The Unconference

Honouring diverse stakeholders & expertise in interdisciplinary spaces

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The Basic Challenge

- respecting diverse ways of knowing

- navigating the push & pull of claiming expertise both within teams and the "stakeholders" that the team wants to involve in their study

- there will always be people/groups/experts claiming primacy or expertise:

- "our method/view/way is the best"

Acknowledgement of Traditional Indigenous Territories

Thank you, IAI and the University of Calgary, Faculty Education for funding & hosting this event.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikuni, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations, including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nation1. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

What are the benefits of transdisciplinary/ interdisciplinary collaboration?

- the Science of Team Science community is doing quantitative research on whether all of this collaboration is generating novel, innovative, transdisciplinary results and solutions

- join their listserv — SCITSLIST@list.nih.gov

- download 2015 book: https:// www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/ NBK310387/

- I emailed Mariana a copy

ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
TEAM SCIENCE

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Be aware of different kinds of interdisciplinary collaborations

- collaborations between science academics, NGOs and government staff (multiple stakeholder groups) ≠

- collaborations between science academics and different kinds of academics from the social sciences and humanities

- *t*hey are all "interdisciplinary" teams bringing different work cultures to the table

Handling the challenges of science teamwork

The USA's National Institutes of Health Ombudsman's office has wonderful resources:

The Field Guide is at:
https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/display/NIHOMBUD/Home;jsessionid=4C049B34FAE7265CE446E6E88DAEC5F9

I emailed Mariana a copy

Collaboration & Team Science:

A Field Guide

L. Michelle Bennett
Howard Gadlin
Samantha Levine-Finley

Factors That Prevent Development of a Strong Team

In thinking about team dynamics, it may be helpful for you to compare the characteristics of successful teams with the indicators of failed teams. In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni identifies five traits that characterize dysfunctional teams:

+ Absence of trust

+ Fear of conflict

+ Lack of commitment

+ Avoidance of accountability

+ Inattention to results

Successful teams are alert to the signs of these dysfunctions and take steps to confront and overcome them. A small but consistent amount of attention to team dynamics can pay off tremendously in terms of improving team morale and performance.

(Adapted from Lencioni, 2002.)

Ask Yourself: Am I Ready to Participate on a Research Team?

+ Can I thrive as a member of a highly collaborative research team? To what extent? What would it take?

+ What would I gain? Do I have anything to lose?

+ Am I willing to share data and credit with team members?

+ Am I willing to accept constructive feedback and training from team members?

+ Am I willing to provide constructive feedback and training to team members?

+ Can I openly discuss issues and concerns with team members?

First Collaboration

It can be extremely helpful to frame one's first projects, both in graduate school and perhaps as a postdoctoral fellow, as collaborations. The collaborator in these instances is the investigator who hired the trainee to support his/her research program. If this relationship is treated as one between peers, based on trust and mutual respect, it will result in an outstanding training environment where the trainee will begin to progressively take on responsibility, contribute to the research agenda, and accept more accountability for experimental successes—and failures.

Clock wise from left: from pp 45, 5 & 1 of Bennett, Gadlin & Levine-Findlay (2010) Collaboration & Science: A Field Guide

- Personality type plays a key role in team dynamics

- What's your personality type?

- If you haven't explored this, you should!

- If only to find out that only about 16% of people actually think like a scientist (INTJ)!

- My results from an online personality test

PERSONALITY TEST   TYPES   PREMIUM PROFILES   MEMBERS AREA   CONTACT

YOUR PERSONALITY TYPE IS: ENFJ

With vision and determination, nothing is impossible.

