S. Aqeel Tirmizi
John D. Vogelsang *Editors*

Leading and Managing in the Social Sector

Strategies for Advancing Human Dignity and Social Justice

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Endorsements

"If you are a leader or an emerging leader working in the social sector, this book will offer you more than insight into how to effectively lead your organization in an environment that has proven to be alarmingly dynamic and at times volatile. This book provides practical knowledge on how social sector organizations can reinvent themselves to adapt and thrive during turbulent times while making a difference."

Dalitso S. Sulamoyo, Ph.D.
President and CEO of the Illinois
Association of Community Action Agencies

"Aqeel Tirmizi and John Vogelsang have gathered an excellent and informative series of articles that capture the challenges confronting, the resilience to continue, and the innovative responses of social sector organizations as they endeavor to advance human dignity and advocate for social justice in ever more complex environments. Writing from both a US and international perspective, the authors share research about what works, best practices, and stories of how to stay mission and values focused that will be helpful to social sector organizations not only in the US but in many parts of the world."

Mee-Yan Cheung-Judge, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow of Singapore Civil Service College
and Roffey Park Business School, UK
Dean of the NTL European OD Certificate program
Director, Quality & Equality Ltd, Headington, Oxford, UK

"Tirmizi and Vogelsang have done a great service for the social sector. The articles and topics in this informative and reflective body of work lead the reader to think globally about the importance of social sector organizations and their leaders. The

topics are important for civil society and the path ahead as leaders face into the importance of global communities and how their leadership will impact the citizens they serve."

Cathy L. Royal, Ph.D.
President, The Royal Consulting Group
Professor, Colorado Technical University

"The challenges of the 21st century demand a greater emphasis on leading and managing within the social sector. In recent years, the sector has been unfortunately overlooked, especially by policy makers and investors. The authors of *Leading and Managing in the Social Sector* have addressed important strategic issues of the sector and highlighted successful pathways to move the sector forward. The book sheds light on the many challenges which the social sector has been dealing with and which require adequate attention. This publication is of tremendous value to the leaders and activists who are concerned with the advancement of the social sector."

Prof. Md. Golam Samdani Fakir
Vice Chancellor, Green University of Bangladesh
Bangladesh; Former Visiting Professor of SIT
Graduate Institute, USA

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Dr. S. Aqeel Tirmizi's professional portfolio includes over 25 years of experience in management teaching, training, consulting, and research in international settings. He is Professor of Leadership in the Graduate School of Leadership and Change at Antioch University—USA. He also holds a visiting faculty position at the School for International Training (SIT)—Vermont, USA. His work extensively deals with leadership development, cross-cultural management, change management, and leading social innovation. Dr. Tirmizi holds a Ph.D. in Management from the State University of New York.

Throughout his professional career, Dr. Tirmizi has undertaken a variety of training and consulting assignments for international and national organizations in the nonprofit, public and private sectors. These assignments include work with the Ford Foundation, ChildFund International, Oxfam America, CARE USA, Women for Women International, Canadian International Development Agency, Heifer International, Eisenhower Fellows Program, BRAC—Bangladesh, and The World Bank. His advisory work for the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program included assignments with a number of partners in the Netherlands, UK, Thailand, Mexico and the US.

Dr. Tirmizi research focuses on leadership, cross-cultural management, and social innovation. He has presented his work in several major international conferences in Asia, Europe and North America. He is dedicated to mission-driven and result-oriented work across multiple sectors. He has an in-depth expertise in adult learning and training and is certified in human systems development. In recognition of his contributions, Dr. Tirmizi was selected in the 2013 CSC Leaders program under the auspices of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conferences.

John D. Vogelsang, Ph.D. has been working for over 38 years in the areas of organizational and social change, conflict transformation, participatory evaluation, board development, strategic planning, and small and large group dialogue and

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Contributors

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Mary Hiland, Ph.D. is a social sector board and leadership development consultant dedicated to assisting social sector executives and board members to unleash their potential for organizational and community impact. Hiland has over 40 years' experience in the social sector, 26 years as an executive, and 17 years chairing and serving on several nonprofit boards. She has presented at numerous conferences; conducted workshops, and taught nonprofit management and governance at San

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Kerry Secrest is a leadership coach for individuals and organizations, focusing on executive coaching, women's leadership, team development, and leadership training. Secrest is committed to supporting women leaders. She founded the innovative Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont program, a six-month, intensive leadership program for established women leaders offered in partnership through Marlboro College Center for New Leadership. In 2014, she was appointed by the Governor to the Vermont Commission on Women. Additionally, she facilitates national corporate courses for women in leadership, provides individual coaching for professional women, leads an annual women's retreat, and personally experiences the power of being more than 14 years in her own women's circle. With international experience in Africa, Europe, and Asia, she finds that her international work provides her with a broader perspective for her coaching and organizational

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Ramon Wenzel, Ph.D., leads the *Learning for Purpose* initiative to research and realize capability development for organizations and individuals in the not-for-profit domain. He draws on human psychology and organizational management in an effort to inform theory, practice, and policy about gaining and sustaining the capabilities for social change. His work addresses the full spectrum of formal and informal work learning; competence development; and the effectiveness, evaluation, re/design, and transfer of training. Dr. Wenzel is Assistant Professor at the Business School of The University of Western Australia and the Centre for Social Impact. He is the Director of the inaugural 'Learning for Purpose' Action Learning program for social service organizations. He attracted external funding worth over $1,100,000 from the Australian Research Council, and multiple corporate and philanthropic entities; and has worked as a researcher and consultant in a wide range of nonprofit, public, and private organizations. Dr. Wenzel is a constant learner.

Chapter 1
Introduction

S. Aqeel Tirmizi and John D. Vogelsang

> There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an under-standing of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures
>
> —bell hooks

The social sector is currently in a vibrant, dynamic, and exciting stage. The sector's role and relevance to advancing human dignity and social justice is greater than ever. This introduction explores: What is unique about the sector? Why use the term social sector? and What are some of the challenges for the social sector?

What Is Unique About the Social Sector?

The number and types of social sector organizations have increased exponentially around the world and are offering extraordinary and much needed contributions toward an array of social issues. Paul Hawken's book, *Blessed Unrest*, included a 112-page appendix to list social sector organizations active in areas of culture, education, pollution, social justice, and faith-based work. Hawken's labeled it as a "movement" of more than one million organizations (Mintzberg, 2015).

Social sector organizations are experimenting with new organizational forms, especially those emerging under the social entrepreneurship umbrella and providing a new momentum and excitement within and outside of the social sector. The interest in social entrepreneurship is encouraging existing social sector entities to actively embrace and encourage innovation. This interest is also inspiring a new

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breed of professionals and organizations to contribute to the social sector. This trend falls under the larger social sector dynamic promoting the creation of "hybrid" and emergent organizational forms, which cross and combine the traditional non-profit and for-profit domains. So far thirty-one US states and the District of Columbia have passed Benefit Corporation (B-Corp) legislation to facilitate legal incorporation of for-profit entities that want to consider society and the environment in addition to profit in their decision making process.

Why Use the Term "Social Sector?"

The social sector includes entities and initiatives devoted to advancing human dignity and social justice. Social sector organizations (SSOs) are formed to primarily improve the human condition and effect social change at local, national, and global levels. A number of terms are used to describe the social sector and entities associated with it. These terms include the independent sector, the citizen sector, the third sector, voluntary sector, the plural sector, and civil society. When we carefully look at the definitions, we find that they mostly overlap and all of them highlight players and initiatives separate from the public and private sectors. These labels have limitations. For example, the social sector, while different from the public and private sectors, is not "independent" and using the label independent could be misleading. The social sector is subject to regulation and often works in collaboration with the other sectors, and the sectoral interdependencies cannot be ignored. The third sector implies a lower ranking for the social sector and thus diminishes its importance in relation to the other sectors.

Regarding the labels voluntary and civil society, Mintzberg (2015) appropriately observed, "Calling the sector *voluntary* overemphasizes the role of volunteers, whereas *civil society*, an old term but of increasing currency these days, is hardly descriptive—in contrast to *uncivil society*?" (p. 30). While commenting upon the label civil society, Fowler (2002) noted, "… Civil society itself—which is far from homogenous and is not inherently civil or conflict free" (p. 21). Mintzberg continued his critique of the other labels and noted, *"Referring to the sector as the home of non-profits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) makes little sense, because governments are literally non-profit and businesses are literally non-governmental. The social sector is a better label, but logically used only when the other two sectors are called political and economic—which rarely happens"* (p. 30). We agree with Mintzberg that social sector is a better label but do not agree with the logic of determining the merit of this label in relation to the other two sectors. Mintzberg (2015) proposed the term plural sector to address a series of issues with the other labels. The implied optimism, collectivism, and responsibility are important. However, the label assumes plurality of organizational agendas and actions within the sector. These assumptions may not be true considering the diversity of players and contested nature of their agendas as noted by Fowler

([2002](#)). More importantly, the expectations and vision of plurality that Mintzberg put forward, must be applied to the public and private sectors as well.

Problems noted above in the use of various labels for the social sector apply to the labels for social sector organizations as well. Organizations operating in the sector have been labeled as civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, nonprofit organizations, charitable, and voluntary organizations. While there is nothing wrong with these labels, we believe that they do not fully and clearly convey the goals and initiatives associated with the sector. For example, the terms non-governmental and nonprofit attempt to define the entities as something they are not; therefore, these labels lack credibility and appropriateness and fail to capture the complexity and importance of their work. The label charitable organization does not capture the diversity of organizations operating in the social sector and the values driven nature of their work. For example, many organizations use resource generation approaches, which are not based on charity. Additionally, many of these organizations identify themselves as rights-based—meaning their work focuses on facilitating access to basic rights (health, education, income) and not on distribution of charity.

As we consider other nomenclature, which defines the emerging developments and long-established goals of the social sector work, the term "social" further demonstrates its appropriateness and significance. For example, in determining the overall effectiveness and success of social sector initiatives, there is a wide agreement on the use of "social impact." In relation to the social innovation agenda and newer organizational forms, which are becoming integral to the social sector work, the terms "social business," "social enterprises," and "social entrepreneurship" are widely used and agreed upon. Continued use of some of the existing terms (e.g., voluntary, civil, independent) defining the sector may lead to confusing labels and meanings. For example, consider the labels "voluntary innovation" and "independent entrepreneurship" or "civil enterprises" in relation to the emerging social innovation field. More importantly, their legal incorporation (social enterprises) and blended-value (social and economic) venture models, do not allow many of them to be categorized as voluntary, charitable, or nonprofit entities. The above discussion makes it clear that we need language to define the sector and its associated entities that highlights "social" and is simple, clear, and inclusive. We believe the labels social sector and social sector organizations offer that clarity and inclusiveness. We anticipate that it will be some time before these labels are more widely embraced but an early momentum is already building in that direction. Many leading institutions deliberately use the term social sector. Examples include the Center for Social Sector Leadership, University of California Berkeley; Social Sector function at McKinsey & Company, a renowned global consulting company; and appearance of the term in many articles and blogs in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, a leading Journal in the social innovation and social sector fields. Internationally, examples of the term may be found from Argentina, Nigeria, to China.

Finally, we approach the label social sector as a broad and inclusive phenomenon, which entails a diverse set of organizations and initiatives committed to

social impact. It may include community based organizations; national and transnational nongovernmental organizations and nonprofits; social enterprises; foundations; and faith-based organizations. They may engage with the social sector through advocacy, service, policy research, and/or impact investing. The organizations may be legally incorporated as public, private, or hybrid entities and run by professional, volunteers, social entrepreneurs, or combinations of the above. The contributions in this book share a variety of rich examples of social sector organizations from around the world and their impactful engagement.

What Are Some of the Challenges for the Social Sector?

The social sector is also facing challenges around the world. CIVICUS—an international group promoting social sector organizations and groups recently reported a rise in the restrictions on social sector activities in a number of countries through worsening policy and legal environments. Adele Poskitt, in her chapter "Changes in the International Development Landscape: Social Sector Organizations from the Emerging Powers" (Chap. 7), describes how governments are increasing legislative and logistic barriers to social sector organizations, particularly to transnational organizations that work on democracy and human rights issues. The funding challenges for the social sector are becoming more significant. In many countries, social sector organizations are denied access to foreign funding and are confined to government funding for tightly circumscribed local development activities.

In the US, there is limited funding to help social sector organizations build their capacity to effectively meet the needs of their current constituents and the growing demands for their services. The Nonprofit Finance Fund's (NFF) 2015 survey of nonprofits found that 53 % of the 5451 respondents from fifty states and Puerto Rico said funders were interested in supporting program expansion and never or rarely interested in covering the full cost of programs, which include administrative costs and capacity building efforts. The Nonprofit Finance Fund also found that 76 % of respondents reported an increase in demand for services, the seventh straight year of increased demand. The funding challenges are pushing social sector organizations to consider and pursue new "business models" to ensure enterprise sustainability and mission impact.

Scandals about use of funds have threatened public trust in the social sector and increased the call for greater accountability and performance measures (Aviv, 2004; Strom, 2008; Chan & Takage, 2011). The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, endorsed in 2011 in Busan, South Korea, calls for a focus on results as well as transparency and accountability, are three of its major principles. However, tracking the relevant data and producing the required reports can strain the organizational capacity of small social sector organizations (Campbell, 2003; Gammal, 2006). Respondents to the NFF survey said that more than 70 % of their funders requested impact or program metrics. While 77 % of the

respondents agreed that the metrics funders ask for are helpful in assessing impact, only 1 % reported that funders always cover the costs of impact measurement; 71 % said the additional costs were rarely or never covered.

Emphasis on performance measures can contribute to mission drift. Performance "measures drive social sector organizations to focus on outcomes, instead of just inputs and outputs…[However] an obsession with particular measures can lead to mission drift and the cherry-picking of services and clients, such that performance looks best along just the dimensions measured" (Brooks, 2003, p. 504). In order to be accountable, social sector organizations may focus on what can be measured and not on what effects long term change. There are also limited methods and resources for measuring long-term social change efforts (Taylor & Soal, 2003).

Social sector organization are also struggling with how to align organizational culture, design, and functions with the values and goals of social change and social justice. Articles in this volume describe attempts to develop structures and practices that express those social values rather than impede them. For example, Hormann and Vivian's chapter "Intervening in Organizational Trauma (Chap. 11)," provides ways to deal with the trauma that may develop in highly mission driven organizations from the work itself and from the methods of leading and managing becoming out of line with the organization's expressed values and mission. Aruna Rao, David Kelleher, Carol Miller, Joanne Sandler, Rieky Stuart, and Tania Principe, in "Gender at Work: An Experiment in 'Doing Gender,'" describe their continuing efforts to develop and re-develop ways of working and structuring their organization that are consistent with feminist principles and that do not manifest as traditional forms of organizational power relations.

The preceding paragraphs highlight the unique and emerging opportunities, complexities, and challenges confronting social sector organizations. This book offers a timely collection of contributions for those concerned with leading and managing these entities, from a strategic as well as an operational outlook. More importantly, the perspectives offered here attempt to approach the emerging realities and issues of social sector leadership and management with pragmatism and idealism. The book offers an approach that allows the bridging of demands between creativity and accountability, between inspiration and results, and between gaining individual commitment and shared ownership of agendas and achievements.

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Part I
Fit for the Future: Leading Social Innovation

Introduction

> Vision is not enough; it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must step up the stairs
>
> —Vaclav Havel

The label Fit for the Future for this part is important for multiple reasons. First, it invites leaders, professionals, managers, and social innovators to think about their work critically and creatively. Critical examination of existing approaches and emerging solutions allows honest assessment of relevance and impact. It allows understanding of root causes of systemic problems, lack of access, and social injustice across societal domains. A clearer and well-thought-out understanding of what is not working and why it is not working lays a foundation for development of more relevant, appropriate, and creative solutions. This critical reflection is necessary for both well-established organizations and startups, which primarily aim to address social issues. The startups may include newly formed organizations or social innovators with new ideas.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the label Fit for the Future encourages social sector leaders and innovators to embrace the creativity lens to ensure their organizations and ventures are fit and aligned with the emerging and future imperatives. In this part we explore how social sector leaders in established entities and social entrepreneurs who start new initiatives lead innovatively to arrive at sustainable and just solutions.

As noted in the introduction, over the last 20 years social innovation has become an extremely popular platform for encouraging, thinking, and supporting innovative approaches to addressing social sector issues ranging from education, health, poverty, and gender justice to strengthening humanitarian action around the world. Simultaneously, research and educational endeavors have grown exponentially to advance the understanding of and learning about social innovation. Paul Light, a professor at New York University, published an important book called *Search for Social Entrepreneurship* in 2008. A few years prior to that Stanford University launched a new journal dedicated to social innovation learning and practice called *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Many leading universities in the US and abroad

have started offering undergraduate, graduate, and certificate courses focusing on social innovation and social entrepreneurship. These developments attest to the importance of the growing field of research and practice and offer an emerging set of important and relevant lessons for social sector leaders. The chapters in this part provide a very good synthesis of research and practice-based lessons for successful leadership of innovative endeavors.

Before introducing the chapters in this part, we briefly review the concept of social innovation. Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller (2008), defined it as a "novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals" (p. 36). This conception of social innovation differentiates it from overlapping concepts of social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, and social entrepreneur. Understanding of these differences is important from a leadership and managerial perspective and we highlight some of these differences below.

Hoodgendoorn et al. (2010) used Gartner's (1985) classification along the four dimensions of new venture creation, namely: individual, process, organization, and environment. This classification was juxtaposed with the concepts of social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and social entrepreneurs to synthesize existing research in the social entrepreneurship landscape. We believe that this is a useful way to locate and understand the social innovation and social entrepreneurship landscape. Specifically, Hoodgendoorn et al. (2010) used Gartner's classification to categorize the social entrepreneurship research at the following levels:

- Social Entrepreneurs—Individual: This category included studies dealing with skills, background, discourse, demographics, and motives.
- Social Entrepreneurship—Process: The topics in this group included stages, opportunity identification, innovation, scaling, networking, process traits, and risk.
- Social Enterprises—Organizations: This category included two sub-divisions, namely strategy and organizational characteristics. Under strategy the areas of mission, goals, and impact were included, and under internal organizational characteristics the issues around governance, resources, legal form, learning, and monitoring were covered.
- Environmental Factors: Under this category the authors expected to find studies of the environmental determinism or strategic perspectives, however, they were not able to use these sub-divisions in light of their findings; instead they organized their findings in terms of environmental dynamics and support structures.

The research synthesis described above has several implications for social sector leaders and practitioners. Firstly, it offers some clarifications related to several concepts connected to social innovation. Secondly, it outlines a series of variables that practitioners should attend to in order to diagnosis the strengths, weaknesses, and improvement areas related to their innovation efforts. However, the above

synthesis of research does not compare and contrast the notions of social innovation and social entrepreneurship. We briefly discuss those differences and offer some additional similarities and contrasts across the concepts of social innovation, social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and social entrepreneur.

Both social innovation and social entrepreneurship emphasize centrality of innovative solutions, significance of serving critical social needs, and scalability potential. However, social entrepreneurship assumes the solution has an entrepreneurial-based business model or self-generating resource strategy to make the venture sustainable—an assumption not necessary for social innovation. Consider a collaborative arrangement between a government agency, a financial institution, and a social sector organization to reduce recidivism using a pay for performance scheme based on social impact bonds.[1] The creative distribution of roles, responsibility, and risk in a cross-sectoral partnership makes this arrangement innovative. However, the fundamental ingredient of this social innovation approach is based on public financing and it does not meet self-sustaining revenue generation mechanisms central to social entrepreneurship ventures.

The term social enterprise also carries specific meanings and needs to be clearly understood in relation to the notion of social innovation and social entrepreneurship beyond the differences named above. Firstly, the term has been used to denote income generation or earned income strategies of nonprofits especially in the US context. While it was and still is an important source of revenue for many nonprofits, it would be misleading to equate it with social innovation. For example, income from earned income strategies or social enterprises run by nonprofits may be less than 5 % or more than 95 % of their total revenue. Therefore, the use of earned income or social enterprise programs do not automatically make organizations financially sustainable or innovative. Secondly, both social innovation and social entrepreneurship assume that the solutions are scalable as noted above. Social enterprises (especially in many European countries) do not assume scalability as a key requirement unlike social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Additionally, while the notion of social entrepreneurship is concerned about the process of innovation (opportunity identification, networking etc.), the notion of social enterprises is more concerned with organizational level (e.g., strategy, legal implications, design, governance issues).

The discussion above indicates some similarities, overlaps, and some important differences related to the concept of social innovation, social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and social entrepreneurs. As a way to synthesize the above discussion we offer two observations: first, in many ways social innovation can be seen as the larger and more inclusive space within which innovation and entrepreneurship may be practiced by leaders, social entrepreneurs, and social enterprises; second, innovative work through social entrepreneurship, social

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[1]A social impact bond is a pay for success arrangement among public, private, and social sector entities, where government is only obligated to pay if agreed upon social outcomes are achieved. Interim financial investment comes from the private sector and social sector organizations act as service providers under such arrangements.

enterprises, and social entrepreneurs often converges but that is not always the case. The chapters in this part further elaborate on some of these observations and provide highly relevant examples from the field. With this background we introduce the three contributions in this part.

A recent report by McKinsey and Company examined the question, what do social sectors leaders need to succeed (Callanan et al., 2014). This report surveyed about 200 social-sector leaders, including CEOs and senior leaders of leading nonprofit organizations, foundations, social enterprises, and impact-investors. The findings of this report indicated that respondents ranked the ability to lead and implement innovation above all the other attributes of successful leadership. The chapter on leading innovation by Aqeel Tirmizi provides a comprehensive overview of research and practice-based knowledge about leading and implementing innovative work successfully. He draws upon over two decades of evidence based and contemporary cases from the social sector to distill strategies and approaches that leaders may use in existing and new organizations to promote and embrace innovative work. This chapter approaches the work of social innovation and social entrepreneurship from the lens of intrapreneurship—a term which has been coined to capture the realities and possibilities that leadership often deals with when pursuing entrepreneurial work within existing and established organizations.

Professor Muhammed Yunus is well known in and beyond the social sector for his contributions to the field of microcredit. He practically invented the concept and practice of microcredit and made the poor of the world credit worthy. Yunus attained global recognition for his work when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. It is important to note that the prize was awarded to both Yunus and the micro finance bank he created called Grameen Bank. This distinction is important because the Nobel Prize committee recognized the vital role the Bank played in expanding the microcredit movement and impact and the wise leadership that Yunus provided as its head over three decades.

Katherine Esty's Chap. 3, "Lessons from Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank: Leading Long-Term Organizational Change Successfully," provides an excellent set of insights that she gained about Yunus's leadership and innovation after years of research. Esty shares lessons based on her direct engagement with Yunus, extensive discussions with his colleagues, and a series of resources, which she analyzed about his work as an innovative leader of Grameen Bank. She starts her chapter tracing back to some of the initial motivations which led Yunus to embark on his lifelong professional journey, and ends with some key lessons about what contributed to his success.

Grace Davie's Chap. 4, "Social Entrepreneurship: A Call for Collective Action," begins by raising a set of critical questions that the field of social entrepreneurship must answer following its surge and popularity. The purpose of these questions is to invite proponents, educators, practitioners, and supporters of social entrepreneurship across multiple sectors to meaningfully reflect on the emerging field and the challenges and opportunities it poses for all involved. She shares a carefully selected sample of some of the definitions of social entrepreneurship. Davie also highlights some of the critique of social entrepreneurship, which has emerged from

the broader civil society and NGO sector. We believe it is important to attend to these voices as they can play an important role in refining and defining the shape social entrepreneurship and the broader field of social innovation will take in the years to come. Finally, drawing upon international experiences, she identifies some significant gaps and potential opportunities for social entrepreneurship to address some of its critique with a special attention to collaboration and collective action.

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Chapter 2
Leading Innovation in the Social Sector

S. Aqeel Tirmizi

> Innovation is a behavior and a process that comes from the core of an organization's values and philosophy. It is acknowledged, touted, and rewarded by leadership. What companies lack is not innovative people, but rather innovative processes that can surface, nurture and sustain innovation.
>
> —Tom Koulopoulos

The quote above nicely sums up the popularity, importance, and roots of innovation. Authentic and meaningful innovation originates in an organization's DNA, its culture, and its philosophy. The quote also highlights the integral role that leadership plays in embracing and encouraging innovative work. Finally, it emphasizes the significance of managing the processes essential to successful implementation of innovative work.

Why should we be concerned with innovation? Evidence across sectors suggests that innovation plays an important role in organizations' survival, efficiency, growth, sustainability, and success. According to Baregheh, Rowley, and Sambrook (2009), "Organizations need to innovate in response to changing customer demands and lifestyles and in order to capitalize on opportunities offered by technology and changing marketplaces, structures and dynamics" (p. 1323). Samsung, a world-renowned Korean conglomerate was mostly making inexpensive and imitative products for other companies until the mid-1990s. The group chairman of Samsung at the time decided that the company needed an innovation-focused strategy to become a global brand (Yoo & Kim, 2015). As a result of this commitment to innovation, Samsung has become one of the leading global electronics entities. Acumen Fund is an impact investment organization focusing on eradicating poverty. Among other innovative strategies, Acumen's Patient Capital approach has allowed them to positively impact 100 million lives around the world. Patient Capital combines financial capital with thoughtful management support and low returns on investment. While it is possible to find inspiring examples of innovative approaches in multiple sectors, there is a lack of clear understanding regarding how to lead and sustain innovative work. This lack of clarity poses a major challenge. In

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relation to the social sector, Dover and Lawrence (2012) observed that nonprofits, dominant players in this sector, have been encouraged to pursue "continuous innovation as a central organizing principle to accomplish their missions and ensure a sustainable future for themselves and their communities" (p. 994). These authors further state that the ability to practically embrace continuous innovation remains an unanswered question.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance on how to effectively lead innovative work. I draw upon the relevant leadership literature and bring empirical evidence and case stories from multiple sectors to outline practices and approaches suitable for leading innovative work with a special emphasis on the social sector. I start the chapter with a section called innovation basics, which includes introductory information about the concept, practice, and forms of innovation. The next section titled leading innovation, draws upon leadership research to identify approaches and competencies, which play a key role in leading innovation. In the third section labeled managing innovation, I describe approaches and considerations for successful implementation of innovative thinking. In the fourth section titled human-centered design, I include some emerging thinking related to both leading and managing innovation. In the final section, I conclude with some overall factors and considerations that facilitate successful innovation leadership.

