

# Use-Cases Feed Forward<sup>1</sup>

## Use-case users-1

Once upon a time there was a teacher, Remko. Remko was faced with a challenge. The teacher discovered his pupils had a severe language deficit. The teacher had an idea how to move forward: set up a library in the school, where children and parents could engage in reading activities, together. But was this a good idea? And if it was a good idea, how to go about? The teacher had no idea. The teacher needed help from other people who have faced social challenges. The teacher went online and found a new platform via Twitter: The Social Feedback Platform 'Feed Back, Go Forward'. He lands on the homepage of the platform, and sees two headlines that appeal to him: "Share your ideas, and consult the experience of others to go forward" and a button which says: "Start sharing stories and exchanging feedback today". Below it says the platform has two aims. "Make your innovative ideas social: Make innovations social by connecting to your community." And: "Make your innovative ideas better: Make your innovation better by receiving feedback from your community." What can this platform do, he wonders? Below it says the tool can support four activities:

1. Build visually attractive projects: Build a visually attractive, user-friendly project space to support your innovation initiative
2. Connect to a collective: Connect to a global collective of change makers to improve your ideas
3. Share stories: Share your challenges in the form of stories, with your innovation community
4. Exchange Feedback: Give and get feedback from your innovation community to generate new ideas, advice and insights from innovators elsewhere

The teacher decides to try out the platform. He signs up for a profile, which asks him to name his project. He names it 'Interactive library'. He is also asked to give a description of the project's social challenge. He writes: 'Language deficits with migrant children'. He is then given a choice between different innovation communities surrounding social challenges and asked to join an innovation community. He signs himself up in the community: "innovating teachers". Here he sees profiles of other teachers, with their project challenges and project names, in the field of education who try to do something new: one teacher set up a reading exchange program between rich and poor children, one

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<sup>1</sup> These use cases are based on real experiences of teachers and project managers in the project Education Pioneers in the Netherlands as part of research conducted in 2012-2014.

other teacher designed a new reading method for children with language deficits. Remko clicks on one of the projects called 'Reading Exchange', owned by Peter. He sees a timeline, which shows the start of the project: January 2013. He scrolls through the timeline from left to right. The timeline contains stories with interesting titles (e.g. Doubt, The Riding Experience), showing in different formats (text, audio, video). He also sees the timeline is divided in different stages: researching, experimenting, prototyping, sustaining. A marker tells Peter is in the phase of prototyping. Remko can read, watch, hear the stories made by the other teacher. He can add comments to these files. He can like stories made by Peter. He also sees other people are 'members' of this project space. Members receive updates or feedback requests from Peter. There is also a collage section, where Peter can show content he finds interesting (You-Tube video's, links to websites), and where members can post links (something like a Facebook Wall). There is a Twitter feed.

On the timeline of Peter he sees one story is high-lighted. Peter is in need of feedback for a challenge he has. The teacher opens the challenge of Peter. Peter says he has encountered difficulties with his colleagues, now that he is trying out his prototype in the classroom. Peter asks how to go about with jealousy of other teachers who see he is being more successful in the eyes of the school director. Remko would like to help him, he has experience with this. He clicks on the button: give feedback to Peter's challenge. The teacher is able to just give a comment, but is also presented with a format that guides him in writing a story about his suggestion based on his experience. It's a story with an anecdotal structure in response to Peter's challenge. The format asks him five questions to help Peter:

- what was your challenge? (eg. Once upon a time I was ...)
- what were the resources available in your experience? (eg. a meeting with my colleagues and parents)
- what gave you a sudden insight in your experience? (eg. my colleague got angry and said...)
- what were the actions you took? (what did you do? e.g. organize a meeting with colleagues and parents ..)
- what were the effects and valuations of your action? (what were the outcomes? e.g. it turned out the colleagues were better able to ... and the parents were better informed about ... but the children were still left unquestioned)

The teacher has written his story in an anecdotal structure. Eg.:

Dear Peter,

If I were in your situation, I would ... (describe action)

Because once upon a time I ... (describe quandary, predicament)

Then I realised that ... through... (describe resources)

I started to... (describe actions)

The effect was that ... (describe outcomes)

I felt ... about it... and others felt it ... (value outcomes for yourself, and others)

Best, Remko

He clicks on the 'upload feedback' button. He sees his anecdote appear next to Peter's

challenge. Promptly he sees that Peter comes online, as Peter has received a notification that someone uploaded feedback. He comments on the teacher's anecdote. "Thank you, this is really useful. I might try this!". The teacher sees other users have also uploaded anecdotes to this challenge. He scrolls through the anecdotes. He finds the stories inspiring.

