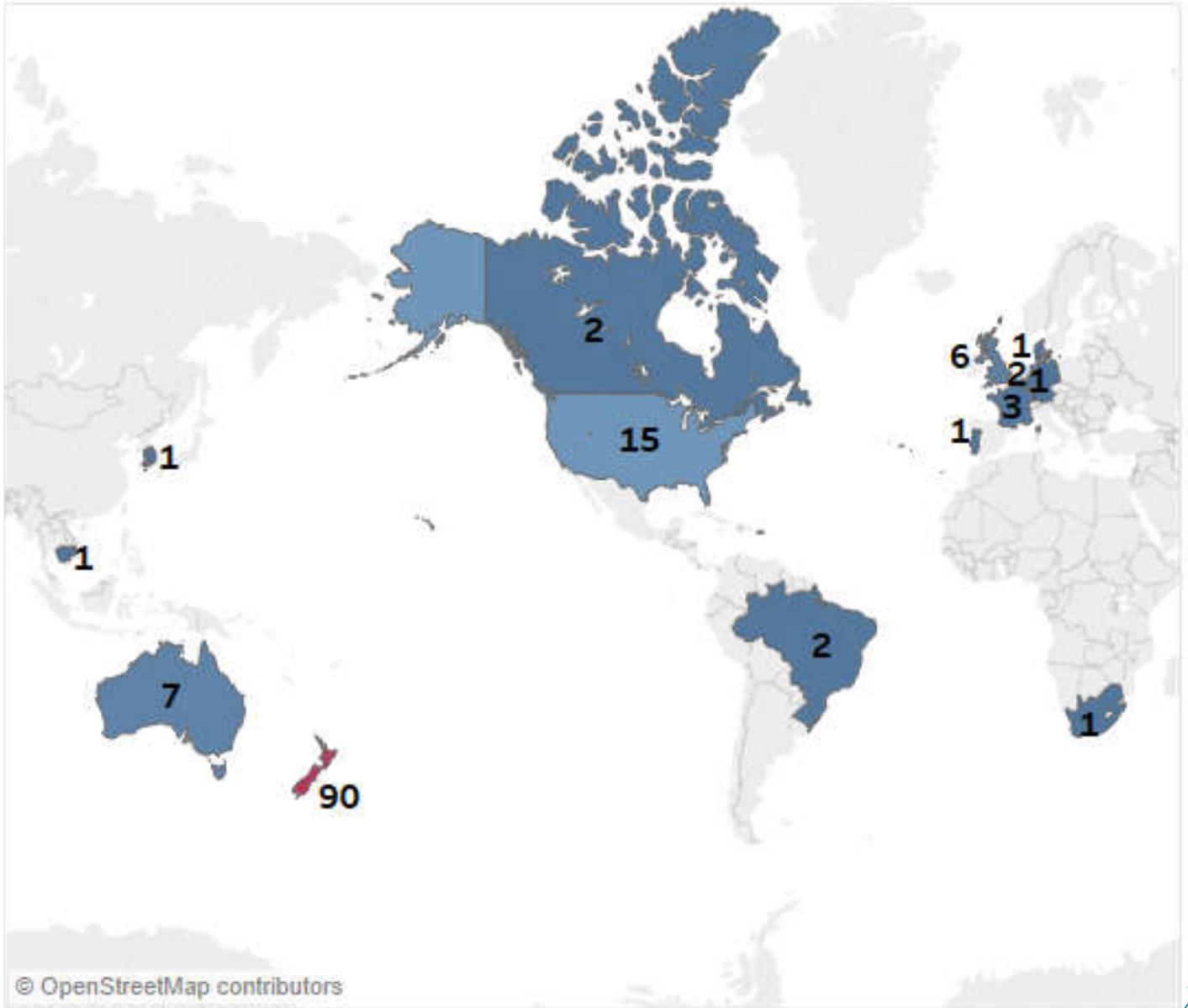
Enspiral's tagline is "More People Working on Stuff That Matters." Enspiral Network was founded in 2010 in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, as a collective of individuals doing contract work together excited by the possibility of creating something more. Enspiral Network now includes over 28 members and 124 contributors, although the network is known to expand much beyond that. New Zealand remains the major hub of Enspiral activities, but there are members who participate from over 14 countries (see image, below).

The first document on the Enspiral Foundation was on June 8, 2011. It is a limited liability company with a charitable constitution that was adopted on June 29, 2012. The members collectively own it. While it is legally obligated to have a Board of Directors, Enspiral Foundation's approach is to remain consistent with its values and have a "minimum viable board" (MVB) with a narrow compliance focus.