Innovation Basics

In this section, I provide an integrative definition of innovation; examine the definition in detail to distill key ideas related to the conception and practice of innovation; and summarize basic forms of innovation with examples from the social sector.

Baregheh et al. (2009) conducted an extensive review of the innovation literature to examine the existing definitions of innovation in order to arrive at an integrative definition. The literature they covered represented multiple disciplinary orientations including management, economics, knowledge management, technology, as well as innovation and entrepreneurship.

Following a content analysis of sixty different definitions, Baregheh et al. (2009) offered the following integrative definition, "Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace" (p. 1334). The authors go on to emphasize some of the elements of this definition by first noting that innovation involves a set of processes as mentioned in a variety of definitions they had reviewed. Secondly, they highlight that it is the transformation of ideas that is integral to achieving successful innovation and this transformation may lead to innovation in new or improved products, services, or processes. This element of their definition is also significant in the sense that it reminds us that innovation may take a variety of forms and is not confined to newness of products and services. I further discuss this point using ideas from Dees

(2001) below. In their final comment on their integrative definition, Baregheh et al. (2009) note "…although not often explicitly mentioned in extant definitions, we include the aim of innovation as 'successfully advancing' (referring to process innovations) and 'competing and differentiating' to reflect both the overall strategic aim of innovation and the potentially diverse social and environmental contexts in which innovation occurs" (p. 1334).

Two points are worth noting in the last section of the integrative definition above and the authors' explanation in the preceding quote. Firstly, the emphasis on competing and differentiating brings out the for-profit and business orientation with which many of the definitions were approached. Secondly, the direct concern with success in the marketplace is important as it highlights the outcome orientation of this definition, which is indeed an important goal of innovation. The notion of marketplace may be approached to mean markets characterized by lack of access and equity in social issue areas such as health, education, and poverty. In fact, in some ways this is where C.K. Prahalad saw the potential for the private sector to make contributions to the social sector in his famous work called Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid (Prahalad, 2006). However, the business-dominant terminology, paradigms, and the associated practice may be an impediment in approaching innovative work in the social sector from an authentic and just perspective. This dynamic had led to the emerging field of social innovation as a way to ensure the primacy of "social" when it comes to innovative endeavors in the social sector arena. According to Mulgan (2006), "Social innovation refers to innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social. Business innovation is generally motivated by profit maximization and diffused through organizations that are primarily motivated by profit maximization." (p. 146). While a number of key leadership approaches and behaviors may be common across the two types of innovative work, the main purposes of innovation in the social versus the business sector differ. I consider this difference throughout this chapter to determine the relevance and suitability of leadership approaches using research- and practice-based evidence.

As a way to categorize forms and opportunities that innovation may follow, Dees (2001) summarized the work of economist Joseph Schumpeter in five categories and offered two additional categories with a focus on the social sector. I list his categories below and provide illustrative examples from the social sector:

1. Creating a new or improved product, service, or program—Greystone Bakery, a social enterprise in New York, started a pioneering open hiring policy to especially assist individuals with social barriers, including history of incarceration and homelessness.
2. Introducing the new or improved strategy or method of operating—Aravind Eye Hospital introduced the "assembly line" method of operating combined with a cross-subsidy pricing strategy to provide cataract surgery access to impoverished Indians at subsidized or no cost.

3. Reaching a new market, serving an unmet need—Introduction of micro-finance programs in countries and regions where these programs did not exist before.
4. Tapping into a new source of supply or labor—Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN), a national non-governmental organization (NGO) in Jordan, trains and uses labor for its social enterprises from the communities where it runs its different programs throughout Jordan.
5. Establishing a new industrial organizational structure—The emerging field of impact investing is providing much needed social venture capital to the social sector.
6. Forming new terms of engagement—Mercy Corps, an international humanitarian organization, has formed creative partnerships with the private sector entities to facilitate its relief and development work around the world.
7. Developing new funding structures—BRAC, a Bangladesh-based international NGO, has added a series of initiatives to create new funding structures including for-profit arms to finance its mission-related work.

Linking the forms and examples above with the conception of social innovation, it is useful to conclude this introductory section by noting the definition provided in the Stanford Social Innovation Review—a leading voice in the field. The definition was offered by Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller (2008) and they argue that social innovation is "A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals" (p. 36). The organizations and innovations listed above were clearly committed to creating societal value. Additionally, the solutions offered by them were characterized by more effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and/or justice within their respective work domains and issue areas.

Leadership for Innovation

According to Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, and Strange (2002), while a number of factors influence creative and innovative work in organizational settings, there is a reason to believe that leaders and their behavior represent a particularly powerful influence in that regard. Stephen Bubb, CEO of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations (ACEVO) in the UK, labeled social sector leaders as innovators who lead reform and change (Bubb, 2010).

I start this section by identifying a couple of broad frameworks that outline the key leadership characteristics, competencies and practices, which facilitate innovative work. Following the description of these broad frameworks, I then outline selected interventions, which facilitate innovative work in organizational settings.

Before discussing leadership characteristics and actions suitable for and encouraging of innovation in organizational settings, it is important to highlight how creative and innovative individuals (followers) approach their work. A meta-analytic review cited by Mumford et al. (2002) provided some interesting

differences and commonalities between artists and scientists (two broad categories of creative people) in terms of their dispositional characteristics. Regarding the differences, artists were found to be more anxious and rebellious while scientists were conscientious and accepting of authority. The two groups' common characteristics included achievement motivation, flexibility, autonomy, openness, cognitive complexity, self-confidence, introversion, and dominance (Mumford et al., 2002). These commonalities become the foundation for developing a general model of leadership for innovative endeavors. Following an extensive review of the existing evidence base, the authors provided a series of propositions pertaining to leadership factors related to creative and innovative work. Their broad leadership requirements and competencies included leadership's ability to provide (a) expertise and creativity, (b) visionary leadership, (c) planning and sense making, and (d) social skills. These four areas are briefly described below.

Innovative work often requires dealing with complexity and ambiguity. It is precisely why a leader's expertise and creative problem solving competencies will be crucial. However, there are times where, depending on the team or unit's own expertise and the lack of technical expertise in a leader, it may be essential to delegate these expertise and creative problem solving to the team itself. Under the visionary leadership paradigm, the transformational leadership theory outlines specific approaches, which facilitate creative work. Specifically, a leader's focus on individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation may encourage creative behaviors among followers. Further, translation of vision into concrete project-level missions (often through participatory approaches) and performance expectations can strengthen creative work. Planning and sense making here refer to clarifying goals, defining broad work parameters, providing feedback, facilitating joint problem solving among diverse individuals, and helping employees make sense out of complexity and uncertainty. Finally, social skills are crucial to leading innovation for a number of reasons. Firstly, these skills are important because this work often requires dealing with diverse constituents and there's a need to communicate, coordinate, and appraise the work. Secondly, these skills are essential for leaders to be persuasive across organizational boundaries to negotiate for resources and sell the innovative ideas so that they may be implemented.

The second broad framework comes from a more-recent work by Hunter and Cushenbery (2011). They offered an important integrative framework to articulate how leadership processes facilitate innovation. They argued that there are two categories of leadership factors, which influence creativity and innovation in organizational settings. They labeled them as direct and indirect leadership influence processes. The category of direct influences includes creative input and ideas suggestions, vision and strategy, resource allocation, and decision-making. Indirect influences comprise role modeling, rewards and recognition, hiring and team composition, and creating a climate of creativity. These two broad influence sets are integrated with a multi-level perspective on organizational work. Specifically, the authors assert that the leadership influences organizational work at individual, team, and organizational levels. It facilitates ideas generation at individual level, the

refinement of ideas within a team setting and, finally, their implementation at the organizational level (Hunter & Cushenbery, 2011).

In a recent meta-analytic review of leadership—innovation relationship, Rosing, Frese, and Bausch (2011), argued that research in this area did not fully capture the complex nature of innovation processes. Building on emerging literature on ambidexterity in organizations, Rosing et al. (2011) argued that innovation demands creativity (exploration) and implementation (exploitation) as well as an ability to be flexible to switch between these two tasks. Based on these foundational ideas, the authors proposed a theory of ambidextrous leadership (leadership for innovation) that specifies two complementary sets of leader behavior that facilitate exploration and exploitation in individuals and teams. In addition to the focus on these two broad leadership innovation behaviors, the authors asserted that these behaviors could not always be practiced separately and sequentially. In other words, at times it is essential to be flexible and alternate between the two behaviors as needed. Specifically, ambidextrous leadership has the following comprehensive components: (a) opening leader behaviors that facilitate exploration, (b) closing leader behaviors that facilitate exploitation, (c) and the temporal flexibility to switch between both based on situational needs. Opening behaviors here refer to behaviors that encourage variety of thoughts, risk taking, experimentation, and learning from mistakes among followers. Closing behaviors include narrowing focus, setting guidelines, streamlining, and monitoring progress towards results.

A number of important leadership factors are common across these frameworks, including innovation strategy, teamwork, team development, experimentation, use of technology, and innovation management. The strategy, teamwork, and experimentation behaviors fall more under the opening (explorative) behaviors whereas the innovation management behaviors fit more under the closing (exploitative) leadership behaviors. The two broad categories of explorative and exploitative behaviors are linked and overlapping in some ways. Therefore, some of the specific behaviors, actions, and approaches described under the two categories do not always fit fully within one of the categories. For example, teamwork behaviors are explorative in nature because they encourage collective creativity. However, teamwork as a process and structural arrangement needs to be managed carefully and thus parts of it fall under the exploitative work. In the sections below I discuss in detail the areas of innovation strategy, teamwork and team development, experimentation, and use of technology and innovation management. In addition, I provide insights and recommendations to strengthen the innovation leadership through the emerging fields of design thinking and technology.

Innovation Strategy

The work of innovation strategy clearly falls under vision- and mission-related components of innovative leadership described above. The importance of strategy also came out in some of the other leadership models described earlier. In his recent

article, Gary Pisano provides a useful way to focus on organizations' innovative strategies (Pisano, 2015). In this section, I introduce his model and then demonstrate its application to the social sector using case examples from some of the leading social sector innovators. Pisano argues that a major reason behind the failure of many innovations is the absence of a clear innovation strategy. An effective innovation strategy is aligned to the overall organizational strategy. Pisano (2015) asserts that to successfully navigate through the innovation maze from a strategic perspective, organizations make choices in terms of their focus on two dimensions namely technological innovation and business model innovation. To offer more specific guidance in this regard he articulated "The Innovation Landscape Map." The map puts the business model innovation on the X-axis and the technology innovations on the Y-axis. While these dimensions exist on a continuum, the framework offers four quadrants or innovation typologies. Innovations that fit the existing business model and technological competencies, Pisano labels them as routine innovations and they fall under the left hand lower quadrant of his innovation map. When an NGO makes improvements to its agricultural input service programs without significant changes to the business model and technology, these changes may be labeled as routine innovations. Disruptive Innovation on the other hand is based on a new business model but not necessarily new technology and sits in the upper left-hand side of the innovation map. An innovation, primarily driven by technological change is labeled as radical innovation and is positioned in the lower right hand corner of the innovation map. When Professor Yunus, the Nobel Laureate from Bangladesh, established his micro-finance banking to give credit access to poor women and vulnerable groups, he introduced a new business model, which required social collateral instead of a personal economic one to provide loans. This innovation largely sits under the disruptive innovation quadrant. On the other hand, Kiva – also an international micro-finance institution, established a web-based technology platform to connect lenders and borrowers in ways that were not possible before. Its innovation mostly falls under the radical innovation quadrant.

Under an innovation strategy where organizations pursue technological and business model innovations simultaneously, Pisano labels them as architectural innovations and they fall under the upper right-hand corner of his innovation map. The Aravind Eye Care system from India offers a good example of this innovation type. The first Aravind Eye Hospital was established in the early 1990s with a mission of providing affordable access to cataract surgery. Close to 22 million poor Indians were blind or nearly blind because they could not pay for simple cataract procedures. Aravind pursued a two-pronged innovation strategy. In terms of technology and operations, it developed an assembly line approach to increase the speed, efficiency, and quality of cataract operations. Its business model had multiple creative components. Firstly, it incorporated a multi-tiered cross-subsidy pricing system, which meant that the treatment fee depended on people's ability to pay and those who could not afford to pay a fee received free treatment. Secondly, the business model included access to different types of lenses and recovery rooms. While these factors did not impact the quality of cataract

procedure, they did allow Aravind to increase its revenue by attracting high-paying customers through these options to make the cross subsidy model work. The combination of these innovation strategies puts Aravind's work under the architectural innovation category.

As noted above, innovation strategy must align with the overall organizational strategy. This means that the focus and mix of innovation strategies will sustain and change in line with the overall strategic priorities. For example, an international NGO working in the child well-being arena continues to work with routine innovation in its business model. This approach may mean continuing its original business model of funding primarily through child sponsorship but with some additional grants and earned income opportunities not included in the original business model. However, in response to increasing calls for accountability and demonstrating impact, it may employ sophisticated technology to improve its monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach. In this case then this INGO is pursuing a combination of routine and radical innovation in response to its current strategic demands.

Teamwork and Team Development

Effective teamwork is an important practice that facilitates innovation and its implementation in organizations. Multiple streams of leadership research findings and theories attest to the importance of the role that teams play and provide a set of useful insights related to strengthening teamwork and their innovative contributions. In this section I include considerations and strategies leaders may use to strengthen teamwork to facilitate innovation. The set includes considerations in team formation and composition, diversity, coaching, and delegation of work.

Mumford et al. (2002) articulated the importance of creating and leading diverse teams to facilitate creative work. Summarizing previous research, they offered some specific strategies in this regard. These actions included: (a) based on team assignments and mandates, bringing together members with complementary but different technical orientations; (b) limiting the time frame that certain team members can work together to deal with loss of diversity resulting from cohesion over time; and (c) induction of alternative skill sets to encourage creative thinking.

Hunter and Cushenbery (2011), under their indirect leadership behaviors that promote creativity, labeled hiring and team composition as an integral component of their leadership for innovation model. These authors emphasized two important factors in relation to organizing teamwork for innovation. The factors included individuals' background and team size. In terms of background, as observed above, diversity in experiences and skill sets of the members, along with representation of marketing and sales functions were important. For social sector organizations, this means bringing together staff from different disciplines and programmatic areas. This also means teaming up professional and technical experts with departmental representatives from fundraising, communications, finance etc. The authors further

argued that the optimal team size is four-to-seven individuals. For simpler or more complex tasks, the size may be slightly smaller or bigger respectively as needed. Pact is an international development organizations headquartered in the Washington, DC area. To promote innovative practices throughout the organization, Pact formed a team of individuals dedicated to this function and gave it a separate identity called Pact Institute.

Coaching plays an important role in team development and team's ability to innovate and implement creative ideas. In an important study on this relationship with 97 work teams, Rousseau, Aubé, and Tremblay (2013) found a positive relationship between team coaching and teams' ability to be innovative. Citing Hackman and Wageman (2005), this study defined team coaching as "direct interaction with a team intended to help members make coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work" (p. 269). Specifically, the findings demonstrated that leaders use team-coaching interventions to strengthen their team's goal commitment and support for innovation, which in turn facilitate innovative work. In other words, this study indicates that leaders use both motivational (focus on goal commitment) and behavioral (focus on creative ideas and their implementation) mechanisms to encourage innovative work in teams.

Mumford et al. (2002) proposed that leaders of creative groups may delegate expertise and technical leadership responsibilities to teams especially under circumstances where they lack these specific competencies. Such is the case in many situations where deep expertise may be represented among teams and units and the leader may bring general leadership experiences with him/her. A dean's or a provost's position in academia is a good example of this dynamic. She/he may come from the industry or may have expertise in a particular discipline (e.g., finance) with little depth in a variety of other areas (e.g., organizational behavior, anthropology, history). Or consider a public health professional with an in-depth expertise in nutrition becoming in charge of a public health unit, which may include team members and professionals in areas of psychology, community health, environmental health, midwifery etc. The new leader in this case may indeed have the leadership ability necessary to be successful but she/he will definitely have to rely on the expertise of multiple disciplines represented within the larger field of public health management. These examples clearly imply that developing a team-oriented climate characterized by consultation, collaboration, and delegation of work will be critical for success in such contexts.

Experimentation

The enormity of current social problems around us indeed pushes leadership towards urgent innovations and solutions with scalability potential. But innovations, which are not fully tested, may be costly and damaging. In relation to innovation, Thomke and Manzi (2014) observed that, "…most managers must operate in a world where they lack sufficient data to inform the decisions.

Consequently, they often rely on their experience or intuition. But ideas that are truly innovative—that is, those that can reshape industries—typically go against the grain of executive experience and conventional wisdom" (pp. 71–72). Based on the collective experience of about forty years, these authors argue that most organizations are reluctant to invest in rigorous experiments and find it difficult to implement such testing. However, absence of using experiments, pilots, and test programs can make innovation costly and discourage it.

Thomke and Manzi (2014) offered a five-step approach to encourage and implement experimentation in organizational settings. These steps include: (a) establishing of a clear purpose, (b) buying-in of key stakeholders, (c) ascertaining the feasibility, (d) ensuring reliability of results, and (e) determining the value contribution. Most of these steps seem straightforward. However, it may be helpful to elaborate upon the feasibility and value contribution components. Ascertaining the feasibility is really about answering the question is the experiment doable? An important purpose of experimentation is to determine cause-and-effect relationships. The complexity and variety of variables and the changing nature of environment may make it difficult to isolate variables of interest in the social sector work. Further, obtaining the right sample size may be challenging due to issues of access, vulnerability, and cost. Regarding value contribution, the results and findings of the experiments need careful scrutiny before determining their suitability in terms of impact group, geography, and wider stakeholders. Consider a pilot program that is implemented to determine the key components and activities of an educational initiative aimed at increasing access to girls' elementary education in impoverished communities in three different Ethiopian districts. In addition to providing school infrastructure and trained teachers, the pilot program may entail transport provision, nutrition, and health components. The results of this pilot must be analyzed carefully to decide which components add the most value across the three sample districts. For example, it is possible that the transport facility may be critical in one representative district due to sociocultural norms and may add little or no value for members of another district. This simple example demonstrates the importance of critical analysis of results from experiments to determine their relevance for wider populations and scaling up.

In a recent effort, UNICEF collaborated with SEWA—a well-known Indian social sector organization focusing on women's rights and livelihoods, to pilot test two cash transfers programs in the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh. The purpose of the two pilot projects was to identify the effects of cash grants on individuals, households, family behavior, attitudes, as well as on community development. In one of the pilots, eight villages received the cash grants and about twelve villages did not. A modified version of the Randomized Control Trial (RCT) methodology was used to evaluate the pilot's results. To examine the role and impact of an advocacy organization, 50 % of all villages were those in which SEWA was present. The impact of the intervention was examined by comparing what happened in the various villages. The pilot process included a baseline survey, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, and a post evaluation and included 89 case studies and an extensive community survey. It examined the pilot programs impact on financial

inclusion, health, sanitation, nutrition, and education. This experimental initiative provides another example of a rigorous and comprehensive experiment that can generate a lot of insights, guidance, and concrete ways to direct and implement innovative thinking.

Employing Technology

Technology evolution and developments, especially over the last thirty years, have revolutionized how we live and work. Impact of these developments is enormously felt at community, organizational, societal, and global levels. Human activity ranging from agriculture, health, education, manufacturing, to humanitarian action are increasingly encountering technology-related opportunities and challenges. The social sector is beginning to see the technology potential and innovators in the field demonstrate the great potential the technology holds in facilitating innovative work. In this section, I build on the discussion above on use of technology in relation to innovation strategy. I describe how technology may be used by social sector organizations in a variety of ways ranging from its integration into organizations' "business" model, increasing operational efficiency, to strengthening of financing mechanisms.

The emerging field of "microwork" also offers an insightful example of innovative technology deployment. Samasource, a San Francisco-based social enterprise is doing pioneer work in this regard. Basically, Samsource works with some of the largest corporations in Europe and the US and outsources their digital tasks in manageable segments (micro projects) to small teams of individuals predominantly in developing countries. According to Gino and Staats (2012), "a small but growing industry known as 'impact sourcing' is addressing that need head-on by hiring people at the bottom of the pyramid to perform digital tasks such as transcribing audio files and editing product databases. Essentially, it's business process outsourcing aimed at boosting economic development" (p. 92). Samacourse is leveraging technology in two critical ways. Firstly, the business model largely relies on the technology itself in terms of the products and services. Secondly, to enhance operational efficiency and excellence, Samasource developed its own technology platform called SamaHub to automate training, workflow, and quality assurance (Gino & Staats, 2012).

Kiva is a nonprofit organization committed to eradicating poverty by providing easy access to lending. Since its inception in 2005, it has provided loans to more than 1.3 million borrowers in 83 countries. The total lending has exceeded 800 million dollars with a repayment rate of more than 98 %. Use of Internet-based technology is integral to Kiva's business model. Specifically, Kiva's website acts as a platform to connect borrowers around the world with individual lenders. The lenders can loan $25 or more with the option of either re-lending or taking their

money back. With the help of its field partners, Kiva identifies and works with deserving borrowers. This simple but creative use of technology allowed Kiva to connect borrowers and lenders in ways that were not possible before and helped create a highly effective and impactful organization. Kiva is a good example of how to leverage technology for innovation in a variety of ways including business model integration, operational efficiency, and financing.

Managing Innovation

In the three key leadership frameworks outlined above, it was clear that leadership plays an important role in directing and guiding thoughtful implementation of creative ideas. One of the frameworks used the umbrella term "exploitative" actions to describe this role. Basically, the implementation related actions and approaches fall under the management of innovation. In the section below, I synthesize steps and approaches, which support and strengthen management of innovation. It is important to note that some of these practices cannot be neatly categorized under *leading* or *managing* innovation. For example, different parts of strategic work fall either under leading or managing innovation. Strategic thinking and overall innovation strategy formulation falls under the work of leading innovation as described above. Implementation of innovation strategy, as I describe below, is an important element of managing innovation. Similarly, the discussion above that focused on use of experiments also touched upon behaviors and actions, which may fall under the leading and managing innovation categories. For example, consider again the five-step approach to experimentation by Thomke and Manzi (2014). Their first step of establishing a clear purpose falls under the leading innovation arena and their third step of ensuring reliability of results is more management focused. The discussion below is not meant to provide an exclusive list of behaviors and actions to manage innovation. My purpose here is to introduce a practice-based framework, which will emphasize and add to the managing innovation ideas already covered above.

Harper and Becker (2004) studied five innovative companies and documented their practices, which facilitate innovative work. They reported that the best practices among these organizations fell under three areas namely structure, process, and people. I describe these practices below and link them to relevant evidence from the social sector organizations.

Structure: Structural practices began with the incorporation of innovation and organizational strategy. These organizations included some form of an innovation committee with representation across different functional units with the mandate to discuss and review ideas. They also held annual or bi-annual summits to engage organization wide stakeholders with innovation leaders to encourage brainstorming and creativity. Physical spaces were also configured in a way to bring together

technical, marketing, and other disciplines to work together. Along similar lines, third-party providers have created innovation spaces to perform a similar function for startups and small entities, especially in the social sector. For example, Center for Social Innovation has multiple branches across North America including presence in New York City and Toronto. In addition, the organizations in this study used acquisitions to find products or services complementing their existing portfolios. Social sector organizations, on the other hand, increasingly use network of national and local partners with complementary missions to deliver on their innovation strategies.

Process: In terms of approaches to process, the organizations in this study required their ideas to go through high-level concept testing process before the committee review described above. The concept testing included such activities as focus groups, pilot programs, and environmental scans. Some of these activities were discussed under the experimentation section above describing the leading innovation practices. This notion reinforces the earlier observation that some of these approaches and practices do not fully fit under the leading or managing buckets. Another process step included development of metrics for the innovation processes to monitor and track performance at multiple levels. These organizations also regularly brought in outside experts to learn the business and then brainstorm creative ways of approaching existing work. To encourage similar behaviors, social sector organizations have hired staff from the private sector to diversify their talent pool and have utilized services from third-party providers to encourage out-of-the-box thinking. For example, a design focused firm called IDEO, works with social sector entities to encourage innovation, using design thinking principles. I discuss this approach in detail below. Use of small pools of funding to encourage and reward creativity has also gained popularity among organizations in multiple sectors. Pact, an international nongovernmental organization has recently implemented such a program to encourage innovative thinking across its programmatic work in over twenty countries.

People: The focal organizations assigned dedicated individuals with full-time responsibility to guide the innovation processes. Another people-oriented practice included rotation of individuals in executive positions across different business units and divisions to facilitate learning and awareness. Assigning and enabling individuals to work in teams to support innovation was another commonality across the organizations in this study. While this was discussed in detail under the leading innovation section, teamwork is an important structural and people-centered component and, therefore, is important from the managing innovation perspective. Additionally, the majority of the employees in these organizations gave 15 % of their work time to identify and explore creative ideas. Another important people-focused practice was ongoing investments by these organizations in their employees' continuous training, education, and participation in conferences to keep them at the cutting-edge (Harper & Becker, 2004).

Human-Centered Design

Human-centered design has received quite a bit of attention over the last several years as a way to lead and manage innovation, especially in complex settings and environments. In this section, I introduce the concepts of design thinking and human-centered design approaches. In addition, I also share a list of methods to effectively employ design thinking along with some considerations to implement design-led innovations effectively.

The roots of the term design thinking go back to the work and ideas of David Kelly, who designed the first mouse for Apple computers and is also the founder of Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design. He observed that when people approached him to explain design, he would end up including the term thinking in his response since that's what designers do according to him (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). Design work has traditionally focused on how a product looks and its functionality. However, the design perspective has expanded extensively and now covers a wide range of angles concerning a product or service. In particular, in the current design work the human needs and experience take center stage. In addition to fundamental human needs as drivers of design innovation, human access, preferences, and environmental and cultural context are seen as key considerations. This expanded view of design work is what Kelly and others have labeled as design thinking. For-profit sector has used design thinking successfully over the last several decades. However, the social sector has a strong tradition of employing human-centered approaches in a variety of fields ranging from poverty alleviation to health improvements. For example, Yunus' work mentioned above on microcredit was concerned with giving credit access to extremely poor women in Bangladesh. His attention to their specific needs and context ultimately led him to innovate and revolutionize the field of banking through microcredit schemes around the world.

