

Chapter 20

Small Scale, Large Scale—Why Networks are the Cornerstone of Transformations



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Abstract This chapter takes a deep dive into the practice of transformative change. It suggests that transformation literacy needs to incorporate the understanding that achieving the vision of vital and regenerative systems requires actors to drive change that models the future systems aliveness. Only then can they become successful transformation systems. Practical experience gives evidence that the shift to transformative impact happens best in enlivening networks across systems, in what is called *transformation networks*. This chapter shows that a necessary systemic perspective on transformation network means they can and need to be strategically built. It introduces six *transformation network enablers* that support such strategic guidance in building networks, that were used in two practical examples of setting up transformation networks. The first example is on the local level and looks at a network of youth civil society for good governance in central Tunisia. The second example is on the other end of the spectrum: it examines a global network of professionals towards a new economic future.

Keywords Transformation networks · Female network · Network enablers · Collective stewardship · Tunisia · Youth CSO · Economic transformation · System aliveness

20.1 Introduction

An important question that transformation literacy asks is how to build on visions of systems that are regenerative and foster the care-taking for earth life-support systems. In order to be transformative, such large conglomerates of systems need to display systemic aliveness. It is only then that they become successful transformation systems. The characteristic of systemic aliveness then is indispensable when we explore transformative impact. Likewise, the question of how to attain such systemic aliveness in transformation systems also needs to be rooted in principles of systemic

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aliveness. The practical experience shows that the shift to transformative impact happens best in enlivening networks across systems, in what is called transformation networks. This experience means that first there is a need to conceptually define a transformation network and set it apart from other forms of networks. This will show that transformation networks can and need to be strategically built, and do not automatically happen out of systemic connections. Any guidance to such processes of strategically setting up transformation networks needs to be rooted in principles of system's aliveness and also needs to promote the three core approaches of transformation literacy: collective stewardship, visionary multiplicity and network leverage. This chapter starts with the role of networks in transformative action and delineates the elements of a transformation network. It then describes six *transformation network enablers* as guidance for the set-up of such networks and continues to illustrate how they were adapted and used in the two case examples, respectively the local and global transformation network.

20.2 The Role of Networks In Transformation Efforts

Neither the existence nor the concept of networks is a recent phenomenon. Historical research on strategic political alliances and learning communities put aside, social theory has long promoted the actor–network theory. It suggests that all humanity and everything that is created in social realms is a result of interactions and relationships, and that these interactions build a constantly shifting web of networks. Everything that we create is both a result of these networks and firmly embedded in it. There is no action, not even human existence, outside of these networks. Conversely, this also means that there is no dichotomy between factors that can be influenced by networks and factors outside to them (Latour, 2005). Whether by conviction of this argument, or by the insight that singular initiatives will no longer be sufficient: The last decades have seen a re-emergence of communities and networked action across the globe for climate action (Beck, 2013). The recognition that sustainability challenges need to be done in collaborative action across sectors and communities has first manifested itself in the rise of multi-stakeholder partnerships across the spectrum of sustainability challenges (Bäckstrand, 2006; Beisheim, 2011; Lozano, 2007; Pattberg & Widerberg, 2014). This insight is not least reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, with the transversal nature and prominence given to the SDG No. 17 on 'Partnerships for the Goals'. The increasing popularity of multi-stakeholder partnerships however has not fully addressed the need for connectivity and collective action across boundaries. Isolation of initiatives and all its consequences—a lack of mutual learning and thus the famous reinvention of the wheel, or worse, repetition of approaches that did not work, a sense of isolated action against a global trend—continued to burden sustainability efforts. Competition of financing and donor institutions in the sector did not help (Udvari, 2014). Networks among sustainability initiatives, often multi-stakeholder initiatives or partnerships, have emerged to address that gap in recent years. Not surprisingly, this has been most

prominent in those efforts that, by nature, demand a combination of several distinct collaborative actions embedded in a larger streamlined action: for example, successes in sustainability standard setting for distinct value chains have often proven to be the result of networked action between collaborations along the different levels—local, national, regional and global. Interest in institutionalizing such successes is on the rise, and thus also the interest in governance maintaining such successful networked action (Ponte & Emmanuelle, 2013). The context of sustainability standard setting is a relatively easy context for network-building, as the interconnectedness of actors along the value chain is often given in the shared understanding of the context of all actors. Other contexts of sustainability efforts show that this recognition of interconnectedness is the key to network-building: Waddell shows that actors engaged in the renewable energy sector began to create new connections and collaborative action once they became aware that they are part of a larger system (Kuenkel, 2019; Waddell, 2016). The importance of not only the systemic perspective on initiatives as collaboration ecosystems, but of initiatives as being embedded in a larger system of relationships, is the unsurprising key to network-building in sustainability efforts.

