

“Our usual way of trying to solve problems hurts and we should stop doing it. I have come to believe that the root of the pain we are experiencing is that our usual way of thinking about how to solve problems no longer works.”—Adam Kahane

Generating breakthrough solutions U-Studio



Difficult Problems

Conflict Resolution

Innovation & Change

Organisations and societies often put important challenges in the too hard basket. We don't want to invest the time to deal with the real issues, or perhaps we are paralysed—unable to respond meaningfully.

U-Studio is an innovative approach to solving difficult problems, resolving conflicts and facilitating innovation and change. These challenges often remain top-of-mind at management or board meetings and linger on in an organisation, community, nation or interpersonal situations. We get stuck. To progress, nothing short of a breakthrough, a new dynamic, a new way of thinking and being, is needed. U-Studio is perfectly designed to deliver this new dynamic, empowering participants to cultivate solutions in an environment of trust, integrity and collaboration.

Conventional approaches

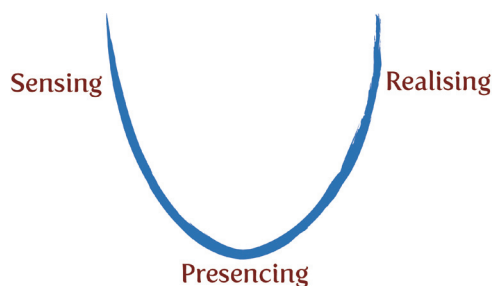
- Draws on known solutions
- Typically push responsibility for change to others
- Focus on transactions and processes
- Tend to be driven via single entity initiatives

U-Studio

- Cultivates creative responses
- Helps people see themselves as part of the system
- Builds relational foundations
- Facilitates systemic change that includes all stakeholders

How does this happen?

Skilled facilitators bring together diverse stakeholders in a collaborative process that engages the complexity associated with multi-layered problems. It cultivates a systemic response by moving through 3 main phases; initially requiring the suspension of judgement, immersion in alternative perspectives and allowing the realities to sit and brew.



As solutions emerge they are proto-typed and tested to assess their impact.

The scope and scale of the process can be configured on a case by case scenario; typically taking from 5 to 10 days spread over a week to 6 months

Ask Yourself:

What do we do when the problem and the solution are not owned by a single player?

How do we progress to a clear path forward?

How do we get beyond people peddling pre-processed responses?

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Case Stories

Ergo team members have been working alongside leaders to help them respond meaningfully in the context of challenging situations for many years.

Our agility has allowed us to be engaged across the sectors with our clients including:

- Local and state government,
- Small, medium and large business,
- Small community based organisations and large NGO's.

Some of the difficult challenges our people have worked on include:

PNG—In post-independent PNG, nation building was the key. The challenge was determining ways to bring together 1,000 different tribes speaking 700 different languages and for them to embrace the concept of nation-hood. Various programs were run across PNG in partnership with Church organisations who have a long history of respected contribution in PNG.

Sri Lanka—A 10 year long process brought together Government leaders (including President, Prime Minister etc), religious leaders, Tamil Tiger leaders, civil society and NGOs in 'building bridges of trust'. The process often came to a near turning point when it would be sabotaged by those with vested interests in keeping the crisis boiling. Most of the participants in the talks have since been assassinated for various reasons by various groups. The problem remains unresolved.

North East India—On the India/Burma border, Government troops and underground tribal fighters were locked in a conflict. Interventions and negotiations led to deep reconciliations between warring tribes and led to conciliatory offers from the Indian Government. This resulted in averting a long drawn out bloody conflict and eventually the creation of a new state for one of the mountain tribes, unprecedented in post Independent India.

Bougainville, PNG—Endeavour Talks between PNG government and Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Meetings were facilitated on a NZ Naval ship anchored off the coast of Bougainville. BRA were speed boated in and Government delegates were helicoptered each day from another ship. The seven day talks resulted in an agreement that set the foundations for further developments. Although the agreement was subsequently broken frequently, the trust building efforts at the Endeavour Talks held together, eventually leading to a negotiated peace in Bougainville.

Northern Ireland—Conversations in Belfast between Ian Paisley's group and Jerry Adam's group, between Catholics and Protestants, civil society groups, government and business. People taking part in the conversation stood out as a sane voice in an escalating crisis. Unfortunately, the problems became worse not better.

Quebec Canada—A program of conversations were facilitated between the key players in the Parti Quebecois and Canadian leaders. In an interesting experiment, Northern Irishmen, who were former enemies, were brought to Quebec to tell their story of reconciliation. This created a compelling call to "trust building".