The human-centered design methodology I outline here is based on the work done by Luma Institute, a Pittsburgh-based organization which identifies itself as a global education company that teaches people how to be more innovative by applying the discipline of human-centered design. Their approach was published in a recent issue of *Harvard Business Review* (Luma Institute, 2014). They have developed 36 specific methods, which fall under three categories and are further divided into subcategories. Luma's three main categories include: (a) looking (observing human experience), (b) understanding (analyzing challenges and opportunities), and (c) making (envisioning future possibilities).

Under *looking*, their three subcategories include skill areas, namely, ethnographic research, participatory research, and evaluative research. These skill areas broadly correspond with studying human behavior, learning from people by letting them express themselves, and assessing the usefulness and usability of products and processes. Under *understanding*, Luma includes three subcategories of people and systems, patterns and priorities, and problem framing. People and systems focus on synthesizing insights about people, places, and things to create new value; patterns and priorities deal with identifying relationships to determine what is relevant and

important; and the purpose of problem framing is present the situation differently so that innovative solutions can be generated.

Their final broad category of *making* entails concept ideation, modeling and prototyping and design rationale. Concept ideation allows exploring a variety of possibilities; modeling and prototyping are used to combat risk aversion through methods such as storyboarding and schematic diagraming; and design rationale facilitates ways to convey the concepts full potential to encourage participants to take the needed steps so that the ideas may flourish. Some of the specific techniques under the design rationale may include developing the concept poster or a quick reference guide. A complete list of the 36 methods are available on Luma's website and the *Harvard Business Review* article mentioned above. It is not necessary to use all the 36 methods to design and implement innovations. However, Luma recommends that at least one method from at least two categories be applied. For large and complex scenarios for innovation, a bigger number of specific methods from all three categories are recommended (Luma Institute, 2014).

Another approach to design thinking that leaders may promote and use comes from the work of a firm called IDEO that I mentioned above. IDEO has used human-centered design thinking to help improve and innovate a variety of organizations across multiple sectors. In 2005, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation approached IDEO to document its human-centered design processes so that their approach may be used by social sector organizations. IDEO designers worked with Heifer Project International and The International Center for Research on Women and International Development Enterprises to understand their processes for developing new products programs and services. The learning from this exercise was integrated with IDEO's own work to develop a toolkit to help organizations implement human-centered design methods. This approach documented in this toolkit is grounded in a system of three overlapping spaces namely inspiration, ideation, and implementation. *Inspiration* deals with the issue or opportunity behind the search for innovation; *ideation* involves the process of generating, developing, and prototyping ideas; and *implementation* focuses on how to move prototypes into products and services (Brown & Wyatt, 2015).

The two approaches described above are complementary and may be used separately or in conjunction with each other. There are two reasons why I have devoted a section to human-centered design. Firstly, this is an emerging field and offers a creative approach to encouraging and pursuing innovations in a variety of sectors including the social sector. Secondly, it offers an integrative platform to leaders to combine elements of explorative and exploitative approaches described above.

Some Final Considerations

This chapter demonstrates the complexities of leading innovative work along with some of the tensions that leaders need to manage in order to balance the encouraging, nurturing, implementing, and monitoring requirements. I conclude

with a few final considerations that complement and add to the research, practice-based evidence, and organizational cases about successful leadership of innovative work.

Innovation Zones

In relation to some of the approaches and practices above, leaders may ask the following questions: How do you ensure continuous innovation? How do you structure a team? Where do you house your experiments? How do you embrace design thinking? In addition to some of the ways and examples discussed above, the answer may also lie in what Tom Koulopoulos, founder of the Delphi Group, calls creation of innovation zones. He described innovation zone as, "…an institutionalized space where ideas can take root in fertile soil, protected from the elements and from organizational antibodies just long enough to demonstrate their value… The last thing you can afford is to let good ideas, no matter how small or different, bleed out of your organization…" (Koulopoulos, 2009, p. 53). The author's advice really focuses on providing protected space where ideas may be shared for feedback, refinement, and implementation.

Collaborative Learning

Learning which facilitates innovation should go beyond systematic approaches covered under the experimentation section above. In particular, learning from peer organizations and "comparators" outside the organizational boundaries could provide important insights. Mercy Corps has invested heavily in its learning efforts to capture and share learning from a variety of internal and external sources. Social sector is increasingly recognizing the importance of collaboration to tackle some of the pressing problems of our time. Consider for example the big ten players working on children's well-being around the world, including World Vision, Save the Children, ChildFund International, and Plan International. These entities are doing impressive work and have achieved many milestones in their respective programs. However, millions of children are still waiting to receive services that help improve their human conditions. Collaborative learning is one way for these institutions to increase the effectiveness, scale, and overall impact of their programs. However, learning from peers must be considered thoughtfully. Importing ideas from other organizations about innovation management may be problematic if implemented without critical consideration. Birkinshaw (2014) argues that distilling the key principles behind "comparators" innovations is important if organizations want to identify the appropriate innovations and ways to adapt them.

Leadership Development

This chapter is based on the premise that leadership plays an integral and critical role in encouraging and implementing innovations in organizational settings. Therefore, well thought out and systematic efforts are needed to ensure that the right kind of leadership is cultivated and maintained at different organizational levels. Bubb (2010) identified leadership development as an important investment to facilitate innovative work in organizational settings. He argued that these developmental initiatives should include senior leaders, staff, and volunteers of social sector organizations. Creativity requires out-of-the-box, imagination, confidence, and knowledge of the cutting-edge developments.

Bubb (2010) asserted that systematic developmental opportunities facilitate these characteristics and behaviors. His list of recommendations included not only formal training and workshop opportunities, but also activities such as coaching, mentoring, shadowing site visits, and learning from mistakes. These activities may be both individual- and team-focused. Mercy Corps has invested in two important leadership development programs. The goal of these programs is to help Mercy Corps develop internal leadership talent to serve its programs at the country, regional, and headquarters levels. Among other leadership competencies, the curriculum emphasizes innovative and entrepreneurial skills.

I conclude this chapter with a couple of reminders and cautions. I have used the terms leaders and leadership somewhat interchangeably in the context of innovative work. This usage deserves attention for two reasons. Firstly, while it is often the case that a single individual may lead innovative work (at least initially) at the senior or another level in an organization, it is also often true that this leadership may be informally shared or occurs through teams as discussed above.

As stated in the opening paragraphs, I have attempted to explore, integrate, and synthesize evidence-based knowledge using rigorous research over the last fifteen years along with organizational cases with some demonstrated achievement and impact. However, I offer two caveats in this regard. Some of the frameworks discussed above are based on rigorous theory building and testing, therefore, they must not be treated as absolute science and will not apply uniformly everywhere. Similarly, the context of some of the successful cases and organizational examples shared may not translate effectively or easily to other cultural, political, and economic environments.

Finally, innovation assumes boldness, out-of-the-box thinking, and a commitment to continuous improvement. This also means that those who embrace innovation take risk on their and their team's, organization's and key stakeholders' behalf. In the social sector, as discussed in the experimentation section above, the stakeholders often include vulnerable populations. This is an important ethical consideration that leaders must attend to very thoughtfully.

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Chapter 3
Lessons from Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank: Leading Long-Term Organizational Change Successfully

Katharine Esty

> There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.
>
> — Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince (1532)*

I was wowed, mesmerized, bowled over when I first met Muhammad Yunus in 1993. Here was a person who was dedicating his life to eliminating poverty. He had been able transform a small experimental project to lend money to the poorest of the poor into a huge and thriving bank, the Grameen Bank. In 1993 the Bank already had millions of women borrowers across rural Bangladesh. His model of small loans to the poor, or microcredit, was so successful that people came from all over the world to sit at the feet of the Bangladeshi banker and learn from him. In 2006, Yunus achieved worldwide recognition for his leadership of the Bank when he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yunus successfully led the Bank for many years, from 1981 until 2014. It was then that a Prime Minister took control of the Bank. His tenure of thirty-three years at Grameen Bank was a remarkable and unusual example of a single person successfully leading an organization for more than three decades. This article explores what can be learned about leading long-term change from his story.

I began conducting research on the leadership of Muhammad Yunus in 2009. I read Yunus' four books and what had been written in English about the Grameen Bank. I also familiarized myself with many of the current articles on microcredit and microfinance. When I revisited Bangladesh in January of 2010, I interviewed Yunus twice, for two hours each time. While there, I also talked with many others who knew Yunus in various capacities—people who worked at Grameen, two of his brothers, and an editor of the English newspaper. I had several other conver-

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sations with Yunus in the next two years here in the states. I also interviewed twelve people here in the US who worked with Yunus at various periods of his long career.

Most of what has been written about organizational change is about short-term change: a new program, a merger or a restructuring effort. Less attention has been given to what is necessary to lead change successfully over the long haul. It makes sense that just as a marathon requires quite different skills and abilities than a sprint, so leading long-term change must require a somewhat different skills-set and abilities than leading a change project or program with a one or two-year time frame.

From my research, and supported by the knowledge I gained from thirty years as an organizational consultant, I identified eight key factors that undergird the successful leadership of Yunus at the Grameen Bank. In this article, I compare and contrast what I have identified as Yunus' model of leadership with two other models of successful change—John Kotter's and Rosabeth Kanter's. I conclude with some preliminary thoughts about how leading successful long-term change differs from leading more time-limited change efforts.

The Leadership of Muhammad Yunus

In the 1972, Yunus returned to Bangladesh after eight years as a student and professor in the US and became a professor of economics. He had no intentions of becoming a banker. Bangladesh had been devastated by its War of Liberation and the famine that followed shortly thereafter. In his autobiography and again in an interview with me, Yunus has told how the faces of silent starving people haunted him and his economic theories seemed like fairytales, totally useless (Yunus, 1999 and interview with author). He wanted desperately to be helpful. In the nearby village of Jobra, he set up a cooperative with farmers and landowners to grow rice more efficiently. The yield at the end of the season was high, but he discovered the farmers had robbed him of his share of the profits.

Seeking another way to help the poor, Yunus took groups of his students and colleagues for numerous field trips to Jobra to learn about poverty. One day he lent some small amounts of money, less than twenty-seven dollars in all, to forty-two impoverished villagers. To his surprise, they paid him back. He discovered over the next months and years that not only did the poor pay back their loans even without any collateral, but also they paid back at rates far higher than the 60 % rate that was typical of commercial banks. This was the defining moment for Yunus (1999, p. 50). He had found a practical way to help.

Ending poverty became his life purpose and the guiding vision for his organization. It was a compelling vision that motivated employees day to day and grand enough to inspire them for decades. What sets Yunus apart from many other leaders is how many years this same vision guided him. Day after day, decade after decade, he has struggled relentlessly and single-mindedly against all kinds of obstacles and challenges to bring his dream into reality.

As Yunus began lending to more and more people, he saw the need to grow his organization and develop new structures. His colleagues and students evolved over the years into his staff and his management team. When I interviewed a number of the highest level executives at the Grameen Bank in Dhaka, I found that most of them had been with Yunus for years, many going back to the times of those very first loans in Jobra. Yunus created a team loyal to him and they stayed with him for decades. His second in command, Dipal Barua, and the heir apparent for many years, left the Bank in 2009. I was told he had appeared too eager for Yunus to retire and he was edged out.

The early years of lending money were rocky. In spite of Yunus' impressive results, none of the bankers in the region would help Yunus expand his experimental project. They just did not believe Yunus' reports or his numbers. Eventually, in 1983, after years of negotiating with skeptical bankers and haggling with reluctant government officials, the Bangladesh government recognized his organization, now called the Grameen (village) Bank as an independent bank.

Although pilot projects usually flounder when they are taken to scale, Yunus was able to expand his bank steadily throughout all of rural Bangladesh. In 1983, when the Grameen Bank became an independent entity, it had 86 branches and 58,000 borrowers; by 2014 there were 2,800 branches and more than eight million borrowers, mostly all impoverished women. Yunus knew how to get the resources he needed to fund this growth. During the 1980's and up until 1995, international aid agencies granted Yunus more than 35 million dollars to help his bank expand and move towards self-sufficiency. After 1995, the Bank was able to thrive without grants or outside help.

Yunus was an innovator. He turned conventional banking practices completely upside down. Locating his branches in remote villages, he brought the bank to the people rather making them travel to the larger towns and cities. He lent to the poor without asking for any collateral, something which was unheard of. When he observed that women used their loans to improve the situation of their family more often than men did, he began to focus on lending to women. When he started out, only two percent of bank borrowers in Bangladesh were women. Yunus succeeded in attracting women to the Bank so that by 2014, 98 percent of the borrowers were women.

Other banks lent to individuals. Yunus, on the other hand, required borrowers at Grameen to participate in a peer support group. He insisted that they use their loans for a small business. At first Yunus thought all the borrowers in a group should be in the same kind of business. From trial and error, Yunus learned that groups of five, composed of people in different kinds of businesses, worked better than larger groups. In the early years, the group members acted as support to each other in time of financial difficulty. While groups continued to exist in 2014, in the last decade, there has been far more flexibility. Not every borrower was in a group.

Yunus promoted societal and cultural change as well as organizational change. His overarching goal was always the alleviation of poverty but he was ready to challenge cultural traditions when they stood in the way. In the 1980's, women in Bangladeshi villages spent their lives in the confines of their family compounds and

many had never even touched money. As he explained to me, Yunus had come to understand that transformative change was possible from living through the late 1960s in the US. While a student at Vanderbilt, he participated in the Civil Rights Movement and took part in protests against the war in Viet Nam. He had observed young people trying to transform their society and succeeding in some measure (interview with author).

At the Bank, Yunus created a new culture that would support his overarching goal. He used the weekly meetings that all borrowers attended and the Sixteen Decisions, a list of agreements that all borrowers had to agree to follow to forge the new culture. The Sixteen Decisions asked borrowers to significantly modify their traditional ways of living and went far beyond the sphere of regulation of other banks. For example, borrowers had to agree to keep their families small, build latrines, grow more vegetables, send their children to school, and give up the practice of dowries when their children got married. While some of these changes were actually impractical for most poor village women, they influenced the behavior of many. Just going to a weekly meeting outside their family compound, was a stunning break with traditional life for women. There they met other women, had time to socialize a bit, and learned from others how to manage their businesses and their families.

While in the USA, Yunus had also been impressed by the participative management style compared to the more authoritarian style that prevailed in Bangladesh. At the Grameen Bank, he insisted on total operational transparency. To achieve this, he required lengthy narrative reports from every branch manager every month so he could keep his finger on the pulse of the organization and make any changes that were needed. He visited every branch himself until there were nearly a thousand branches. He was well aware of the necessity of good management systems and early on pushed for the development of computerized evaluation and monitoring systems. Even as the bank and its systems grew, most employees continued to see themselves working for the idolized Professor Yunus.

Yunus knew communication was critical for success (Bornstein, 1996). From the first years of the bank, he institutionalized the communication vehicles: internal and external newsletters, training programs, manager's meetings, and seminars for outside visitors. He stayed in constant communication with his managers, his borrowers, the general public and bankers from abroad. In recent years, Yunus still located his branches in remote villages, he brought the bank to the people rather making them travel to the larger towns and cities.

Yunus has told and retold the amazing story of Grameen in newsletters, speeches, articles, books, films and broadcasts until it has now has achieved mythic status. His speeches have always been rich with powerful metaphors and vivid anecdotes. He frequently talks about the time when our grandchildren will have to go to a museum to learn about poverty. Or how the poor are like a bonsai tree. As the pot prevents the seedling from a giant tree from growing, so their impoverished environment keeps the poor from reaching their full potential. For years, he has been the public voice, the promoter and advocate of microcredit as well as for his model and his bank.

In 2009, I heard him speak on a snowy night in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His plane from London was late and the eight o'clock speech began at 9:40 pm. Despite the long day of travel, his jet lag and the fact that for him it was two o'clock in the morning, a glowing Yunus leapt to the podium and launched into his speech with relish. And when it came time for questions, he was eager to talk until the last question from the last person was answered. Later on, during one of my interviews with Yunus, I asked him whether he ever got bored telling the same stories over and over. He just looked puzzled and shook his head.

While his vision of lifting the poor out of poverty has remained constant, Yunus changed his strategies and tactics many times. For example, he first wanted his organization to be a part of an existing commercial bank. Later he tried to become a part of a government bank, and finally, he decided Grameen should be a totally independent bank. Another example of shifting strategy was how he handled grants. After having accepted millions of dollars in grants, Yunus did an abrupt about-face in 1995. He announced he would no longer accept any aid at all in order to demonstrate that his Bank could be sustainable without aid.

Yunus frequently changed his short-term goals as well as his strategies and tactics. For example, the goals for the expansion of the Bank were revised often as were the goals for the percentage of borrowers who were women. Today there is a new system of rating each branch in terms of five goals such as having all the children of borrowers attending school.

For long-term change, it is clear that the priority cannot be on short-term wins. But, as Marshak has suggested (Marshak, 2008, p. 63), short-term wins are necessary to create momentum to ensure long-term survival. Yunus managed this paradox skillfully, pushing hard on some issues and biding his time on many others. Yunus was always aware of the big picture. This was especially true in dealing with the Bangladeshi government. He had lifelong mistrust of government, but he knew when to fight and when to accept half a loaf and wait patiently.

From the start, Yunus envisioned a culture of integrity, hard work, and simplicity for Grameen that would reflect his values and be in stark contrast to the lavish perks and corruption that were usual in Bangladesh (Esty, 2010). To accomplish this, he hired staff who were young and malleable and who cared about lifting the poor out of poverty. New staff underwent a long and intense training period living in remote villages away from their families. The pay was minimal.

Employees of Grameen have never been allowed to accept gifts—even something as small as a plum or glass of water. All offices at Grameen have always been bare. Managers have simple wooden tables rather than desks with drawers where papers can get put away and forgotten. Yunus himself has always lived very simply, sharing the life of sacrifice that he expected from his employees.

Following several years of extreme flooding in the last years of the 1990's, an increasing number of the Bank's borrowers began to default. By 2000, it was clear that the Grameen model of banking had become a straight jacket and restructuring was needed for the Bank to survive. Unlike many founders of companies, Yunus was able to adapt to these new circumstances. He was able to let go of the original Grameen model that had served him so well and oversee a participative process to

design a new model, Grameen II. Grameen II offered many new financial services such as savings plans and insurance that provided far more flexibility to the borrower.

Today, Yunus continues to live in a small apartment adjacent to the Bank even though he is no longer an employee of the Bank. In 2015, as the government continues to harass him, he has refocused his energies on developing social businesses in Bangladesh and in promoting social businesses in Europe and Asia. Grameen America is doing well and has a strong new CEO, Andrea Jung, former head of Avon. Yunus is now a grandfather.

It has not been all accolades and praise for Yunus. Over the years he has stirred up wave after wave of detractors both in Bangladesh and abroad. Among his critics have been journalists who sought to deflate the hype that surrounds him. Yunus has seemed to invite these criticisms by his exaggerated claims about the Bank, his way of simplifying complex issues and his hyperbolic language which is more like a politician's than a scholar's. Recently, several economists out of MIT's Poverty Action Lab have raised questions about the impact of microcredit in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Some of their studies have concluded that the effect of microcredit on poverty is weak if not nonexistent. Others have acknowledged that microcredit provides a necessary buffer during the inevitable crises that the poor face. At times, Yunus has offered a rebuttal to a critic as he did to Daniel Pearl's scathing appraisal of Grameen in The Wall Street Journal in 2002. In 2010, as an Indian microfinance institution, SKS, was getting a good deal of press for the huge profits investors have made from the IPO "initial public offering," Yunus once again took center stage. He denounced SKS saying, "Of course (microlenders) can serve the poor and make a huge profit. But I would not support it. That's what loan sharks have been doing over centuries" (The Times, 2010).

As I began my research I had wondered over and over if Yunus was too good to be true.

Now many years later, and after taking his critics as well as his admirers into account, I still see his accomplishment as remarkable. It is true that he often exaggerates his accomplishments and sometimes oversimplifies complicated issues. He does take credit for all he has done and a bit more. But these are minor frailties.

What is truly important is that Yunus changed the world. He was not the first one that came up with the idea of small loans to the poor, but he *was* the one who showed the world that they could work on a large scale. He was the one who demonstrated that the people at the bottom of the economic pyramid could be brought into the mainstream of financial services. And he was the one whose work at the Grameen Bank provided the major model and the impetus for a worldwide microcredit movement.

Yunus' achievements as an organizational developer and leader of change over the long-term are also extraordinary. He was able to take the Grameen Bank from a single branch and help it grow larger and larger, despite all the usual challenges of developing an organization over time and despite the ongoing natural calamities that plague Bangladesh. It may be helpful for all organizational practitioners to take

a closer look at how he was able to successfully develop and lead his organization over the long-term. From my research and analysis, I have identified eight factors that help us understand what made his long leadership tenure possible.

Lessons about Leading Long-Term Change from Muhammad Yunus

1. Set forth an inspiring vision and stick with it.
2. Innovate. Challenge the prevailing wisdom.
3. Build a team that owns the dream.
4. Communicate. Relentlessly communicate within and beyond the organization.
5. Be Flexible. Change strategies, goals, and tactics as needed.
6. Be patient and persevere. Sometimes you have to wait.
7. Embed your values into the organizational culture.
8. Brand yourself and your organization.

Yunus' Model Compared with John Kotter's and Rosabeth Moss Kanter's Change Models

For twenty years, as an organizational consultant, I often turned to the thinking of John Kotter and Rosabeth Moss Kanter for their insights on leading change. Kotter's eight step model for successful change efforts and Kanter's insights about the skills of change masters guided my consultations. I worked at Kanter's firm from 1984 to 1987 and during those years often facilitated workshops on change and gave the "Change Master" speech.

Interesting similarities and some interesting differences can be seen comparing and contrasting the factors that undergird Yunus' successful long-term leadership at Grameen with the models for change of Kotter and Kanter. I am using Kotter's eight factors from an article in *Leader to Leader* (Kotter, 1998, pp. 27–33), and Kanter's article, "The Enduring Skills of Change Leaders" (Kanter, 1999, pp. 3–7).

All three models agree on the importance of a developing an inspiring vision. But what is important and different in the Yunus model is the idea of the importance of sticking with the vision. A key factor in his success in my opinion was the way he held to his vision over the years. He did not change or modify it. All three models also believe building a team or guiding coalition is critical to success.

Yunus and Kotter both highlight embedding the new ways into the organization. Kotter's model, unlike the other two, calls for creating a sense of urgency and focusing on short-term wins and consolidating gains. In terms of leading short-term change, these priorities make sense. Yunus and Kanter agree on challenging the

Table 3.1 Comparing change approaches of Yunus, Kotter, and Kanter

Yunus	Kotter	Kanter
Create an inspiring vision and stick with it.	Develop a compelling vision.	Communicate aspiration/vision.
Innovate.	Communicate the vision.	Challenge prevailing wisdom.
Build a team that owns the dream.	Establish a sense of urgency.	Tune into the environment.
Communicate relentlessly.	Build a guiding coalition.	Build coalitions.
Be flexible.	Empower employees.	Transfer ownership to team.
Be patient and persevere.	Generate short-term wins.	Persevere.
Embed values in the culture.	Consolidate gains.	Make everyone a hero.
Brand yourself and the organization.	Anchor new approaches in the culture.	

prevailing wisdom and the importance of perseverance. Kanter uniquely focuses on tuning into the environment and recognition (Table 3.1).

Three of the lessons from Yunus differ from the other two models of change: flexibility, communication, and branding. First, flexibility: Yunus was willing to change strategies, tactics and goals over and over. While he never deviated from his vision, he was ready to change everything else as circumstances changed. He was guided by what worked, not theoretical concepts. Yunus was even willing to give up his own model when he reorganized and created Grameen II.

Secondly, the Yunus model places a priority on communication of all kinds in contrast to Kotter and Kanter who stress only the importance of communicating the vision. It seems today that there is never enough communication and Yunus understood that communication is a key lever of change. He developed many different kinds of mechanisms for internal communication that allowed for his values and his ways of working to reach the smallest village in Bangladesh.

Finally, branding: Yunus became the storyteller of his organization and microcredit. He also created himself into a global celebrity and has made the name of Grameen Bank known in the far corners of the world. His facile use of the media and his ability to create a compelling narrative about the bank and himself differentiates him from many other leaders. Of course, it is all the hype that envelops him that has spurred some people to criticize him. I believe, however, that his ability to create the brand is, perhaps, the most important factor in explaining how he has been able to continue to be a successful leader for so many years.

The leadership of Yunus can be taken as a starting point for creating a model for leading long-term change. The model presented in this paper builds on earlier models and many of its elements overlap the major points about successful change made by Kotter and Kanter. The study of Yunus broadens our understanding of leading long-term change successfully, however, by highlighting the importance of flexibility, communication, and branding as well as holding to the vision. For too

long we as organizational practitioners have limited our thinking about change to short-term change. We can improve our practice by raising questions about the long-term in all our comments and recommendations to clients. Yunus beckons us to a new frontier.

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Chapter 4
Social Entrepreneurship: A Call for Collective Action

Grace Davie

Social entrepreneurship is a thirty-year-old concept with a shifting and contested set of meanings. The term most often refers to someone who launches a for-profit or nonprofit venture with a social change agenda such as healthcare delivery or job creation. Perhaps the classic example is Muhammad Yunus who started the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Now a global business, it has given small loans to thousands of poor people, primarily women, previously thought to be bad credit risks.

Plan Puebla, the Highlander Research and Education Center, and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) have also been heralded as exemplars of social innovation. These organizations "focus explicitly on mobilizing existing assets of marginalized groups to improve their lives, rather than delivering outside resources and services" (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004, p. 270). As Bill Drayton told one interviewer, social entrepreneurs want to transform entire systems: "you give people fish, that's good. Help them to learn to fish, that's a little better. But changing the fishing industry, now that's where the real leverage is … that's where entrepreneurs comes in" (Bloomberg TV, 2009).