When we talk about networks within the field of sustainability efforts, there are two main types of networks to distinguish: the first is a network of a like-minded community or *exchange network*. Their purpose is mostly to raise interests in, or awareness of, a particular issue in sustainability. It can also have the goal to solicit feedback or input of perspectives on the issue, be that by those concerned by it or by technical experts on it. Their form is therefore mostly consultative and focused on knowledge-building or coming to a shared understanding of context. Additional purposes of these networks are often to provide a space of mutual support to its members in a shared effort and often also to offer a shared value system. The second type is a *platform* or *forum*: its purpose can vary from facilitating the get-together of different actors for the exchange of experiences to the coordination of different sustainability efforts towards a shared goal. Members aspire to contribute together towards a joint goal in the sustainability effort. Consequently, they can take the function of developing advocacy strategies together or develop calls to action. Typical results of platforms are jointly developed statements or recommendations. Exchange networks often develop into platforms, as the shared understanding of context and consultative space of members often generates the eventual interest to advocate for action on its basis (Kuenkel et al., 2011). Both these types of networks share a purpose of exchange and joint learning among its members. Coming back to the more implementation-focused multi-stakeholder action for sustainability efforts, we also can differentiate between two main forms: *multi-stakeholder initiatives* bring together a variety of actors or stakeholders under a joint sustainability purpose. In contrast to a platform, the goal is pursued with agreed-on measurable results and within a certain time period set valid for all. It is often actively managed by a collaborative (or collaboratively defined) steering structure. In most cases, initiatives have a complex set-up with a variety of stakeholders with often different interests. In contrast to exchange networks and platforms however, they do not have the intent to grow and engage more actors to reach their goal. In the best case, their purpose is to

set up or revitalize a collaboration ecosystem of stakeholders around their sustainability issue at its heart. *Multi-stakeholder partnerships* again represent the most intense form of joint collaboration between stakeholders, with goal, measurable results and activities jointly developed and agreed upon (Biermann et al., 2007). In addition to steering structures, this often also demands implementation and technical support structures. Their purpose is to achieve specific results with complementary resources and a limited number of partners in a specific time frame. They become relevant when the challenges to be addressed need collaborative design on all levels, from goals to activities. This often also demands financial contributions by all stakeholders involved and thus brings with it the need for partnership agreements detailing shared project management, resource contributions, role clarity and monitoring and evaluation systems (Brouwer & Woodhill, 2015; van Tulder & Pfisterer, 2013). Both multi-stakeholder initiatives and multi-stakeholder partnerships are focused on joint implementation. They focus on setting up or revitalizing a collaboration ecosystem and are initiated on the conviction that collective impact is needed to effectively address the sustainability effort it focuses on (see Chap. 15, Fig. 15.1: Trajectories towards transformative systems change in the chapter introduction).

20.3 Towards Transformation Networks

The experience has shown that multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships are the cornerstone for achieving collective impact in sustainability efforts. They provide the frame to address issue-based sustainability efforts and the important regional and locally focused collective efforts to address sustainability challenges by and with those concerned by it. Exchange networks and platforms are often an important precursor to them: the shared understanding on a need for joint collaboration in an initiative or partnership is often the result of like-minded communities' awareness raising and joint learning, and recommendation delivered by platforms. They can also accompany or embed such initiatives in a larger context: the initiatives or partnerships often appear as members in exchange networks and platforms, with the express purpose of ensuring its connection to similar efforts. Such connections among multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships however are not sufficient to generate transformative impact. It also needs two further elements: first, there is *strategic action*, complementary activities developed jointly among the network members. The independent activities of its members on an issue remain as important as ever to provide the necessary contextualization of action (Loorbach, 2007). At the same time, transformative impact demands some coordinated effort that scales up the variety of context-based solutions: transformation needs the conscious activation and stewarding of systemic connections (Kuenkel, 2019). Second, transformation networks need *collective stewardship* for this networked action. The conceptualization as well as the implementation of networked action needs to be geared towards fostering aliveness in the transformation system. The fact that this cannot be done by one entity in the system, however resourceful, is given from the definition of system aliveness itself:

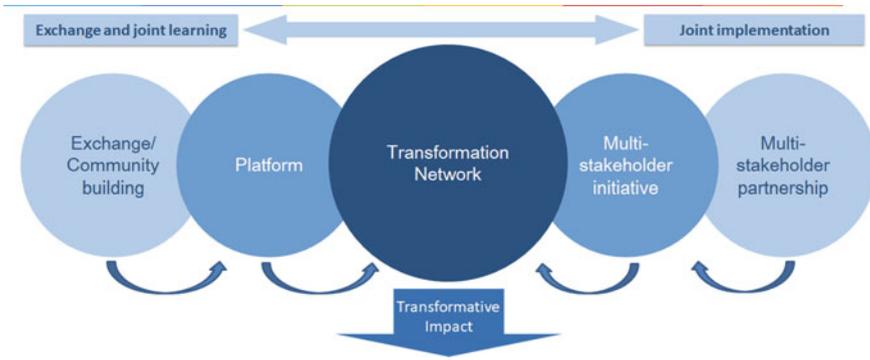


Fig. 20.1 Transformation networks and other key forms of networks and collaboration (copyright by the Collective Leadership Institute)

it is ‘never a stable state, but consists of multiple connectivity processes in dynamic balance that allow for creative and agile responses to disturbances’ (see Kuenkel in Chapter 7, p. XX). The very challenge of operating among multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships that evolve, whose context continuously changes and thus whose challenges and opportunities for complementary and scaling-up action continuously develop, escapes the steering capacity of any organization (Kuenkel, 2019). What sets transformation networks apart from other types of networks is that they bring together multi-stakeholder initiatives, partnerships and existing platforms and communities in a transformation system that develops strategic networked action: they are *networks of multi-stakeholder collaboration ecosystems connected for deliberate and strategic action, stewarded collectively, towards a transformative goal, and anchored in a system’s understanding*. Figure 20.1 shows how different forms of networks can feed into transformation networks. The key question now is how transformation literacy can shift existing connections towards transformative impact.

20.4 Strategic Action to Build Thriving Transformation network: the Transformation Network Enablers

From that definition of a transformation network, it follows that effectiveness of a transformation network as well as efficiency in attaining the network’s transformative goal needs to be understood as aliveness in the transformation system. On this basis, transformation networks need to be built in a deliberate process to generate strategic action across its members that is geared towards aliveness. A key task of building



Fig. 20.2 The Six network enablers related to the aliveness principles (copyright by the Collective Leadership Institute)

transformation networks is to pursue such a process of strategically building aliveness in the system, so that network members—be they initiatives, partnerships, platforms or exchange communities—start to contribute to the envisioned transformative impact.

Figure 20.2 shows six strategic *transformation network enablers* that are derived from principles generating aliveness in systems (see Chap. 7) and related to insights of stewarding approaches in transformation literacy (Kuenkel, 2019; Kuenkel et al., 2020). They can provide essential guidance in a process to build thriving transformation networks. Most importantly, they all have a specific contribution to promoting the three core approaches necessary in transformations: *collective stewardship* (the absence of centralized steering structures), *visionary multiplicity* (a diversity of envisioning and living the future) and *network leverage* (bridges between networks of networks and institutions).

20.4.1 Network Enabler #1: Purpose-building Narratives

All transformation network members need to align around a common purpose and contribute to the network's impact strategy. The key question that needs to guide any strategic action here is: which future narratives can engage all network members? With the visions for regenerative civilizations and the way to realize them being so context-specific, this can be a challenging endeavour. It can be supported by clarity to all network members on ways they can contribute to the narrative and an accompanying impact strategy. It is also promoted by transparent and inclusive membership strategies to the network, so that the purpose is reflected in a shared understanding of who is needed and necessary to attain it. The composition of the network, be that of representatives of multi-stakeholder initiatives, partnerships, platforms or exchange communities, needs to reflect the network's purpose. All members also need to report and show regularly how they advance the purpose of the network in their various ways, and this reporting needs to be effectively communicated to all members to ensure transparency and accountability, and allow a collective sense of progress to emerge.