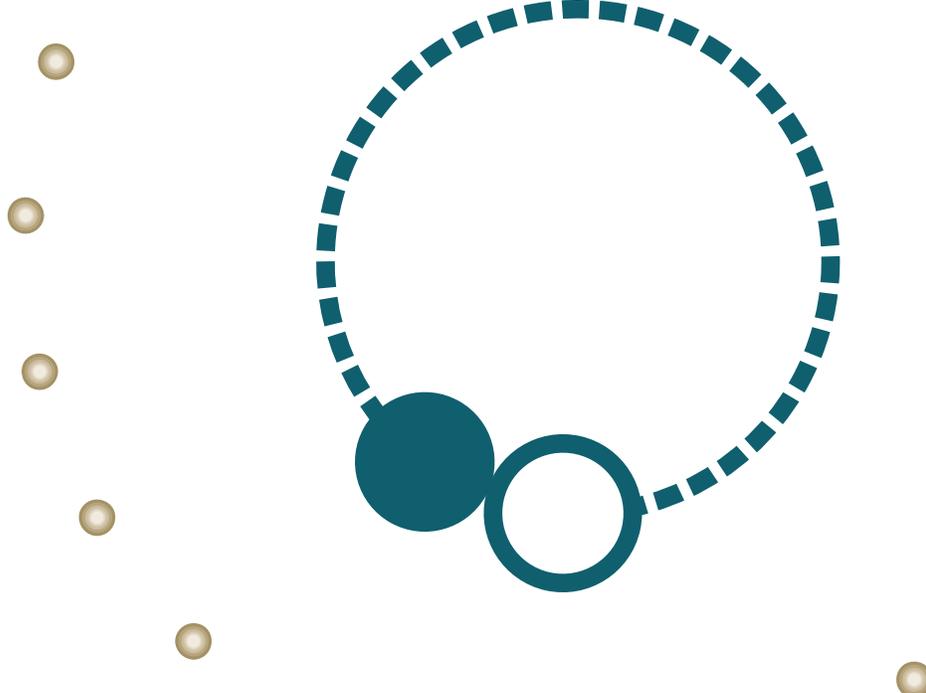
In 2019, Enspiral convenes in person twice a year at the winter and summer retreat, and has monthly facilitated meetups in Wellington, New Zealand. It coordinates efforts over many channels on Slack; makes collective decisions and conversations on Loomio; pools, proposes and distributes money over Cobudget; and records its structure and best practices in the Enspiral Handbook. Among the different modes by which people interact include stewards, or support pairs, and pods, which are any small group of people meeting in person or virtually at least semi-regularly, generally around a common goal or discussion theme. Most of the internal work takes place through formal and informal working groups. Any participant can propose a new project or idea within Enspiral. Meanwhile, most of the market-facing work happens within the ventures.

See Box 2: Glossary for further description of Enspiral terms

Locations of Subscribers



Enspiral Subscribers as of 2019, which includes Members and Contributors, represent 14 countries and 6 continents

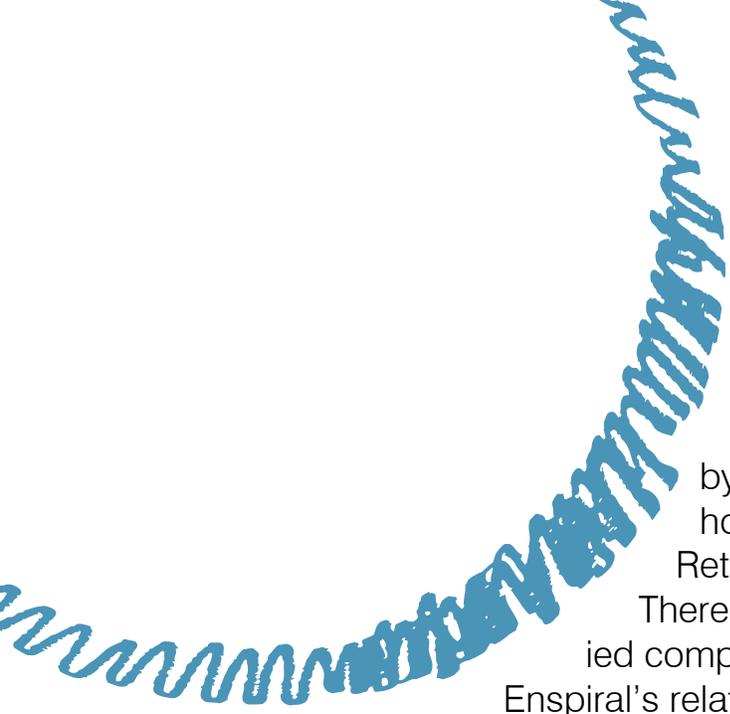


Who We Are

Emmi is a data scientist, activist, Mozilla Open Web fellow, and PhD student at the University of Arizona along the USA/Mexico border. They received their M.A. in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation with a thesis on Decentralizing Governance in Post-Conflict settings. Following that, they launched Monitoring & Evaluation department capacity for the Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria. Their current research delves into disinformation, bots, and the rise of the alt-right on social media. They are founding Rebellious Data, a social impact data-storytelling consultancy. They attended the Enspiral retreat in 2019.

Emma is a community organizer, co-founder of Shakesqueer Theater Collective and experienced grant writer/communications person. They have coordinated within the collective border humanitarian aid effort No More Deaths and were the training and events intern at Social Impact evaluation consulting firm. They have crafted funding proposals large and small, amounting to over 2 million USD awarded, including the founding of a small-scale farming apprenticeship program for youth in Senegal and the founding of a multi-pronged project to narrate the US/Mexico border.

We are not strictly an independent evaluation body in that we are also new contributors to Enspiral and have many friends within the network. This bridge between internal and external views helped us get both connected subjectivity and external objectivity.



How and Why

The methodology really started with conversation and consensus building. The idea for this report was spawned by Enspiral members and contributors hosting a session at Enspiral Summer Retreat 2019 about how to fund Enspiral.

There was much discussion about the varied complexities of goals and strategies around Enspiral's relationship to funding streams. A question that kept coming up was how to explain the impact that Enspiral has to external audiences such as funders and potential replicators of the Enspiral model. Chelsea Robinson's essay, "Finding the Stuff that Matters" in *Better Work Together* reflects this point, wherein "Enspiral itself is not producing deliberate external outcomes. The most direct units of impact are the projects that people organise themselves around." Enspiral is attempting systemic changes at a meta-level by facilitating an ecosystem of purpose. Given this, its outcomes are necessarily complex. Our intention emerged: to do research that attempts to understand and communicate the impact of Enspiral.