Social entrepreneurship has rightly been described as the latest fashion in international development (Fowler, 2000). It has made a mark on American foreign policy discussions. The Obama administration held a Summit on Entrepreneurship in 2009 intended to "highlight and support business and social entrepreneurship in Muslim majority countries" (Hightower, 2009). Philanthropies and donor organizations facing tightening budgets appear enthused about social entrepreneurship's market-friendly approach as opposed to those approaches said to create donor dependency. Some in the nonprofit world are touting social entrepreneurship as a "bold" career choice for idealistic youth seeking personal satisfaction in their work (Dorsey & Galinsky, 2006). Finally, social entrepreneurship is gaining a foothold

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on college campuses. Professors are challenging students to design creative solutions to the world's most pressing problems—from violence and inequality to human trafficking and environmental destruction.[1]

Social entrepreneurship presents great opportunities for higher education, international development, philanthropy, advocacy, and community organizing. Yet it also presents real dilemmas. Can social entrepreneurship live up to its proponents' greatest expectations? Will it secure lasting support from donors, corporate partners, and universities? How can educators ensure that their discussions with students about social transformation translate into excellent research and appropriate conduct in the field? What might the turn towards social entrepreneurship mean for ongoing social justice campaigns (especially those that emphasize grass-roots participation as opposed to individual initiatives)? How can this new field win over progressives suspicious of corporate-sounding words like "entrepreneur?" Do social entrepreneurship's assumptions about the power of business models to change the world overlook the critical role of civil society, not to mention the need to hold governments and corporations accountable (Edwards, 2010b)? And what is the message here about accommodation versus agitation? Are social entrepreneurs expected to cast down their proverbial buckets where they are in the harsh waters of privatization? More definition is needed about the endeavor's paramount aims. This essay argues that social entrepreneurs should rethink their relationship with collective action; that they should revisit old ideas while also looking for new ones; and that critical thought be given to the field's implicit assumptions about social innovation and markets.

What Is Social Entrepreneurship?

Most discussions of social entrepreneurship begin with Bill Drayton. As an assistant administrator at the United States Environmental Protection Agency in the 1970s and early 1980s, Drayton helped create the political conditions necessary for legislative action to limit air pollution. He then set out to find other strong-willed individuals working to transform dysfunctional systems. Drayton scoured the globe looking for people recognized by their peers as problem-solvers. In 1980, he established Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, a grantmaking organization that supports innovators and their pattern breaking solutions.

David Bornstein's *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (2004) compellingly describes Drayton and several remarkable recipients of Ashoka fellowships. Yet, the book also relies on a common trope in the mainstream literature: the social entrepreneur as a special type of person. They are described as passionate and imaginative, unwilling to wait for governments or

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[1]See Ashoka's Changemaker Campus initiative (www.ashoka.org/changemakercampus) and the Transformative Action Institute (www.transformativeaction.org).

corporations to act, and determined to realize their ideas despite all odds against them. Social entrepreneurs often say they "just can't stand" to see things the way they are. They become utterly possessed by their vision. As one Ashoka document explains, social entrepreneurs have a "committed vision and inexhaustible determination to persist until they have transformed an entire system" (Light, 2006).

Similarly, Gregory Dees defines the social entrepreneur as a "rare breed" (Dees, 1998, p. 6). They are "one species in the genus of entrepreneur. They are entrepreneurs with a social mission" (Dees, 1998, p. 3). Not just anyone, he suggests, should be able to self-identify as a "social entrepreneur." His definition "preserves their distinctive status and assures that social entrepreneurship will not be treated lightly." Dees's vaguely taxonomic language implies that the social entrepreneur's abilities are innate not learned; that gatekeepers are guarding the field; and that only individuals qualify as social entrepreneurs, not groups.

Paul Light has tried to broaden the definition of the social entrepreneur, warning that a narrow focus on the individual can produce a "cult of personality," such that worthy people and innovative organizations are refused needed support (2006). Light advises researchers and donors to keep an open mind by studying how social innovation happens instead of assuming it takes a rare breed. In other words, if we focus too much on the rugged individual we risk overlooking the importance of teachable skills, such as knowing how to mobilize public support for a proposal and how to get things done within organizations (Light, 2006, p. 48). And, if the field of social entrepreneurship forever fetishizes the new idea, the search for novelty will obscure the fact that meaningful social change might be achieved by securing the political will needed to implement ordinary good practice (2006, p. 49).

The early meanings of "entrepreneur" seem to haunt the term "social entrepreneur." In the early 1800s, Jean Baptiste Say first defined the entrepreneur as someone who embarks on a risk-strewn quest to create value (Say, 1803). In the early 1900s, Joseph Schumpeter expanded on this by emphasizing the entrepreneur's rarity as well as the newness of his ideas (Schumpeter, 1949). Martin and Osberg (2007) echo Say and Schumpter when they describe social entrepreneurs as few and far between. They have called for a "rigorous" (read "narrow") definition of social entrepreneurship. The social entrepreneur is someone who "creates a new stable equilibrium, one that provides meaningfully higher levels of satisfaction for the participants in the system … the entrepreneur engineers a permanent shift from a lower-quality equilibrium to a higher-quality one" (2007, p. 34). Using the creators of eBay as their example, they describe social entrepreneurs as creating "a powerful ecosystem that simply [can't] be dissembled." The "delta between the quality of the old equilibrium and the new one [is] huge" (2007, p. 34). Social entrepreneurs not only pursue their vision "relentlessly," they catalyze an irreversible reaction with a measurable "delta."

Debates about how to define the social entrepreneur are important insofar as they determine where this promising new field is going and under what size tent. Dees recommends an exclusive definition while Light calls for a more inclusive one. What both sides of this debate seem to ignore, however, are the neo-liberal assumptions underlying the paradigm. Whether one sees social entrepreneurs as a

rare breed of individuals adept at the mysterious arts of social alchemy, or whether one prefers a looser definition that includes organizations and individuals, the mainstream definitions presume that social entrepreneurs create "value" and that their ideas must find their place within markets. Moreover, the mainstream literature accepts the premise that even the best ideas for social change must be sellable. Social entrepreneurs are described as uniquely talented at winning converts, overcoming resistance, and producing demand for their innovations. (See Bornstein's profile of UNICEF's tireless child-health-care visionary, James P. Grant.) The mainstream literature alludes to the entanglements of culture, the dangers of political risk-taking, and the inheritances of history. Yet the drama always plays out on the stage of markets, which, however flexible, ultimately decide if the social entrepreneur's idea will take hold. It is not policies that must be changed or dogmas overturned but markets that must be discovered and exploited.

Critiques of Social Entrepreneurship

A few voices have expressed alarm about this and questioned what the turn to social entrepreneurship means for social justice movements, international development, governance, and the "global South." Writing from a NGO background, Alan Fowler contends that "civic innovation" offers a better development paradigm than social entrepreneurship. He presents civic innovation as authentic, since its inspiration comes from the public, while social entrepreneurs simply "commercialize their initiatives" (2000, p. 647):

> Civic innovation's focus is on popular engagement rather than enterprise, allied to a mobilization of resources from within the citizen base. It draws on relational life that people know and trust and takes this forward in new ways to deal with new problems in the dynamic context in which people live. (2000, p. 648)

Fowler sees social entrepreneurship as "strongly informed by the current 'privatization' climate in the North" (p. 645). Nongovernmental organizations are now expected to "generate value-added, not to create reform." They do not "produce social benefits, but services. They are working for 'clients' with needs, not constituencies with interests" (p. 643). Conversely, Fowler would like to see changes in "how the North works and behaves towards other economies and societies," something he implies social entrepreneurs cannot accomplish (p. 651).

Fowler's "North–South" language with its indirect allusion to colonialism immediately places his critique in tension with the mainstream literature's cheerier, can-do tone. Notably, he offers no practical specifics about how global North–South relations might be reformed (something promoters of social entrepreneurship would surely want to see spelled out). Nevertheless, his criticism of social entrepreneurship's willingness to go along with free-market principles and the decentralization of social welfare services, no matter what the problem at hand, is one worth taking seriously.

Health activist Paul Farmer has made a similar argument. Rather than calling for the empowerment of civil society, he calls on social entrepreneurs to join the social justice movement. Business models just don't apply everywhere, he says. It is disturbing that social entrepreneurs are lauded for doing what governments ought to do: "we live in an era in which simply seeking to provide high-quality medical care to the world's poorest is considered innovative and entrepreneurial" (2009, p. 23). Farmer confesses that this makes him "wince." The talk about "clients," "products," and "sustainability" perpetuates the idea that markets can solve all problems. The lingo of service delivery "can be used to deny the destitute access to goods and services that should be rights, not commodities" (p. 23).

Farmer also objects to social entrepreneurship's infatuation with the new. Training community health workers to prevent disease among the poor, for instance, is an old idea, he points out. In South Africa, community health workers were proven capable of making a major impact on public health as early as the 1940s. The problem was that advocates of community-based healthcare failed to secure adequate state support to make these health workers as effective as they could be. As Farmer reminds us, even with persistent lobbying, governments and other powerful interest groups often cannot be convinced to invest in needed social innovations unless put under pressure. The failure of community healthcare to take off when the idea was first proposed in South Africa means that extraordinary people like AIDS-home-care activist Veronica Khosa must now essentially reinvent the wheel (Bornstein, 2004).

The crux of Farmer's critique resides in a metaphor: the social justice bus. Proponents of social entrepreneurship need to get on the bus, he insists. Only the social justice movement can ensure that health care, jobs, food, water, education, and other things deemed essential to a life with dignity are treated, not as commodities, but as basic human rights that must be provided to all. Farmer exhorts us not to ignore that "only governments can confer rights … nongovernment organizations, universities, foundations, and forward thinking-businesses are not, alas, in the business of conferring rights" (p. 24). Social entrepreneurs can lend their talents to the struggle to ensure that all people have a chance to have a decent life. But social entrepreneurship cannot substitute for this struggle.

These definitions have consequences. Rejecting "social entrepreneurship" for "civic innovation" would contribute to a development industry that responds to grassroots NGOs. Alternatively, a definition that emphasizes rare personal traits would give foundations, funders, and other gatekeepers the discretion to decide who qualifies and who does not. Conversely, a definition that deems social entrepreneurship something that can be learned rather than an innate ability would benefit teachers and institutions of higher education seeking to generate student interest, alumni support, and academic distinction. Farmer's perspective is refreshing because he cares little about this new field, but he cares deeply about creating the conditions for lasting institutional changes. Farmer writes: "We need hope and energy to tackle the diseases that should have been wiped out decades ago" (p. 27). And Farmer identifies what is clearly missing from current discussions of social entrepreneurship: an overt political agenda.

The Missing Piece

Social entrepreneurs tend to accept that the world's cards have already been dealt. They appear to be uninterested in lingering over the past. And they often say they are not willing to "wait for the revolution," a phrase that gestures simultaneously towards class revolution, green revolution, and other "utopian" visions. I agree that the daunting realities our world faces today should not be ignored while we fantasize about radically different futures, peopled by enlightened leaders and enlightened publics. With refreshing urgency, the social entrepreneurship movement insists that individuals must act now. We need to "be the change" we want to see in the world, as M. K. Gandhi is thought to have said. The social entrepreneur's role is to show others, including governments, that better approaches are both workable and scalable.

What I have not heard proponents of social entrepreneurship express, however, is an overarching strategy aimed at promoting structural change through popular movement building. There are allusions in the mainstream literature to social entrepreneurs who use protest tactics to pressure governments. Overwhelmingly, though, this literature ignores the importance of grassroots action and dwells on the individual, portraying social change as a highly atomized process.

To be clear, there are exceptions. One recent study stands out. Harvard researchers have compared several social-change organizations, including Highlander and SEWA, and concluded that the most effective were those that went beyond disseminating a new technology or a new skill and engaged in politically transformative movement-building (Alvord et al., 2004). Also, while Martin and Osberg (2007) argue for distinguishing social activism from the definition of social entrepreneurship, they acknowledge many practitioners develop hybrid models that included social services, social activism, and social entrepreneurship.

Although we should not romanticize disruptive social movements or assume that civic engagement is a cure-all, my hunch is that the profoundly revolutionary changes social entrepreneurs envision are probably changes that could only transpire on a large scale when historically oppressed people grasp their latent power and band together to compel powerful groups to meet their demands. As some of the world's most inspiring nonviolent activists have shown, one way to do this is by making everyone feel they share a common destiny; that we are bound together by insoluble bonds of human-mutual responsibility and obligations of the spirit; and that principled protest can be practiced without regard for personal gain or personal shame. Historians of American's Black Freedom Movement have also shown that grassroots movement-building requires sustained work and shrewd strategic expertise—labor and knowledge that can get hidden from view when individual national-level spokesmen, like Martin Luther King Jr., are celebrated and memorialized (Carson, 1986; Payne, 1995; Ransby, 2003).

Bornstein's authorial choices are relevant here. He does not paper over Ashoka's political missteps in South Africa or Nigeria, where the organization struggled initially to win legitimacy. Still, I wonder if Bornstein played it too safe. Many of the

changemakers he profiles attack injustices affecting children, the ill, and the disabled, which allows him to skirt the problem of readers who might suspect that "able-bodied" adults can, to some extent, be blamed for their plight. Moreover, the only chapter he devotes to a protest movement focuses on India's Disability Rights Movement, a group unfamiliar to North American readers, his likely target-audience. Bornstein describes Javed Abidi's realizations in the early 1990s that people with disabilities in India could only prevail over the physical and cultural barriers they faced if state policies changed. Seeing the need to lobby the government, Abidi organized a protest to convince Parliament to pass a disability bill.

The photograph of this rally raised questions for me. We see Abidi in a wheel chair with his fist in the air. He is flanked by four other wheel-chair-using protestors and several men and women, some walking, some clearly limping. India's national federations for the deaf and the blind are also represented. Someone holds a placard calling for the speedy implementation of a proposed disability bill. One placard reads, "give us jobs."

With Farmer's critique in mind, this image reminded me of a photograph taken amid South Africa's 1973 Durban strikes when African factory workers, angered about low wages, stopped work. Thousands of workers classed as "unskilled" joined a general strike that disrupted the city for over a week and slowed trade out of Durban's busy port. After these strikes, Black workers reticent to join trade unions after years of government repression began to organize again for their rights. This made way for the rebirth of South Africa's Black labor movement, which itself proved critical in ending apartheid. Although the visionary leadership of Mandela, Tutu, and others was essential to the negotiated settlement, so too was the collective action of well-organized workers and civic organizations whose collective action made reform appear absolutely necessary. The trade unions working in tandem with the liberation movement and its international allies convinced institutional investors, multinational corporations, and other onlookers of the perils of leaving the regime to its own devices.

These two photographs are strikingly different in terms of their likely impact on viewers. In the image of the Durban strikers, we see muscular laborers wearing tattered work garb and marching with smiling faces and spear-like sticks raised above their heads. One Indian man appears to join the march, perhaps a store-clerk or a trader. This image would have been extremely threatening to White newspaper readers in the late-apartheid period. Not only would it have hinted that the racially classified might one day unite against the government's divide-and-rule tactics, it would have conveyed to White South Africans the uncertainty of their privileges. For years, the government had successfully propped up White (and to a lesser degree Mixed-race) living standards through discriminatory wage scales, grossly unequal pensions, segregated schools and neighborhoods, and the migrant labor system, which relied on poor African households in rural areas to supply cheap labor to the cities and the mines. Whites looking at this image would have been compelled to consider the possibility that their control over the engines of

government and industry might one day succumb under the pressure of unpredictable popular unrest.

By contrast, the photograph of the disability rights march in India would probably not make North American readers today feel the least bit threatened. (I'm not sure about Indian readers.) It is not a picture of poor people demanding concessions from the wealthy. The protestors look like professionals and intellectuals. The image does not ask North American readers to contemplate an adjustment in their own lifestyle. For me, this image underscores the tameness of the mainstream literature. This literature remains largely silent about militant mass protest. It depicts collective protest as a useful supplement to the work of the social entrepreneur, but stops far short of suggesting that collective action ought to be central to their mission.

To give another example, Dorsey and Galinsky discuss Teach for America, an organization established in 1985 by college student Wendy Kopp, in their book, *Be Bold: Create a Career with Impact* (2006). In the mid-2000s, Teach for America was placing over 4000 young teachers a year in struggling schools. The book calls it a "movement" changing America's national consciousness. *Be Bold* also profiles Karen Tse, the founder of an organization dedicated to advancing human rights in developing countries through education and rights-advertising. Tse recalls the moment she recognized the need to forge a "united front" against human rights abuses (p. 35). And, the book quotes City Year co-founder Michael Brown: "If you're involved in the social sector, you need to stay involved in the larger social change objective. You need to leverage your work from a policy perspective" (p. 51). We hear social entrepreneurs talking about their individual ventures as part of broader social movements and larger human rights campaigns. We see them striving to influence government policy. Nonetheless, there is no indication that social entrepreneurs might one day attempt to build broad popular support for a shared plan of action if the problems that concern them remain unsolved.

Be Bold is published by Echoing Green, a grant-making NGO modeled after Ashoka. The book's purpose is to inspire young people to "think big" when considering a career in the nonprofit sector. I wonder, though, if this book actually gives young readers the misleading impression that social change is synonymous with self-discovery; that changing the world is about finding the pluck to pursue one's dreams: "the people profiled in *Be Bold* prove that there is not one path to your goal. There is only your way" (Dorsey & Galinsky, 2006, p. 94). Unfortunately, this representation of social change ignores the alternative possibility that young people with the gumption to "be bold" might pool their energies with other like-minded people. Social entrepreneurship as it exists today appears to have no answer to the question of how collective action should figure in the fight to address today's most pressing problems. Granted, there are voices in the field that acknowledge the importance of social movements. Some of their writings offer a needed correction to the mainstream literature's near deification of the social entrepreneur as a rare and special type. Nonetheless, the field could go much farther by explicitly encouraging collective action as Scott Sherman has done in his bid to bring social entrepreneurship under the rubric of "transformative action."

Transformative Action

One alternative to the mainstream literature can be found in essays and teaching manuals written by Scott Sherman. He and his network of educators and students have been promoting what they call "transformative action," a combination of nonviolence, social entrepreneurship, and positive psychology. Sherman argues that, to change the world you must have the courage to speak out against injustice and the ability to persuade others not to participate in dehumanizing and destructive systems. This is what Gandhi, King, and other proponents of nonviolence advocated, he stresses. Nonviolence, wrote King, "seeks to attack the evil system rather than the individuals who happen to be caught up in the system. …It not only avoids external violence or external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit" (1957, pp. 12–13). Desmond Tutu makes a similar point about reconciliation in post-conflict situations,

> where the central concern is not retribution or punishment… the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community. (2000, p. 55)

The second pillar of transformative action is offering one's would-be opponents persuasive evidence that concrete advancements can be made over the status quo. This is where social entrepreneurship comes in (although nonviolence also offers many examples of leaders who persuaded people that alternatives were possible). "In any constructive program," writes Sherman, "there must be positive creative goals. Normally, revolutions are reacting to the problems of the past—trying to overthrow some unjust social order. But transformative revolutions look towards creating a better future" (p. 15). The visionary's job is not just to tear down but to build up—to design something different, inclusive, and inviting.

The third pillar involves something akin to self-care. The successful change-maker must not become burnt-out, depressed, egomaniacal, or caustically angry. "[T]ransformative action theory postulates that anger, while effective in mobilizing a social movement, will not be very effective in actually solving the problem" (p. 13). Sherman draws on the cross-cultural and neurobiological studies of happiness conducted in the last two decades which suggests that people are more fulfilled and more effective in their work when they act altruistically and practice the art of contentment. The changemaker's batteries must somehow get recharged.

Conclusion

Social entrepreneurship and its offshoots, like transformative action, could benefit from open debate about long-term goals and methods. What would transformative action look like if it were combined with engagement with grassroots movement-building? What foundational principles are we being asked to build upon

and how do those link to practical next steps? These principles and goals need not be dictated from the leaders. But they could be openly discussed and vocalized by the larger social entrepreneurship/transformative action community. Perhaps if Sherman and other leading advocates of social entrepreneurship spoke more overtly about their ultimate aims, it could create space for conversation about the possibility of collective mass action. It seems a shame not to have this conversation since there are so many people, especially young people, enthused about social entrepreneurship. This silence poses a particular problem for aspiring social innovators, because it leaves them vulnerable to the influence of powerful institutions that are very clear about their ultimate objectives and will readily use all available resources and people, including social entrepreneurs, to advance their aims.

Certainly, the appearance of ideological neutrality can be useful to a new field seeking credibility and institutional staying power. Of course, diplomacy is always important. But is not there a danger that social entrepreneurship might get hijacked, or that it could splinter into an ever increasing number of directions, never effectively speaking with one voice? Is transformative action still too accommodating of the neo-liberal ethos that made Farmer cringe? Is it too accepting of the premise that education, access to healthcare, electricity, housing, etc. are "services" to be delivered rather than basic human rights? If so, such an acceptance would smack of what Karl Polanyi described as commodified citizenship, a situation in which rights are reduced to what can be secured in exchange for participation in the market and so-called "social rights" are off the table (1944).

To be a social entrepreneur in the United States today, must you limit your goals to ones that fit comfortably within the dictates of current antipathies towards big government? Does this model too readily accept the assumption that the state should play a minimal role in managing society while giving a maximal role to the market and to bootstrapping individuals? Might social entrepreneurship end up functioning like what James Ferguson has called an "anti-politics machine" (1994)? (Ferguson examined development agencies in Lesotho, South Africa in the 1980s, where NGOs helped to authorize many interventions in society while remaining silent about apartheid and ignoring inequalities perpetuated by labor migration.) Will social entrepreneurs, like development experts in Lesotho, ignore entrenched relations of power?

My intention here is to be constructive, not dismissive. Social entrepreneurship is an exciting phenomenon. I only wish for greater clarity about the field's politics, values, and ultimate goals. My recommendation would be that proponents of social entrepreneurship continue to work to empower those living closest to today's major social and economic problems, while also striving to change the "systems, structures, values, and relationships that prevent most of the world's population from participating equally in the fruits of global progress" (Edwards, 2010b, p. 10). If social entrepreneurs listened to and learned from historically disempowered people and built upon their locally conceived social-change agendas, this would represent a bold contribution to community organizing, international development, advocacy, and higher education. Some are doing this. Both BRAC (an international

development organization based in Bangladesh) and the Grameen Bank focus on listening to and building local capacity for village groups, especially women. BRAC also works with other organizations to promote gender equality and to influence government policies and agendas that impact women (Alvord et al., 2004). As business schools and market-oriented private foundations increasingly dominate this field, it seems essential that long-standing promoters of social entrepreneurship work to clarify and restate their long-term goals and, perhaps also, to find ways to stay true to their ideological roots.

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Part II
Engaging Meaningfully
in the Complex Social Context

Introduction

> Power in the hands of the reformer is no less potentially corrupting than in the hands of
> the oppressor
>
> —Derrick A. Bell

Global, national, and regional contexts may significantly impact the work of social sector entities. Johns (2006) defined context as, "situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior" (p. 386). He appropriately emphasized that the organizational actions, activities, and their meaningfulness may be impacted by external dynamics. The context comprises a variety of factors including political, technological, economic, cultural, environmental, and competitive forces. In this introduction, we briefly describe some of the contextual effects related to the external context of social sector organizations and then introduce the three chapters included in this part.

Governments around the world remain a powerful player, which shape the external environment of organizations in the public, private, and social sectors. Following Johns' argument above, this shaping of the environment or context through governmental legal and policy actions could facilitate or hinder the work of organizations in significant ways. Additionally, overall political climate, freedom of expression and inter and intra-national conflicts may significantly impact social sector work. For example, conflicts in Nigeria and Pakistan have adversely impacted girls' access to education over the last several years and the work of social sector organizations active in the education sector. Conflicts in Syria and Iraq are having devastating effects on human security and well-being. CIVICUS, a South Africa based entity which promotes civil society causes around world, recently called upon the US to look into law enforcement's heavy handed dealing with those protesting police officers' unnecessary killing of Black men. On the other hand, tragic killings of police officers in Dallas, Texas, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana have created a tense environment across many cities and towns in the country. This environment of distrust results in a difficult context for community-based and larger social sector organizations working on issues of police–community relations, race, and discrimination.

Technology has remarkably changed the way organizations operate. It influences every aspect of organizational work ranging from operations, marketing, human resources management to general management. The arrival of social media has reshaped the way organizations engage with their constituents and manage communications. Managers perceive big data to hold tremendous promise for knowledge management and decision making in organizations. Applications such as Box and Slack are changing the way organizations manage information and teamwork respectively. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, among many other technology facilitated developments, offer tremendous outreach and resource development opportunities to the social sector. Despite these many positive developments, emergence of technology also poses some challenges. For example, many smaller social sector organizations operating in the Global South have limited access to the Internet due to limitations on bandwidth and infrastructure. Many governments minimize or block access to certain websites and social media.

The economic meltdown of 2008 had devastating consequences across all the societal sectors. The social sector witnessed a tremendous loss of resources as institutional and individual donors saw their financial means depleted. In 2009, the United Nations Secretariat commissioned a study to examine the impact of global economic crises and surveyed 640 social sector organizations around the world. The study's author Hanfstaengl (2010) reported that, "Responding CSOs have seen reductions by individual contributors, private foundations, international institutions, and governments, although not necessarily by all categories at once" (p. 6).

With pessimistic climate change predictions and increases in natural disasters, the global environmental landscape poses a series of challenges for social sector entities operating at local and global levels. Take for example the work of organizations involved in post-earthquake reconstruction work in Nepal. The 2015 earthquake killed more than 8,000 individuals and destroyed over 800,000 homes. An important issue for those involved in the reconstruction work is how to make resilience a priority in their work to better prepare communities for future disasters.

To be effective and responsive in working with the complex, external social context, social sector organizations must be strategically and operationally positioned. This preparation would include embracing flexibility, nimbleness, and ability to quickly change and adapt. Benson (1977) appropriately summed up this organizational preparedness with the following observation, "An organization as part of the social world is always in a state of becoming. It is not a fixed or determinate entity. Its major features—goals, structural arrangements, technology, informal relations, and so on are the outcroppings of the process of social construction" (p. 6).

The three chapters in this part bring a series of perspectives on how the social context may impact the behavior and effectiveness of organizations operating in a variety of national and sectoral environments. One of the chapters explores the nature of social change work and how it may be reflectively approached by social sector organizations. The other two chapters in this part explore the policy issues that are impacting the work of social sector organizations.

Doug Reeler's Chap. 5 "Exploring the Real Work of Social Change: Seven Questions that Keep Us Awake," highlights the power that our questions carry in relation to social change and the need to approach them thoughtfully and patiently. His first argument is that "empowerment does not begin with the ability to find right answers but to continually develop more powerful questions, out of real experience. Questioning is the yeast of social change." Many questions in social change work are complex and difficult and there may be no answers, only continual questioning into the future. Reflecting upon seven important questions that guide him and the organization he works for, Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), Reeler describes how CDRA designs and facilitates transformative practices and processes of social change. Many of the questions in Reeler's list highlight the importance of engaging meaningfully in the social context. For example, his question, "How do we see and work with power?" brings out the complexity of power dynamics and the need to work with those dynamics carefully and thoughtfully. Reeler concludes his article with a challenge to obsessively detailed planning, monitoring, evaluation, and other technical systems to manage and control social change.

