



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION  
OF PUBLIC PROBLEM-SOLVERS



[govlabacademy.org](http://govlabacademy.org)

## THE GOVLAB ACADEMY

### TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PUBLIC PROBLEM-SOLVERS

Over the last three years, in a series of Masters-level academic courses and online and off-line workshops and coaching programs, the GovLab and its network of 25 world-class instructors and coaches and over 100 mentors have trained 446 participants in more than a dozen US cities and thirty foreign countries to take a public interest technology project from idea to implementation.

Under the auspices of several professional schools at NYU as well as MIT and Arizona State University, we delivered 12 semester-long Masters-level academic

courses against a target of 11 courses. We also provided 16 “intensive” deliveries (coaching programs and workshops) of our core offering, against a committed target of eight such deliveries. In particular, 1-3 day intensive workshops on “problem definition” and “problem solving” served over 100 individuals with more than 20 different specific projects.

In contrast with a 2-10% MOOC completion rate, **90% of the Academy participants finish.**

Over **99% of participants surveyed said they would recommend the training to a friend.**



PARTICIPANTS COME FROM 30 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

## ACADEMY OFFERINGS

### COACHING PROGRAMS

Online coaching sessions for those involved with a civic tech project. Sessions meet every week for 4-5 weeks or every other week for 8-10 weeks.

Limited to 10 teams or individuals.

### WORKSHOPS

Intensive, in person 1-3 day substantive introductions to support teams about to start or already engaged at a specific stage of a civic innovation project.

### COURSES AND PROJECT CLINICS

Masters and professional-level project-based courses and clinics focused on the innovative application of civic technology to public problems. Online or blended delivery.

STARTED THE WEEK OF: **MAY 4 - 8**

## Citizen Engagement Projects

Rightly managed, citizen engagement leads to more effective and legitimate governance actions and decisions. This coaching program is designed to help the leaders of such efforts, especially at the city level, make them more focused and more actionable.

[More Info](#)

Beth Simone Noveck   Tiago Peixoto

STARTED THE WEEK OF: **APRIL 27 - MAY 1, 2015**

## Open Contracting Projects

This group is designed for those with projects focusing on fully realize the promise of open contracting on all stages and contract types, from more basic contracts for the procurement of goods, to complex contracts, joint venture agreements, licenses and production sharing agreements.

[More Info](#)

Gavin Hayman

STARTED THE WEEK OF: **APRIL 20 - 24**

## Open Source Technology Practices For Civic Engagement Projects

This coaching program is designed to help projects that leverage open source technology to reshape

## THE GOVLAB ACADEMY

### GOAL

The goal of the GovLab Academy is to train public problem solvers – what we call public entrepreneurs – to use technology to create implementable engagement projects with the ultimate objective of improving people's lives.

We do not measure success by levels of enrollment but by the impact participant projects create.

## THE PROBLEM

Technology – especially tools for capturing both data and human intelligence – can help us understand and tackle hard social problems in new and better ways. But whether the challenge is reducing the incarceration rate among prisoners or increasing the literacy rate among children, our public institutions and those who run them are often ill equipped to identify and implement innovations systematically.

The GovLab Academy is an effort to accelerate the use of technology to solve hard public problems by increasing:

- 1) the capacity of people working in public institutions to learn about innovative approaches;
- 2) the ability to use technology to implement innovations;
- 3) the connections between distributed innovators to foster mutual learning and collaboration.