- MIND -

Extraverted | 19% | Introverted

- ENERGY -

Intuitive | 26% | Observant

- NATURE -

Thinking | 16% | Feeling

- TACTICS -

Judging | | Prospecting

- IDENTITY -

Assertive | 29% | Turbulent

SEND RESULTS BY E-MAIL

PERSONALITY: **ENFJ**   VARIANT: **ASSERTIVE**   ROLE: **DIPLOMAT**

You are one of the Diplomats - an empathic and idealistic individual who enjoys exploring interesting ideas and prizes morality. You are known for your determination, intuitive skills and ability to inspire other people. Above you will find a brief overview of your personality traits - proceed to the type overview to learn much more about your personality type. Prepare to be impressed.
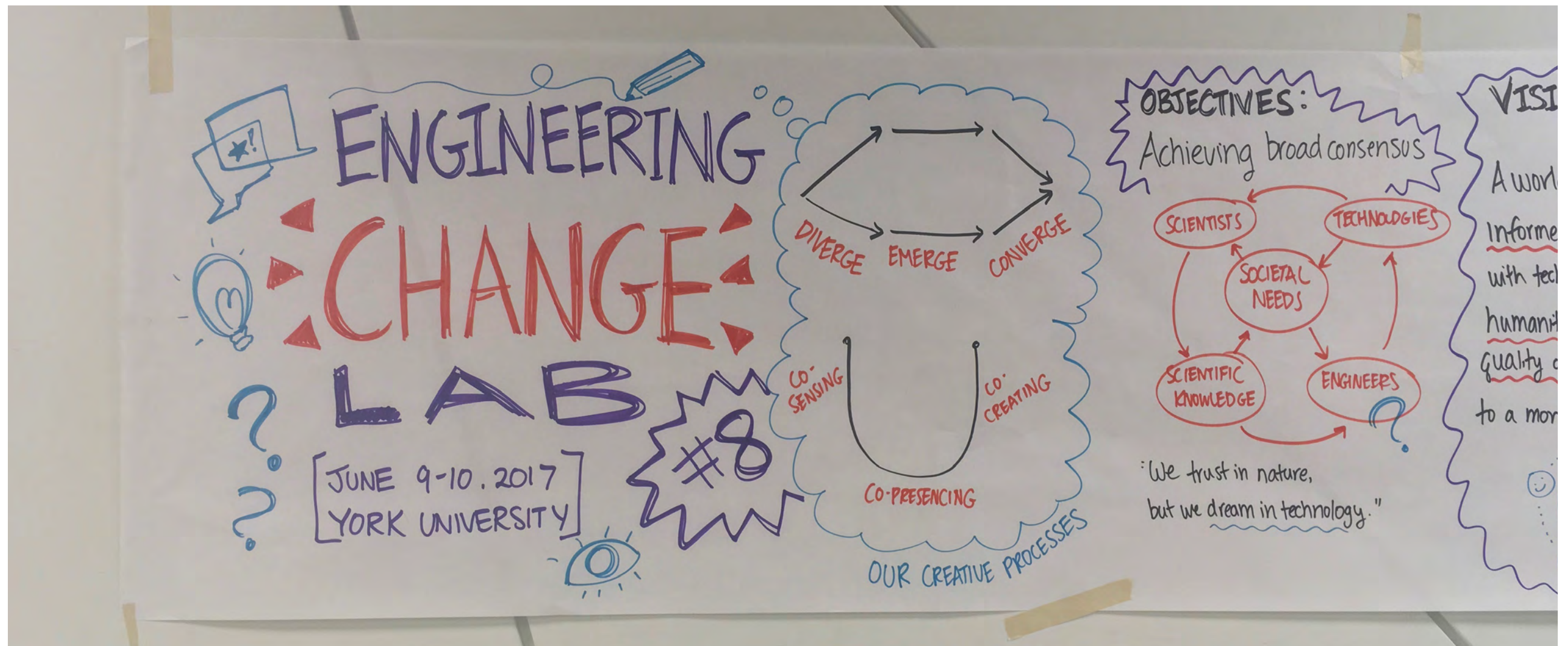
A **new approach** is required.