20.4.2 Network Enabler #2: Value Creation

An often-neglected cornerstone of effectiveness of transformation networks is members that mutually acknowledge each other's experience and expertise in a conscious way. While much attention is given to shared value creation especially in networks that represent like-minded communities, transformation networks need the shared value creation that comes from an appreciative approach to complementary expertise and influence among its members. Differences in cultures and/ or other constraints are known and acknowledged, and there is sufficient communicative space for the expression of different interests. It is out of this appreciation, and balance of different interests that value creation across all members can emerge and be actively fostered, while acknowledging and guarding the space for the various and varied layers of differences across its members. Reconciliation emerges as the preferred way of dealing with conflicts, and mechanisms for complaints and disagreements that envision such reconciliation and the search for consensus can effectively be built.

The network enablers of purpose-building narratives and value creation combined support the emergence of *visionary multiplicity* in the network.

20.4.3 Network Enabler #3: Dynamic Structures

Transformation networks need to support self-organization around common interests of its members to ensure ownership for change and high levels of engagement towards the transformative goal. The guiding question for strategic action here is to ask which cooperation structures promote transparent and effective change processes. This is supported by transparent decision-making processes that ideally follow consensus-building principles. Network members have the opportunity to engage in thematic exchanges and can work collaboratively in small groups to implement the network's purpose. Such engagement opportunities in the network can also help members to build and leverage their areas of influence. Dynamic structures allow for such collaborative and result-oriented spaces and actively connect members with each other for collective action across the network.

20.4.4 Network Enabler # 4: Dialogic Exchange

Communication and exchange among network members seem self-evident in a transformation network. Yet to be effective for transformative impact, they need to serve the purpose of implementation and joint learning among the network members. Good communication and exchanges in this sense leverage diversity and create cohesion in the network. If dialogues are structured, it means they take place regularly, have high dialogic quality and bring out said diversity as well as emerging consensus. At the same time, they balance out their result orientation by always providing space for collective reflection. Both internal and external communication rules are agreed on and adhered to by all members. The network governance body represents the diversity of its members, the strategies amplify complementary contributions, and joint learning mechanisms include all members and are an integral part of said strategy.

The network enablers of dynamic structures and dialogic exchange combined support the emergence of *collective stewardship* in the network.

20.4.5 Network Enabler #5: Novel Pathways

The knowledge of the network is strengthened through continuous expertise building and creative approaches. What needs to be asked here is how to create space and support for social, scientific and technological innovations that accelerate the transformative change envisioned by the network. This can be as simple as providing room for creative exchanges in meetings and workshops. But it also asks if there is room for testing and piloting new approaches, solutions or ideas to attain the network's goal. This creativity needs to be connected to state-of-the-art knowledge on content issues for its members; otherwise, the creativity would remain a mere exercise and

not become truly innovative. In order for the creativity and expertise building to be integrated into the network, its planning needs to be flexible enough and be regularly reviewed and adjusted, ideally by a separate network governance body.

20.4.6 Network Enabler #6: Contextual Impact

The relevance of the network's purpose and its impact strategy need to be embedded in larger transformations. This captures the need to extend the systemic perspective beyond the network's boundaries and see the layers of network-in-network connections. Guidance for this complex task comes if we ask which connections will increase impact. Context relevance is the first entry point here: knowledge on the broader context of the network is regularly updated, and trends and developments regarding the network's purpose are also regularly reviewed and integrated into its strategy. Support is both provided to the members, e.g. by a network's backbone support,¹ and also given by members to each other, so they can anchor the network's purpose in their respective field of work and advance it to the best of their abilities. This helps to foster aspirations by all members to contribute to the overall network purpose. Finally, the impact focus in this complex undertaking is ensured by regular review mechanisms focusing specifically on the impact progress.

The network enablers of novel pathways and contextual impact combined support the emergence of *network leverage*.

20.5 The Practice: Local and Global Transformation Networks

Transformation networks, like other forms of networks, can develop and become active at different geographical levels. On a practical level, the *transformation network enablers* were recently used as strategic guidance in the active set-up of two transformation networks. The first is a local example, a youth civil society network in central Tunisia for good governance.² The second is a global version, a femxle-led³

¹ Backbone support in this context means to have access to independent and funded personnel resources for continuous support in the network management process. Key functions are to catalyse collaboration on multiple issues across members, be a caretaker and facilitator for the network process, and support necessary capacity building across members. Cf. Kuenkel 2019.

² A video reporting the first year of the network can be found here: <https://youtu.be/M4jc1QpP-TY>.