The teacher leaves the project space of the other teacher and returns to his own project space. It is time to start his own project. Where to start? He clicks on the button 'Share new challenge'. The platform asks in which phase he wants to post the challenge in: Research, Idea, Experiment, Prototype, Sustain? He chooses research. He wants to know how he can do good research, before he can try out new ideas. He clicks on the button: receive feedback. The teacher is presented with a guiding format. The format guides him in asking a good question in the research phase. The format asks him:

- describe your challenge (starting with: Once upon a time there was ...
- describe your target group ... who
- describe your challenge

For the experiment phase, the format looks different:

- describe your experiment (starting with: I thought about doing.x)
- describe who will be potentially affected by this idea (starting with: Because I think... x could benefit from...)
- describe who can possibly help you in your innovation (starting with: In my environment there are people who could help me: ...)
- describe your specific challenge (starting with: I don't know if.... ending with: how to go about?).

In each section of the format he can click on a button that shows suggestions other users have previously filled in in this community. The teacher is finished filling in the format and clicks on upload. He has two options to upload: to his innovation community only, or to the public. He chooses: my innovation community only. He is directed back to his project space and waits for people to give feedback on his challenge.

At night he returns to his project space. He finds three users have given him feedback! Two users commented on his challenge. One user has uploaded a story in the form of an anecdote on how he went about. His anecdote suggests he should start small, by organizing an evening session with a few teachers and parents. He should also organize it smart, for example with a meeting where teachers and parents had to be anyways. He could ask at this meeting what the parents wanted: do they want children who read better? If not: what do they need? And how could they be helped? The user had made the meeting into a pleasant get together, with a movie and food. Afterwards he collected the needs of the parents and discussed them with the other teachers and the school director. Together they came with the idea to construct a library in the school. The idea was valued by the parents, and they are now going to move into looking for funds to find books. The general idea of getting people together on a smart timing appealed to Remko. In his own school this translated to a gathering where the pupils and parents would be anyway, appealed to the teacher. He decides to try it. One week later he returns to the platform. The meeting went well, but he has run into a new challenge: in the meeting his school director expressed his doubts about the idea. How to get his school director to work with

him? He chooses to 'resolve' the challenge by ticking it with a smiley. He is then presented with the option to publish (parts or complete) thread of 'challenge-comments/stories' to the public. He thinks it's important to share this knowledge with the public and chooses to go public. The thread lands on the homepage and becomes searchable for outsiders.

He goes to the homepage of the platform. It shows he can search a database to search for users who have uploaded anecdotes on this challenge. It also shows challenges in need of feedback. Remko decides he wants to search the database. He is able to search via keywords (e.g. reading, children), or via categories of challenges (how to engage colleagues). He is also able to directly access the 'working principles section', which contains all the working principles that have shown their worth in innovation practices.

E.g.:

- Think large, start small
- Innovation comes from action and reflection
- Dare to Share, to Ask and to Engage
- Learn from each other by making your practice and actions visible
- Look through an innovation lens, instead of a project lens
- Sustainability happens when others become owners of your ideas
- All knowledge is traceable online and offline
- Look with an appreciative outlook to strengthen what goes well.

When he clicks on one of the 'working principles', he can see all the previously uploaded anecdotes under those working principles. Through this search query he finds one anecdote that gives him new guidance. He does not upload a new query but tries out the new strategy, which works! He uploads a report in the form an anecdote in his timeline. He makes this anecdote public. Anyone can read his anecdote on how he went about. He invites a few members to join his project space. He leaves the platform by signing out.