Jeff Unsicker's Chap. 6 "Policy Advocacy and Social Sector Organizations," summarizes his perspectives on policy advocacy, which are based on forty years of engaging in advocacy, both practically and as a professor. He offers a series of examples from international and US experiences to demonstrate the range of approaches SSOs use for effective policy advocacy. Unsicker begins the chapter by highlighting the importance of and need for social sector organizations to engage in policy advocacy work. He then introduces the concept of "enabling environment" and explains how it may hinder and facilitate the work of social sector organizations. After highlighting some reasons why SSOs do not engage effectively in policy advocacy work, Jeff then goes on to list policy advocacy skills essential for SSO leaders to be effective in this arena. Understanding and working with these skills reside in a set of pathways and conceptual maps, which Jeff and his colleagues have developed. The chapter ends with a commentary on the complexity of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) work in the advocacy arena. George Mitchell, a contributor to this book, builds on and further explores some of the MEL related issues that Unsicker introduced. We describe Mitchell's work in the last part of this book.

Adele Poskitt, in Chap. 7 "Changes in the International Development Landscape: Social Sector Organizations from the Emerging Powers," considers the changes in civil society space in emerging powers and how civil society is adapting to operate and influence governments. She provides a deeper examination of the notion of enabling environment that Jeff Unsicker introduces in his chapter. Drawing upon research in the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Mexico, Indonesia, and Turkey, Poskitt looks at the challenges for social sector organizations in emerging powers to stay relevant, fulfill their mandates, and operate effectively within a shrinking civil society space. Poskitt describes the decline in civil freedoms and the roll back in democratic practices, particularly in the emerging powers. Social sector organizations are being curtailed

off from funding sources, registration, and convening. Yet, state elites across the emerging powers are open to and even encouraging civil society engagement in tackling the challenges of poverty and inequality that continue to affect their countries, at least in part because they are aware of the risks of political instability that arise from these challenges. State elites, nevertheless, remain determined to set the terms of the engagement and are wary of any challenge to their overall political legitimacy and control over policy processes. The result is that while there is still the potential for innovations to be generated within local civil society-led development initiatives, many opportunities for them to scale up into national policy are likely to be lost. Poskitt also includes examples of how organizations have to adapt to the new restrictions to the enabling environment for civil society.

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Chapter 5
Exploring the Real Work of Social Change: Seven Questions that Keep Us Awake

Doug Reeler

> The important thing is the relationships, not the agenda… eventually they will call me to a meeting, I will not call them to a meeting. Participation means that we participate with the village people, not that they participate with us…the first thing is to make relationships, not to make projects.
>
> —Nee (1999)

> People have to be seen as being actively involved, given the opportunity, in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs.
>
> —Sen (1999)

This chapter is written out of the work my colleagues and I have been doing over the past 20 years as activists and social change facilitators. We work out of an NGO based in Cape Town called the Community Development Resource Association (www.cdra.org.za), with a wide variety of people, from rural and urban communities and movements to networks and alliances, local and international NGOs, and donor agencies to government, in almost every sector, and with a wide range of issues. We are dilettantes in the finest sense of the word. Our practice is essentially about designing and facilitating transformative practices and processes of social change and the kinds of organization and leadership required to support these.

This chapter is about exploring questions that matter. We see ourselves as "action researchers" and so we like good questions, constantly working with them to improve our observations and learnings, and to guide our next actions. We put good effort into encouraging the people we engage to continually improve their own observational and questioning powers and processes. Empowerment does not begin with the ability to find right answers but to continually develop more powerful questions, out of real experience. Questioning is the yeast of social change.

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Sometimes there are no answers, only continual questioning into the future. As Rilke implores:

> Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves… Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.
>
> Rilke (1929)

Our important questions seldom have ready answers. Consider the question: How do we bring communities and government together into a co-creative relationship? The answer to this complex question is not only different for different contexts but in each of these contexts the response cannot be simply cooked up in a strategic planning session or a logframe[1] with a fixed budget under a donor's deadline. The answer to this question must be discovered through continuous cycles of doing, observing, reflecting, learning, and re-planning, each requiring its own process of disciplined questioning, and the more participative the more likely to succeed. And it is likely that the question itself will change, perhaps to: How do we support communities and local government to prepare themselves for engagement? This is the practice of social change, continually searching for better questions and able to meet the intricacies and nuances of life.

One of the disciplines we teach in our work revolves around an exercise that helps people to improve their important questions, based on looking again at the experience out of which their questions come, reflecting on that experience, stimulating the developing of improved or new questions, and then deciding what our next most fruitful step might be. We emphasize not looking for quick answers, but continually deepening our understanding, and framing better questions and the next right steps forward.

This is not an easy stance to take in a world that demands answers in the form of a solid plan up front, a budget that can be accounted for, and proof that this was the right plan, if the funding is still to flow. It takes a certain humility to say, "we don't yet know," to say that we want to experiment our way forward. Yet without this humility we are unlikely to approach the future as learners and should not be surprised when the right answers continue to elude us.

Are we asking the right questions? We offer seven important questions and lines of inquiry that guide our work. The questions are conceptually posed and we offer conceptual takes on them, hardly answers because these are ongoing inquiries and serve to guide the asking of these in the field of practice. When these questions are asked of a particular context, they take on an entirely different character, serving to guide a process of observation and experimentation. The seven questions are:

Question 1—What is social change and how do we approach it?
Question 2—What is our primary role as development practitioners?

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[1]Logical Framework Approach (logframe) is a management tool used for designing, monitoring, and evaluating international development projects.

Question 3—How do we see and work with power?
Question 4—How do we work with uncertainty?
Question 5—What social change strategies work best?
Question 6—What kinds of organizations and leadership do we need to face the future?
Question 7—How can we have conversations that matter?

Question 1—What Is Social Change and How Do We Approach It?

In working with communities, organizations, or networks, before we ask, "What are the problems and possibilities and how do we change things?", we like to ask, "How are things already changing and why, if things seem stuck, is change being constrained?" In this way we are able to acknowledge and work with the innate forces for and against change.

The development sector tends to conceptualize change as a cause and effect process—"this effect (e.g., poverty) is the result of this cause. Therefore, I must change the cause to have a different effect." Sounds logical, but this is only a useful conception of change for the world of inanimate objects and technical systems. Living, animate, social systems are different in that they are already in a constrained flux of change from within (Franzetta, 2010). People cannot be changed from the outside as if they are pieces on a chess board. Indeed, to apply an external stimulus for change is more likely to provoke resistance or further passivity. If women in a community are stuck, seemingly passive and unable to break out of dependence and subservience to the patriarchy, it is not because they are internally passive, but because their will and capacity to change is held back by a series of constraints both internal (psychological and cultural) and external. If they can be helped to remove or lower these constraints, they will be able to change themselves and their (power) relationship to the world.

Seen in this way, living beings, social or individual, do not change via cause and effect but by the release of the inner and outer constraints that are holding them in a particular state. If they can be supported to release the right constraints, they can move themselves in the right direction.

In the Limpopo Province in South Africa the CDRA has been working with scores of self-organized women's groups who come together to see to the needs of their young children. The program is called Letsema (the Sotho word for a universal tradition of working together to reach a common purpose). Until we started work with them, they were stuck within their own worlds, unaware of their own interesting and useful experiences and capabilities. We supported them to start visiting each other in horizontal learning exchanges, sharing how they live and what they do, learning from each other's innovations and from that mutual appreciation developing the self-worth and confidence to see a different future for themselves in which they are active participants.

In our work we have identified three dominant kinds of change that people, communities, and societies go through (Reeler, 2007):

- **Emergent change** describes the day-to-day unfolding of life, adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience and the change that results from that. This applies to individuals, families, communities, organizations, and societies adjusting to shifting realities, of trying to improve and enhance what they know and do, of building on what is there, step-by-step, uncertainly, but still learning and adapting, however well or badly. Emergent change conditions exist most strongly in unpredictable conditions. These may be a result of external uncertainties like an unstable economy or a fragile political dispensation, or from internal uncertainty.

  In peri-urban areas around Cape Town, like many cities of the South, rural migrants arrive every day seeking work and access to health services and schools for their children. They gather and group on spare pieces of land, illegally occupying them. Some are connected through rural ties and some make new connections, for protection and support. They are emerging communities, still fragile and fractured and vulnerable to rivalries and exploitation. With time and experience, leadership and a sense of place, trust and identity begins to form. However, patriarchal and tribal rifts are still prevalent.

  These communities are an emergent process of people learning to get along, to know and trust each other and to become authentically organized. What are the external support approaches that connect with this, enabling the emergent community to strengthen itself?

  The Federation of the Urban Poor, built over time from organized shack dwellers, allied to the Shack Dwellers International, and supported by some NGOs, often begin work in such emergent communities by suggesting that the women form "daily savings groups" through which they elect trusted collectors (emergent leaders) to collect from each member of a block of shacks a small amount of change each day. This provides a seedling foundation of local organization and leadership on which larger programs of change can be built in the future.

- **Transformative change**. At some stage in the development of all social beings it is typical for crisis or "stuckness" to develop. This may be the product of a natural process of inner development; for example, the crisis of the adolescent when that complex interplay of hormones and awakening to the hard realities of growing up breaks out into all manner of physical, emotional, and behavioural problems and issues. Or a pioneering organization reaching the limits of its informal structuring and relationships, unable to grow without a qualitative shift, a transformation of the way it works. Crises may also be the product of social beings entering into tense or contradictory relationships with their world, prompted by shifts in external political, economic, cultural, or environmental contexts.

  Crisis or stuckness sets the stage for transformative change. Unlike emergent change, which is characterized as a learning process, transformative change is more about *unlearning*, of people letting go of those leading ideas, values, or

beliefs that underpin the crisis, that no longer suit the situation or relationships that are developing.

South Africa is riven by conflict and protest. Every day in scores of townships residents block the roads and march on their local councils, sometimes violently, to protest the lack of service delivery (water, housing, electricity). They feel excluded and expect the government to deliver. But the government cannot deliver on its own—its attempts at top-down delivery on the back of a bureaucratic infrastructure inherited from the Apartheid regime is failing amidst corruption and lack of capacity.

A key transformation that needs to take place revolves around challenging the top down nature of the system and the assumptions that a passive citizenry must have its services delivered by an active government. Even the language of "rights," so beloved of Development Aid, which separates "rights holders" from "duty bearers" encourages the conception that local government and community have separate interests, and feeds their mutual alienation. The endless cycles of protest and failed delivery will not end until communities and government let go of these notions and transform the way they see each other, and their roles, to discover more co-creative ways of communities bringing their resourcefulness and initiatives to meet the collective resources and larger systems of support held by the government. The conception that active citizenry is only about holding government to account is itself impoverished and even dangerous.

How can we strengthen impulses to let go of these attitudes? What can we do to help either side to begin to see past this fruitless cycle?

Working with resistance to change is at the heart of transformation. In our heads we may know we have to change but deeper down we are held captive, frozen in the current state and unable to let go. Three things stand out here:

- **Fear** of losing power, privilege, and identity, of being hurt or worse. Fear of the dark and unknown that will disrupt what we have become used to, even if these are just coping strategies for what has not worked;
- **Doubt and self-doubt** that we cannot be better or do what is required, that we and our ideas are inadequate, that we do not have the capability; and
- **Hatred or self-hatred**. Where there has been conflict, abuse or trauma we can be consumed by bitterness, resentment, and revenge or paradoxically blame or even hate ourselves for what we have done or not done or even what has been done to us.

All of these constrain the will or imprison the innate flux of change. There are no easy methods for working with these deep resistances. We look for ways to surface and share them, to bring them to light, either intimately or socially, to give them perspective, to enable them to be expressed, and through that comes the possibility of release, of freeing ourselves from what is constraining us. Helping people to share their stories is a well tried approach. Asking ourselves what we fear, doubt, and hate and supporting honest answers and conversations may be what is required. From our experience we know that people start to free

themselves when they are able to speak more honestly about themselves and their experiences and directly describe their fears, doubts, and hatreds. We see it working when they start to become more physically energetic, when they are able to look each other in the eye, and when their will to move on is activated. On the other side of fear, doubt, and hatred we can find courage, faith, and love. Good ideas for change are flimsy without courage, and central to our work is to face fear and more consciously and collectively decide what we have to do about it, to encourage each other. Love is one of the least spoken words in the books and workshops on social change. But there can be few transformations that are not centred on the transformation of the heart.

How do we work with doubt and faith, fear and courage, and hatred and love more consciously in our practice?

- **Projectable change**. Human beings can identify and solve problems and imagine or envision different possibilities or solutions for the future. We can *project* possible visions or outcomes and formulate conscious plans to bring about change. This is the essence of development projects.

  Where the internal and external conditions or environments, especially the relationships of a system, are coherent, stable, and predictable enough, and where unpredictable outcomes or risks do not threaten desired results, then the conditions for projectable change arise and well-planned projects become possible.

  The fact is that many of us, especially those who control and are responsible for finances and resource allocations, tend to like Projectable Change approaches because they give the illusion of control and accountability, even when the conditions for projects simply do not yet exist. Indeed, few situations of marginalization, impoverishment, or oppression are projectable, by definition. Other work needs to be done before projects make sense.

  Of course, many practitioners only know of one way of doing things, most often by projects. Abraham Maslow said in 1966, "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail" (p. 15).

  Projects, if they are to be sustained, must come at the right time and take root within the people who will sustain them.

  Out of the savings groups (referred to above) the women become members of the Federation and are then supported to undertake enumerations–door-to-door research to collect the information about themselves needed to better under-stand who they are and to be better understood by their context, especially local government. The enumerations lead to small visioning processes where they envisage and plan possible water supplies or good sanitation, or eventually their own houses. These are projects, in the best sense of the word, home-grown, owned and, therefore potentially sustainable. Local government is invited into observe these preparation processes and their support is sought. The savings that communities have made are revealed and can be offered as a contribution. The question put to government by the community leaders is: "How can we help you to help us?"

There may be many more kinds of change, but the key is not to rush into any particular approach, but rather to observe what kind of change or changes are already at play and to see if there are ways to work within and out of these.

How can we build a sensibility in ourselves and those with whom we work to more accurately read the nature of change conditions and formulate approaches to change that can work with these?

Question 2—What Is Our Primary Role as Development Practitioners?

The need for change in marginalized and impoverished communities the world over are widespread and vast. But the ability and resources of governments and NGOs to work with these needs, in helpful ways, are extremely limited.

Yet those same communities, who appear to outsiders as needy victims, have reservoirs of hidden and potential capacities and resources, and resourcefulness from hard-learned experience that vastly outweigh what can be brought in from the outside. Once surfaced and validated by people themselves these are the seed-beds out of which change can be nurtured.

But most Development Aid Projects we have seen unthinkingly dump capacity-building, technology, and funding onto communities, structured around the idea that people lack capacity, resources, and organization and conclude that is what must be provided. And in doing so they further bury the hidden reservoirs of community potential.

And of course in burying what people have and know and bringing answers and resources from the outside, inevitably people's own will, confidence, and ownership are also buried and the projects continue to fail to sustain themselves once the capacity and resource bringers leave. This is the grand narrative of the Development Aid Industry.

We must recognize that people have been developing long before the Development Aid came into their lives and will continue to develop long after it leaves. The will to develop is innate, inborn. It is an inside-out and a continuous process. It may not be happening in a healthy or productive way in this or that community and it may be that its potential is blocked or buried by a series of constraints, but it is the only game in town to work with.

Development is already happening and as an outsider I cannot deliver development to anyone or indeed bring change to anyone. Our role must be to work with what is already developing in the community, not only with what they have but with how they do things, to help people to strengthen and build on what is healthy and to let go of or change what is not. But these things are seldom visible to practitioners or even the people themselves. And so a key task is to bring to light peoples own hidden resourcefulness, their untapped potential.

So the question is what can those of us who are intervening from the outside do to help communities to surface, unlock, mobilize, share, and organize their own resources and resourcefulness in order to develop and transform themselves and their relationship with the outside world? Do we have the patience and faith to let them do this in their way and in their own time?

In the Letsema Program we support the rural women's groups to bring their leaders together for five day workshops. These are not training sessions but development sessions where the women are encouraged to tell their life stories, to listen to each other, to experiment with asking better questions, to inquire into the power relationships they are caught in, and to build trust and solidarity between them. There is very little teaching, just the odd concept or two, and no fixed curriculum. The workshop moves as the women suggest, increasingly facilitating themselves and setting the agendas. They are continually encouraged to reflect on themselves, to draw strength, forgiveness, and learning from lives that, without exception, are filled with experiences of hardship, trauma, sacrifice, initiative, and triumph. In a few days they start to look at themselves and each other differently, each a bit taller, their eyes filled with hope and courage and their minds with new ideas.

Question 3—How Do We See and Work with Power?

We live, learn, and develop within three differently experienced kinds or levels of relationships: relationship with self, interpersonal relationships with people around us, and external relationships with the rest of the world. These three levels span the inner and outer experiences of human beings and so it is at these levels of relationships that we find the work of helping people to free themselves. Power is held in relationships, whether it is the struggle we have with ourselves to claim our inner power, or the power we have over others, or the power we hold cooperatively with others, or the power the State wields in relation to its citizens—without relationship power means little, it has no force, for bad or for good. If we want to shift power, we have to shift relationships.

It is within each or all of these three levels of relationships that people are free or unfree. If in our view of ourselves we have self-doubt or self-hatred we become inhibited, entrapped, or unfree. A stuck, abusive relationship with a partner may be as great a hindrance to development as a lack of social opportunity or (relationship of) political oppression. These kinds of "unfreedoms" at the three levels of relationship mutually reinforce each other and add up to a recipe for entrenched marginalization—the core target of development interventions.

But the word or notion of "power" in many cultures is difficult to work with. In collective cultures power is often veiled and hidden behind seemingly collective processes, where those with power use their influence, experience, and ability to steer decisions in directions they like. To even suggest that there are power differentials and that they constrain development is regarded as disrespectful to the culture.

Power does strange things to the best of us. Those of us who do confront power directly, violently or non-violently, often find that the harder we push, the more we struggle, the stronger becomes the resistance to change, the more we bolster the forces we had sought to weaken. Power is paradoxical and can seldom be approached in a straight line.

In the third learning week of the network of civil society organizations we ran a day-long role-play on power. We put the leaders in government positions and those with the quietest voices were asked to play the community organization leaders. Others played the role of NGOs and the media. A contentious scenario was developed and the day unfolded in an exciting and disturbing way. We were amazed at how those put into government roles resorted to defensive and avoidance behaviour, how they shut themselves away from delegation to civil society, how they sought to continually portray their trustworthiness through exaggerations and even lies, and how they spoke down to the "little people" they were supposed to serve. In the reflective debrief afterwards none were more horrified and disturbed by their own behaviours than the directors themselves.

The corrupt and powerful, who are addicted to power and money, and fearful and dismissive of others, will have to be confronted with the truth of their destructive and self-destructive obsessions and fears, and either persuaded or toppled. Sometimes the powerful undermine themselves, blinded by their egos and often hiding or denying what their power manifests. How can we engage them in ways that do not burn down the country?

When the powerful are unseated by force, how often is their place taken by people who adopt the same behaviours, using the old regime's laws and institutions to secure their new regime? Or worse, rival pretenders to the throne rush into the political vacuum and new wars begin. It did not take long for the hopeful and unstoppable "Arab Spring" to degenerate into several nightmare scenarios.

Clearly there are distinctions to be made. Some good people lose themselves in their power and can be persuaded away from dysfunctional uses and be helped to share. But more often the powerful will only change when confronted by a crisis, a transformative challenge where the *perceived costs* to themselves of holding onto power are greater than the *perceived risks* of letting go. Calculating and communicating perceived costs and risks can be where some of the key work lies in weakening the resolve of the dysfunctionally powerful. The fall of the Berlin Wall and Apartheid both happened when a point of sanity was reached and the regimes were helped to see the writing on the wall.

Some people would focus on building alternatives rather than confrontation:

> You never change anything by fighting existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete. R. Buckminster Fuller (see http://bfi.org)

This choice does not always exist and can be naïve in many situations. Modern-day slaves cannot wait for alternatives to their bondage to develop. But as a part of a sustainable approach, developing alternatives can be critical. Facing climate change will require the development of alternatives but these will only flourish as viable investments when the causes of global warming are tackled and made

more politically, morally, and financially costly than the powerful can stomach. Is there a different way to reach the powerful?

The complex and paradoxical nature of power requires that we have diverse and layered approaches to change when obstinate and brutal power is being faced. But still many more questions remain.

Question 4—How Do We Work with Uncertainty?

Most of what is happening inside a change process is invisible not only to outsiders but also to communities themselves. We are all stumbling around in the dark pretending that we can see, imagining that we have can find the answers, desperately trying to create enough certainty to feel safe and in control and to show we are accountable. But the future, like the skies over our biggest cities, is hazy more and more so it seems each year as global economic instability and environmental crises lay waste to our best laid plans.

So what do we do? First of all, we need to recognize that uncertainty cannot be wished away and nor can it be simply brought under control by more planning. The mind-sets that shape the planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems that frame and shape Development Aid Projects usually emphasize control and accountability above learning and adaptation. To get the funding everything needs to be thought through, activities and budgets agreed upon upfront, and monitoring and evaluation checks put into place to ensure that people do what they have promised to do. The pre-analyzed causes and effects are solved by project planned causes and effects. A little failure and some learning is tolerated but not much. Miss enough targets and your funding is cut and you may get fired.

This is a significant problem for two reasons. First, the tendency is to do the big planning upfront back in the NGO or government offices and then to sell the plans to the communities, again undermining authentic processes of ownership and the surfacing of hidden resourcefulness. Second, the promise and illusion of control and accountability that the logframed, bureaucratic development project brings undermines the thoughtful and continual adjusting of practice and plans based on ongoing experience required to learn our way into an uncertain future.

Our critical capacity to honestly learn from our mistakes is hobbled by our fear of losing funding or position. We dare not be too honest. We find results where there are none and ignore failures that could, if analysed, hold the key to learning and innovative ways forward. Logframed projects, when implemented, as they usually are, in emergent or transformative change conditions, promise success and accountability, but deliver failure and cultivate corruption.

How can we actually reward honesty about "failure" and learning above accountability for results? We know that in uncertain times it is only through honest learning and the innovation this enables that sustainable results become possible. This is not a new question and many readers are probably tired of hearing it. And

therein lies the real question. Despite our doubts about bureaucratic accountability for results, what keeps holding us captive?

Too often we box our questioning and learning processes into our Monitoring and Evaluation[2] systems, outsource them to experts and effectively rob the stakeholders of the one thing that may enable success: the ability to learn our way forward through continuous processes of action learning.

But it would be wrong to simply see learning as a way to better navigate complex change, or something that should occasionally or periodically accompany the work we do to improve it. In our view learning is far more important than that. In our view social change is fundamentally a learning and unlearning process best met by a learning practice. Indeed, change, development, and learning can be seen as virtually indistinguishable.

The challenge is to recognize and work with learning and unlearning in every aspect of a change program, to see in its DNA the spirals of learning that describe the reality of how we actually do learn and unlearn our way into the future.

What does this actually mean for practice and how does it link to results and impact?

There can be many results, but the most critical result, the foundation of sustainability of any social change initiative, is that communities have become better learners, continually improving on their experience, and continually enhancing their ability to respond creatively to whatever life throws at them—their response-ability. This is real evaluation, not in the form of the deadening M&E systems that we attempt to use to account for and control our precious plans, but as the living processes of feedback that throw light and perspective on the hidden depths of our evolving endeavours for all stakeholders.

It should be clear by now that many M&E systems have little to do with real learning, and as such, they are more often an impediment to good practice than a support.

The things that matter most are the least visible, the least measurable, and if we insist on certainty in our plans and if we demand the achievement of contracted results, then we will learn even less. Continual observation, listening, reflecting, and questioning, within a learning orientation provide the only keys to the locked doors that we are continually confronted and confounded by.

There are three types of learning to recognize here:

- **Action learning**. Simply put this involves continual reflection on experience, drawing learnings from those reflections, and building the implication of those learnings into future actions. Most NGOs I know, through their M&E systems try to draw learnings immediately from experience without deep observation and reflection, resulting in shallow and misleading learnings. Action Learning is a nuanced change process that requires a disciplined approach (see *Barefoot*

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[2]Some twenty years ago we used the phrase Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, seeing it as a continuous cycle. The dropping of Planning from common discourse reflects this outsource to M&E experts.

Guide to Learning Practices in Organizations and Social Change, http://www.barefootguide.org/barefoot-guide-2.html). This connects strongly to emergent change discussed earlier.

- **Unlearning.** Sometimes, in order to move forward, learning does not help because we are constrained by ideas, beliefs, or attitudes that are too close to us to easily let go. Before we can continue to learn our way forward we have to pause to unlearn these things, i.e., how White people see Black people, how men see women, how women see themselves. These prejudices have to be unlearnt. But usually, unless there is the force or pain of a crisis, people are unwilling to do so. Fear, doubt, and self-doubt, as well as resentment, hatred, or even self-hatred are the predominant factors for this kind of resistance to change. Helping people to surface and face these can be the key work of social change. This connects strongly to transformative change discussed earlier.

  In the Letsema leadership workshops, through telling and listening to each other's life stories, not only do the women learn from each other, but they begin to unlearn many assumptions about themselves that constrain their ability to change—that they must fear those who are in charge, that they are just women and not able to lead, that their role is to respond and not to initiate, that they are not as worthy as men to enjoy their lives. Each woman has had turning points to relate where they have, despite the odds, stood up for themselves and claimed some power. Through sharing, they reduce their isolation and begin to unlearn the inner constraints that are holding them back, sparking a critical process of personal transformation.

- **Horizontal learning.** Since time immemorial people have learned from each other, informally sharing stories and wisdom, trading innovations and recipes, teaching each other techniques and technologies, neighbour to neighbour, farmer to farmer, parent to child. This horizontal learning has always been a powerful motor of social change.

