

**Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health
Social Innovation Think Tank Roundtable**

June 2-3, 2016

Summary – Press Release

This inaugural *Social Innovation Think Tank* hosted by York University's Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health offered a unique opportunity to discuss and learn from participants' collective experience and insights. The intent was to launch a global collaborative network to strengthen research and community capacity to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Three overall themes emerged: i) using a social innovation lens to focus on the root causes of global health challenges, ii) engaging diverse communities across local to global contexts to address these issues, and iii) working with decision-makers to enhance the impact of research via public policy.

Dialogue: The roundtable featured representatives from two IDRC think tank networks: Andrea Ordóñez of Southern Voice, and Michel Rowland of the Latin American Initiative for Public Policy Research whose public policy analyses address the UN SDGs. Manoj Fernando of Rajarata University in Sri Lanka presented compelling examples of effective local community social innovation. Deljit Bains discussed the innovations the South Asian Health Institute has initiated in BC's Fraser Valley South Asian communities. Peter Taylor (IDRC), Jianhong Wu and Martin Bunch (York University) and Vic Neufeld (McMaster University) shared their insights on the research funding landscape.

Social Innovation: Dr. Ola Tjornbo from the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience offered a thought-provoking keynote address that set the stage for the discussions.

Goals discussed: Consensus emerged on the overall goal to strengthen collaborative partnerships. The first phase will build a platform that serves as a hub for interdisciplinary research and community capacity development. The second phase will leverage the collaboration to develop research and strengthen community capacity to addresses local and global inequities in health and make the case for policy change.

“Canadians have much to learn from our global partners in addressing health inequities within our own vulnerable communities.” - Vic Neufeld, co-founder Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research

Common challenges identified include access to, and analysis of databases that are needed to infuse evidence into policy, and integrating health and social supports across diverse sectors. The third phase involves communication, outreach and knowledge translation by engaging civil society networks and governments to advance social innovation as potential windows of opportunity align with the formation of multi-sectoral collaboratives.

Community capacity development: Dr. Manoj Fernando, Rajarata University and Dr. Firdosi Mehta, former WHO country representative for Sri Lanka will be the principal applicants for a proposal to establish a 'Partner Hub: Capacity Development in Social Innovation.' Their successful engagement and empowerment of communities in Sri Lanka will enable them to share their model with countries interested in pursuing their approach.

Research: Participants discussed their research priorities in which women's health was a common thread. Mental health research emerged as one of the most pressing foci as it is affected by social

inequities that impact individuals, families and communities. Research on diverse models of social innovation, strengthening community capacity and the burden of non-communicable disease are further priorities.

A more detailed report will be available and can be obtained by contacting: Lecia Facey at lfacey@yorku.ca