³ In response to a global trend, the term femxle/womxn is used throughout in this network to be inclusive and encompass all persons identifying as female/woman.

network⁴ of professional change-makers towards a new economic architecture.⁵ The strategic guidance of the *transformation network enablers* had the key function to ensure that both networks were set up to develop transformative potential and thus make a strategic shift to go beyond an exchange network or learning platform.

20.5.1 Transformation Network Example 1: Youth Civil Society in Tunisia for Good Governance

The local network among youth civil society organizations in central Tunisia started in 2020 to respond to a complex problem of governance between administration and citizens and local sustainability challenges. Tunisia is at a precarious point of its sociopolitical development: while in 2013 70% of the population named democracy as the best form of government, in 2018 it was only 46% (Meddeb, 2018). Against this background, ‘political, economic and administrative ties of the old system as well as the still existing authoritarian practices and an “old” rhetoric in politics and society make it difficult to deepen fragile democracy’ (Gallien & Werenfels, 2019). Youth civil society organizations were set up after the revolution, many with the mission to advance awareness of sustainability challenges, and promote equally local sustainable solution to them. However, the role of civil society is usually limited to one-off statements on sustainability issues and unilateral advocacy (Klaas & Dirsus, 2018). The state structures must work in a collaborative manner with the young civil society in order to clearly counter the risk of political instability, but also to develop visions for local regenerative living and civilizations. Depending on the region, this can range from transformations in agriculture to urban infrastructure to local economic sufficiency. Such cooperation must relate to elements of local culture, identity and environmental protection in order to achieve their stabilizing effect. This situation is particularly striking in the central governorates of Kairouan, Sidi Bouzid, Siliana and Sousse (outside the city of Sousse). The network was set up with three youth civil society associations as key members, respectively from Sidi Bouzid, Siliana and Sousse. An experienced association from the Kairouan Governorate, We love Kairouan, took up the role as initiator and coordinator of the network.

The set-up for this network followed a proven process methodology for transformation processes, where four iterative phases of building engagement, formalization, implementation and sustaining impact are used a general process handrail (Kuenkel et al., 2020; Kuenkel, Frieg, & Gerlach, 2011). Within that process, the *transformation network enablers* were adapted to the particular context. Below is the situation summary for each enabler, and how they were adapted to and used as strategic guidance in the network’s process design.

⁴ More information on the network’s website here: <https://36x36.org>.

⁵ The term ‘architecture’ is used as a reference to the design of an overall structure that allows for different manifestations. This honours the need for plural approaches to economics that all refer to overarching principles of wellbeing on a healthy planet.

Purpose-building narratives: Many youth civil society associations share missions that envisage local sustainable change, combined with the intention to safeguard as well as adapt local identity and culture to their generation, and provide a tangible perspective of a life-affirming future in their communities. At the same time, almost all associations had made the defining experience that their usual role of civil society advocacy in the collaborative initiatives was not sufficient to bring about initiatives with lasting change. The network process design had to acknowledge these differences for the choice of the focal points for the respective network associations within We love Kairouan: Affinities to or knowledge of local cultural identities were an important prerequisite. Review of membership of potential associations needed to reflect these shared missions and experiences. The co-development of their new role as a key purpose of the network needed to be embedded in the engagement phase of the network, to provide guidance to all members and remain adaptable to each association's unique mission and identity.

Dynamic structures: Though local exchange networks and connectivity among local or regional civil society associations are high, there is little or no connectivity across regions or governorates. The only supra-regional connections are with associations in the capital. Coordinated action for initiatives mostly happens with affiliated 'sister' associations and is based on specific sustainability topics such as conserving coastal areas. The network process design needed to provide spaces for collaborative action on the challenges shared by all associations, namely setting up and implementing local multi-stakeholder initiatives. Regular strategic planning and review sessions needed to be integrated to develop together action plans for common challenges, such as managing intricacies in local public administration culture and building stakeholder's engagement in the absence of external funding for the initiatives. The unique role of We love Kairouan as the network's coordinator and backbone support needed to be established through practice-based coaching sessions with each association, with each of them having an individual contact point at We love Kairouan.

Novel pathways: Local sustainability initiatives or challenges provided the most flexible environment to become creative with stakeholders in testing a new role, and process, for civil society associations with sustainability missions. We love Kairouan as the network coordinator had key expertise and experience to pass on with regard to facilitating and implementing such processes, and needed to support the local adaptation of it to three different regional contexts. The network process design reflected this in its approach to build the network's overall strategy and purpose on local associations and their initiatives. The expertise for multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the role as facilitators was anchored in the network's members with a combination of peer-coaching across the associations, process coaching for each individual association as well as joint learning and review sessions embedded in design principles for impact-oriented multi-stakeholder initiatives. Regular reviews within We love Kairouan ensured a process adaptation to joint needs emerging from the association's progress with their initiatives.

