

Bigger Boat

Organisation Profile

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Facilitating Transformative Collaboration

Offer

Complex problems need inventive, multi-faceted solutions. Bigger Boat is a new organisation that brings together change agents across sectors and supports them to better understand – and act collectively to address – the big, intractable problems of our time.

Company Profile

Overfishing. Human trafficking. The healthcare crisis. Revitalising small businesses. No single person or organisation can tackle these big, intractable problems alone. And yet, for every complex problem there are innovators working to solve it from different angles, institutions, geographies and sectors. Each working more or less separately on different parts of the problem. Each with insight into a particular piece of the puzzle.

To solve these complex problems at the scale required, we need to break down silos and bring these innovators together to share learnings, surface insights and collaborate to achieve big goals. But this kind of collaboration isn't easy. It requires trust. It takes time and resource. And there aren't enough places in today's world where such collaboration can happen.

Bigger Boat is that place. We create a trusted and safe space where practitioners can work together to grow their collective impact. We help to recruit the right entrepreneurs, businesses and charity leaders, and we work with them to identify high-impact opportunities to change the system. We support them in a powerful – and fun – process of community-building, learning and testing. And we help them to incubate and launch a portfolio of solutions that individually tackle a crucial piece of the problem and together deliver lasting and far-reaching change.

To do this Bigger Boat combines an understanding of design thinking, psychology and systems and organisational dynamics, with practical, community-led support to incubate and launch real-world solutions to complex, intractable problems.

The Process

STAGE ONE: RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY (BETWEEN TWO AND SIX MONTHS)

The first stage in a Bigger Boat is a period of deep qualitative research.

We work to develop a practical, nuanced understanding of the problem and the solutions that have worked so far. To do this, we support you in framing a focused question, gathering in-depth qualitative data through practitioner interviews and a literature review, and identifying common challenges and patterns of innovation.

Our research methodology emphasises both analytic rigor and empathic listening. We speak with dozens of leading practitioners who are actively working on the problem. We listen deeply, using journalistic, ethnographic and psychoanalytic techniques to support our understanding of what's going on above and below the surface. We then sift through the problems and solutions, looking for patterns that point to core barriers and the underlying strategies used to solve them.

The result? A deep analysis of barriers and solutions, based on the hard-won insights of people grappling with the problem every day. We call this a Landscape Map. Landscape Maps are practical tools for practitioners, investors, philanthropists or public agencies to identify high-impact opportunities to shift the system.

STAGE TWO: CONVENING TO DESIGN (TWO TO THREE DAY EVENT)

The next step is an in-person gathering to design a set of linked solutions based on the Landscape Map.

Using design-led processes, Bigger Boat convenes and facilitates a two- to three-day meeting for a small number of leading practitioners, funders and policymakers. These leaders work together to identify and plan a number of linked, ambitious and achievable initiatives. These initiatives are intended to work both independently and in concert to systemically solve the problem.

STAGE THREE: COLLABORATING TO INCUBATE AND LAUNCH (18 MONTHS+)

Each Bigger Boat aims to launch several initiatives within 18 months. This is an ambitious goal – and a community of strong relationships, continual learning and shared understanding is vital if these initiatives are to succeed.

Bigger Boat helps create such a community by offering an extensive programme of one-on-one work, group work and study tours, along with a dedicated space at for meetings and social events. A combination of reflective work, practical learning and collaboration, and high-value fun supports participants to:

- Explore, learn and better understand the problem;
- Build community and friends; and
- Get their hands dirty and collaborate to get initiatives off the ground.

Taking part in a Bigger Boat is a significant commitment of time and energy. On average, each participant will attend two half-day events, undertake a half-day of individual work / study and attend at least one informal evening event per month. Participants are also asked to be available to their Bigger Boat cohort for advice and collaboration and to contribute to the shaping and content of the programme.

For more information on Bigger Boat go to www.biggerboat.org
Or contact Ben Metz | mail@benmetz.org | +44 (0)7961 373 385

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