## Use-case Users-2

Once upon a time there was a man who wanted to better the field of education. His name was Kimon. Kimon saw teachers do not have much space to really try out new work practices, because they are stuck in old ways or stuck in tight systems of control. He decided he wanted to support these teachers, as he thinks teachers like no other can see opportunities for improvement of education for their pupils. Via a colleague at his work with Kennisland, he hears from a new platform: The Social Feedback Platform: Feedback Go Forward. He goes online and sees he can set up a private community in the field of 'education', in which he can invite teachers to join. He sends invitations from the platform to his network. Within no time he has found 20 teachers with new ideas who want to participate in his innovation community, which is called Education Pioneers. They decide to meet four times a year, and in the meantime they will be making and sharing stories, giving each other feedback in online comments and tagging their stories. Kimon is amazed by how much is being made, shared and commented on. What was previously invisible, becomes visible. The teachers help each other, and the man has less work in coaching the teachers. But the man wants to support the teachers. He does so in two ways: he administers the uploaded challenges and anecdotes by checking if the tags match to the content, checks whether content is stored in the right way, checks on language abuse. By ordering the data in tags, the man keeps his system clean and of high quality. He hopes

the tool can one day self-organize the tagging system through crowd-sourced control. So that he can focus on helping to make anecdotes from uploaded reports and stories. To do this he goes to his special evaluator-page and opens his tagging tool. He can swipe through newly uploaded content in a window, and he can tag non-anecdotal content (comments, uploads, stories) into four categories:

1. a starting point (feelings of insecurity: what to do to meet a challenge, e.g. standing on a rock, surrounded by water),
2. an exploration and choice of possible resource(s) (what is around to support meeting the challenge, e.g. a rope and a tree)
3. the initiation of an action and (what did you do, e.g. tied the rope to the tree, swing the rope)
4. an overview and valuation of what is achieved (the valuation of the action, e.g. got me safe on the dry bank)

He can then in an empty anecdote format rewrite stories by combining sources. He can then upload the anecdote into the database, give a suggestion to an innovator who could use this anecdote. It is a good exercise, in a way he gets acquainted to all the content of his community, so he knows better how to support the teachers when he sees them at the meetings.

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### **About Emergence by Design**

This document adds to deliverable 3.4.1 (Feed Forward Platform)<sup>3</sup> which constitutes an online platform to generate narratives to facilitate social innovation practice in the project Emergence by Design ("MD", grant agree no: 284625, ICT-2011.9.1)<sup>4</sup>. The Feed Forward Platform is developed and tested by Factlink (MD participant number: 7) and Kennisland as part of the MD-storyboard tool (all MD-partners). D 3.4.1 is linked to deliverable 3.2: Case Study: Education Pioneers. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013).

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<sup>2</sup> <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://feedforward.me/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://emergencebydesign.org/>

### **About Kennisland & Factlink**

Kennisland (Amsterdam, Netherlands) is an independent action-oriented think tank, founded in 1998 with a public mission to make societies smarter. Kennisland designs and implements innovative interventions to strengthen our knowledge society to provide new approaches for societal challenges. Kennisland connects different levels and sectors to create new strategies, concepts, ideas and structures that work. Kennisland currently works in the fields of educational innovation, smart government, creative economies, cultural heritage and copyright.

The Feed Forward platform is built by Factlink. Factlink is a social, more-than-profit enterprise aiming to increase the quality of online information. Factlink is an application that enables internet users to collectively review information found on the world wide web through an inline commenting system.

### **About the author**

Marlieke Kieboom is a researcher at Kennisland. Marlieke's expertise is divided among conducting (action) research, designing innovation support structures, and practically managing operations. Marlieke obtained an MSc in Anthropology (Utrecht University, NL) and an MA in Conflict and Governance (Simon Fraser University, CA). She was part of several knowledge initiatives in the Netherlands, Canada, India and Central-South America. Please email her at [mk@kl.nl](mailto:mk@kl.nl) with questions, ideas, feedback, comments or new ideas for future endeavours.