The challenge of externally communicating impact is not the only reason to engage in impact evaluation; there is also the matter of internal navigation. Chelsea writes, "If I could go back and do Enspiral again, I would institute more intentional learning systems so we could constantly integrate new information about the nature of impact. Most of the work of making a difference is grunt work, implementing the vision one day at a time, but you'll grunt in the wrong direction if you don't stay oriented on the map and adjust the compass." Impact evaluation can help each participant know what is working and what isn't, while also providing evidence for the fruits of everyone's labor. Impact evaluation creates the opportunity not just to grow, but also to provide meta-level perspective and a sense of accomplishment. So while it can be difficult to not oversimplify Enspiral through quantitative analysis, doing some form of data work has the opportunity to move the network forward and provide a lens for other related projects to

engage in similar reflection.

It was with this intention that we initiated around 20 different preliminary conversations with participants of the Enspiral landscape, primarily in Wellington, New Zealand but also online. Our goal was to build an evaluation based on Enspiral's understanding of what Enspiral's impact is, and could be, rather than implementing a top-down practice based on our preconceived definitions of impact, which would be at odds with the spirit of Enspiral itself. These conversations transferred into a Loomio discussion and then a Slack channel where invested people in an informal working group could offer feedback as we updated them and moved through the process of our research. Through these fora and dialogues, strategic priorities for this evaluation emerged (see Boxes 2 and 3 for more about this).

We decided to create a broad scope and solicit all of the initiatives that could claim they had been "impacted by Enspiral" to try and understand what that impact looked like. We created a list of as many initiatives that being "impacted by Enspiral" would apply to, according to our diverse contacts within the network. These include initiatives associated currently or previously, in formal or informal ways, with Enspiral. We then tested a survey instrument within our informal working group, with the intention of the instrument getting at numerous ways to understand this impact. We then distributed the survey to the entire list.

The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data about how Enspiral helped the initiatives facilitate their impact. We then combined this with internal data from Optimi and Loomio about various back-end admin and facilitation tools. In total we surveyed 27 different ventures and projects out of the 47 initiatives that were originally identified. Enspiral has touched far more projects than these, but we chose this sample dataset for the significance of their relationship. We then analyzed the data using google forms, kumu, word clouds, and other data reading and management approaches.

Box 2: Glossary

Enspiral has a number of words that it has developed and uses exclusively, which we have attempted to define below. In addition, we've included a few of our own words as we use them within this report, in particular their roles.

Enspiral Network: Broadly refers to the people, relationships, and groups who associate with Enspiral and its ecology of purpose.

Enspiral Foundation Ltd: The official limited liability company with a charitable constitution. It's collectively owned by the members, with a "minimum viable board" of directors.

Member: These people look after the people and relationships, determine who (and what projects) are invited or not.

Contributor: These people are involved in collaboration and decision-making but do not have all of the access of members.

Subscribers: Regular financial contributor-participants in Enspiral, which includes contributors who have opted in past their 3 month trial period, and Members

Friends & Partners: Form a wider ecosystem of supporters.

Venture: Social enterprise mostly comprised of Enspiral people

Minimum Viable Board (MVB): "Enspiral's goal is to distribute vision, strategy, and leadership as widely as possible in the network, so our approach is a "minimum viable board" (MVB), with a narrow compliance focus."

Initiative: The word chosen by the authors to encapsulate any going-on that has been touched by Enspiral, meant to expand beyond ventures. Initiative is inclusive of events, pods, gatherings, projects, companies, and more. See Box 3 for more about this.

Pod: "Pods are small groups of people (4 to 5 is suggested) formed by members and contributors of Enspiral. These groups can support enspiral members/contributors to build relationships across the network – especially with those further from the center – supporting more people to be 'seen' and to experience mutual support and care."