## SELECTED COURSES AND COACHING PROGRAMS

DATA SHARING PROJECTS

SOLVING PUBLIC  
PROBLEMS WITH  
TECHNOLOGY

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
AND FOIA PROJECTS

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT  
PROJECTS

HUMANITARIAN  
INNOVATION PROJECT  
COLLABORATIVE

PUBLIC LAB DESIGN

CITIZEN SCIENCE  
ON THE WEB

TECH PROCUREMENT  
PROJECTS

OPEN CONTRACTING  
PROJECTS

CIVIC TECH FOR LOCAL  
LEGISLATURES AND  
LEGISLATORS

LEVERAGING CROWDS  
IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

DATA ANALYTICS  
FOR CHANGE

## A SELECTED PROJECT FROM THE ACADEMY

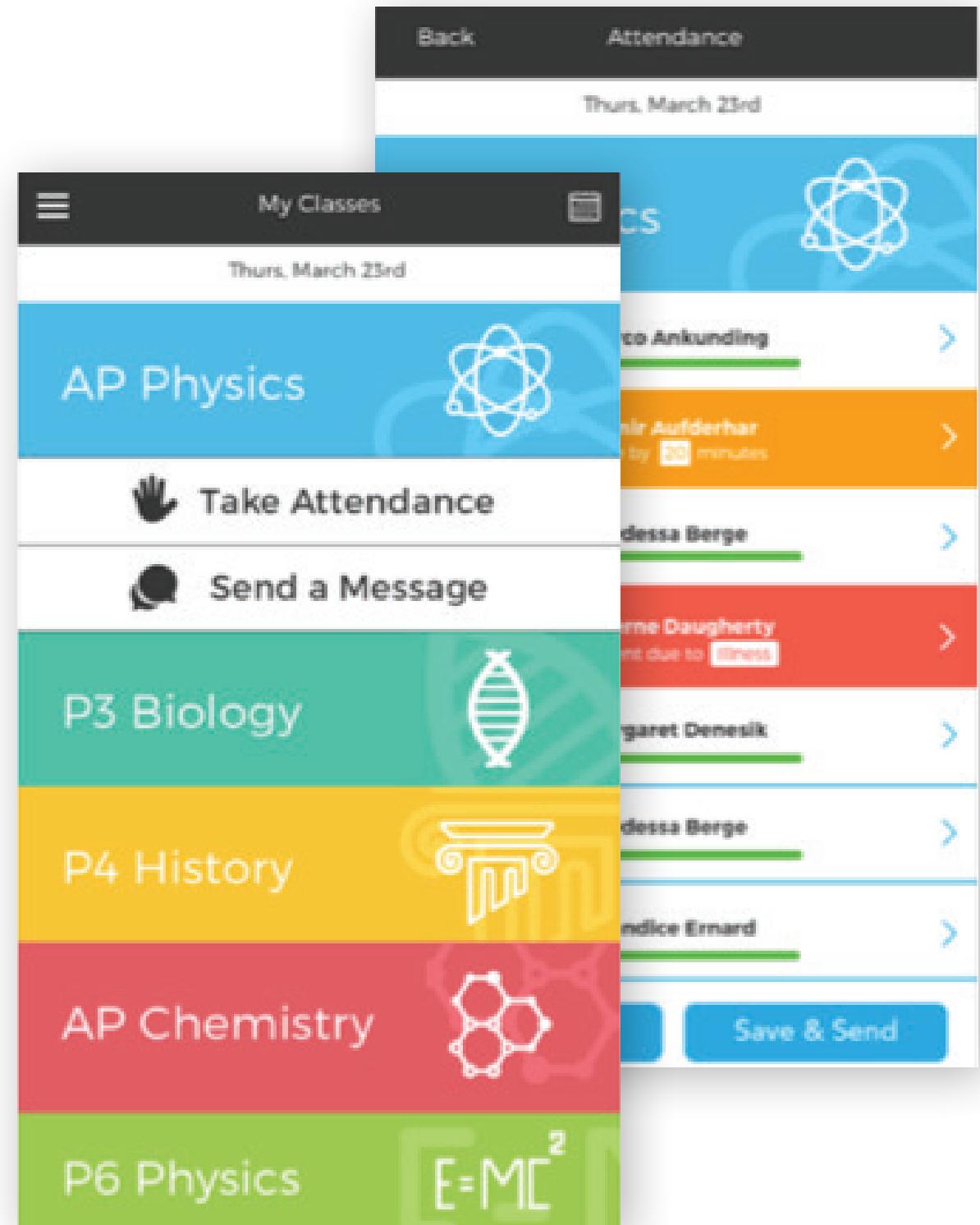
### KINVOLVED

*Tackling the problem of educational attendance and outcomes.*

A project that grew out of the Academy, Kinvolved (Brooklyn, NY) is a social venture enabling access to data about school attendance to inform interventions. Founded by GovLab Academy alumna, Alexandra Meis, Kinvolved aims to use data to get students into their seats at school. The goal is to “close the school communication gap to improve graduation rates, boost the economy, and help the U.S. achieve top ranking among its peer nations.” Kinvolved currently works with 300 schools and afterschool programs in underserved communities nationwide.

