



3 Secrets to Building Your *Innovate* Team

THE CHALMERS CENTER
chalmers.org



Can we let you in on a secret?

Innovate is a team sport. If it had a warning label, that label would read, “do not try this alone.”

Over the last three years of running *Innovate* in multiple countries with hundreds of teams, we’ve learned a thing or two. People going through *Innovate* were able to be more creative, build stronger relationships with their stakeholders, and get the absolute most out of the course when they took *Innovate* as a **team**.

You’re here because you want to create an effective ministry to help people who are materially poor, but this isn’t a solo endeavor. You’re going to need a team of people to help you.

Now you might be thinking,
“I don’t know how to build a team. That sounds difficult.”

Well, the good news is that there are likely people you already know who would be glad to help—you just need to ask them to join you.

→ **In the next section, we’ll outline what it takes to build a great team for *Innovate*.**

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Poverty alleviation work takes *time*.

Creating or redesigning a ministry that empowers people who are materially poor is challenging.

Not only are you dealing with false stories of change, broken people, unjust systems, and destructive formative practices, but you're also dealing with your own brokenness.

As you start building your team, you need to recognize that developing a holistic mindset toward poverty alleviation is a God-sized task. Any accomplishments are due to the work of the Holy Spirit. That's why prayer is a critical part of this work.

In the previous section, we emphasized that ministry with people who are materially poor is not a solo endeavor. You need people working together. The only way you're going to see lasting change is when you have many people going in the same direction and working toward a common goal.

As we see in Scripture, God gives different gifts to people, and they're all necessary for the body of Christ to flourish. What a generous and creative God we have.

As you're considering who to ask to work with you to create a ministry that empowers the materially poor, you're going to need 2 - 6 other people on your team.

Remember, every *Innovate* team is a little different. Maybe you are a local church team made up of some church workers and some volunteers. Perhaps you are a Christian nonprofit with team members working in different locations. Or maybe you are a group of leaders from different ministries coming together to make a change in one city.

**Your context is unique,
and your team should reflect that.**

Here are some characteristics to look for in team members:

- They love God, work well with others, and can laugh even when things are hard
- They have a learning mindset and want to empower people who are materially poor
- They have relationships with the group of people for whom you are designing (In fact, the best design teams have team members *from* the stakeholder group. Designing a program for refugees? Recruit a refugee to your team!)

Beyond these characteristics, you'll want to look for a mix of people who will do their part. This includes attending live Zoom sessions, meeting as a team, and doing homework in community (like interviewing folks trapped in material poverty). The rule of thumb is that design teams should be made up of 3 - 7 people. If you have more than 7 team members, consider splitting into two teams. Many hands make light work!

→ **In the next section, we'll suggest some steps for moving forward with leading your team.**



How to be a *good* leader.

As you're going through the process of building a team, it's easy to think that as the leader you have to have all the answers.

But this simply isn't true.

Instead, your job as a leader is to listen and learn alongside your team.

Yes, you'll be the point person for scheduling meetings and making sure team work gets completed. But the key to your success as a leader is being a humble listener. That's what will help keep people engaged.

As you begin having conversations with the people on your list of potential team members, you can invite them into this process of listening and learning.

Begin meeting together as a team for prayer and Bible study.

A few good passages to discuss as a group are:

- Matthew 9:35-38
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 4:12-17

As you meet for prayer and Bible study, take time to get to know each other and figure out what gifts and skills you bring to the table and assign responsibilities for various roles. Define who will lead the team, who will organize logistics and keep records, and who will focus on building relationships within the community you want to serve and other volunteers.

→ **In the next section, we'll review some important truths to keep in mind as you begin walking alongside people in material poverty.**

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This isn't *your* burden.

It can be tempting to think that your team is responsible for solving material poverty in your context. But the truth is you're not responsible for the result.

God is the one who brings growth.

Now that you're taking steps toward building your team, you might be feeling a little overwhelmed. That's normal. This work isn't easy.

But we want to remind you that when God calls you to build up His body, He gives you what you need, and He provides the growth. It's not up to you!

As you begin this journey with your team of walking alongside people in material poverty, you'll face ups and downs. After all, there are demonic forces that want to keep people stuck in broken relationships. Remember that prayer is your most important weapon.



On those days when the discouragement sets in, cling to the truth that Jesus is making all things new, and He has called you to participate in His work of restoration.



Next Steps

As we mentioned earlier, when it comes to building a team, there are likely people you already know who would be glad to help—**you just need to ask them to join you.**

Maybe there's a group at your church that helps with outreach or benevolence. Maybe you have a neighbor who volunteers with a local non-profit. Maybe you have some new staff and want to use the process to get on the same page missionally. If you can't think of people, ask your friends if they know people who might be interested.

→ **Take a few minutes now to brainstorm a list of people you know who have a desire to help the materially poor.**

Prayerfully consider these questions:

- Is there already a team that can work with you?
- Do you know people who are already committed to serving people who are materially poor?
- Who has relationships with the people you want to work alongside?

As you create a list of potential team members, set up a time to meet and pray with these people so you can share your vision and ask them if they're willing to partner with you to explore creating a ministry that empowers the materially poor.

It's okay if you don't know exactly what you're asking them to do yet. In order to work as a team, you need to build relationships—both with each other and then with people you want to help.

As you build your team, you'll likely find that you could use some extra encouragement and guidance as you think about creating solutions to challenges in your community. *The Chalmers Center can help.*

Even though there's not a one-size-fits-all solution to something as complex as poverty, we have developed a framework that has helped hundreds of churches and nonprofit organizations design and launch poverty alleviation ministries that are fostering real transformation.

**This is what we teach in our flagship program,
*Innovate: Ministry Design To Help Without Hurting.***



Innovate
Ministry Design to Help Without Hurting



***Innovate* is designed to help churches and nonprofits create a new or improved ministry that empowers the materially poor.**

***Innovate* guides teams of 3-7 people to:**

- Use simple yet powerful tools to address the root causes of poverty
- Empower materially poor people to experience real and lasting transformation
- Think differently about poverty
- Create a new or improved poverty alleviation ministry
- Improvise the kingdom of God in their communities

Enrolling your team in *Innovate* is the best way to get feedback from The Chalmers Center on your poverty alleviation program. In addition, you'll also be able to connect with other church and Christian nonprofit leaders who are also working to address poverty in their communities.



Sign up for *Innovate*

chalmers.org/innovate-enroll

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