Quotes from <http://whatis.enspiral.com/> and <https://handbook.enspiral.com>

Levels of Engagement

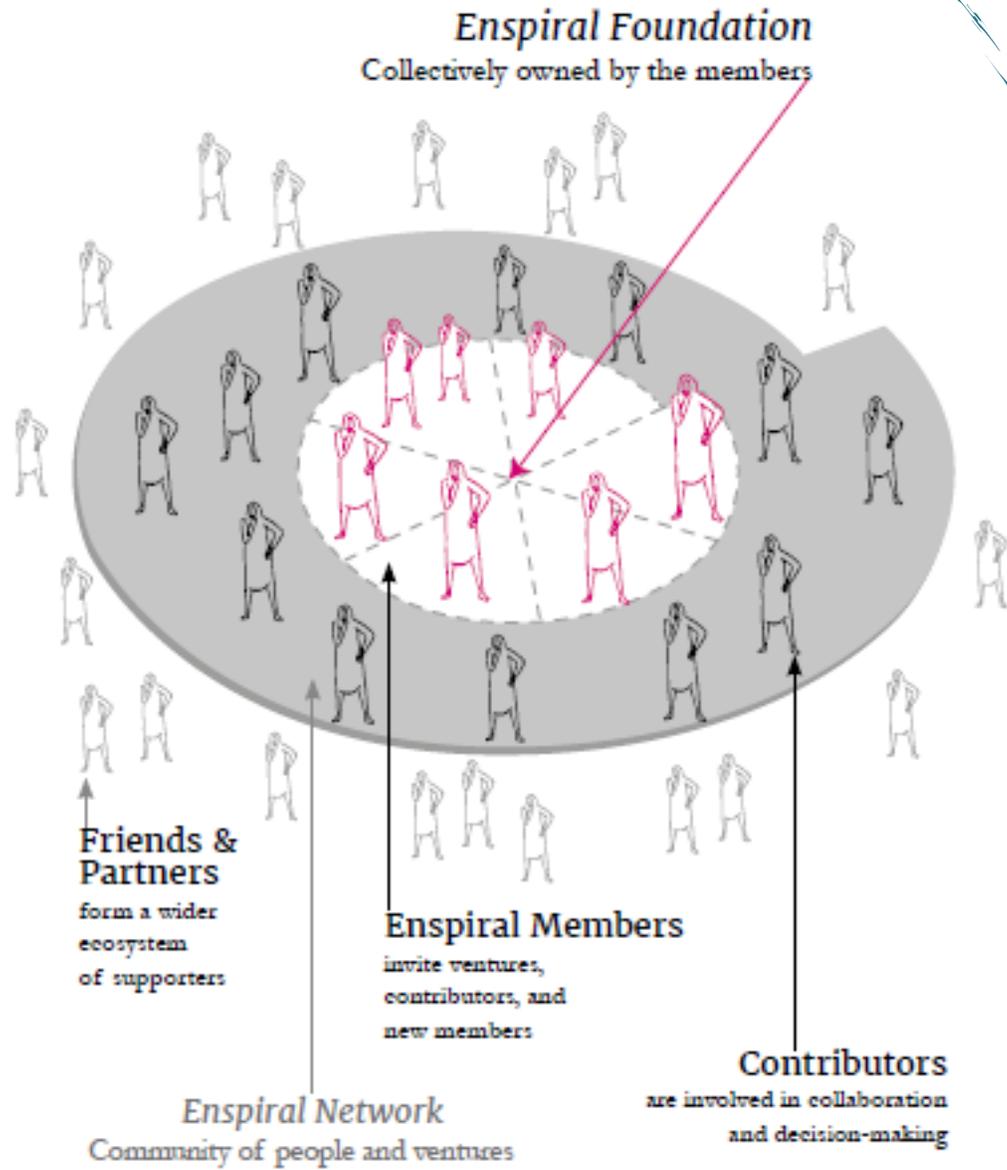


Image from "Better Work Together" page 45

Box 3: But...what is a venture? Why use “initiatives” instead?

In our early research, we ran into a wall immediately when we attempted to define a venture, even though it is one of the central operations of Enspiral. Many examples emerged outside of any definition we could attempt. For instance, “a venture is money-making,” but so is a livelihood pod, and not all ventures make money. So, what’s a venture, then? It seemed that people have a sense of whether what they were doing counted as a venture or not, but that distinction point differed from person to person. People would hear that we were looking into ventures, and then immediately demur, stating that they weren’t in a venture, even if they were doing something else important.

We thus realized that just looking at ventures failed to capture all of the many goings-on in Enspiral: the sometimes informal workings that have real value and impact. So, instead of trying to limit our scope, we expanded it. We decided to use the word initiative to attempt to capture as many things as possible, broadly, activities going on that had been in some way impacted by Enspiral, whether a fully running company, regular event, publication, defunct nonprofit, board game, collaboration, etc. The evaluation would be more worthwhile the more of the whole we attempted to include, therefore initiatives became our base data point.

Results

Our research focused directly on the impact of Enspiral on various initiatives and how those initiatives feed back into the network. In order to look at that, we took a few steps, in addition to asking several questions as a way to seize the moment of having the captured attention of these various players, such as whether the initiative would like to be listed on the Enspiral website. The sections of the survey are as follows:

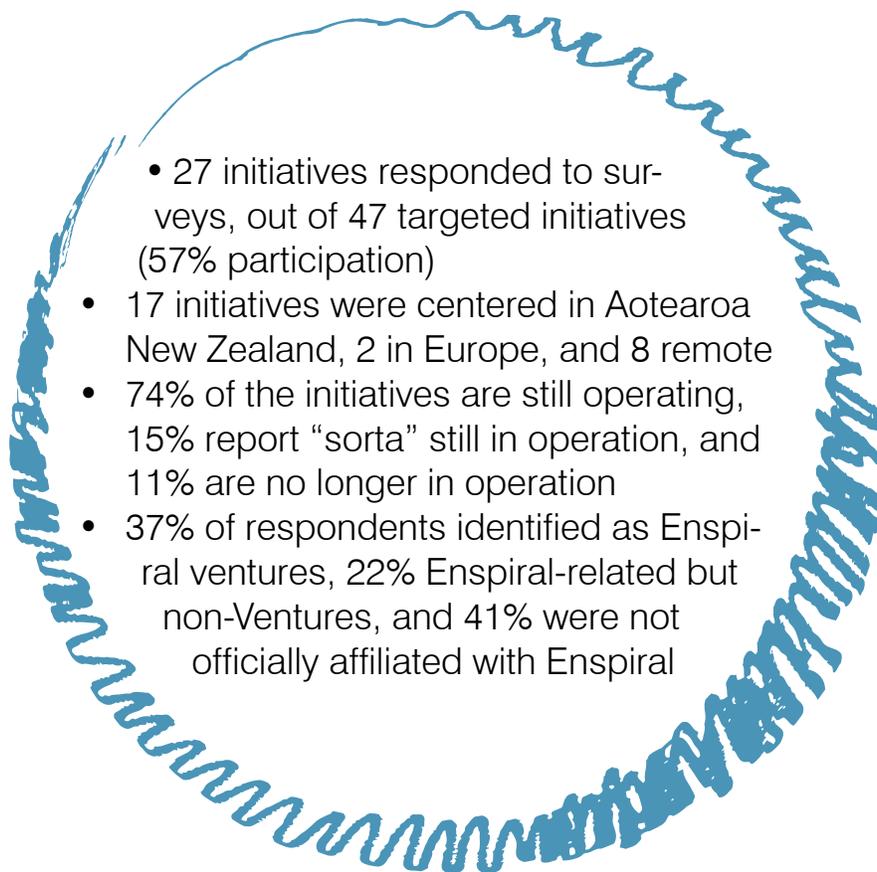
- Overview: about the initiative
- Numbers, Numbers, Numbers: quantitative data about the initiative and the financial contributions of Enspiral to the initiative, and the initiative to Enspiral
- The Impact of Enspiral: a break down of whether our hypothesized theory of change was true to reality
- Let's Get Specific: breaking down to assess the impact of the different facets of Enspiral: the handbook, Loomio, and Cobudget
- Dream Big: a space for feedback and brainstorming about impact with Enspiral

We were excited to have been able to typify conclusively some of the impact Enspiral has had on these different initiatives.