Kinvolved has won The Robin Hood College Success Prize, NYU Berkeley Center Social Innovation Competition, Milken-PennGSE Education Business Plan Competition, and the Teach For America Social Innovation Award. Alex (and her co-founder Miriam Altman) were named to Forbes 30 Under 30 in 2015. Kinvolved began as a project of a semester-long Academy offering.

The project’s founders used what they learned from faculty and, especially, from ed tech mentors in an Academy course, to develop their idea into a prize-winning social venture in use in schools.



## A SELECTED PROJECT FROM THE ACADEMY

# THE INNOVATION LAB QUITO - LINQ

*Tackling the problem of citizen engagement.*

A project that grew out of the Academy, The Innovation Lab Quito (LINQ) project grew out of a coaching program on Designing Public Labs. The purpose of LINQ is to co-create innovative solutions to address Quito's most pressing issues. LINQ is an innovation booster with a

strong focus on smart cities, under a participatory, open, collaborative and transparent framework.

The Academy helped to coach the founders of the project from the earliest stages of the idea through to launch and beyond.



The screenshot shows the LINQ website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "What is LINQ?", "Participate", "Open Challenge and Calendar", "News and Press", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a "News" section with a large image of a map and event details for an inauguration event on November 25, 2015. Below this is a "Open Challenges" section with a graphic of a hand pointing upwards, and an "Open Data" section at the bottom.

## A SELECTED PROJECT FROM THE ACADEMY

### BEACON

*Mobile Phone-Based Emergency Medical Dispatch for Resource-Limited Settings*



**BEACON**

BEACON is a text message-based emergency medical dispatching software designed for communities where consistent ambulance response is not available. The project was incubated in an Academy program on Leveraging the Crowds in the Public Sector. By relaying text messages from the scene

of an emergency to trained responders throughout the community, the software enables the nearest available emergency care providers to quickly locate, treat and transport emergency victims to local hospitals. The Academy helped to support the project make the transition from concept to pilot.



# WHAT WE LEARNED



## LESSON 1

There is growing, and unmet, demand for training a new kind of public servant: the public entrepreneur

## LESSON 2

There is a distributed supply of talent and expertise to increase learning

## LESSON 5

There is a need to teach collaboration and partnering for change.  
“Write the memo you want someone else to send.”

## LESSON 3

There is need for a method for training public entrepreneurs to solve public problems

## LESSON 4

There is overwhelming demand to help public interest innovators “cross the chasm” from idea to implementation

## LESSON 6

For public entrepreneurs to be successful one has to be able to define the problem - a skill widely lacking

## LESSON 7

Connecting innovators (and alumni) with one another generates a new public infrastructure that can help solve problems more effectively

## LESSON 8

Pedagogical priorities include making problem solving more data driven and evidence based

## LESSON 9

The demand and supply is global - requiring a global mindset and platform to learn what has worked elsewhere and why.

## LESSON 10

Collaboration and coordination among anchor organizations is key to meeting the demand and coordinating the supply

## LESSON 1

There is growing, and unmet, demand for training a new kind of public servant: the public entrepreneur

In response to the diverse demand from public officials and professional students, The GovLab evolved the Academy from a platform for delivering bundled and unbundled content about governance innovations, such as crowdsourcing and open data, into a hands on program to help those working in the public interest take a project from idea to implementation. In doing so, we addressed the demand for knowing how to use technology and innovation to solve public problems, especially through greater openness and collaboration.

The world's national, state and local governments don't have the right digital skills in the right quantities to meet the challenges of the coming century. This is a Big Problem.

**Tom Steinberg**  
*Founder of mySociety.org*

There are serious questions about the ability of many areas of government and civil society to identify, cultivate and retain individuals with the necessary skills for success in a world increasingly driven by information technology.