  When education arrived in the form of expert teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, agricultural extension workers, etc.—for many people as part of colonial domination—the result was that people's belief in the value of their own and their neighbour's experiences, knowledge, and ideas became increasingly diminished. Cultures and practices of horizontal, community learning and knowledge have become half-buried and vertical dependencies have emerged over the past few generations, continually reinforced by modern society. Knowledge and learning have become external commodities increasingly removed from the organic life of communities, robbing people not only of access to their own local knowledge and potential, but weakening the accompanying age-old interdependent relationships of community. Restoring or renewing cultures and practices of horizontal learning, hand-in-hand with action learning, surely becomes central to a developmental practice.

  But horizontal learning can take us even further. If we want to work together collaboratively and fruitfully we might best begin this by learning together, horizontally. The powerful housing and farmers' movements of Shack Dwellers

International and Via Campesina use horizontal exchanges at the heart of their mobilization and organization. In South Africa the Letsema program uses horizontal learning exchanges not only to share innovations but also to build relationships and solidarity (Reeler, 2005). Horizontal learning exchanges are, arguably, the most powerful motivator of engagement between the women in the program, so much so that after the first few were stimulated and supported from the outside, they now happen regularly and without any external support.

From this we see that horizontal learning also begins to provide an answer to the conundrum described earlier that the need for change in marginalized and impoverished communities the world over are widespread and vast. But the ability and resources of governments and NGOs to work with these needs in a helpful way are extremely limited (Reeler, 2005). Indeed, through horizontal learning processes, communities can stimulate and support change in each other, with minimal external help, with development spilling from village to village, or even of change catching fire as good ideas and innovations spread widely and generously by word of mouth, as they used to before modern times.

In the Limpopo province a group of 60-odd villages revived a traditional practice of meeting once a year for a seed-sharing festival. This had fallen into disuse since the agricultural industry, ushered in by government extension officers, began showing small farmers the modern way, creating deep and worrying dependencies on corporate-controlled seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. An awareness workshop by a local NGO on the looming dangers of genetically-modified seed finally tipped the scales and provoked the renewal of the old practice.

Now, at a different village each year, the farmers once again send representatives of each village to gather and congregate for several days, each bringing bags of their beans and grains to cook and taste and then to freely share as seed, with advice on how best to plant and grow. And all of this generates the revival of other cultural practices, of songs and dances and stories that express a renewed identity of community and interdependency (Reeler, 2005).

The question that we continue to ask is how can we cultivate support for open-ended horizontal learning practices and approaches that cannot guarantee this or that outcome, but that prepare the soil for working together through learning together?

Question 5—What Social Change Strategies Work Best?

In our experience there is seldom one strategy that is sufficient to meet the complex processes of social change. And quite often several consecutive or concurrent strategies are called for. Some of the different strategies are described or implied in the text above, but here I would like to spell them out more clearly:

- **Top-down strategies**. Democratically elected governments, legitimately appointed leaders, and skilled managers may find call to implement changes from above, particularly those that meet initiatives from below. Universal healthcare, sanitation, education, transport and communication infrastructure, police forces to combat criminality may all be top down initiatives. Of course how they meet the varied needs of communities and at what point they require community engagement from below must be considered, but there are valid aspects of social change that are legitimately and developmentally brought from above.

- **Bottom-up strategies**. Of course, sometime change begins from below, where stuck power above cannot move, whether in its own interest or because of external uncertainties. Marginalized and oppressed people must free themselves. Communities cannot wait for a collapsed local government to deliver water before it takes matters into its own hands.

- **Inside-out strategies**. All sustainable change begins as an inward journey. Before people can free themselves from their oppressors they must free themselves from their own self-identification. This is transformative change, of individuals and communities, unlearning what they have held to be true and seeing themselves with new eyes, before embarking on changing the attitudes and even the laws and practices of society.

- **Sideways strategies**. This is closely connected to horizontal learning, as a powerful motor of change, where people connect across boundaries within and between communities, perhaps involving some unlearning, to create new communities to face their problems and take advantage of new possibilities.

- **Do nothing strategies**. Sometimes a situation needs the space and time to sort itself out, for a crisis to ripen, or for the will to change to gain sufficient strength. We may need to spend time to simply observe to see if we do have a role and what that role might be. We should not assume that the kind of change that we can support is always needed or possible. Be wary of change merchants posing as social change practitioners who always assume they can be helpful!

Complex or comprehensive change agendas, programs, and interventions quite often contain several of these strategies, running concurrently, or the one set of actions paving the way for the next. Horizontal exchanges (sideways strategies) have proven to have surprising success in creating foundations of learning and solidarity for collaborative or co-creative initiatives. Top-down or bottom-up strategies seldom succeed unless they provoke some transformative inside-out change in key actors.

But no planned strategy can account for the full story nor anticipate what will prevail. The complexity of change can only be met by diverse approaches that learn their way into the future.

Question 6—What Kinds of Organizations and Leadership Do We Need to Face the Future?

Communities can discover their own agency, develop their own organizations and leadership required to take initiatives and to meet government and social-minded business in co-creative partnerships.

Sovereign, local organizations and leaders, able to express what people think, feel, and want are key building blocks of social change, without which little is sustainable. Projects are not organizations, and too often substitute for them because donors, government, or practitioners are too impatient to support their development.

But in this post-modern age the conventional and traditional hierarchical forms of organization and strong leaders at both community and local government level are less and less appropriate. Young people, in particular, are emerging en masse, informed and empowered by education, the TV, and the internet as never before, yet unwilling to meekly follow strong leaders. Through social media they have become easy to mobilize but more difficult to organize in conventional forms.

The world is starting to experiment with less controlling, more participative, less hierarchical, more networked forms of organization but these are tentative. What is clear is that they are not so easily held together by formal structure and rules but rather by new kinds of relationships, conversations, and understandings. Their ability to be agile and to learn may be a determining factor in navigating the uncertain future ahead.

A word on leadership. Leaders are only one form of leadership. Conventionally they are the dominant form. But increasingly, as people demand participation and joint decision-making, it is through conversations, in meetings and workshops, that leadership is taking place. As this grows the role of leaders becomes more facilitative, paying attention less to the decisions and more to the quality of process and the conversations that lead to good decisions.

In the organization I have worked with over the past 18 years the idea of a particular "leader" always felt strange. Indeed, for a number of years we had no one who was called "the Director." People would call us and ask for the Director and the receptionist would reply, "Please hold on, I will see who is in." Eventually we did designate a Director because this answer was too disturbing for the outside world. However, leadership is essentially and mostly held in our monthly learning days, when we gather to reflect on the issues and experiences of the month to learn our way forward and to make important strategic decisions. The process is the leader.

How can we re-imagine leadership as intelligent learning processes, in many possible forms, to meet the complex and diverse challenges we face?

Question 7—How Can We Have Conversations that Matter?

How different are we from the conversations that we have with ourselves and with each other? In many ways we are conversations. If we were to stop conversing, we would find that we would soon stop living. Human conversation, in human relationship, lies at the very heart of the processes of social life.

Good social change happens from good conversations. Almost all change takes place through conversations of one kind or another. Conversations that lead to change are in themselves processes of change, and in paying attention to the quality of our conversations we are determining the kind of change that emerges. This is an obvious and simple truth but one that is easily forgotten in all the clever change strategies and complicated project plans that we construct to drive the change we seek.

The first conversation is the one that each of us has with ourselves, if we allow it, between the different voices that live in our heads and hearts. We are social beings, continually influenced by the people with whom we grow up and live. How often do we hear the voice of a parent, a friend, or teacher pop up into our heads in response to a situation? We debate and argue with ourselves when faced with a dilemma, using some points of view of two or more of the influential people in our lives. Holding and allowing different voices can be a healthy thing because this working with diversity inside us helps us to prepare for and meet the diversity and complexity of life outside, to prepare for conversations with others. As a social facilitator I know that to get good participation I often need to support these inner conversations to surface in one way or another before bringing people into conversation with each other.

The second conversation is the one each individual has with another or others, engaging to chat, share, confront, and resolve the issues of life, bringing the voices of each together. In doing so, and in issues of social change, we may or may not find common ground. But we are also changed by these conversations—we continually learn and unlearn, emerge and transform. To the extent that we do move closer together, we prepare ourselves for the third type of conversation.

Several years ago I assisted with an action learning program in West and Central Africa. Its purpose and logic were quite simple—to introduce the action learning cycle into the formal conversations of disability movements and town councils to improve their processes, to help them to be more learningful. They were shown how to use the action learning cycle as a conscious and more disciplined frame for conducting their meetings. In the program evaluation a year later, the mayors from two town councils in Cameroon related stories of how their meetings, previously over-formalized, dry, and unproductive, had become transformed as more people participated, of how honestly they spoke and how their reflections and learnings led to action.

The third type of conversation is the one we collectively have with others. It might be a group of parents engaging their children's teacher, or a community speaking to their councillor. What it carries though is social power and the potential to spark or pave the way for social change.

As social change practitioners we must pay attention to each of these levels of conversation as each level prepares people to engage at the next.

In all these conversations that involve change there may be those voices of fear, doubt, and self-doubt, of resentment or self-hatred, moving from individual to the group. How these are surfaced and met will determine whether the individual or the group are able to act, to find the will to be part of the change.

> Out of the diversity of "voices" we find the richness of conversations, and out of our rich conversations spring the relationships, ideas and impulses for change. We are social beings and it is through our many voices in many conversations that we are most social. How authentic voices are brought, received, engaged with, and supported makes a world of difference to the quality of conversation, to human engagement, and to the contribution we each can make to processes of change.
>
> Dlamini (2013)

Concluding Thoughts

As we look for better questions in deeper conversations, continuously observing and learning, and as we desperately seek for answers, we have to recognize that in the sheer complexity of being human and working with change, so much remains that is unknown and even more that is unknowable. And so, I have argued in this paper for diverse, collaborative, learning-based approaches to change that can meet the learning-based nature of change.

Social transformation can happen in a simple conversation that leads to a change of heart. Or it can take decades of strife and hardship. So much hinges on the human qualities of questioning, observing, learning, relating, and conversing amongst the role-players. Up to a point several of these can be consciously acquired, even taught, but the human trust and commitment required to carry and sustain change are the less tangible and malleable qualities that need to be unblocked and cultivated.

But we are all still in the thrall of obsessively detailed planning, monitoring, evaluation, and other technical systems to manage and control social change, all instrumental manifestations of our fear of losing control and power. This is perhaps our greatest challenge, to let go of our need for certainty and control and to have more faith in our collective ability to humbly learn our way forward in messy but creative, human, and real processes.

One question each of us needs to keep asking is: In what ways are our own needs, doubts, and fears hindering the ability of people we work with to learn their way into the future?

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Chapter 6
Policy Advocacy and Social Sector Organizations

Jeff Unsicker

In every part of the world, the policies of governments, corporations, and other powerful institutions significantly impact the formation and operations of social sector organizations (SSOs)—incorporation or registration laws, tax policies and budgets to name a few. These in turn impact the benefits that SSOs can provide to the marginalized communities they seek to support. Moreover, those communities are even more dramatically impacted by yet other policies of those powerful institutions—minimum wage laws, access to health services and other rights, fair elections, environmental protections, and many others.

Therefore, effective SSOs monitor such policies and contribute to a wide range of advocacy strategies, ranging from highly collaborative to confrontational, in order to influence them. A multi-year study of "high-impact nonprofits" in the United States by Crutchfield and Grant supports that argument. The authors found that "greatness has more to do with how nonprofits work outside the boundaries of their organizations than how they manage their internal operations" (Crutchfield & Grant, 2008, p. 19). They isolated six practices that such organizations employ, the first of which is "advocate *and* serve." They noted that most high impact nonprofits "… start out providing great programs, but eventually they realize that they cannot achieve systemic change through service delivery alone. So they add policy advocacy to access government resources or to change legislation, thus expanding their impact." Still others "start out doing advocacy and later add grassroots programs to supercharge their strategy" (2008, p. 21). Moreover, two more of the six practices are closely related to doing effective advocacy: building a base of supporters committed to their cause and nurturing networks of allies.[1]

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[1]The other three are: make markets work, master the art of adaptation, and shared leadership.

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That said, Crutchfield and Grant, as professors of management, admit "… what we found surprised us—and flew in the face of perceived wisdom in the field" (2008, p. 14). They had observed that most service-oriented SSOs do *not* engage in policy advocacy. Moreover, that "perceived wisdom" is reflected in the curricula of US graduate programs in nonprofit management. For example, of the programs that *US News and World Report* rated as the 10 best in the country, not one required a course on policy advocacy and only two even offered an elective course.[2]

In that light, this chapter begins by discussing some of the most important policies that SSOs should monitor and seek to influence—policies that can enable or impede the work of SSOs in different national environments. I then address some of the reasons why SSOs do not engage in efforts to influence them. Next, as a resource for such organizations that wish to become (more) engaged, the chapter provides an overview of some key concepts and practices of policy advocacy. In so doing, I draw on lessons that many SSOs have gained through decades of engagement in policy advocacy (evidently outside the view of most management faculty), including frameworks that we use in our relatively extensive curriculum in the SIT Graduate Institute.[3] The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of one of the cutting edge issues facing the practice of policy advocacy: evaluation of outcomes and impact. At various places in the chapter I illustrate points with relevant experiences from my own 40 plus year career doing and teaching advocacy.

Policies that Impact SSO Operations

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international leader in clarifying, promoting and defending the rights for SSOs and other civil society organizations to operate in a manner that allows them to fully pursue their social justice missions. It uses the concept of an "enabling environment" to describe the conditions necessary for this to occur. CIVICUS identifies a number of socio-cultural, socio-economic and governance dimensions of an enabling environment. Among the latter are three types of government policies:

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[2]The most recent rankings available were from 2012. See http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-public-affairs-schools/nonprofit-management-rankings?int=a95909&int=a06908 for rankings. Review by Ammar Mohammed, research assistant.

[3]The SIT Graduate Institute, established in 1964 as the School for International Training, offers practice-centered MA degrees and certificate programs focused around careers in social sector leadership and management, sustainable development, conflict transformation, international education, teaching English as a second language, and other social justice related fields. See www.sit.edu/graduate.

The Legal and Regulatory Environment. An enabling environment is one where the state's laws, regulations, and policies on civil society (at both national and sub-national level) make it easy for civil society groups to form, operate free from unwarranted interference, express their views, communicate, convene, cooperate, and seek resources.

The Political and Governmental Environment. An enabling environment is one where the institutions and agencies of government, including government bodies, political parties and politicians, recognize civil society as a legitimate social actor, and provide systematic opportunities for state and civil society institutions to work together. An enabling environment is also one where…civil society personnel are able to go about their work and lives without fear of attack, with full recourse to the criminal justice system in the event of attack.

Resources. An enabling environment is one where civil society groups are able to access resources from a range of sustainable sources, including domestically, and to define their own activities, rather than have these defined by funding opportunities. (CIVICUS, 2013a, p. 19)

As part of its research, CIVICUS produced a series of publications that evaluate and rank countries' performance against such criteria. The *CIVICUS 2013 Enabling Environment Index* (CIVICUS, 2013b) documents a range of performance for 109 countries—from best (the top five, beginning with the very best, are New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Denmark, and Norway) to worst (ending with the very worst, are the Gambia, Burundi, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Obviously, the goals and strategies of SSO policy advocacy will be shaped by the degree to which they are in an enabling (or disabling) environment. However, even when the context is relatively positive, SSOs may need to defend themselves from political attack. For example, in the United States (ranked 10th best in the CIVICUS index), Planned Parenthood must engage in policy advocacy to counteract continuing efforts by far right political forces to discredit and defund it.

An example of a less contentious but important policy advocacy goal for some SSOs in a number of countries, including the United States, has been to pass laws that give social entrepreneurs the option of forming a for-profit "benefit corporation" or "B Corp"—also called a "profit with purpose business" or "PPB" (Orrick, 2014). Currently US laws require a for-profit corporation to maximize profits for its shareholders; the new form allows those corporations to pursue environmental and social goals even if those efforts reduce profits.

However, perhaps the most critical policy advocacy goal for SSOs is related to funding. Policy advocates seek to create, protect and expand funding for the services they provide. My first job as an advocate was with the Community Congress of San Diego, California, a coalition of over 50 alternative community service organizations that emerged from the progressive social movements of the 1960s. The coalition was initially formed to advocate for a change in the policies of the city's United Way—the local branch of a national association of fund raising organizations. The local board of directors had created policies that limited their funding to well-established service organizations such as the Red Cross. The Community Congress used various advocacy methods (collaborative and confrontational) to successfully pressure the board to expand their policies to allow for proposals from free clinics, drug hotlines, women's centers, and other alternative SSOs that had been created by a new generation of leaders. Subsequently, the

coalition led advocacy that pressured the county government to open up its social service funding to its members and similar organizations.

Advocacy focused on funding sources often goes beyond the initial issue of access. For example, in some cases the advocacy focuses on a funder's policies on cost sharing, reporting requirements, and other more technical but important issues of implementation.

Unlike the above examples, issues related to access to funding are quite different in countries where the government is controlled by the military or other repressive forces, that is, where the environment is distinctly *not* enabling. In such cases, the advocacy goal of both local SSOs and the funders (in this case international aid agencies) is to block or repeal government policies that restrict the flow of external funds to those organizations—and do so with a strategy that limits risk to the local SSOs.

Policies that Impact the Marginalized Communities that Social Sector Organizations Serve

While the policies that impact SSO operations are important, the number and impact of policies that affect the communities they serve are far greater. Governments at all levels (local, state/provincial and national), international inter-governmental organizations (United Nations, World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc.), large, often transnational corporations (Exxon-Mobil, Monsanto, Nestle, etc.) and other powerful institutions regularly make policy decisions which have the potential to help or harm the least powerful members of our societies.

When SSO advocates successfully protect and expand funding for their services, as discussed above, they have influenced policies in a way that helps the least powerful. However, those benefits can easily be undermined by other policies that create or worsen injustices. For me one of the most heartbreaking examples of this came during a period in the 1990s during which I had the privilege to lead the School for International Training's collaboration with the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe. ORAP was an SSO founded in 1981, the year after independence from White minority rule, by Sithembiso Nyoni —a young leader with both great vision and pragmatism. She had the skills and contacts to secure funds from several international donors, which were used to create a new bottom-up, culture-centric approach to development.

Women in hundreds of villages throughout Western Zimbabwe were helped to form associations dedicated to local community development—from education to small enterprises. Those associations then formed umbrella groups and those groups formed the board that guided ORAP's evolving support work. As part of that evolution, ORAP began establishing its own businesses to reduce donor depen-dence. Throughout this time, the new Black majority government was establishing numerous social justice-enhancing policies—from expanding human services (e.g., free public education and health) to controlling the costs of food and other basic needs for the rural poor.

However, after a decade of progress—nationally and especially in the commu-
nities where ORAP associations were active—the government was forced to adopt
an economic structural adjustment policy (ESAP) as a condition of support from the
United States, other Western nations, and the multilateral institutions, such as the
World Bank and International Monetary Fund, that those same nations control. The
imposed policies included downsizing of government, the privatization of many of
its services, and elimination of price controls and subsidies. Within a short time,
leaders of ORAP associations were reporting that their achievements were being
lost; all energy was being devoted to just coping with the impacts of the policy
change. Betty Ncube, one of those leaders, told a group of us that ESAP is so
destructive that it was like a giant snake strangling her community; she went on to
say that if she knew where the snake's head was, she would chop it off with a
machine. Of course, Nyoni and ORAP's core staff knew "the head" was in
Washington, DC and the organization became part of the international advocacy
campaign that was ultimately able to end structural adjustment mandates. But it
took many years. And ORAP's programs never fully recovered.

Fortunately, there are also many cases that are more positive and illustrate how
social sector organizations have collaborated with or effectively pressured gov-
ernments (which, after all, are supposed to be engaged with and accountable to
citizens) and other powerful institutions to adopt policies and practices that enhance
social justice.

So Why Don't More SSOs Engage in Policy Advocacy?

Efforts to provide a scholarly answer to that question are limited by the lack of
substantive research on nonprofit advocacy. For example, a 2007 literature review
by the Center for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University, one of the
field's leading research units, states: "Despite the importance regularly attached to
the advocacy function in nonprofit organizations, knowledge about the extent and
character of nonprofit engagement activities in advocacy activities is actually fairly
sparse. More distressing still is the fact that what evidence does exist is highly
inconsistent" (Geller & Salamon, 2007, p. 1).

On the other hand, there are fairly well understood, and understandable, reasons
why service-oriented SSOs do not engage in advocacy. In the context of the
CIVICUS report, SSOs in countries at the repressive end of their "enabling index"
struggle to simply exist, much less seek to influence the policies of their govern-
ments or the corporations that have gained access to a country's natural resources
and other assets—often through bribery. There are heroic SSOs that do advocacy in
those contexts, but they do so at great personal cost and must be careful to not
endanger the communities they support. In many cases, their primary role is to
provide grassroots information to international organizations that can exert inter-
national pressure.

But in the United States and other nations on the positive end of the CIVICUS index, where SSOs have explicit rights to engage in advocacy, there are still barriers to overcome. One of the purposes of a major research project by Jeffrey Berry and colleagues was to understand why in the US so many nonprofit leaders reported that they feared losing their tax-exempt status if they became involved in "politics." Clearly one reason was that the leaders did not understand the definitions of advocacy and lobbying in the US tax code; in fact, they dramatically underestimated what was allowed (Berry & Arons, 2003, p. 67).

But even if they were to better understand those laws, nonprofit leaders in the US often fear that such efforts will diminish the good work they have done in providing services. From that perspective, "every dollar for advocacy is a dollar taken away from someone badly in need of services, a vulnerable individual for whom the nonprofit is a lifeline" (Berry & Arons, 2003, p. 127).

And even if those leaders understand the laws and even if they recognize the benefits of combining services and advocacy (the first of the six practices of "high-impact nonprofits" that Crutchfield and Grant identified in the previously cited study), Berry reports that they fear that engaging in politics will alienate volunteers and donors who do not have the same understanding. He notes this is especially true when advocacy is described as lobbying—which today carries a highly negative connotation. Thus it is not uncommon for the development or fundraising staff in an organization to be among those who most resist such changes.

And, indeed, many foundations and other donors of US nonprofits are unwilling to support advocacy (again, in part due to an inaccurate understanding of what is allowed under the tax code that affects both the recipients of their funds and their own nonprofit status).

A related issue is the difficulty of demonstrating, in a philanthropic world increasingly focused on "return on investment," the benefits of advocacy, especially in relation to the very concrete, person-specific benefits of service provision. I will return to this issue in the final section of the chapter.

Finally, service-oriented NGOs do need resources if they are to add an advocacy dimension to their mission. They must invest in new staff and organizational capacities that are distinctly different than program development and service delivery. For the reasons just noted, it is often difficult to access the resources to do so.

What Are Key Concepts and Skills that SSO Leaders Need to Become (More) Engaged in Policy Advocacy?

The SIT Graduate Institute is one of a handful of US colleges and universities that has developed an extensive policy advocacy curriculum for SSO leaders and managers. The first courses were offered in the early 1990s and today SIT offers a year-long course sequence, short field-based courses, multiple practicum placements, and capstone paper options that form a specialization in policy analysis and advocacy. This section draws on that content.

Our curriculum begins by introducing different "conceptual maps" or frameworks that can guide policy advocacy work and analysis. Just like someone in a city is likely to need multiple maps—a street map, a public transportation map, a topographic map if the city is hilly, a hand drawn map for friends to visit her house, etc.—effective advocates use different conceptual maps. Each illuminates certain dimensions of advocacy practice; at the same time, each also obscures other dimensions. There are many such maps. Nearly every good handbook or training manual on advocacy is designed around one and a quick internet search will locate dozens of such documents.[4]

Most of these are organized around a set of steps or stages in planning an advocacy initiative or campaign. Jim Shultz, founder of the Democracy Center in Bolivia and frequent speaker in SIT courses, uses the term "road map" to describe five basic steps of an advocacy campaign or initiative: (1) *define your objective*—the policies that you want adopted or changed, (2) *target your audiences*—those persons who you need to move and those who can help or hinder that effort, (3) *create your message* in the form of a persuasive argument, (4) *pick your messengers*—those person who will deliver the message to various audiences, and (5) *take action* through an appropriate set of strategies and tactics (Shultz, 2002, pp. 71–82).

Sarah Roma, a consultant who has led advocacy units in Save the Children and other international NGOs, and member of SIT's adjunct faculty, developed the following ten step conceptual map for a global coalition of health workers (Fig. 6.1).

Shultz, Roma and the developers of similar conceptual maps emphasize that, in practice, the advocacy process is complex and rarely if ever so linear. Thus in the course of teaching, I developed yet another map that highlights, among other dimensions of advocacy, that nonlinear or iterative process (at the same time that it obscures some other dimensions). For reasons evident in the following diagram, my students began to refer to it as "*the advocacy circles*," and I will use it here to discuss key concepts and practices that effective advocates employ (Fig. 6.2).

The **Advocates Circle**, which represents the SSO, is at the center of the other four. Effective advocates are skilled analysts both of their organization's internal capacity and limitations and of the external realities represented by context, policy, politics and strategy. While the internal and external dimensions can never be separated in practice, the latter are discussed below.

With regard to building internal capacity, a key element is ensuring clarity of and shared agreement about advocacy as fully integrated into the SSO's vision, mission, and values. Given the concerns that staff, board, funders, and other key supporters often have about engagement in "politics" (and especially "lobbying"), it is important for any expansion of these guiding principles be the result of as inclusive a process as possible. The outcome should be a broad "theory of social change" that

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[4]A few good examples are Cohen, Karkara, Stewart, Rees, and Coffman (2010), Gosling and Cohen (2011) and Alcade Castro, Perez, and Azcarraga (2010).

Fig. 6.1 The advocacy planning cycle (Roma, 2015, p. 12)

understands the nature of power at both the micro level of community and services and the more macro levels of political economy and governments and that articulates how they can be connected.

Developing the human and financial resources needed to support advocacy is another element of internal capacity. Depending on the level of engagement, those resources may not need to be extensive. Often it is the executive director or program managers who invest a portion of their time toward this end. On the other hand, adding at least one staff member who is fully dedicated to this work has significant benefits—not the least of which is preventing colleagues from losing focus on the advocacy mission when there are always so many other and immediate demands on their time and it is difficult to prioritize the long-term outcomes of policy change.