Value creation: While the network associations have similar missions and challenges in realizing them, local cultures as well as the constraints coming along with

them are an important difference among them. All associations are located, respectively, in three different governorates, all with their own history and local identity, most particularly regarding their role and self-understanding with regard to the countries' revolution and the new social, political and economic order in its wake. Consequently, each of the associations also had a different perspective and stance to the coordinator role envisaged for We love Kairouan, situated in yet another governorate, geographically connecting them all. The network process design had to acknowledge these differences for the choice of the focal points for the respective network associations within We love Kairouan: Affinities to or knowledge of local cultural identities were an important prerequisite in choosing the focal points. Conflicts needed to be dealt with within the core group of association representatives and We love Kairouan's focal points. Only if reconciliation and consensus-building could not be achieved in this constellation, a broader group of the network's backbone would engage in meetings with the respective association to broaden perspectives and engage in a deeper search for solutions to the conflicts.

Dialogic exchange: One of the key purposes of the network was the need to make visible the shared challenges and need for a different role of the associations in driving local sustainability, in order to build shared strategies and action on this basis. At the same time, this need for transparency across previously unconnected associations was a challenge in itself, as judgement by unknown peers on poor performance in the highly driven advocacy world inhibited such structured and transparent conversations. The network process design had to integrate the building of an appreciative learning culture devoid of negative judgement from the start. This was done in smaller spaces within each association with the backbone organization of We love Kairouan first. Only then could larger collective learning exchanges across all associations be held and develop their enlivening potential. Weekly exchanges, always following the same structure of sharing updates and reflection on progress between associations and their focal points, were key to establishing this culture. In the preparation of the joint learning exchanges among all associations, the ability to abstract the challenges from their local context and define the underlying systemic pattern was imperative to help associations see the profound similarities in their challenges, as well as their opportunities.

Contextual impact: Local sustainability is a mission practically translated and anchored in the network's member missions—such as promotion of sustainable agriculture, protection of cultural heritage or climate change mitigation. Broader knowledge on the concept of sustainability and how their efforts fit into a larger trend however are largely absent among the associations, as well as among their stakeholder system. Consequently, no support structure exists among associations or wider stakeholders engaged in local initiatives that have a similar vision. The network process design focused heavily on a support structure as an entry point for addressing this situation. Mutual support practices and culture were introduced and supported from the beginning; spaces for their review and adjustment were integrated into every network meeting. The key element however was the individual support to each association member via the backbone organization. This was the space where shared

understanding of the larger sustainability context could flourish first and then extend to the spaces of collective reflection and action among the network associations.

Within a year, and despite COVID-19 restrictions and public priorities focusing on public health, the network resulted in three fast-advancing local transformations in the three regions: in El Krib, local development plans based on ambitious environmental protection standards of the unique natural environment in that region have been formalized, with a resource fund of both private and public contributions for its implementation rapidly growing. In Regueb, farmers organized themselves to develop a local standard for organic agriculture and set up the first farmer-initiated cooperative to facilitate its integration in public agriculture policies as well as generating a local demand and market for it. A twin mindset shift among both farmers and local consumers that local environmental associations had tried to promote for years, with no significant gain, rapidly took hold within a year. In Hergla, a complete redesign of the urban planning based on sustainability principles, translated to the local culture and context, was developed between civil society associations, more than 100 citizens, and the local administration. The plans and engagement generated quickly drew the attention and support from the regional administration, resulted in formal collaboration structures between the associations and administration for its implementation, and generated the personal support of the city's mayor.

The experience from the network in Tunisia is a good example for collective stewardship as the practice of stewarding transformations for multiple issues within a certain circumscribed area. The challenges of good governance between administration and citizens and the local sustainability challenges vary greatly between communities in Sidi Bouzid, Sousse and Siliana. Yet, a transformation network across civil society associations in these locations could effectively leverage and catalyse the impact of each local multi-stakeholder initiative.