That is why leaders representing organizations from across the profession have come together to form the *Engineering Change Lab*.
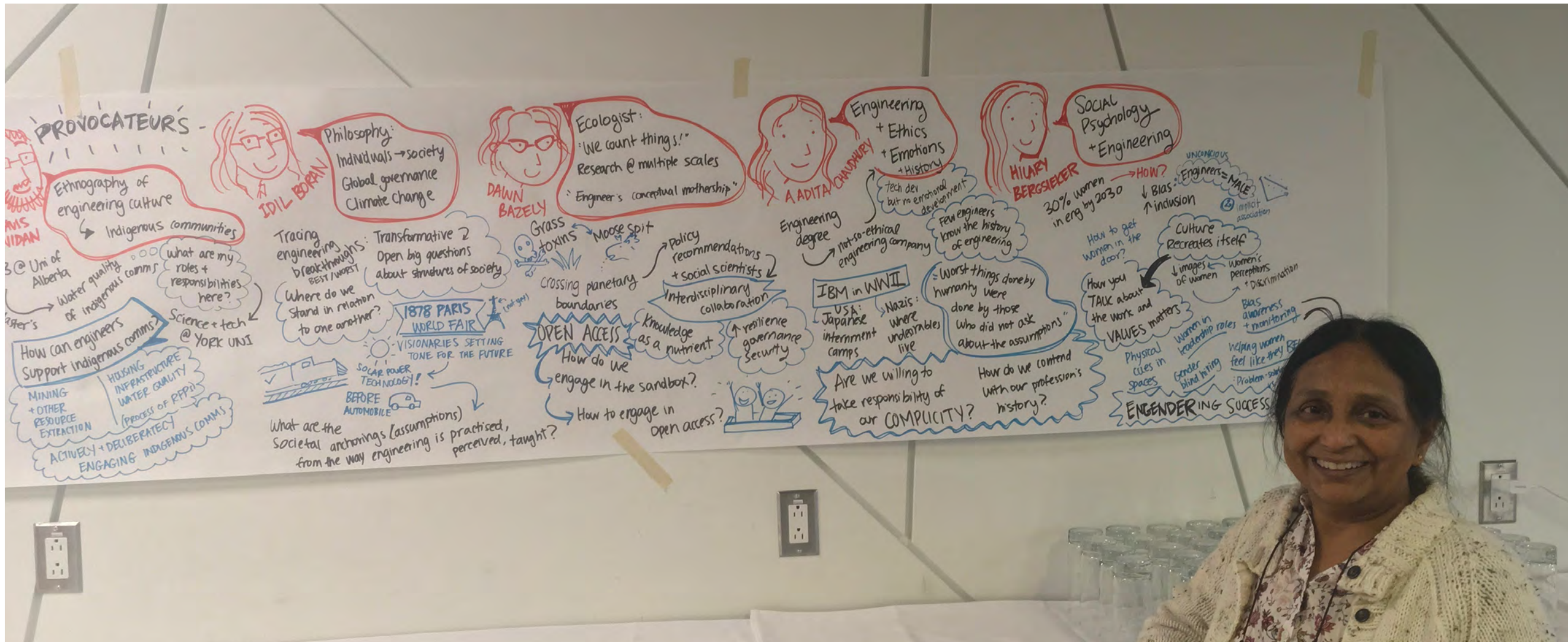
ENGINEERING
CHANGE
LAB

Engineering Change Lab by Engineers Canada & Engineers Without Borders

Agents Provocateurs

Change Lab aims to get past inertia generated when experts feel threatened

- and dig in their heels

- while there may be a grass-roots, and a top-down desire for change, there is often a clay layer in the middle that stops the flow of information that results in culture change