Developing a core of volunteers ready to engage in advocacy is yet another element. They are critical to creating the "people power" that is often essential for overcoming the "money power" of the interests that often oppose policy changes that benefit marginalized communities. In the language of policy advocacy, those
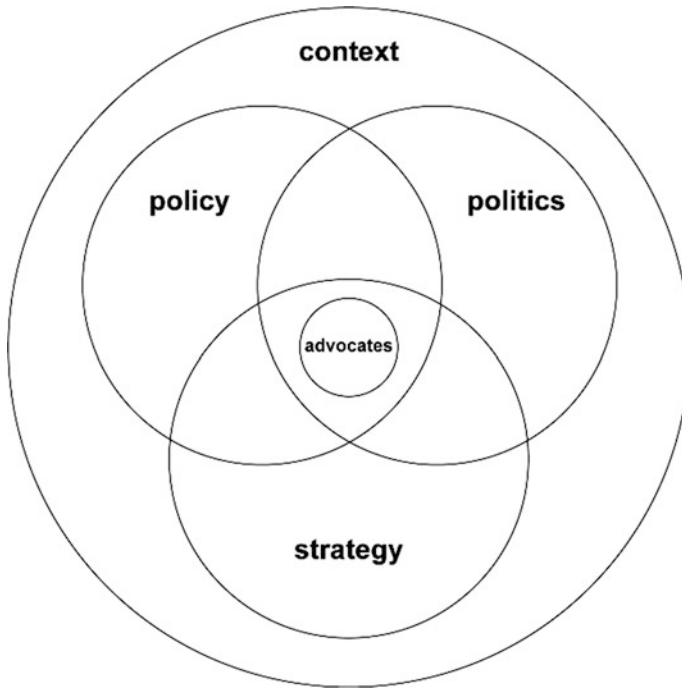
Fig. 6.2 Advocacy circles (Unsicker, 2013, p. 17)

volunteers are the SSO's "constituency." Whenever possible, many should be members of the specific communities that the SSO supports and can often be recruited in the process of providing services or other regular activities. The SSO then needs to develop processes for building its constituent's self-confidence, knowledge, and skills and for mobilizing their engagement at appropriate moments in an advocacy campaign or initiative.

Developing a network of relationships with other SSOs and like-minded organizations is both one way of filling gaps in an organization's advocacy capacity (e.g., for generating evidence about problems and policy options) and for expanding the "people power" noted above.

The **Context Circle** surrounds all of the other four since it represents the complex interaction of historical, political, economic, cultural, and environmental forces that influence every dimension of advocacy.

By that very definition, context defies simple description. Suffice to say that it is that which is generally beyond the ability of advocates to influence, is different in different countries and localities, and is constantly changing over time. Effective advocates pay careful attention to those aspects of their context that are most relevant to their mission and goals.

However, another key aspect of the context are *events*, both planned and unplanned. Examples of the first type of events include elections, international

summits, and designated international days or weeks (e.g., of women, food, peace, and so forth). Major disasters—weather or human induced—are examples of the latter. To the extent possible, effective advocates anticipate or quickly respond to such events in ways that support their ongoing work.

The **Policy Circle** represents the *what* of advocacy. What problems are the advocates concerned about? What are their causes? And, what changes in policy will address those causes and (help) solve the problems?

Thus this circle incorporates three steps in Roma's map: "define the problem and advocacy issue," "develop advocacy goal and objectives," and "get the facts." While the first step in Shultz's road map, "define the objectives," is more limited, his book includes a very thorough chapter on policy research, and emphasizes the need to begin with an analysis of problems, their causes and possible solutions, and to gather evidence throughout those processes.

Thus effective policy advocates must be skilled in *isolating and prioritizing a focal problem* among a web of numerous and interconnected problems facing the communities they seek to support. While that process is often frustrating, it is necessary to define a problem that the advocates can feasibly address in a reasonable period of time. Ideally, the problem is also one that can leverage change in the related problems and/or whose solution lays a foundation for solving those other problems. To do so, advocates must carefully analyze the specific causes of a problem (Shultz, 2002, pp. 83–95).

The advocates' next step is to *choose one or a very limited set of policy changes* that—often in concert with services or other more micro interventions—will (help) solve the problem. Those changes—or the "solution"—must address a problem's causes, not its symptoms. Attention to that concept will also help service-oriented SSOs avoid a tendency to define the problem in terms of a preconceived solution. For example, it is not uncommon for a microcredit organization to define the problem as lack of credit. However, lack of credit is most often a symptom of a deeper problem related to the factors that cause poverty and lack of credit. Thus an effective solution likely will require additional if not totally different policy changes and interventions.

Policy changes is a broad term. It refers to specific policy decisions, but also decisions regarding the *implementation* of enacted policies and decisions regarding the *processes* by which policies are enacted and implemented. In a world filled with admirable policies—for example, adoption of internationally endorsed women's rights—the problem is often the "lack of political will" (read: power of oppositional forces) to enforce them. I developed a 2×2 matrix to help clarify the *enactment* and *implementation* issues (Fig. 6.3).

In recent years, there has been a very hopeful expansion of advocacy regarding *processes* of enactment and especially implementation. Internationally, these efforts have been championed by progressive SSO coalitions like CIVICUS and members of the Open Government Partnership.[5] They are supported by bilateral and

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[5]See http://www.opengovpartnership.org.

	Policies that Support SSOs and Marginalized Communities	*Policies that Impede SSOs and (Further) Marginalize Communities*
Existing Policies	Defend and Seek Full Implementation	Seek to Repeal (or Amend); If Unsuccessful, Block or Limit Implementation
Proposed Policies	Introduce, Seek Enactment and then Full Implementation	Block Enactment; If Unsuccessful, Block or Limit Implementation

Fig. 6.3 Types of policy changes (Unsicker, 2013, p. 35)

multilateral development agencies that have become frustrated by the "leakage" (read: corruption) or ineffectiveness of funds they disburse to recipient governments. For example, the World Bank is now serving as the secretariat for the Global Partnership for Social Accountability.[6] More specifically, local and national SSOs are being trained and funded to carry out budget monitoring, audits, and other "watchdog" strategies for increasing accountability.

In the process of isolating and prioritizing problems and identifying the policy change(s) the advocates will push for, effective advocates gather existing and/or generate new data or *evidence* that helps in two ways. It gives them confidence in their choices about the problem and its solution. (A worse case is to advocate for and win a policy change that turns out to be ineffective or counterproductive!) it also helps convince others, including policy makers, about their arguments for change.

Some SSOs function as think tanks or research centers and there are also academics and other sources that produce evidence and analyses that advocates can use to inform their choices and make their arguments. However, SSOs that are directly engaged with marginalized communities—providing services or other types of support—are in a unique position to understand problems and generate evidence that can complement or even be more reliable than the researchers reports. And the more systematic an SSO's monitoring and evaluation procedures, the better is that

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[6]See http://www.thegpsa.org.

evidence. Moreover, SSOs that can present such firsthand evidence have a unique and important credibility with many different audiences.

On the other hand, the power of evidence should not be overstated. Granted that the phrase "evidence-based policy making" is widely popular among many politicians. And an implicit assumption in the curricula of most graduate programs in policy studies is that the decisions of policy makers are based on rationale analysis—in the best of situations, rigorous and dispassionate cost-benefit analysis —and so the focus is on research. Unfortunately, as a series of studies by the Overseas Development Institute in London confirmed, this is infrequently the case.[7] For example, one team of ODI researchers examined about 70,000 research reports related to education policy and found that only 70 could be judged to have had a significant impact on policy decisions (Crewe & Young, 2002). While one in 1,000 odds is probably on one extreme of the continuum, it makes the point about the limited impact of research—if not also effectively linked to the elements of the next two circles: politics and strategy.

The **Politics Circle** represents the *who* in advocacy. It incorporates the step that Shultz calls "target your audiences" and two steps in Roma's map: "understand the policy process" and "identify and analyze targets."

There are many ways to break out who needs to be identified, analyzed, and targeted. At a minimum, effective advocates identify three categories of actors. The most essential category consists of the individual(s) who have the authority to make the policy decision that the advocates seek—often referred to as the advocates' *targets* (not be confused with what service-oriented organizations often term as target populations who they seek to serve). A second category consists of *allies*— individuals and organizations that support the advocates' policy change solution(s). The third consists of *opponents*—those who do not support those change(s) and may pressure the same targets to make a different decision.

In practice, these categories are more complex. For example, while in some cases the target(s) may be neutral with regard to the policy decision, it is often the case that s/he or they may be both target and opponent or, less frequently, target and ally. When the target is a group, such as a legislature or committee, the members may be (unevenly) divided between those two categories. In practice, it is also the case that some opponents may actively work against the advocates (sometimes termed primary opponents) and others may be more passive in their opposition (secondary opponents). A similar distinction is often made between those who will actively work for the advocates' position, often as members of a common coalition (primary allies) and those whose support is more passive (secondary allies). And, in practice, not all opponents and allies or opponents have equal power as measured in terms of credibility, wealth, people power, etc. Effective advocates have developed

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[7]See Court and Young (2004) for a concise overview of the limits of most policy research. Other and more recent publications of ODI's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) program can be found on their website: http://www.odi.org/programmes/rapid.

a wide range of "political mapping" tools to analyze those complexities as a step in formulating their advocacy strategy.

But the reality of the politics is still yet more complex. Effective advocates must fully understand the formal processes by which policies are formulated and enacted. For example, there are official and largely transparent procedures by which a legislature or parliament passes laws, a president issues executive orders, a government agency issues regulations to enforce laws and orders, and so forth. But they also understand that there are hidden processes by which powerful actors engage in that process—at times even drafting the laws, orders and regulations. Effective advocates respond to this reality when they formulate their strategy.

The **Strategy Circle** is the *how* of advocacy. It incorporates three steps in Shultz's road map: "create your message," "pick your messengers," and "take action." In Roma's map, these are: "build partnerships," "develop and deliver messages," and "develop and implement an action plan."

At its core, a strategy is simply a sequence of actions that the advocates believe have the greatest likelihood of convincing their targets to adopt the policy change or solution they seek. That sequence, and any interim outcomes that the advocates anticipate, constitute the advocates' "theory of change."

Depending on the context, the policy and politics, the strategy may involve actions that involve a high level of collaboration with targets. Examples include consultations and jointly designing and implementing a policy innovation. In other situations, the actions may be more confrontational. Examples include citizen protest (including civil disobedience) and litigation. The continuum between those two polls includes a range of still other actions. Examples include direct lobbying and indirect communications through the media.

A general rule is, when possible, first try actions on the collaborative end of the continuum and proceed to more confrontational ones only if those are not effective. The approach may conserve the advocates' resources, which are often limited. Moreover, if a more collaborative approach fails, the advocates can claim a moral high ground when they escalate to more confrontational actions.

Given that the political context is often one where opponents often have far more financial resources, it is important for advocates to fully capitalize on their strategic advantages. One of those advantages is the SSO's firsthand knowledge of community problems and unique credibility based on their commitment to making a difference on the ground. Despite the limitations of evidence noted in the section on the **Policy Circle**, data from baseline studies and monitoring and evaluation can be used effectively to document problems and demonstrate the efficacy of new program approaches that policy makers could adopt or support. Such data can be especially useful in contexts where governments have limited research capacity. A study by Berry (2015) makes this point with regard to municipal and county governments in the United States. A similar situation exists even with national governments in less developed countries.

But an SSOs' primary strategic advantage is *people power*. Two primary sources of such power were noted in the section on the **Advocates Circle**. The first is an SSO's constituents. Effective advocates are able to mobilize volunteers and

community members to put various forms of pressure on policy makers—voting in elections, signing petitions, writing letters, providing testimony in hearings, participating in demonstrations, and so forth. At the same time, those advocates plan all mobilizations with a commitment to avoiding undue risk to persons who are already in marginalized situations.

The second form of people power comes from networks, alliances, and coalitions that an SSO forms or joins. While there are also challenges of managing such relationships, they offer important ways to build power. Many other organizations have their own constituencies who they can mobilize as part of coordinated actions. Working with other organizations can also expand knowledge of the policy makers and opponents and improve the capacity to identify key moments when mobilizations will be most effective.

Advocacy Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Only one of the conceptual maps referenced above—Roma's Advocacy Planning Cycle—specifically references the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) element of advocacy. But it is clearly one of the most important dimensions. It is also one of the most complex and controversial.

Advocacy staff who are engaged in the responsive, fast paced reality of policy change often resent what to them feel like distractions by MEL staff or processes, especially when the methods are derived from the very different reality of program evaluations. And indeed the outcomes of many evaluations do fail to inform advocacy practice.

In light of those challenges, a new community of advocacy evaluation specialists has emerged and produced a number of designs (most based on ensuring that theory of change is clearly diagramed) and corresponding tools that respond to the unique nature of campaigns and initiatives. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review those, but fortunately there are online resource centers that advocates and evaluators can turn to, for example the Innovation Network.[8]

On the other hand, donors and others (e.g., the SSO's board members) often want evaluations that measure outcomes and increasingly "return on investment"—often in comparison to returns from program services. But policy change is nearly always the result of efforts by many actors and thus it is rarely possible to attribute an outcome to any one organization or even coalition. Therefore, most advocacy evaluation specialists have concluded that they should seek to assess "contribution" rather than "attribution."

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[8]See http://www.innonet.org/.

But even when it is possible to identify an organization's or coalition's relative contribution to an advocacy effort, the success, partial success or failure to achieve the desired policy change or outcome may be the result of other variables far beyond the control of the advocates. Some of those are visible shifts in the context, such as change in government or a natural disaster. Other variables are often invisible and, for political reasons, frequently hidden.

Moreover, when an advocacy effort succeeds in achieving a policy change, its impact or "return" in terms of improvements in the lives of people, cannot be assessed until the change is implemented. But implementation is often another contested process, with opponents seeking to block or limit the outcome (just as social justice advocates seek to block or limit the implementation of policies that will negatively impact marginalized communities). Even when uncontested, the implementation process takes time and thus more shifts in context may have a profound influence on outcomes, making it difficult or impossible to attribute the success, partial success or failure of the impact to the policy change to which the advocates contributed.

I believe this complex reality requires a different approach to advocacy evaluation. A brief article by Teles and Schmitt (2011) makes the case very well. They argue:

> Advocacy evaluation should be seen … as a craft requiring judgment and tacit knowledge – rather than as a scientific method. To be a skilled advocacy evaluator requires a deep knowledge of and feel for the politics of the issues, strong networks of trust among the key players, an ability to assess organizational quality, and a sense of the right time horizon against which to measure accomplishments. In particular, evaluators must recognize the complex, foggy chains of causality in politics … (2011, p. 39).

Thus they argue that it is the evaluator and not the evaluation design or tools that matter most. They suggest that effective evaluators have a skill set that is analogous to those of a foreign intelligence officer or applied anthropologist. Persons in both of the roles focus on both context and nuance when sorting through multiple but always incomplete sources, determining which can be trusted and what can be learned from those that cannot be trusted.

In fact, there are many highly experienced advocates who, through reflection on years of multiple campaigns within that complex reality, have developed the skill set that Teles and Schmitt discuss. I have argued that SSOs should more actively engage them as evaluators (Unsicker, 2013, pp. 235–239). While most evaluations ask to what extent and how well did a campaign carry out its plan, many highly experienced advocates can also analyze its context and make judgments about the quality of the plan itself. This leads to better assessments and deeper learning.

Thus, while there are a variety of factors that will determine if advocacy campaigns accomplish their goals, there is always much to learn from each of those experiences, including from those that do not fully succeed. If SSOs are committed to learning, they will help realize what Martin Luther King preached: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

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Chapter 7
Changes in the International Development Landscape: Social Sector Organizations from the Emerging Powers

Adele Poskitt

The environment in which social sector organizations are able to operate effectively is changing dramatically around the world. Geo-political changes in the last decade have impacted financial flows and the international development cooperation architecture. An increasing number of governments are introducing legislative and logistic barriers to social sector organizations, particularly to transnational organizations that work on democracy and human rights issues. The trend of curtailing civil society space is now global. It is no longer just affecting the post-Soviet region and familiar dictators, but social sector organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas are increasingly being accused of being too intrusive and encountering efforts to block their work.

This chapter will analyse how the role of social sector organizations seeking to influence policy makers and represent communities is changing around the world, with a particular focus on the world's emerging powers. This research looks at the enabling environment for civil society in emerging powers and considers how shifting power dynamics, both within a country and between international actors, has left civil society trying to respond and adapt to a rapidly changing political situation.

Drawing upon research in the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China. and South Africa), Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey, this chapter looks at the challenges for social sectors organizations in emerging powers to stay relevant, fulfil the organization's mandate, and operate effectively within a shrinking civil society space. This chapter will consider the importance of this trend for social sector organizations in the US and other Western countries.

There is broad agreement amongst commentators that we are witnessing a decline in civil freedoms and a roll back in democratic practices, particularly in the emerging powers. The "democratic recession" observed by Diamond (2015) is

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characterised by legislation that curtains social sector organizations funding sources, registration and convening. This chapter includes examples of new restrictions to the enabling environment for civil society and how organizations are having to adapt. I will conclude the chapter with lessons that organizations can identify and how civil society networks are crucial for organizations to influence effectively, operate efficiently, and in some situations, for organizations to survive.

Social sector organizations or civil society is just one of the many senses in which the term is used. This chapter focuses on the sense summarised by Edwards (2009), "the world of associational life" (rather than alternative conceptualizations of civil society as "the good society" or "the public sphere"). I am particularly interested in a fairly limited subset of the collective actors who populate this world of associational life in the emerging powers: that is, formally structured civil society organizations (CSOs) with a history of engagement in project implementation, policy dialogue and/or public debate in relation to issues of social and economic development at home and abroad. This category includes nongovernmental development organizations (NGDOs) as well as advocacy NGOs working in fields such as human rights and the environment, NGOs with a service provision or social entrepreneurship orientation who are operating in the field of corporate social responsibility, organizations linked to social movements or labour unions who are active in transnational political mobilization, and research-oriented NGOs that tend to operate more as think-tanks.

These categories are not clear-cut, and often such organizations will—like many of their counterparts from traditional donor countries—be hybrids playing multiple roles across the spectrum of service provision, research, networking, and advocacy. These roles and the positions vis-à-vis governments and businesses that go with them may also differ according to whether development engagements take place at home or abroad; for example, an NGO that operates as an uncritical outsourcing partner for government development cooperation projects overseas may be fiercely outspoken when it comes to domestic development policy, or vice versa. Despite this fluidity, as I will discuss, there are often cases where an NGO deliberately positions itself on this spectrum or classifies others according to their position on it in a way that reflects deeply felt differences in identity and ideology as well as in political and economic interests and in the nature of different organizations' engagements in particular transnational networks across the BRICS and beyond.

My use of the term "NGO" is a convenient shorthand which should not of course imply that I assume that all these organizations are fully independent of government; neither do I follow a purist definition of "civil society" as an associational realm that is somehow completely separable from the state. As I will discuss, the state-civil society boundary in the emerging powers tends to be more blurred and fluid than it is in Northern traditional donor countries, and even organizations that cannot be strictly characterised as GONGOs (government-organised or government-operated NGOs) often have formal or informal links with state agencies and/or governing political parties. This can be the case in the famously vibrant democratic contexts of the IBSA countries (India, Brazil, and South Africa), as well as in the notoriously authoritarian contexts of Russia and China. Civil society organizations in the IBSA

countries have traditionally enjoyed a great deal more space to challenge government policy, but this does not make civil society organizations from the other BRICS mere appendages of their governments. In fact, I will argue that, across the emerging powers, development cooperation policy includes many paradoxical cases of state-civil society dialogue emerging in unpromising authoritarian contexts and stalling in traditionally vibrant democratic ones.

Research in this chapter builds upon a body of work that I have done with the Rising Power in International Development team at the Institute of Development Studies at the University in Sussex, UK. Views expressed here are the authors own but are shaped by numerous visits and conversations with many generous individuals and organizations in the emerging powers.

Changing Power Relations and the Impact on Social Sector Organizations

Huge changes in the global economy and shifts in political relations between countries battling for dominance are profoundly changing the global landscape. At the same time that the traditional powers are losing dynamism, the economic and political importance of emerging powers is growing. Existing aid architecture, built upon the widely-accepted model of developed countries providing financial assistance to developing countries, is facing a crisis of legitimacy and mandate. As the boundaries are progressively more blurred between "developed" and "developing" countries; between the "North" and "South"; and between the "rich" and "poor," civil society has to reassess its roles and realign its relationships. One of the important effects, which is considered in this chapter, is the changing role of civil society around the world and the rise of South–South Development Cooperation.

The importance of new political allegiances for development, most notably the BRICS group, must be recognized. The population of the political group made up of Brazil, India, China, Russia, and South Africa is almost half the global population (43 %) and labour force (46 %). In 2003, the BRICS represented 9 % of the global GDP, and by 2009 it increased to 14 %. "In 2010, the combined GDP of the five countries- in terms of purchasing power parity—has already reach $19 trillion, or 25 % of global GDP" (INESC, 2013: 9). If you include Indonesia in the grouping, the GDP is bigger than OECD (Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development) countries. Trade among the BRICS countries was valued at $230 billion in 2011 with an average growth rate of 28 %, and Foreign Direct Investment from the five countries has increased from $10 billion in 2002, to $146 billion in 2011 (John, 2012).

Recent studies by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has mapped trends in global development assistance flows between 2000 and 2009. Due to the nature of these financial flows, this data is difficult to locate, access and analyse, but ODI illustrate the new actors and landscape in development assistance. Whilst these

figures are just estimates, they help give us an understanding of the new development assistance landscape and the impact this will have on civil society organizations around the world. ODI estimate suggests that total development assistance grew from $77.1 billion to $213.5 billion between 2000 and 2009. In 2000, non-traditional development assistance was $93.5 billion, while by 2009 it had grown to $93.5 billion, a five-fold increase. Non-traditional development assistance rose from 22.8 % of total development assistance in 2000 to 43.8 % in 2009 (Greenhill, Prizzon, A., & Rogerson, 2013).

There was a change in share of overall non-traditional development assistance in 2000 and 2009. The composition of flows within the 'non-traditional' category has changed, with the share of both philanthropic and official concessional assistance falling between 2000 and 2009 (although within a rapidly expanding pie), with the share of global health funds, social impact investment, and climate finance all increasing. Despite all the imprecisions inherent in the data used by ODI, it is still possible to observe that non-traditional flows are already very significant and have been growing very rapidly over the past decade.

ODI research has found that since the early 2000s the share of development assistance accounted for by non-traditional sources has increased in six countries they did case studies. Figure 7.1 illustrates the share of non-traditional development financial flows in total development assistance to six countries where ODI did case studies in Africa and Asia (Schmaljohann & Prizzon, 2015).

In Cambodia in 2009, non-traditional development financial (NTDA) was estimated at $191.5 million, or 23.5 % of the value of total development assistance. This was an increase from only $34.1 million (or 10.7 % of total development assistance) in 2002. In Ghana, NTDA was already important in the early 2000s (20 % of total development assistance) and it accounted on average for 36 % of development assistance in the late 2000s. In contrast, in the case of Zambia non-traditional assistance accounted for around 2 % of total development assistance
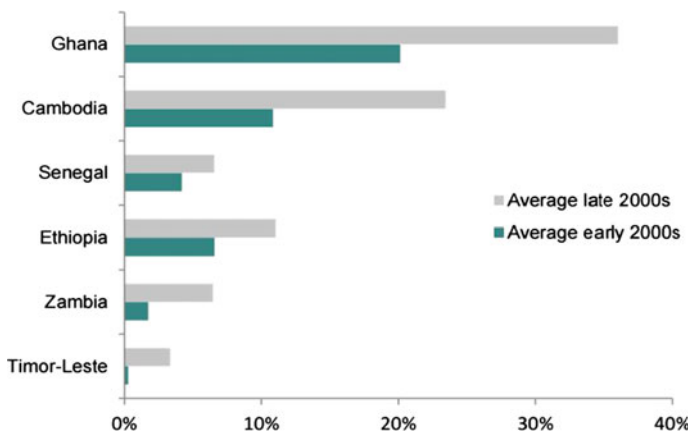

Fig. 7.1 The share of non-traditional development assistance

in the early 2000s, growing to around 6 % between 2008 and 2010. NTDA accounted for 9.1 % of total assistance in Ethiopia in 2009 (Schmaljohann & Prizzon, 2015).

Enabling Environment and Civil Society Space

The enabling environment for civil society is defined by conditions that impact the capacity of citizens and organizations to engage in development processes in an effective and sustained manner, including the legal and regulatory framework, and political, sociocultural and economic factors (CIVICUS, 2013). This environment for civil society is markedly different in each of the emerging powers, yet there is the common situation of operating within a country that is shifting from being an aid recipient to a partner in development cooperation. Civil society in these countries is facing the challenge of balancing competing demands and maintaining relevance. Civil society organizations are adjusting to domestic demands, alongside engaging with multilateral groupings, as well as engaging with opportunities for South-South cooperation.

The Enabling Environment Index (EEI) is a CIVICUS initiative that ranks 109 countries using a set of indicators that assess the governance, socioeconomic, and sociocultural environment that enables civil society to function effectively. Whilst the EEI is limited by the secondary data available for some of the dimensions, it does give us an indication of the enabling environment in the BRICS (Table 7.1).

Amongst eight of the most significant emerging countries, only South Africa and Brazil scored marginally higher than the global average, with India, Russia, and China measured as having a poor environment for citizens to participate in civil society. Therefore, we can observe that as the emerging powers become more prominent in global decision making there are restrictions in the environment for civil society to operate effectively in these countries.

South Africa ranks the highest out of the emerging powers, with high scores for government cooperation and an environment conducive to policy dialogue. This result also reinforces my research findings that the South African government has been willing to engage, with one civil society organization saying, "DIRCO

Table 7.1 Enabling environment index ranking of emerging powers (*Source* Author's own based on CIVICUS, 2013)

Country	Ranking (out of 109)
South Africa	40
India	67
Russia	75
China	89
Brazil	42
Mexico	51
Indonesia	59
Turkey	72

[Department of International Relations and Cooperation] has accepted every request to meet with civil society" (Poskitt pers. comm., 2014).

Brazil ranked 2nd of the emerging powers, with low scores in the governance dimension, causing India to rank 3rd of the BRICS countries and below the global average. Russia and China both have a fairly good socioeconomic environment for civil society, but very poor governance contexts. Further to this, China also scored highly in the sociocultural dimension, which suggests there is potential for civic action and organized civil society in China, although it is currently limited by legal restrictions.