About the Initiatives

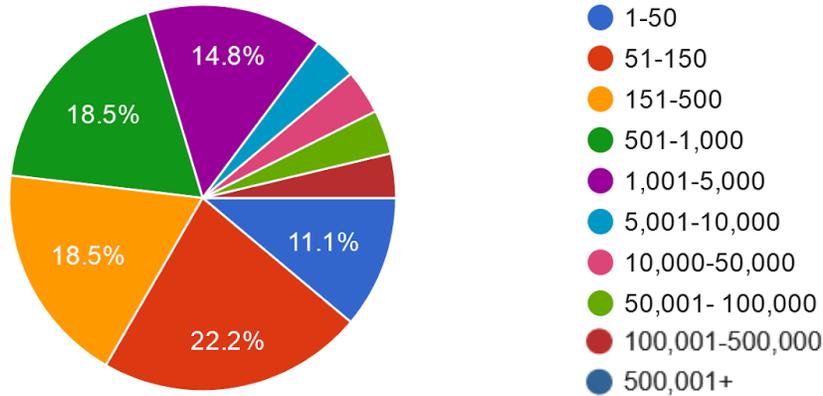
The overview told us a few important things about Enspiral initiatives. It shows that Enspiral hosts a very diverse landscape of initiatives. Furthermore, the impact Enspiral has had is not limited to officially affiliated initiatives.

The large diversity of users and customers reveals how diverse the types of initiatives are. For instance, Loomio provides asynchronous decision-making tools to hundreds of thousands of users, while many other initiatives create specialized services and products delivered to under 200 people. Having this many different types of initiatives present and in conversation via Enspiral creates a more robust ecosystem for co-development.

- 
- 27 initiatives responded to surveys, out of 47 targeted initiatives (57% participation)
 - 17 initiatives were centered in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2 in Europe, and 8 remote
 - 74% of the initiatives are still operating, 15% report “sorta” still in operation, and 11% are no longer in operation
 - 37% of respondents identified as Enspiral ventures, 22% Enspiral-related but non-Ventures, and 41% were not officially affiliated with Enspiral

About how many users/participants/customers has this initiative had?

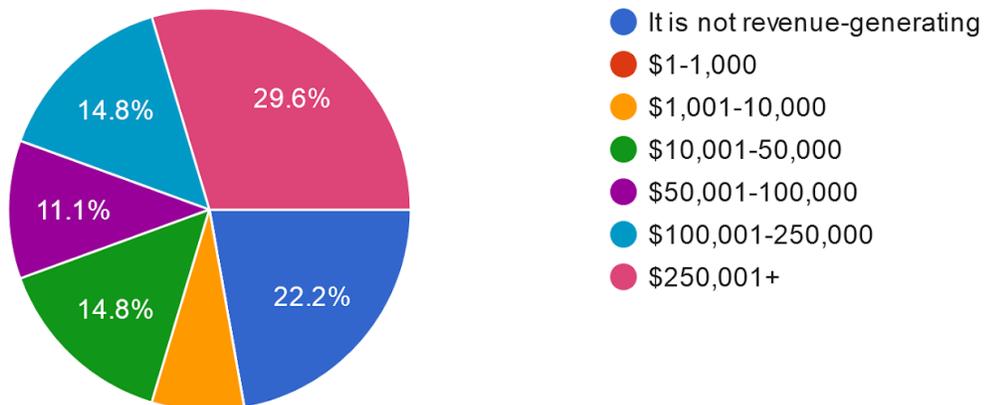
27 responses



While the largest number of responses to “About how many users/participants/customers has this initiative had” was 51-150, the range included every answer possible, from 1-50 to 500,000. The diversity of responses and relatively even distribution stood out.

What is the approximate current annual revenue of this initiative? (\$NZD)

27 responses



The close split is seen above between above \$250k NZD revenue-generating initiatives and non-revenue-generating initiatives, another point of internal diversity in Enspiral. This includes organizations like Enspiral Dev Academy that have a yearly revenue of over \$2 million NZD. While obviously this data is skewed by who we asked the question of, the diversity of responses shows how we tried to not focus solely on organizations that were in the “center of the boat”, or more central to the network itself.

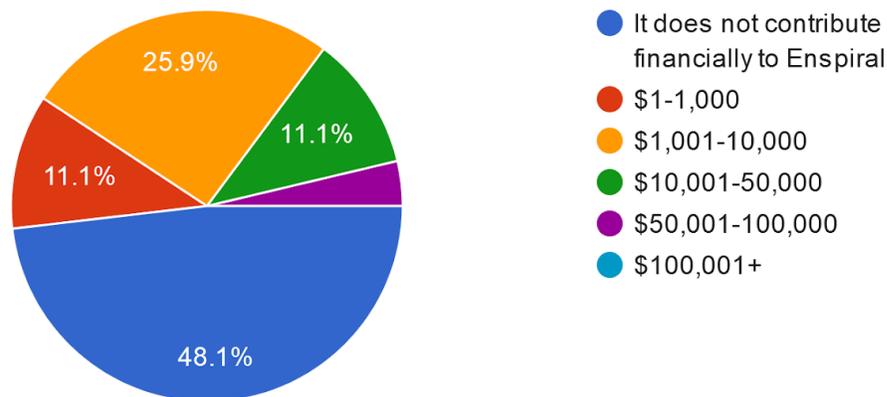
Return on Investment

There is a dynamic exchange of material support between the people and projects inside of Enspiral. There are benefits of being in Enspiral that are not easily tracked by resource flows, but, nonetheless, resource flows tell a part of the story. While the questions in this section all focus on money, goods, and services, this exchange indicates the deeper web of non-commodifiable support and mentorship within Enspiral.

