

WeavEast Jam: Proceedings In Brief

December 16, 2020 via Zoom

We are entering year 3 of the funding that has helped us establish WeavEast as a response to the need to develop the Atlantic Canadian Social Innovation Ecosystem.

On December 16 we held a WeavEast Jam. Of 35 registered participants, 20 people showed up to take part, joining from the Atlantic provinces, as well as other provinces and areas of the world.

Technology Experimentation Note

Our session was hosted on Zoom and, in the spirit of experimentation with different tools, facilitated using [Miro](#), which allows for participants to share on a virtual whiteboard with markers, shapes, and stickies (like Jamboard) but with additional functionality like allowing the session leader to 'call' people to one spot, and to lock images in place.

[You can view the completed Miro board here.](#)

At our session, we shared the lessons learned to date (which you can also view on the Miro board at the link above) and we broke off for discussions of what was resonating with participants. Among the lessons were some familiar Wicked Questions:

- How do we keep the productive divergence of experimentation and still find convergence to move forward?
- How do we build deep relationships and also reach out to more widely include new, different types of people into our circles?
- How can we ensure power is held at the periphery with a backbone structure that offers centralized support?

We need to recharge and connect

A lot of discussion came back to the topic of burnout and the need for more communication and connection. As COVID is now in its tenth month and winter settles in, changemakers crave and

miss opportunities for casual connection. A question emerged around the narratives that contribute to burnout, with a suggestion this could be a group discussion topic for a future event.

We need clear and inclusive language

There was also some rumination about language: are the terms 'changemakers' and 'weavers' clear enough? Are they exclusionary in some way? How can we help the people doing the work see themselves as part of this network?

We need to be mindful of technology

Another theme was **digital equity** (i.e., access to the internet, devices and the knowledge to use it) and digital exhaustion, and questions of how and whether a digital space can be a good convening spot. With so many other platforms and social spaces, how can Wayside be unique, welcoming, restful, unoppressive and a desirable destination?

We want to learn from each other

A thirst for peer learning emerged, with several groups asking the question around how we can find opportunities to share our learnings among ourselves, in a community model. Is Wayside the place to do this? Is a community of practice what's needed?

We are a multitude

A further brief discussion on what folks are working on and where their energy is led to a more-'popcorn' and less-themed response. People attending represented a range of issue areas and topics, as we expected, from education through food, immigration, LGBTQIA+, youth social development, and more. In a continued motif from the first set of group discussions, the thread of how to bridge and connect with each other, with grassroots actors, and with different regions emerged.

We have answers

Finally, the question of how we as changemakers can foster collaboration and weaving through Wayside gathered a lot of energy, with burnout and balance again emerging. Around burnout, there was a call to explore systemic responses overall, like four-day work weeks, better pay and flexible working; and how to personally manage the desire to do more, but in balance, and more holistically. Connection was also suggested as essential to nourish the network, but more

opportunities for casual connection, with a few people honestly confessing they are not terribly drawn to another online place to text and comment.

A notable quotation from this session was, “the opposite of online is on-land.”

We support each other

One participant specifically requested help learning to better manage online working. A mini-session of peer education and support saw these suggestions emerge:

- Zoom tip for sanity: put it on speaker mode to help with the overwhelm. (so many faces to react to!)
- Phone trees are still awesome! Call to do a check in and getting others to pay it forward with as close to a personal connection as possible. I spend a lot more time than usual on individual connections - it is time consuming but very important to sustain the relationships and do caretaking work in communities like this.
- If you're tech frustrated with zoom, I often use [whereby](#) so that folks can just follow a link and join a room! Might be nice to have an informal weaveast room for coffee breaks :)
- We have a distanced walking check-in group (we sit in nature together), phone walking chats
- I use <https://rogueamoeba.com/loopback/buy.php> to run audio through my Zoom sound input to route iTunes and Spotify in

Funding Opportunity: Your Input is Appreciated

Finally, we ran a poll in the meeting to get a sense of what people were feeling about the next opportunity for funding.