**NetGain**

## LESSON 2

# There is a distributed supply of talent and expertise to increase learning

Unlike a traditional professional school, where participants are constrained by the limits of the faculty, an online program offers a platform for making diverse know-how available across institutional boundaries. GovLab Academy has 25 world-class instructors and coaches from five different universities as well as a wide variety of government and public sector organizations

### SELECTED ACADEMY FACULTY AND MENTORS

**Mike Bracken**

*Chief Digital Officer of the Co-operative Group*

**Samir K. Brahmachari**

*former Director General of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research of the Government of India*

**Brian Forde**

*Director of Digital Currency, MIT Media Lab*

**Francois Grey**

*Citizen Cyberscience Centre, Geneva*

**Gavin Hayman**

*Executive Director of the Open Contracting Partnership*

**Clay Johnson**

*Chairman of The Department for Better Technology and Former Presidential Innovation Fellow*

**Karim Lakhani**

*Lumry Family Associate Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School*

**Amen Ra Mashariki**

*Chief Analytics Officer of New York City*

**Geoff Mulgan**

*Chief Executive of NESTA*

**Miriam Nisbet**

*Former Director of the Office of Government Information Services*

**Arnaud Sahuguet**

*Director of the Foundry at Cornell Tech*

**Joeri van den Steenhoven**

*Co-Founder and Chief Research and Development Officer of MaRS Solutions Lab.*

## LESSON 3

There is need for a new method for training public entrepreneurs to solve public problems

### OUR PROGRAMS OFFER:

- ▶ Rigorous up-front diagnosis of the team's impediments to implementation
- ▶ Emphasis on problem definition
- ▶ Combining subject-matter and skills-based training with peer-to-peer support
- ▶ Mentoring and coaching from those with a track record for successful social change
- ▶ High-quality original or curated content from the best expert practitioners
- ▶ Coaching is flexibly configured to be responsive to participants' specific challenges
- ▶ Participants receive durable, digital certificates to demonstrate mastery



## The GovLab Academy

*Recognition of Program Completion*

We are hereby pleased to confirm that the Academic Advisory Board of the GovLab Academy acknowledges the successful completion of all requirements associated with

the **Citizen Engagement Projects** coaching program.

We are, therefore, pleased to welcome

**Jonathan McKenna Jr.**

as a formal member in good standing of the GovLab Academy Community, with all attendant rights and expectations of ongoing community participation.



Seth Simone Noveck  
Co-Founder and Director, The Governance Lab

July, 2015



VERIFIED  
CERTIFICATE



Verify at [basno.com/verify/89576BS5875](http://basno.com/verify/89576BS5875)

*The Academy certifies participation with a durable, authenticated digital certificate*

## LESSON 4

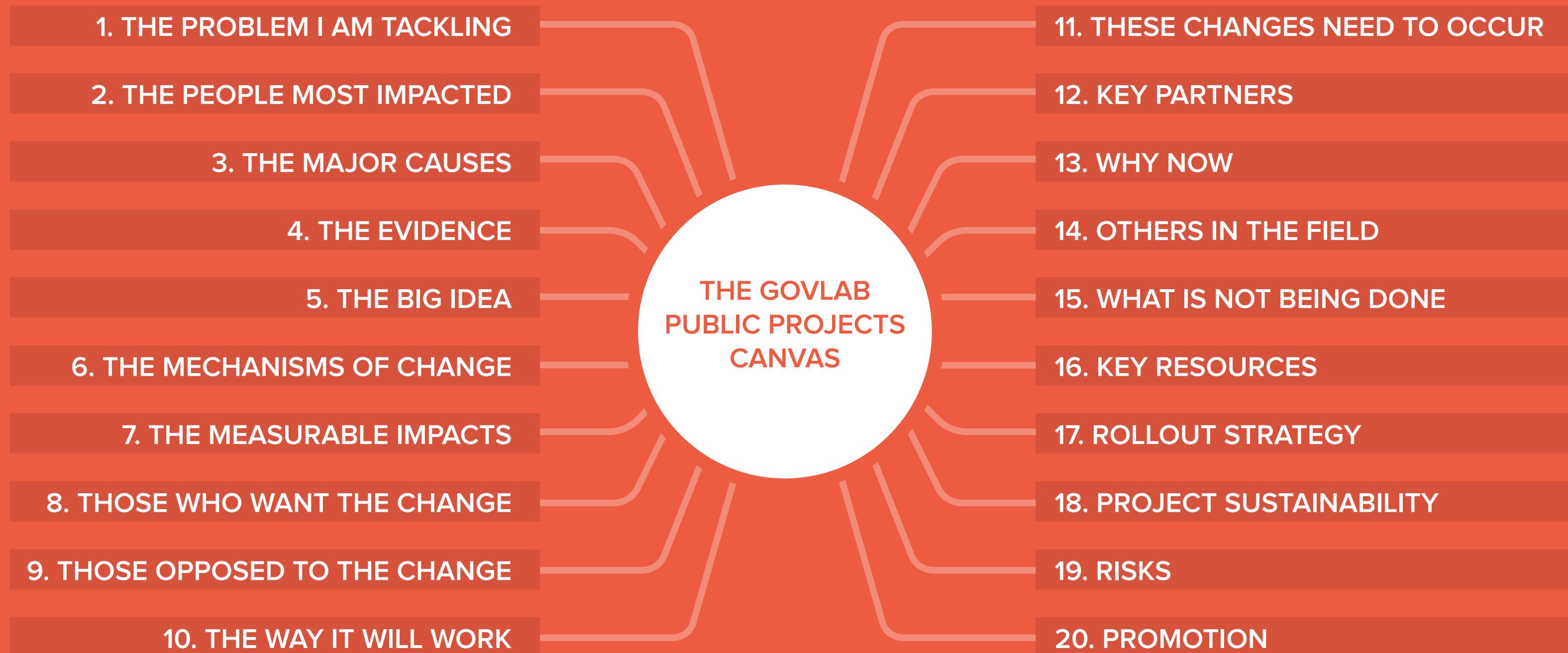
There is overwhelming demand to help public interest innovators “cross the chasm” from idea to implementation