The following graphic shows that initiatives have contributed at least \$87,000 NZD (a sum of the minimum amounts) to the Enspiral Network.

How much money (\$NZD) has this initiative contributed to Enspiral, in total?

27 responses



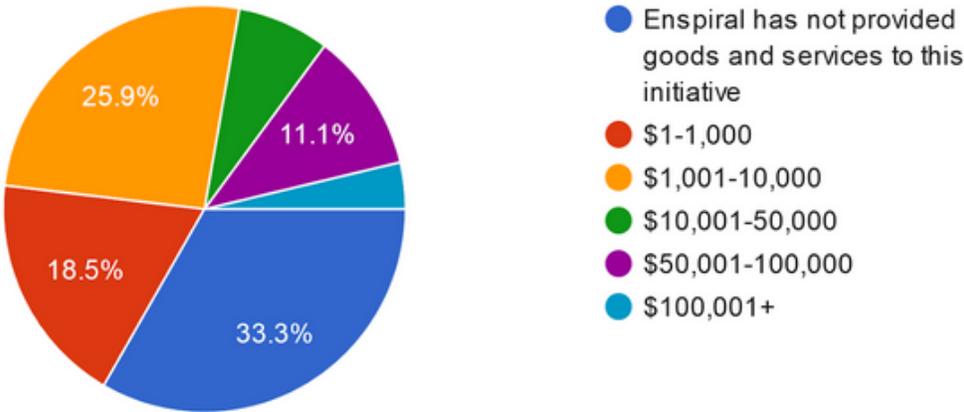
Initiatives have also contributed, at minimum, over \$129,000 NZD sum total worth of goods and services into Enspiral. Lifehack reported contributing about \$40k NZD for four years.

The majority of initiatives (85%), however, have not received financial support directly from Enspiral in return. The contrast between financial input and output shows that there is more going on than just simple financial transactions, as more money is being contributed than received.

We complexified the understanding of support received beyond just financial, to the exchange of goods and services between Enspiral and the initiatives in the network. The graphic below shows that by the lowest estimate Enspiral has given a sum total of over \$277,000 NZD worth of goods and services to initiatives into the initiatives network.

What is an estimated sum value (\$NZD) of all goods and services Enspiral has provided to this initiative?

27 responses



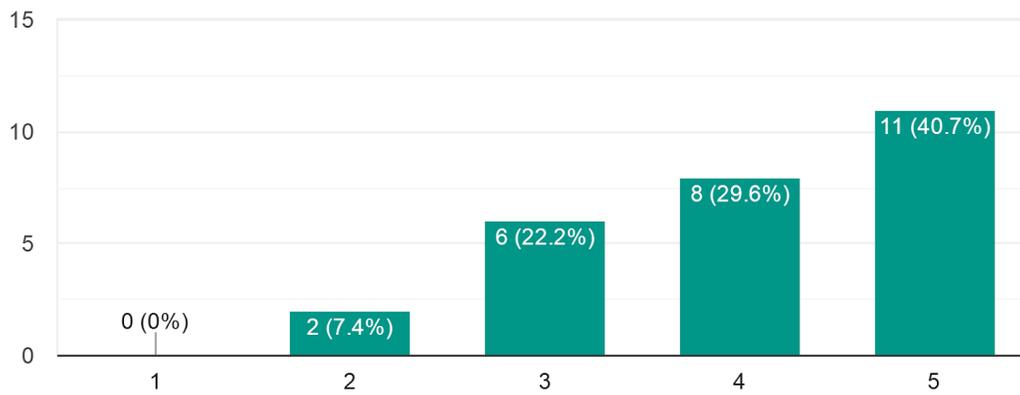
In looking at simply the goods and services rendered to and received from Enspiral, initiatives have gotten a return on their investment of time and resources of at least 114%. This somewhat obscured exchange is part of what qualifies Enspiral as a horizontal mutual aid network - or a leaderless network where members seek to support each other materially and emotionally.

These flows reveal the ways in which Enspiral helps to magnify resources to and from initiatives in the network in order to better support their impact. The relationship between the impact of initiatives in the network and Enspiral itself can be best viewed by looking at how Enspiral impacted these initiatives.

Impact Evaluation

To what degree has Enspiral had an impact on this initiative?

27 responses



On the scale of 1-5, 1 being “Not at all/Barely” and 5 being “Very much/Fundamentally,” the largest group of initiatives stated that Enspiral has had a critical impact on them, with the majority choosing a 4 or a 5. While Enspiral cannot claim direct responsibility for the impact that these initiatives have made, the greater they ascribe Enspiral’s impact on them, the more we can conclude that there is a correlation between Enspiral’s contributions and their ultimate impact.

There were many different ways in which initiatives felt that Enspiral contributed to their impact. Seventy percent of respondents reported that their initiatives founders met through Enspiral. This incredible statistic shows the degree to which Enspiral facilitates the creation of projects by bringing together the right people at the right time. Around 70% of respondents also reported that “Enspiral brought in collaborators/personnel”.