20.5.2 Transformation Network Example 2: A Femxle-led Network Towards a New Economic Future

The global example of a transformation network, the femxle-led network of professional change-makers towards a new economic architecture, emerged out of a much larger consciousness on the challenges ahead towards regenerative civilization. It was built on the recognition that the current most dominant economic framework is built on a narrative of growth by all means, resource depletion and ignorance towards social and environmental externalities. We have built economic institutions that actively encourage and reward the masculine side of people. This narrative also assumes that resources to generate economic activities are unrestricted. Planetary limits, the existence of carefully balanced geo-bio-physical life-support systems, are absent in this narrative (Rockström, et al., 2019).

This narrative did not simply emerge between theory and practice of economic activities, and it was deliberately promoted and inserted into all leading financial,

educational and economic institutions. The network was set up from the need to recreate a fundamentally new story about the economy as a human interaction system supporting people and the planetary life-support system, with womxn taking the lead. In addition, there are many proposals on new economic thinking emerging, which all deserve attention (such as Raworth, 2017; Trebeck & Williams, 2019 and publications by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation). But they are disconnected and have subsequently little chance to influence the current economic system. To address these needs, the 36x36 transformation network for wellbeing on a healthy planet was set up. Its goal is to unite at least 36 femxle professionals from around the globe to develop a new economic architecture and disseminate it globally in a manifesto.

As in Tunisia, the set-up used a general process methodology, within which the network enablers were adapted to the context and used as strategic guidance for the process design. Below is the relevant context for each enabler again and its use as process guidance in this context:

Purpose-building narratives: With the fragmented initiatives and exchange networks around a diversity of new economic approaches that already exists, an engaging and yet pluriverse narrative needed to be built that could engage potential network members from across a variety of communities of practice. It also needed to convey clearly its nature of action orientation vs the existing exchange networks and multi-stakeholder platforms in that area. The global ambition needed to be embedded in the network's member selection and provide clarity on the process of bringing that narrative into a living practice on a global level. To integrate this into the network process design, wellbeing on a healthy planet was chosen as the purpose of the network that could speak to the diversity of lived existences and experience of womxn all over the world. Membership selection was explicit in selection criteria around age, gender, professional expertise as well as vision for the economy of the future that could contribute to the overall narrative. The global aspiration was also built into membership selection via a quota for global regions according to their proportion of the global human population. The network's process roadmap is aligned around six guiding themes, derived from a system's perspective on economic approaches, and offering clarity for network members on expected contributions to each step. Process anchoring sessions to support member's transformative resilience, i.e. the ability of holding the ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty of the roadmap towards the narrative, are regularly held.

Dynamic structures: In order to promote collective stewardship, multiple layers of connectivity and collective action need to be knitted across the network members. Connecting the community of practices across sectors, regions, schools of thought and cultures is imperative to allow a diverse and yet structured cross-pollination of members for collective sense-making and consensus-building around concrete action, be that e.g., on recommendations on metrics to achieve the network's vision or identification of promising action initiatives on the ground that have scaling-up potential for the network's purpose. The network process design helped the network members come together in small action teams for thematic exchanges around the six guiding themes, for peer exchanges on professional expertise building around

new economic approaches, in a global scholarship organizing hub focused on decolonizing economics, in regional groups and a network strategy group. The process is regularly reviewed and adjusted to allow for the integration of emerging needs to promote connections of members across different boundaries (regions, expertise, sector, specialty, challenge, professional passions). Clarity on purpose and result expectation is co-developed and built into each action team.

Novel pathways: In order to ensure the network develops into its transformative nature, capacities for collective stewardship for system's transformation need to be built into the network-building process. At the same time, the network's impact orientation needs to provide for testing ideas and concrete, issue-based initiatives, reviving local or regional collaboration ecosystems around new economic practice. For the process design, this meant the network-building sessions are embedded into a competence-building track of strategizing transformative change that conveys competence on the level of system thinking, strategic process design for transformation processes and collective stewardship capacity. The network's process roadmap foresees several prototype practice projects developed by member teams for contextualizing and implementing the manifesto content. A high-level network advisory group made up of femxle experts and strategic forerunners in new economic thinking and practice is providing the expert input and support needed.

Value creation: The acknowledgement of difference and diversity in perspectives, approaches to change and value systems, to allow consensus-building around a manifesto for a new economy is crucial for the network's strategic delivery. With both a global claim and purpose, the network member needs to collectively support each other to provide space for the differences to emerge and at the same time make the connections possible and necessary for consensus around a manifesto for a new economic future. For the process design, this meant the layers of diverse connectivity built across the network members were also strategically chosen to bring out the differences and diversity, such as the regional teams and the sector and expertise mix within them. The term of 'architecture' (instead of, e.g., roadmap) was deliberately chosen, since it refers to the design of an overall structure that allows for different manifestations. This honours the need for plural approaches to economics that all refer to overarching principles of wellbeing on a healthy planet.