The “valley of death” is a common term in the startup world, referring to the difficulty of covering negative cash flow in the early stages of a startup, before a new product generates revenue. But when you are passionate about solving a public problem there are also common deathtraps.

These include:

- ▶ Defining the problem clearly enough in order to develop a solution that really works;
- ▶ Knowing how to navigate the necessary bureaucracies, legal regimes, and institutions to get things done;
- ▶ Developing materials compelling enough to persuade the “no machines” you must convince within those bureaucracies;
- ▶ Identifying how to measure what works.

Based on our experience working with Academy participants, GovLab developed the Public Projects Canvas, a worksheet to help advance a public interest project from idea to implementation.



Available in Dutch, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

GOVLAB Canvas

en

# Arnaud & Artiom

## One Liner

Category

Arnaud & Artiom

Geneva

## Understand

The problem I am tackling is... (comment)

What is the need?

Comment l'éclairage public influence-t-il le moral des habitants et comment l'environnement économique influence-t-il l'éclairage public?

Edited 3 months ago

The people most impacted by this problem are... (comment)

Who is harmed?

Les habitants des zones rurales et des quartiers éloignés du centre-ville et, à l'inverse, les habitants des quartiers populaires et riches.

Edited 3 months ago

I believe the major causes of this problem are... (comment)

What are the causes?

Les motivations de l'Etat en fonction de la population du quartier et de l'environnement économique de ce dernier.

Edited 3 months ago

Example of a Public Problem Solving Canvas Worksheet. The Canvas is shareable, editable and commentable by peers, mentors, coaches and team members.

## LESSON 5

There is a need to teach collaboration and partnering for change. “Write the memo you want someone else to send.”

The everyone-should-have-a-startup-culture has lead to nonprofits that never should have been started and apps that never should have been created. By contrast, GovLab Academy focuses on doing what it takes to make change happen, including collaboration, partnership, and “writing the memo you want someone else to send.”

Mark and Yoshi met through the coaching program and decided to team up and work together on the same issue they are both passionate about.

Thanks again for everything. It's been a blast and an absolute honor to be a participant your program. Hope to stay involved and help however I can. Here are the recent prototypes which are a collaboration/artifact that came from the procurement workgroup.

**Mark Hansen and Yoshi Manale**

*Tech Procurement Coaching Program Alumni*

## LESSON 6

# For public entrepreneurs to be successful one has to be able to define the problem - a skill widely lacking

Effective solutions are developed only when one has a clear definition of the problem to be tackled. Hence our pedagogy emphasizes problem definition and we frequently helped people to rewrite their problem statements three or more times using such tools as GovLab Canvas and The Problem Definition ToolKit.