Around half of Initiatives stated that:

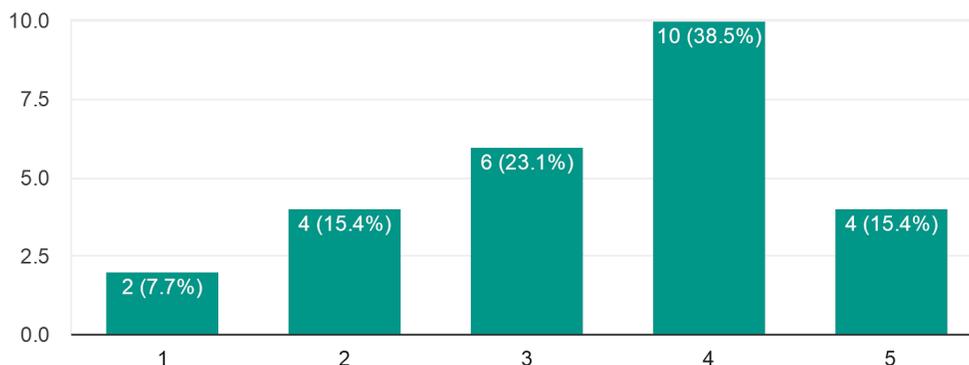
- Enspiral provided advice/other forms of support
- The Initiative has exchanged labor/expertise with other Enspiral members
- The Initiative has leveraged Enspiral brand
- Enspiral has provided work spaces
- Enspiral has provided marketing

Around 30% percent of initiatives to bring in new work or contracts, got the idea for their initiative from an Enspiral forum, or utilized the Enspiral Handbook. Other forms of support were noted but with lesser percentages such as the importance of retreats or various other community spaces.

Loomio: A Standout in Supporting Enspiral Initiatives

How much have Enspiral practices of shared decision-making, such as through Loomio, helped t... initiative leverage its impact?

26 responses



Loomio is heavily used within the Enspiral network. A metric for analyzing engagement and exchange through Enspiral is through data from their shared decision-making channel on Loomio. Enspiral's loomio account has had 23,583 unique visits. It has 236 members and 37 subgroups. Excluding subgroups it has 1,609 threads with 35,724 thread items, and 976 polls. What this shows is a tremendous amount of asynchronous, horizontal decision-making.

In looking at how the use and practice of Loomio affected the initiatives, between 40 and 50% of respondents named support from Enspiral via the use of decision-making tool Loomio. Towards this mention of Loomio, in later questions, the highest concentration of respondents rated the importance of Enspiral's shared decision making processes through tools like Loomio at 4 out of 5 (again, on a scale of 1 being "Not at all/Barely" and 5 being "Very much/Fundamentally"). When asked for additional details, one quote response drew out this impact on their initiative:

"Loomio was like a training ground for us in making decisions together...the principles and behaviours that we learned through using Loomio have endured. Things like being clear about what agreement to a proposal means, giving everyone a voice, prioritising consent over consensus."

In considering the three facets of Enspiral as listed on its website: Sharing Money (Co-budget), Sharing Control (Loomio), and Sharing Information (the Handbook), Loomio was ranked as the most impactful to the individual initiatives. Most comments mentioned going on to use Loomio within the initiatives themselves, in addition to how it is used within the broader Enspiral network.

Qualitative responses revealed other contributions such as Ouishare who wrote, “A key impact is from the work on governance and the handbook, which helped Ouishare formalize this for itself in its own handbook.” There are some members of Ouishare who are also members of Enspiral with the express intention of cross-pollinating between the networks. Although only 33% of all respondents noted that the Enspiral Handbook had contributed to their initiative’s impact, it is clear that those that were impacted were often impacted quite deeply. The entire Ouishare network building their own handbook is itself a monument to the inspiration Ouishare drew from the Enspiral Handbook. Similarly, Root Systems also ported pages directly from the Enspiral handbook into theirs such as their Decision’s Agreement. Additionally the Handbook has nearly 26,000 views to date.

Words and Stories

When given the opportunity to share more expansively about the impact of Enspiral on the initiatives, responses came from organizations such as the Edmund Hilary Fellowship who wrote, “EHF has been fundamentally shaped by the culture and community established by Enspiral. We are very grateful.” Loomio wrote that Enspiral was “key to the formation of Loomio’s concepts and values.” These insights both show how the energy of Enspiral as an innovator in the future of work helped to generate the fundamental principles of these organizations. One particularly beautiful response stated:

“Enspiral people gave me the courage I needed, [it’s] hard to measure.”

Some organizations also reported impact support in the form of contacts and structure, such as Lifehack who wrote, “Enspiral Foundation partnered with the Ministry for Social Development to host Lifehack.” Enspiral in this case helped this organization to develop critical connections and put its efforts into official realms, which likely contributed to its ultimate impact.

But it is not only the success stories that point to the positive impact that Enspiral has had on these initiatives. Many stories shared express with a brave openness how important both challenges and ‘failure’ can be. Enspiral Space responded to our question on impact stating, “Enspiral Space was the coworking space for Enspiral in Wellington. We had a hard time to make it work financially as ventures using the space were in start-up mode, and did not have much money. [We] also had no one that was passionate about running the space.” In a sense, Enspiral provided the testing ecosystem to find out if a project like this could run. In the end, much of that energy had transferred to Enspiral Dev Academy. This invaluable learning experience was made possible in part through the support of the Enspiral network.

Box 4: Impact of the Initiatives

While Enspiral is a laboratory, the initiatives experimenting inside and around it do incredible work. We would like to include a sampling of the impact of organizations who rated Enspiral's impact on them as either 4 or 5. An interactive map of the various impacts can be found [here](#).