Dialogic exchange: In a network effort with an ambition of complex system transformation, the clarity of process regarding the purpose of internal exchanges is paramount for member engagement and contributions. Joint learning mechanisms and sessions need to have a clear connection to key points in the network's roadmap, and result delivery needs to be transparently connected to goals and impact the network visions. For its purpose, the network needed both learning and exchange spaces for the divergence to emerge, as well as planning and strategic sessions to build cohesion and action orientation. For the process design, the network's exchange sessions are clearly developed around cycles of divergence and reflection towards convergence and consensus-building. Exchanges around the six guiding themes are first built internally, with exploration/divergence and a following first consensus, e.g. regarding recommendations for further development of the theme in a public

format. All exchanges are anchored on a different conceptual level, from principles to strategic roadmaps to implementation pathways. A learning series provides a structured space to hold all emerging exploration and consensus around manifesto elements.

Contextual impact: A key challenge deriving from the membership criteria as well as from the network's ambitious purpose is the connection to communities of practice, key institutions, organizations and networks that hold the different layers of influence and power necessary to implement the network's manifesto on a large scale. In order to achieve its desired transformative effect, the network needs to be connected with—and be embedded in—existing strategic networks. For the network process design, this meant that a high-level advisory group with femxle experts is integrated into the network-building process. A key task for this group will be to identify together with the network members the kind of powerful structures, networks, institutions and organizations that are needed for the manifesto's impact, and for the continuous development and (re-)building of the new economic architecture at the heart of it.

Within its first 5 months, overall 48 high-profile global femxle professionals were selected for membership in the network, out of more than 100 expressions of interest. They span the globe from the Philippines to the US West Coast. A network vision, thematic action groups, regional representatives and strategic plans for the network in five global regions have been developed, and publications that explore, respectively, narratives and metrics for a new economic architecture have already been produced.

The global network for wellbeing on a healthy planet highlights the need for visionary multiplicity and network leverage in transformation efforts. Only if the new economic architecture the network strives for allows for a pluriversity of envisioning, conceptualizing and living the economic future will the network build momentum and engage those it needs for a transformative impact. Similarly, it needs to actively reach out and bring in the existing networks and the powerful institutional stakeholders in this field in order to achieve the necessary leverage.

20.6 Conclusion

Transformation networks are the cornerstone to drive transformative impact. A look at the practical experience with transformative impact shows that it emerges most strongly in networks of multi-stakeholder initiatives and networks-of-networks. The most important distinguishing characteristic of such transformation networks is their nature of bringing together existing learning networks, exchange networks and multi-stakeholder initiatives to strategically drive transformative action. This strategic action orientation of the network can purposefully be built if guidance is derived from principles generating aliveness in systems. The six network enablers introduced above fulfil those criteria and can thus function as important orientation in building transformation networks. They also importantly attend to the three core approaches of transformation literacy—collective stewardship, visionary multiplicity and network leverage. Two practical examples of building transformation networks

with the enablers were examined, one on a local and one on a global level. Both examples show that the enablers can be adapted to very different network levels and contexts, and provide strategic and practical guidance in the complex process of actively setting up a transformation network. A key insight from these experiences is that the process of setting up and driving transformation networks needs an iterative loop of attention to systemic patterns and process design. The network enablers can only develop their potential if regular attention is paid to systemic patterns to tailor and translate them to each context. A circle of observing, adapting and enacting is always needed to ensure vitality in the system that embeds the transformation network, so that it can continue to be transformative. An important research need that emerges from these experiences is the need to have a closer look at backbone organizations for such networks. In both the local and also the global examples, organizations⁶ that initiated and facilitated the process of setting up the networks had a deciding role in the success of the effort. For such an influential role, a closer look is necessary on what characteristics and resources such organizations need to have, potentially at different phases in the process and certainly on the different possible levels, in order to successfully take up the role as initiator, driver and eventually backbone support for a transformation network.

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⁶ Both networks were initiated and facilitated by the Collective Leadership Institute, in the local example in collaboration with the We love Kairouan Association, in the global example in collaboration with the Wellbeing Economy Alliance and the Schumacher Institute.

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