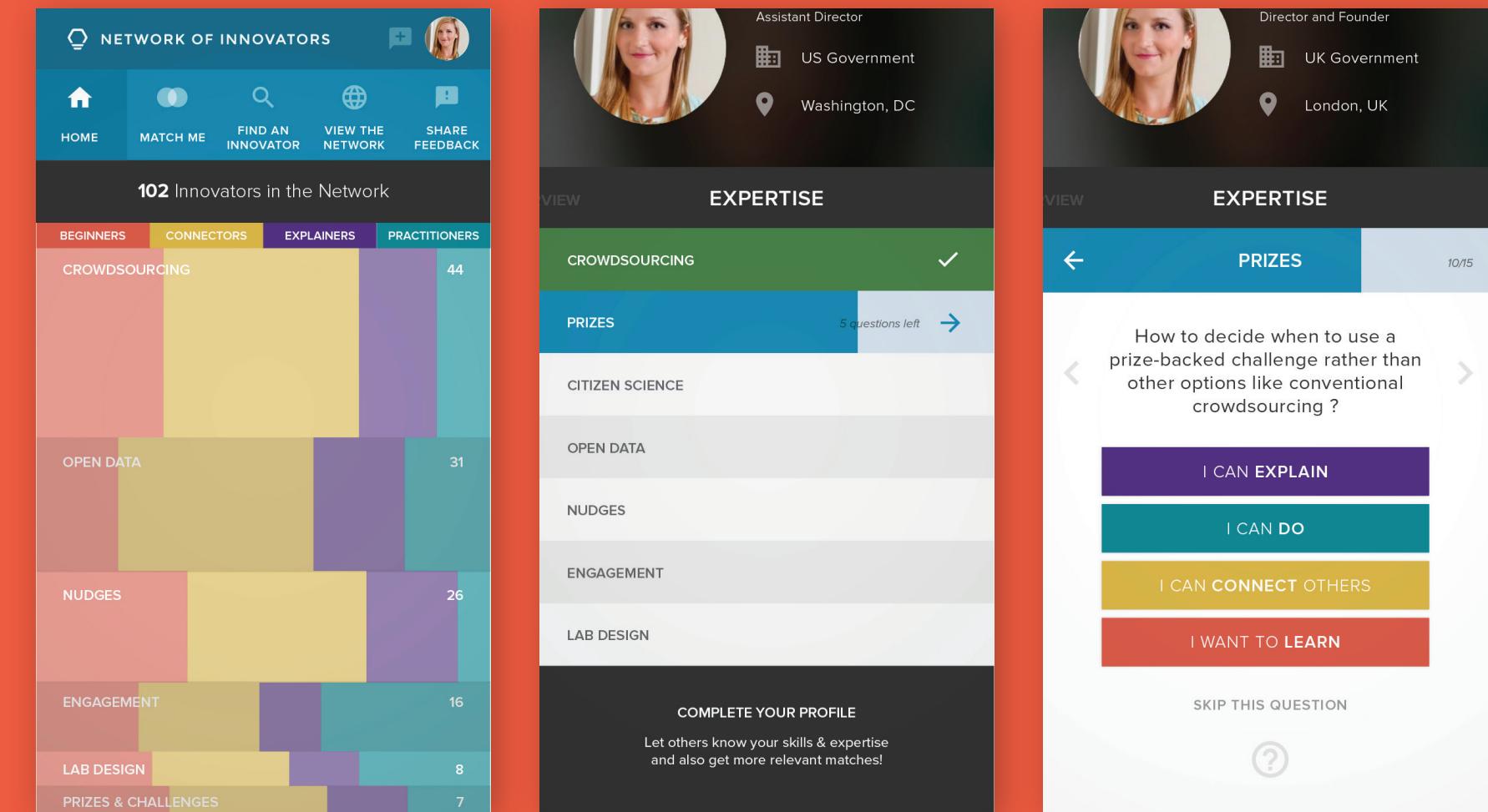
Participating in the GovLab Academy coaching program “Leveraging Crowds in the Public Sector,” however, was rocket fuel to our team’s trajectory. It helped us map out a site development plan, develop a crowdsourcing strategy, and hone our vision of the content the site should feature.

...the idea that I designed in that class is being turned into a working product at a new hackathon for female entrepreneurs

If you are looking for a class that will help you think more deeply and practically about a problem you’d like to solve for, I encourage you to check out SPPT and GovLab’s other course offerings. Through the class, I learned how to better articulate a problem, communicate my ideas and generate support.