Engineers Without Borders: Engineering Change Lab

Grass Roots

Clay

Nutrients from weathering rocks
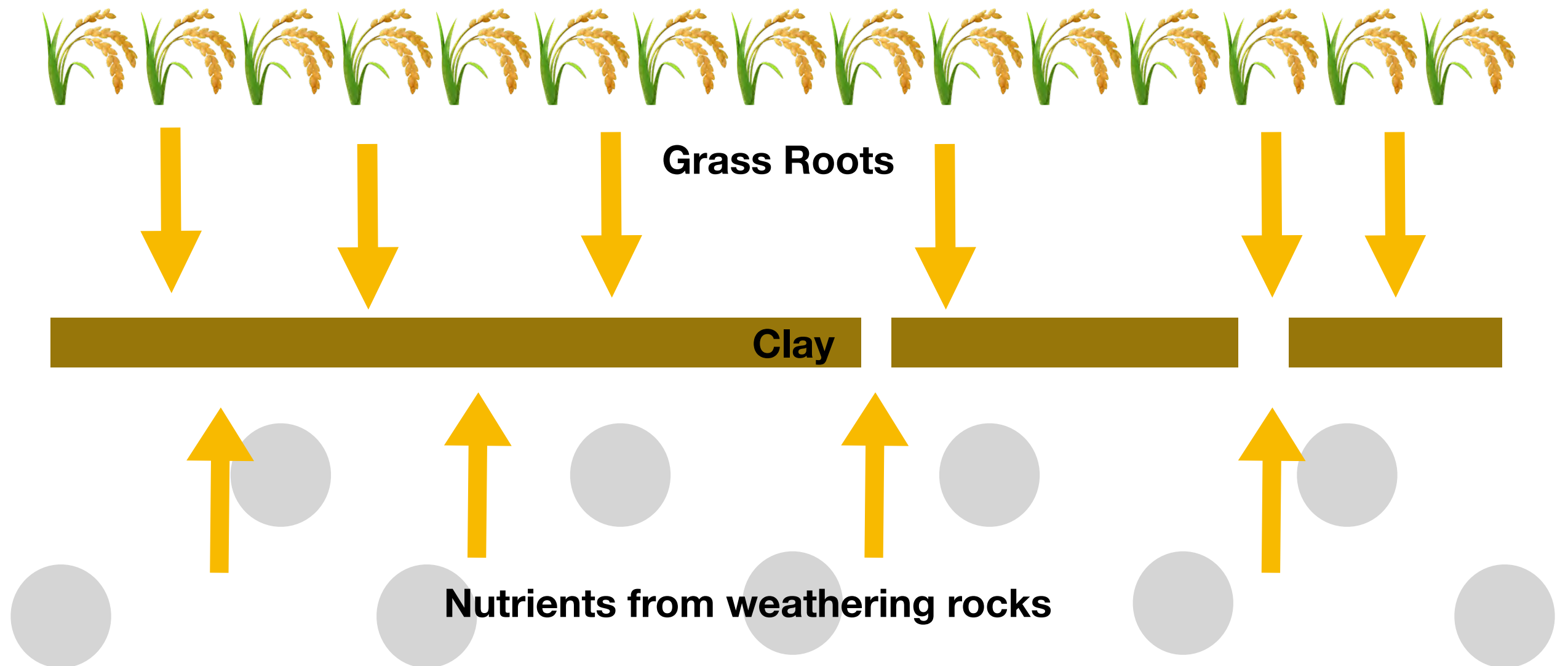
"How will disenfranchised peoples adapt to climate change?" York University (2009) Symposium, led us to adopt the Unconference approach with stakeholders in future work

https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/6351

The Unconference

because your list of stakeholders will always miss voices with a view & knowledge
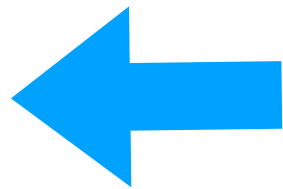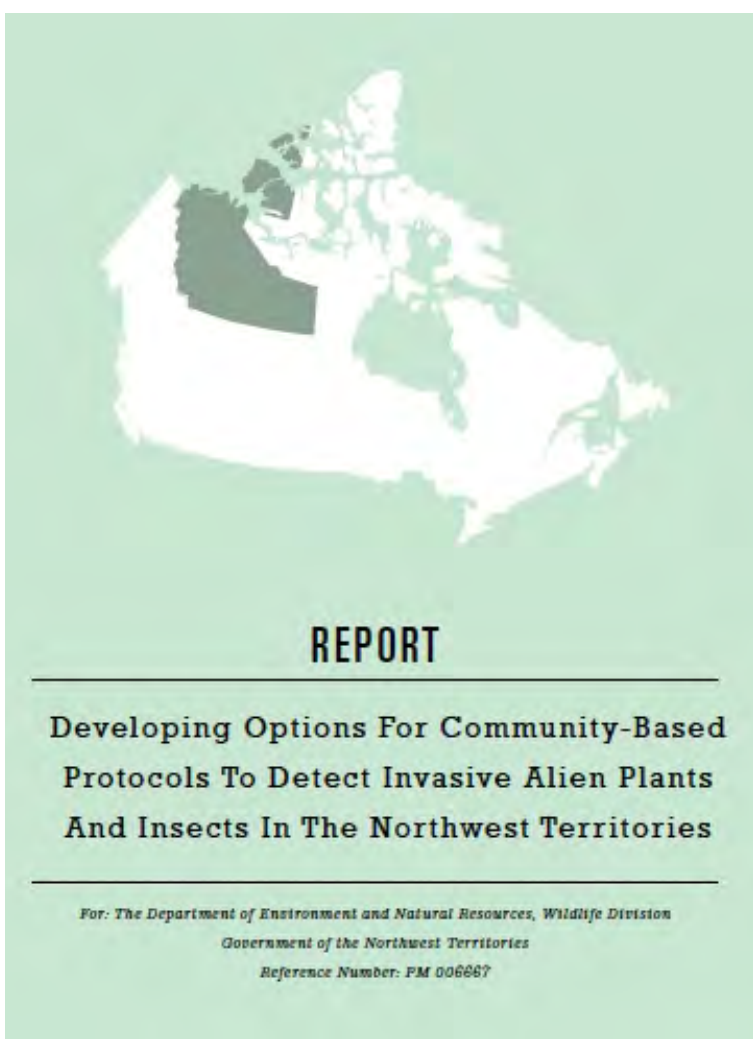
"There are only two rules at an unconference, Kauffman says:

1. Nobody is giving a presentation – unconferences are all about conversations;

2.   If a session doesn't inspire attendees and they are not contributing, they should get up and find a different one. (It's called the Law of Two Feet.)"

–Rebecca Bagley, Forbes Magazine 2014
https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccabagley/2014/08/18/how-unconferences-unleash-innovative-ideas/#2149ff22645b

We used Unconference techniques
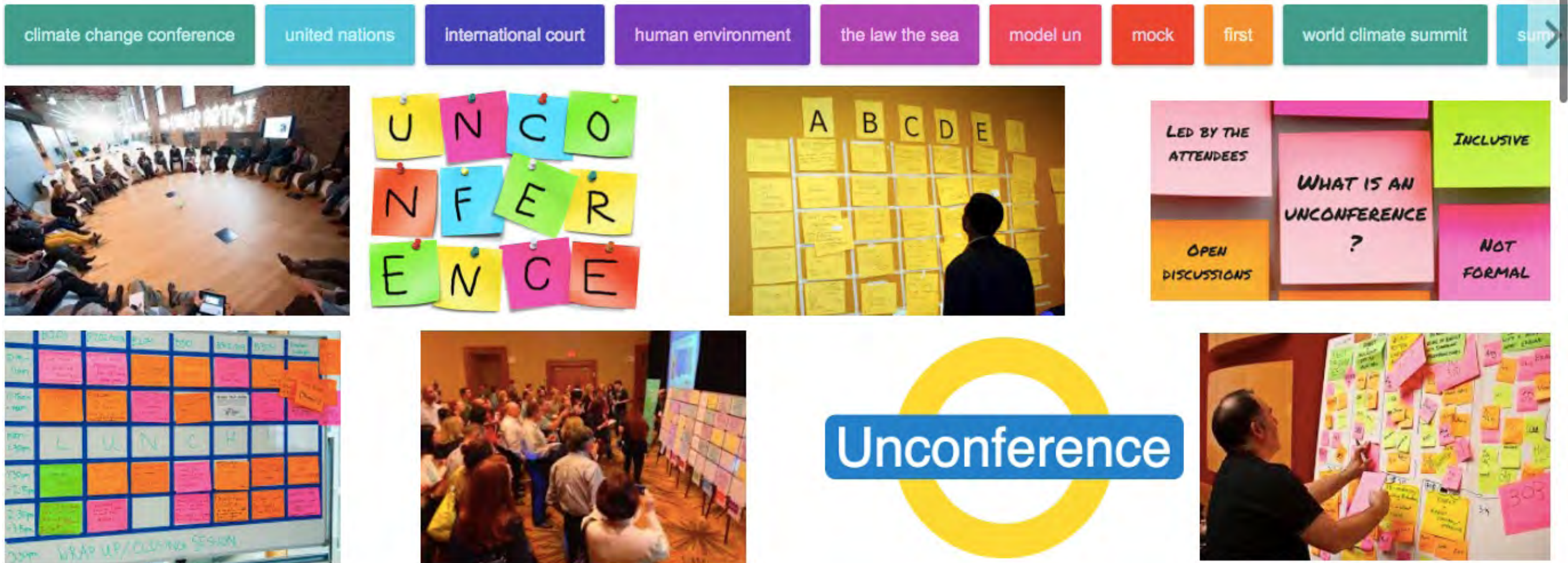in doing this research
I emailed Mariana a copy

