

Abstract

The Change Lab Approach to Addressing Highly Complex Social Challenges

Increasingly we face complex social challenges for which approaches that were developed for simple challenges are not effective. We need approaches that are systemic rather than piece-by-piece, participative rather than authoritative or authoritarian, and creative rather than based on best practice. The change lab--in which leaders from across a social system come together to construct a shared understanding of what is happening and might happen in this system, what their role in this is, and what they will do about it--is one such approach. Kahane will present learnings from his twenty years of experience with such work, on challenges including food security, health care, economic development, judicial reform, peace making, climate change; throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia; involving executives and politicians, generals and guerillas, civil servants and trade unionists, community activists and United Nations officials, clergy and artists. He will also outline the implications for people who wish to lead: activists, change agents, and social entrepreneurs from government, business, and civil society.