# LESSON 7

## Connecting innovators and alumni with one another generates a new public infrastructure that can help solve problems more effectively



**102 Innovators in the Network**

Category	Count
CROWDSOURCING	44
OPEN DATA	31
NUDGES	26
ENGAGEMENT	16
LAB DESIGN	8
PRIZES & CHALLENGES	7

**Assistant Director**  
US Government  
Washington, DC

**Director and Founder**  
UK Government  
London, UK

GovLab Academy is creating the first skill sharing online platform that enables our participants to continue to consult and learn from one another even after formal programs are finished. This expert network, called the Network of Innovators, is a skill sharing platform that matches public entrepreneurs with complementary skills for mutual learning.

## LESSON 8

Pedagogical priorities  
include making  
problem solving  
more data driven and  
evidence based



# R-SEARCH

Rapid Re-Search Enabling the Design of Agile  
and Creative Responses to Problems

STEFaanVERHULST  
ANDREWYOUNG



Every GovLab Academy program includes a module on strategies for using data and evidence to define the problem and understand possible solutions. We developed a toolkit on Rapid Results Research to help teams get smarter faster.

## LESSON 9

The demand  
and supply is global  
- requiring a global  
mindset and platform to  
learn what has worked  
elsewhere and why.

Effective projects get developed when people learn from peers in other cities and countries. Hence we combined people together working on common problems.

For example, in Clay Johnson's Procurement Innovations course, teams from New York City and Pittsburgh exchanged feedback and learning from teams from Mexico City and London and vice versa.

Invigorated by @TheGovLab course with an impressive  
international cohort and our coach @Joerivds  
**Teresa Bellefontaine - via Twitter**

”

## LESSON 10

Collaboration and coordination among anchor organizations is key to meeting the demand and coordinating the supply

We collaborated with many anchor organizations in the creation and delivery of the GovLab Academy using different methods:

**Combining Coaching and Prizes** - Working with institutional partners like One. Org, the Citizen Cyberscience Centre, and the Crowdcrafting platform we've run coaching programs to train the winners of prize-backed challenges such as the Open Seventeen Challenge to take an innovation like an app from cool tool to implementable project. Next up....Coaching for city challenges in Monterrey, México.

**Creating New Communities of Practice** - Working with the Organization of American States, we coached their inaugural class of Latin American innovation fellows to implement their projects and with NESTA and MindLab to coach a cohort of new public lab practitioners. Next up...working with the White House and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils to train and coach the new breed of data driven criminal justice reformer in the United States.

**Agile Expertise** - Through a curated call for help to global experts, GovLab coached the City of Quito to prepare for the possible explosion of the Cotopaxi volcano by assembling dozens of global experts to provide advice and mentoring, leading to the development of a new suite of citizen reporting tools. Next up... curated crowdsourcing of expertise to help LatAm respond to Zika in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and other global health partners and to help the Spanish political party Podemos transition from campaigning to governing.

# BUILDING ON LESSONS LEARNED

## In the face of:

- ▶ Growing, and unmet, demand
- ▶ Distributed supply of expertise
- ▶ New methods to solve public problems
- ▶ Need to cross the chasm from idea to implementation
- ▶ Peer to peer global learning and mentoring
- ▶ Focus on better defining the problem
- ▶ More data driven and evidence based solutions
- ▶ Coaching in collaboration with partner organizations

# BUILDING ON LESSONS LEARNED

**Our next step is to replicate and scale what works**

- ▶ Expanding the coaching model to a wider audience of government, social and civic entrepreneurs to create more effective change agents
- ▶ Building communities of tech-enabled problem-solvers in key domains, including criminal justice, humanitarian innovation, science for good, disaster management, and procurement and the business of government.

**And to continue to explore new models to deliver training to the next generation of public problem-solvers**

- ▶ Catalyzing more teaching and training of public interest technology and entrepreneurship by sharing curricula and building a community of faculty practitioners.
- ▶ Creating a degree granting program and progression of courses leading to a qualification in public technology and therefore inspire imitators in other schools and disciplines.
- ▶ Leveraging our network of alumni on the network of innovators to work together to solve hard public problems.

**Helping our community continue to measure impact and continue to iterate on their projects**