REPORT

Developing Options For Community-Based
Protocols To Detect Invasive Alien Plants
And Insects In The Northwest Territories

For: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Wildlife Division
Government of the Northwest Territories
Reference Number: PM 006667

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PLoS Comput Biol. 2015 Jan; 11(1): e1003905.
Published online 2015 Jan 29. doi: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003905   PM(

Ten Simple Rules for Organizing an Unconference

I emailed Mariana a copy

climate change conference | united nations | international court | human environment | the law the sea | model un | mock | first | world climate summit | sum

UNCONFERENCE

A B C D E

LED BY THE ATTENDEES   INCLUSIVE

WHAT IS AN UNCONFERENCE?

OPEN DISCUSSIONS   NOT FORMAL

LUNCH

Unconference

let's try it now!

Here's what happened:

- Crowdsourcing an agenda for discussion

- we did not add any new people — but, at the start of a project or in community consultations, we make posters and flyers and widely advertise a broad, open discussion: eg "What are your concerns about Water?"

- we made a big circle of chairs & started crowdsourcing ideas for discussion

- we wrote down keywords from the title of the seminar (see photos)

- we asked the people present for other concepts to add to the list

- we spent 5 minutes in small group discussion to allow shy/quiet people to contribute concepts that they might also want to put on the list

- we added those to the list (if a person was too shy to speak, then a small group member would tell us their concept words)

UNCONFERENCE
FOR PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
TRANSDISCIPLINARY
⊗ SUSTAINABILITY
~~COCDA~~ COCDA.
WATER
GRASSLANDS.
VULNERABILITY / COPING
ADAPTATION   CC
SCIENCE
POLICY.

LIFE
COLLABORATION
TEAMS
SYNERGY
PEOPLE
BIODIVERSITY
⊗ INCLUSION
⊗ COMMUNITY
⊗ GLOBALIZATION CORPS
SOLUTIONS
CONNECTIVITY
RESISTANCE.

HIDDEN THOUGHTS

GOVERNANCE
RESILIENCE
⊛ POLITICS
INTERACTIONS
CONTRADICTIONS
TENSIONS
CONFLICTS
⊛ PROFESSIONALIZATION
DISCOMFORT
RACE
IVORY TOWER

⊛ LIVELIHOODS
‖ TERRITORY
⊛ PLACE
BOTTOM-UP ⟷ TOP-DOWN
COMMS
CO-PRODUCTION
RESPECT
FLEXIBILITY
USE OF SCIENCE
MULTICULTURALISM

Choosing 4 topics

- we chose one concept from each of the 4 lists

- we split into 4 groups and each group discussed the selected concepts:

  - sustainability

  - inclusion & globalization

  - politics & conflicts

  - livelihood & territory

- each group discussed the concept & reported back

- the discussions could then be used to inform future iterations of the proposals or the professional development seminar

Where to go next

- the research team can gather all of the feedback and identify areas that popped up for many people, as well as concerns that only a few people may have had

- this information has many benefits:

  - confirm that researchers' goals align with a diverse community that they did not plan

  - be used to tweak a Participatory Action Project (the Unconference IS a way to do PAR)

  - drive future iterations and plans for reporting back

Other ways to make an Unconference agenda

- post-it notes are commonly used

- everyone is given 4-6 notes

- people write on notes and put them under key concepts, and the concepts with the most notes are used to form the agenda for the Unconference

- BUT, there is no right or wrong way to move forward

- invent your own

An inclusive & unexpected, unpredictable list of stakeholders

- there are many ways to use the conversations generated at an unconference

- as you move forward with shaping future discussions, you can always circle back to ideas and concepts that were on people's minds

- I have always met unexpected people and ideas at the sustainability unconferences that we organized

- we would decide on a broad theme and make posters inviting everyone to discuss

- IMPORTANT we would provide snacks and drinks during the day

- in the Northwest Territories, we always provided lunch or dinner for the community