Some examples of impact measurement from around the broader Enspiral ecosystem are as follows:

Lifehack: “Over 2013-2017 we grew the capacity of the system to support the wellbeing of young people, with an emphasis on co-design, prevention and capability building.” They created a system for analyzing their impact that focused on Physical Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital, Emotional Capital, and Intellectual Capital as outlined by Zaid Hassan in *The Social Labs Revolution*. Lifehack then meticulously analyzed their impact through a gorgeous final report which they graciously shared with the world. They even made a movie!

Enspiral Dev Academy: “Enspiral Dev Academy is NZ's premiere full immersion web development school, pioneering hands-on technology education and career development.” EDA is also undergoing a process to develop organizational goals and flexible impact measurement criteria in a way that meshes with their mission to “contribute to population parity in the tech sector.”

Loomio: “Loomio helps your group to make better decisions together.” Loomio has a huge user-base around the world and highlights their impact through looking at what various groups use their tools for and ultimately focusing that data into the framework of the UN Millenium Goals.

Edmund Hillary Fellowship: “The Edmund Hillary Fellowship brings world class entrepreneurs and investors together in New Zealand to catalyse positive change for the world.” Similarly to Loomio, EHF primarily seeks to communicate their impact through storytelling around the projects and innovators they support.

Dream Big

To capitalize on the opportunity of surveying the initiatives to identify future needs, we asked participants “How do you see Enspiral supporting this initiative’s impact in the future?” This allowed us to get a glimpse into people’s hopes and visions for their continued relationships in Enspiral. Much of what people wrote reiterated the findings of how they were impacted by Enspiral more generally. For example, many people cited sharing of resources, collaboration, referrals, networking, and things such as this. However some other interesting quotes also stood out:

“How do you see Enspiral supporting this initiative’s impact in the future?”

“By providing a place to meet a network of collaborators. We want to meet more people within Enspiral who we can collaborate on projects for clients with, and we want to bring more business into the network by understanding who’s here and what value they can add for companies/leads that we’re talking to outside the network.”

“The continued networks, meeting aligned people, for me is one of the most valuable parts of Enspiral. I’m part of a pod which have really enjoyed engaging with.”

“We also love the “pod of pods” idea, and would love to replicate ourselves within Enspiral to create multiple groups of people who can do what we do. So we’re using Enspiral as an incubator to grow a means of livelihood that we have found in other people who are looking for it.”

“I see our communities on a shared mission with strongly overlapping shared values, and thus many ways to collaborate together ongoing. Enspiral can especially help influence the thinking of new global EHF Fellows, who often have not been exposed to these kinds of alternative ways to do business, share governance, support each other, etc.”

“Pushing the blog posts & resources out, spreading the word about events, using the impact methodology.”

“Existing.”

“... working with others on impact reporting.”

“Marketing and sales leads, working processes and techniques to increase wellbeing, inclusivity and fulfilment at work.”

It seems clear though that many of these initiatives have a clear vision for a future of collaboration within Enspiral. We also asked, “What resources DON’T currently exist within Enspiral, but would be useful to this initiative’s impact?” Several people asked for more resources around sales and marketing including:

- More salespeople
- “A robust sales channel with a thriving network around it”
- Guides on marketing through Enspiral
- More marketing channels
- Business and financial strategy
- “A front desk for marketing and sales and easier access to skill sharing through some sort of timebanking”

However funding, both funding itself and a radical take on how funding takes place, was a particular focus of responses to this question about what Enspiral can do for its initiatives. A particularly detailed comment in this regard wrote, “[We are] looking for more refined patterns for social entrepreneurs to raise money in NZ in values-aligned ways that don’t just fall into same infinite-growth / require-exit paradigms, and for investors to invest in NZ projects for social and environmental impact - with ability to still generate returns and fit within their fund’s legal requirements.”

This comment is echoed in others:

- “Strategic partners and agents inside Government and/or large Govt facing consultancies and / or real naive VCs.”
- “More links to sponsors and funders to keep levelling up the budget.”
- “A better understanding of development capacity in the network and how there might be collaborations with developers on future ideas.”

These comments all suggests greater potential for collaboration between funders and initiatives within the network but the simultaneous need for these initiatives to generate returns and fulfill compliance in a social impact setting.

Lastly, comments expressed a desire for increased social outlets including “more meet-ups and networking” opportunities and even “raves.” A networking-related comment wrote, “Some way to connect Dweb or crypto-related ventures around the network would be cool.” All of these comments point to the dynamic tension of the network between ventures, social networks, and non-revenue generating initiatives within Enspiral.

Conclusion

Enspiral is a beautiful and complex example of the questions we who are concerned with a more positive vision of society should be asking. It faces many struggles and tensions, but holds the space needed to grow collaboratively as a result. As Chelsea wrote in Better Work Together, “the [Enspiral] community is a very important primordial soup for increasing everyone’s capacity for impact. This is the essence of becoming a platform for impact: combine passionate people, a trickle of money, high risk tolerance, and good intentions. If you can sustain yourselves, have events, build relationships, and work together, then you’ll get thoughtful, awesome projects.”

In this sense, Enspiral is a meta-impact generator in that it helps cultivate the “awesome” projects that it contains. Beyond that level, Enspiral has a contagious energy and direct impact on the people who are participants. It is clear that, like the network itself, members and contributors learn, grow, get burned out, and inspired anew in this environment that can help them to hold their journey and learn from it proactively. What makes Enspiral special is hard to explain, but hopefully through things such as this report and continued impact reporting and storytelling initiatives, Enspiral and its fans can learn and disseminate its best practices in the hope of new seedlings popping up and adapting to their own circumstances, with the benefit of Enspiral’s lessons learned. Through this larger mesh of horizontal innovation, we can not just work to tackle some of the largest problems facing earth today, but also try to build a world that’s more enjoyable and meaningful to live in at the same time.



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