Further to the CIVICUS Enabling Environment Index, it is beneficial to analyse how emerging powers perform in other indices that impact civil society space and effectiveness. The results below demonstrate that the environment for social sector organizations is restricted in many of the most significant emerging powers (Tables 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4).

Table 7.2 Open data barometer 2015 rankings for emerging powers (*Source* Author's own using open data barometer)

Country	Ranking out of 86
South Africa	41
India	39
Russia	26
China	46
Brazil	21
Mexico	24
Indonesia	36
Turkey	41

Table 7.3 Corruption index 2015 for emerging powers (*Source* Author's own based on transparency international)

Country	Ranking out of 167
South Africa	61
India	70
Russia	119
China	83
Brazil	76
Mexico	95
Indonesia	88
Turkey	66

Table 7.4 Freedom House ratings (*Source* Freedom House)

Country	
South Africa	Free
India	Free
Russia	Not free
China	Not free
Brazil	Free
Mexico	Partly free
Indonesia	Partly free
Turkey	Partly free

The differences in scores between the IBSA countries on the one hand and China and Russia on the other would seem to justify distinguishing the former countries from their fellow BRICS and labelling them as "Democratic Emerging Powers" or DEPs (Jenkins & Mawdsley, 2013). This distinction is often made by civil society and government actors alike from the IBSA countries. Despite these proclaimed and perceived differences, however, the emerging powers share common characteristics that make their domestic policy contexts challenging environments for social sector organizations seeking to engage in debates around international development cooperation, and this is the case even in the IBSA countries.

The first of these characteristics is a belief in a strong (developmental) state which is endowed not only with superior financial and technical resources for promoting national development but also with a certain moral superiority. This moral superiority derives from a mix of the political legitimacy of state elites as representatives of the interests of the people (whether or not they are formally elected to represent these interests) with a more generalised sense of entitlement to rule, sometimes combined with a specific claim to have restored the country's greatness or a with a revolutionary or otherwise transformative narrative attached to the ruling party. This makes it hard for civil society's own legitimacy claims to get a purchase, and inclines elites towards the view that while civil society organizations may have a place in delivering state-conceived policy initiatives, they should not go beyond this in seeking to shape such initiatives or propose their own. This conflicts with civil society's own view that they are in effect the co-authors if not the originators of many successful policies recently adopted in the emerging powers.

The second characteristic is a strong nationalistic tendency in which growing assertiveness is mixed with historically rooted anti-colonialism, which makes life particularly difficult for social sector organizations who are aligned with and/or funded by transnational actors based in the Northern traditional donor countries. As Tandon and Bandyopadhyay note, "for some BRICS States there may be a lurking doubt that civil societies, and particularly the civil society organizations, are a western invention and not to be trusted/relied upon" (2013, p. 14). This has contributed to the development of an increasingly restrictive legal framework, a tendency which is most marked in the more authoritarian contexts but is also increasingly evident in the so-called Democratic Emerging Powers.

Legal Environment for Social Sector Organizations in Emerging Powers

There is evidence of a growing concern about the restrictions that civil society faces in many countries. Civil society reports are supported by comprehensive research studies and statements by high profile political figures. The Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment (2014) found a mounting body of evidence of increasing restrictions on CSOs' access to foreign and

non-foreign sources of finance and restrictions to peaceful assembly; and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law recorded more than 50 restrictive laws that have been passed or considered worldwide that would restrict the formation, operation, and funding of CSOs, as well as the right to peaceful assembly in 2013 (ICNL, 2013). At the UN Special Meeting on the Post-2015 Agenda, President Obama stated,

> we're… seeing a growing number of countries that are passing laws designed specifically to stifle civil society…We're also seeing new and fragile democracies cracking down on civil society, which…sets them back and sends a dangerous signal to other countries. (White House, 2013, para. 9).

Instituted largely as a result as a response to terrorism, Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) legislation has grown to become one of the more common policies impeding support for NGOs. IFF legislation has generally been adopted for well-founded reasons as governments have a legitimate interest in preventing the flow of illegal goods, preventing tax evasion, and depriving terrorist groups of access to funding. It can be argued that policies controlling NGOs in terrorism affected areas are justified as there is evidence that some NGOs have been used to conceal and route funds to extremist organizations.

However, Hudson Institute (2015) argue that Russia, Turkey, Malaysia, and Pakistan are amongst the countries using this type of legislation to deliberately restrict the funding to civil society organizations. In each of these countries, legislation passed supposedly to combat IFFs has been used to limit the autonomy of philanthropic actors, investigate and monitor groups critical of the government, and impede organizations attempting to access foreign funds.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, Maina Kiai, highlighted the restrictions on an organization's ability to access financial resources as a violation of the right to freedom of association. In his annual report to the Human Rights Council in April 2013, Maina Kiai specifically noted the restrictions in Russia.

In November 2012, Russia began implementing a law requiring NGOs receiving foreign funding and conducting "political" activities to register as "foreign agents." Government officers began making unannounced inspections of over 2000 NGOs in search of foreign agents. During these inspections, officials demanded a wide variety of information, from staff lists to tax records. The first conviction under the new law came in April 2013 against Golos, an election monitoring organization. Foreign NGOs, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Crisis Group, were similarly subject to spontaneous inspections despite falling outside the purview of the 2012 law. In October 2012, Russia expelled USAID from the country, accusing it of meddling in politics. In addition, beginning in January 2013, Russian NGOs implementing political or other activities on the territory of the Russian Federation that constitute threats to the interests of the Russian Federation, were prohibited from receiving any US funding (ICNL, 2013). In 2015 and continuing in 2016, it is possible to observe the Russian legislation being used as an example by other governments to develop their own

more restrictive environment for organizations (Reuters, 2015). The parliament in Kyrgyzstan is debating a bill which is a blueprint of the Russian foreign agents legislation (Poskitt, pers. comm., 2016).

In India, there have been recent moves by the government to increase the restrictions on civil society organizations that receive funding from international organizations. A report by the Intelligence Bureau accusing several foreign-funded NGOs of stalling major infrastructure projects, was leaked in May 2014. The report accused foreign-funded NGOs of anti-development activities and serving as tools for foreign policy interests of western governments. Organizations and individuals working on environmental, land rights, or anti-nuclear issues were specifically mentioned in the report as using "people-centric issues to create an environment, which lends itself to stalling development projects." The report claimed that India's annual GDP growth rate fell by 2–3 % because of civil society campaigns between 2011 and 2013 (Mashru, 2014).

Whilst the accusations and the targeting of environmental organizations in India are not new,[1] there are concerns within civil society that the timing of the leaked report, just days after Narendra Modi became prime minister, suggests new tougher restrictions by the government. "We are part of a broader community of civil society in India and so recognise that the attacks on Greenpeace are not just attacks against Greenpeace," said Kumi Naidoo, chief executive officer (CEO) of Greenpeace. There is evidence since the leaked report of several other organizations, researchers and academics besides Greenpeace who have had their bank accounts frozen, international staff denied access to enter India, as well as Indian activists that have been prevented from travelling to the UK.

Funding and Sustainability of Social Sector Organizations

Civil society funding is heterogeneous and some organizations have been highly adaptable and resourceful in recent decades. However, several challenges are evident that civil society organizations, regardless of size, locations, or mandate, urgently need to be considering when planning long term sustainability and change.

In many countries, but particularly evident in emerging powers, civil society is caught between measures that make it more difficult to access foreign funding and the fact that domestic funders are not yet able or willing to support social sector organizations to a large extent. The Index of Philanthropic Freedom assesses the enabling environment, the restrictions on the ability of civil society organizations to incorporate, operate, and receive foreign funding. Barriers that can be identified to restrict organization receiving funds can take on a number of forms, including

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[1]In 2012, NGOs funded by America and Scandinavian countries were accused of fueling protests against the Kudankulam nuclear project in Tamil Nadu (see www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-17150953—accessed 6 February 2016).

limitations on civil society organization founders, minimum capital requirements, lengthy registration periods, high registration costs, and endemic corruption. According to Douglas Rutzen, President and CEO of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, his tracking data reveal that 98 laws restricting freedom of association or assembly around the world have been proposed or passed since 2012. Approximately half of these laws put constraints on the registration and operation of civil society organizations and another third constrain cross-border philanthropy. The constraints on civil society are seen throughout all regions of the world as well.

Table 7.5 shows the ranking of emerging powers and the US in the Philanthropic Freedom Index. The study found significant variations in philanthropic freedom among these countries, with scores ranging between a maximum 4.83 and a minimum of 1.69. While the countries studied in the Index of Philanthropic Freedom represent a diverse array of philanthropic environments, many share a number of common challenges and opportunities.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the legal restrictions being used in Russia are also being implemented in numerous other countries, such as India, Egypt, Uganda, Cambodia, Hungary and Ecuador. However, legal restrictions are not the only way to limit civil society assistance and curtail the work of NGOs who receive such funding. "Governments engaged in pushback also work to create a political climate in which recipients of foreign funding are intimidated and publicly delegitimized. Government officials in Ecuador, Malaysia, Russia, and Venezuela, for example, have depicted NGOs receiving external support as foreign agents or puppets of Western powers pursuing larger geostrategic objectives" (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014, p. 11).

One international enabler of civil society space restriction, somewhat unintentionally, comes in the form of the global mechanisms to prevent money laundering and financial flows to terrorism. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1989 to fight money laundering, which broadened its scope substantially following the 9/11 terrorist attacks to also address the financing of terrorism. In 2015, a coalition of civil society organizations —the Charity Security Network, Human Security Collective, European Foundation Centre, and European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law - drew attention to the ways in which the work of the FATF can be harmful for civil society (CIVICUS, 2016).

Table 7.5 Index of philanthropic freedom (*Source* Hudson Institute philanthropy index, 2015)

Country	Ranking out of 64	Score (0–5)
South Africa	29	3.7
India	46	3.2
Russia	50	2.9
China	52	2.7
Brazil	33	3.6
Mexico	22	3.8
Indonesia	56	2.5
Turkey	47	3.1
USA	2	4.7

The FATF may be an unwitting enabler of restriction because several governments, under the guise of FATF compliance, have introduced measures far in excess of those required by the FATF, suggesting that governments are "policy laundering": introducing restrictive measures for reasons other than compliance.

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law argues that these governments are using the justification that receiving international funding undermines national security and "might affect public peace." There is a typology of the different ways in which the receipt of international funding is being restricted, as part of a sustained decline in the key civil society rights of free association, assembly, and expression. The restrictions on international funding include:

1. Requiring government approval to receive international funding;
2. Introducing "foreign agents" legislation to stigmatize civil society organizations;
3. Limiting the amount of international funding that civil society organizations can receive;
4. Restricting activities that can be supported from international funding; and
5. Applying broad anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering measures to restrict international funding (CIVICUS, 2015, p. 3).

Several of these government tactics to curtail the role and effectiveness of civil society organisations are evident in this example from Malaysia:

> In Malaysia, both the government and the state-controlled media have demonized foreign-funded NGOs as treacherous and destabilizing forces…In July 2011, Utusan Malaysia, a newspaper owned by the ruling UMNO (United Malays National Organization) Party, accused a prominent organization calling for electoral reforms of being backed by "foreign agents." (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014, p. 12).

Demonstrating the influence of the media and the government's efforts to crackdown on civil society, the NGO referred to in the Utusan Malaysia, was subsequently outlawed by the government. The following year, in 2012, a Malaysian minister publicly asserted that "the influx of foreign funds for such purposes will cause us to become agents of foreign powers and we will be forced to create lies to destabilise the country" (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014, p. 12).

Alternative Funding Sources for Civil Society Organizations

There is a pressing need for organizations to consider new, alternative sources of funding as traditional donors are reducing funding. The geopolitical changes and shifts in development assistance flows discussed earlier in this chapter mean that social sector organizations in many emerging powers are no longer receiving traditional donor funding, for example UK aid to South Africa and India ending completely in 2015 (DFID, 2012).

The end of bi-lateral development assistance to emerging powers has had a devastating impact on some of the most influential and innovative organizations from India and Brazil, who over the last decade have lost much of the access to international foundation or NGO funding that they had used to maintain a degree of autonomy from government or business influences while combining local projects with knowledge generation and policy advocacy (Moilwa et al., 2015). South African organizations have now begun to be subjected to the same pressures, though the phasing out of bilateral aid to South Africa began more recently, and they continue to some extent to be shielded by their strategic location on the African continent, still the epicentre of activity for the global aid industry.

The modes and levels of domestic philanthropy are very different within the emerging powers due to a range of historical, cultural, and regulatory issues. For an in depth analysis of philanthropy and resource mobilization in emerging powers see the excellent research by the Hudson Institute (2013).

The donor-driven agenda for value-for-money programing and the reporting frameworks that suit the public demands in donor countries, stifles civil society innovation and creativity. This is not a particularly new trend, but some people argue there are "ever-smaller chunks of money with ever-larger relative reporting requirements" (CIVICUS, 2015, p. 2).

The consequence of these trends to the funding of the civil society organizations, is the increased dependence of organizations on government funding for tightly circumscribed local development activities. As outlined above in the analysis of enabling environment, the policy and political context in emerging powers is problematic for a simple shift from overseas to domestic funding. In a press release after the leak of the Intelligence Bureau memo on restricting access to foreign funding, the CSO platform Voluntary Action Network India argued that:

> In the last decade the relationship between government and NGOs has changed drastically. NGOs are not seen as the partners in development but rather as subcontractors…The sector which was known for its innovations has become a tool for delivering the projects. (Vani, 2014, p. 2)

Vani further notes that civil society in India is still in the charity mode of philanthropy and has not moved to a mature level of society wherein private donation is motivated by the overall development of country (Vani, 2014, p. 2).

Civil society is grappling with the question of who will fund civil society organizations in the future as traditional donors start to withdraw their financial support to emerging economies. International NGOs with a long-established presence in the emerging powers, such as Oxfam and ActionAid, are continuing to support strategic research and advocacy work, but they are also establishing nationalised branches in these countries that are often seen by national organizations as competitors for scarce international and domestic funding.

Further to the clear immediate funding challenges for many organizations in emerging powers, there are important consideration for the social and accountability consequences of these shifts in funding patterns. There is growing awareness that the transparency, governance, social, and environmental justice issues around

which organizations have long mobilized domestically are now struggling to find domestic funding. Without traditional donors or international NGOs funding research and advocacy in emerging powers, will their governments support civil society research and engagement in these areas? If not, who will hold the governments to account? And if emerging powers' governments or businesses do financially support research and civil society mobilization projects, who will be setting the debate agenda?

The final section of this chapter looks at the risks of civil society organizations in the emerging powers shifting their mandate and ability to be outspoken as a result of increasing domestic, private sector, and foundation funding.

The Role of Social Sector Organizations and Domestic Development Innovation

The principle focus of the challenges to the enabling environment for civil society organizations in emerging powers as discussed throughout this chapter, is limiting the ability of organizations to engage in the domestic development policy debates particularly in relation to governance, human rights, and environmental issues. Emerging power government funding for organizations has primarily been for service-delivery and targeted anti-poverty programs. Advocacy organizations in emerging powers are often the most affected by the changes in funding sources.

Tensions in these fields are of course by no means new, and in many cases they contain echoes of past struggles, whether against the military dictatorship in Brazil, the Soviet system in Russia, the suppression of dissent in China, the State of Emergency in India or apartheid in South Africa. These echoes mean that state elites are particularly sensitive to challenge in these fields, either because they identify with the regimes that were targeted by these struggles and fear a repeat of the legitimacy challenges that they represented (in the case of China and Russia), or because they consider that they themselves are the legitimate heirs of these struggles and the custodians of the aspirations for justice that they embodied (in the case of Brazil and South Africa), and cannot thus be criticised in the same terms as the regimes that they helped to end.

However, there are many within civil society organizations within the emerging powers who argue that amid their concern to assert their own political legitimacy and proclaim their own development successes, state elites have ignored the role that civil society organizations-led struggles for human rights and social and environmental justice played in shaping these development successes. Widely trumpeted policy innovations that are now being spread through South-South Cooperation, such as India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Brazil's *Bolsa-Família* (literally, "family purse") social protection program, had their roots in civil society campaigns for an end to hunger and poverty and against the corruption that marked governments' existing anti-poverty

initiatives. As the Brazil State of the Debate report put it, "many public policies, which are shared by the Brazilian government with other developing countries, are seen as the result of social dynamics and political struggles that had civil society as a key player" (Costa Leite et al., 2014. pp. 63–64).

In addition to campaigning, organizations from the emerging powers have also accumulated long experience in implementing development projects in their home countries. This has enabled them to develop innovative social technologies at the local level; a recent major Indian civil society workshop on development cooperation concluded that "it is important to acknowledge civil society contribution in innovation and applications of development methodologies particularly in the context of local diversities" (PRIA, 2013, p. 6).

Civil society organizations argue they have made a distinctive contribution to the dynamics that have given the emerging powers their unique combination of global influence, high inequality, and high innovation capacity (Shankland & Constantine, 2014), yet their contribution is being systematically undervalued by governments. A series of case studies carried out by IDS, Articulação SUL, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) in 2014, demonstrated some of the proactive international roles played by civil society organizations from middle-income countries and illustrate the contributes civil society organizations have made to government policies (Moilwa et al., 2015). The collaborations demonstrated in these case studies are usually based on values of solidarity among communities facing similar problems in different countries, and often developed out of initial links facilitated by faith-based organizations or international NGOs. As the overseas role of the rising powers grows, such collaborations provide an important foundation for joint civil society campaigns linking BRICS-based organisations with counterparts in Africa, where debate on the opportunities and risks of engagement with the BRICS for their countries' development is increasing among civil society actors (Vaes & Huyse, 2013).

Such solidarity-based linkages often form part of what Brigagão and Seabra (2009), discussing the Brazilian case, call "civic diplomacy." While such linkages are often rooted in political solidarity, for example among peasant movements affiliated with the transnational Vía Campesina ("the peasants' way") movement (Chichava et al., 2013), they may also have a religious dimension. This was evidenced in the role of the Catholic Church in promoting linkages with Haiti among Brazilian as well as Mexican civil society organizations (Costa Leite et al., 2014; Gómez Bruera, 2014).

Poskitt and Shankland (2014) acknowledge in some cases of South-South cooperation initiatives there is an increased willingness on the part of governments to fund NGOs to provide outsourced government services and deliver targeted anti-poverty programs. India's new government is a case in point; regarded with hostility by many civil society organizations for its commitment to brushing aside social and environmental justice concerns in pursuit of a development model tailored to suit the interests of "big capital," it was nonetheless described by interviewees as pragmatic and open to dialogue on the potential for civil society involvement in development initiatives—at least within the framework described by

Dagnino as that of "the neoliberal project, which requires the shrinking of the social responsibilities of the state and their transference to civil society" (2008, 57).

At the same time, Chinese interviewees pointed to an increased willingness on the part of the government to allow them (and in some cases to fund them) to take the lead in experimenting with solutions to development and service delivery challenges at local and provincial level, with Yunnan Province and the city of Shenzhen being cited as examples. Domestic and international observers alike have described a proliferation of both informal and legally registered NGOs and a rapidly improving regulatory environment for social organizations in China, despite continued nervousness about a possible resumption in the pattern of periodic crackdowns that has marked the government's relationship with organizations that lie beyond its direct control (Simon, 2011; The Economist, 2014; Zhang, 2015). Even in Russia, a study for the international Civil Society at the Crossroads project found many activists outside Moscow were optimistic about the opening-up of spaces for constructive engagement and civil society-led development activities at the local level, even while the clampdown on democracy and human rights movements in the capital continued to intensify (Buxton & Konalova, 2012).

In conclusion, there appears to be a pattern whereby state elites across the emerging powers are open to and even encouraging of civil society engagement in tackling the challenges of poverty and inequality that continue to affect their countries, at least in part because they are aware of the risks of political instability that arise from these challenges. State elites nevertheless remain determined to set the terms of the engagement and are wary of any challenge to their overall political legitimacy and control over policy processes. The result is that while there is still the potential for innovations to be generated within local civil society-led development initiatives, many opportunities for them to be scaled up into national policy are likely to be lost.

Lessons for Global Civil Society

The increasingly restricted environment for social sector organizations that has been analysed and discussed throughout this chapter, presents global civil society with numerous challenges and considerations for the future. Shifts in the global economic and political landscape account for some of the challenges civil society organizations face today, but the domestic political environment in emerging powers is of great importance. In addition to putting in place barriers to prevent civil society organizations operating effectively, there is evidence that the emerging powers are stimulating civil society organisations' participation in local service delivery while restricting the scope for them to shape national and international policy. Along with the steep decline in funding from traditional sources, this has compromised civil society's ability to sustain a strategy of combining grass-roots innovation with broad-based policy engagement.

Civil society organizations and international donors need to debate more widely the extent to which international donors need to comply with local laws that curtail civil society rights. If a country prohibits external funding for political advocacy and human rights activities by NGOs altogether, should aid providers nevertheless attempt to find ways to get funds to NGOs they wish to support in that country? Some people argue that local laws should always be observed, whereas the US government maintains a policy of "reserving the right" not to respect local laws that it believes impede legitimate democracy and rights support.

With aid-recipient governments increasingly accusing civil society organisations and donors of crossing lines with regard to the political nature of their assistance, the question arises of whether it is possible for civil society organizations to agree among themselves and with recipient governments where those lines should be drawn. Civil society organisations and donors need to be more aware of how their work is perceived to engage in more systematic reflection about what limits of intrusiveness they should respect. In order to address some of the current challenges facing civil society around the world, government and civil society must try to reach a consensus concerning the line between acceptable political engagement and illegitimate political meddling.

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Part III
Fostering Organization Resilience

Introduction

> Everything can be taken from a man (and woman) but one thing; the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way
>
> —Viktor Frankl

Many social sector organizations operate with limited budgets in resource challenged environments and yet are expected to deal with the growing demand for their services. They are further impacted by the perplexities of the various in-country political situations, especially efforts in some countries to restrict SSOs' access to foreign and non-foreign funding, to limit what services they can provide, and to prohibit advocacy and human rights activities. Given this turbulent and complex environment, social sector organizations need to foster resilience in order to sustain themselves and thrive.

What is Resilience?

Robb (2000, p. 27) defines resilience as the capability to do two things simultaneously:

- Deliver excellent performance against current goals; and
- Effectively innovate and adapt to rapid, turbulent changes in markets and technologies.

It also includes:

- Ability to create structure and to dissolve it;
- Provide safety in the midst of change;
- Manage the emotional (anxiety and grief) consequences of continuous transformation and change; and
- Learn, develop, and grow.

Hillman (2013, slide 8) describes organizational resilience as an "ability to anticipate risks and future trends (prepare/before); to understand the situation, to resist, and act thoughtful (response/during); to recover fast, to adapt, and to renew

or reinvent (recover/after); while effectively aligning operational with corporate strategies to be able to survive in turbulent and complex environments."

For social sector organizations, Bonilla (2015, p. 11) argues that the organization's core values (e.g., take risks, share leadership, collaborate, innovate, act with integrity, pursue excellence) are the engine that drives the key components that contribute to resilience:

- Resources—social, emotional, material;
- Experiences—exposure, involvement, insight, what one has learned from the past;
- Agility—openness to change and the capacity to move quickly; and
- Structures—task allocation, coordination, supervision that furthers the mission rather than impedes.

If the organizational leaders continue to expound the core values, express the core values in action, and act in a way that encourages staff to develop their own belief in the values, together they can develop a resilient work environment (Bonilla, 2015). In such a work environment people take risks by sharing resources, by talking about what they have learned from the past and from working for other organizations, by being open to change, and by being willing to create a structure and encourage practices that are more in line with the core values. Resilience is maintained if the espoused values are the basis for re-inventing the organization to respond to a turbulent and complex work environment.

The chapters in this part focus on fostering resilience through human capital development, improving the functioning of the board of directors, learning how to structure and restructure an organization to be responsive to core values in order to aid constituents in ending discrimination, and helping organizations overcome trauma through regaining their resilience and agility to handle internal and external challenges.

Ways to Foster Resilience

Ramon Wenzel, in Chap. 8, "Learning for Purpose: Challenges and Opportunities for Human Capital Development in the Social Sector," focuses on developing human capital so that social sector organizations can continue to respond to complex changes and challenges and fully realize their mission and community objectives. Many social sector organizations may not be sufficiently equipped to deal with current and future challenges. Staff need to become more adept at developing and managing new services, processes, and ways of doing the work. To successfully move forward the social sector organizations need to (1) revisit key competencies, (2) rethink work learning, and (3) revise funding models.

Key competencies for a specific social sector organization can be determined by its strategy and structure, the underlying business or funding model, and the wider context of the purpose it addresses. Practitioners ought to discuss and define what competencies directly and indirectly facilitate social change both within their organization and across the social sector. When analyzing and articulating a key

competence, the following needs to be considered: How does this specific competence relate to achieving the overall mission? How will improving this competence facilitate increased organizational viability and more social change?

There need to be continuous learning opportunities that promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, and empower people toward a collective vision. People should be able to openly discuss errors in order to learn from them. This involves encouraging an open and honest feedback culture, where issues and problems are viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve. It further means that people in such organizations are rewarded for exploring new ways of working.

Wenzel also stresses it is essential to revise the traditional funding models and beliefs that underpin much of the social sector and develop a multipronged approach that increases funding and time directed to developing people, maximizing the utility of extant learning opportunities, and changing the conversation about costs.

Mary Hiland, in Chap. 9, "The Next Level: Understanding Effective Board Development," argues for the importance of well-functioning boards. Understanding board development requires answers to some basic questions. First, do boards matter? If the answer is yes, the next questions to ask are: Is it worth putting in the effort and resources to improve a board? Does board development result in more effective boards? What does an effective board look like? And finally: How do boards achieve the next level? What practices and/or processes make up board development and which work best? What are the critical success factors?

Hiland's chapter explores the answers to these questions. She cites research that verifies that boards indeed do matter and presents the characteristics of particularly effective boards. She also provides a framework for thinking about board assessment. Finally, Hiland presents the findings of her research that identified the benefits of board development, its four dimensions, and the critical factors for a successful board development process. Strong governance helps ensure long-term resilience and this chapter offers excellent insights about how to strengthen the work of organizational governance.

Aruna Rao, David Kelleher, Carol Miller, Joanne Sandler, Ricky Stuart, and Tania Principe, in Chap. 10, "Gender at Work: An Experiment in 'Doing Gender,'" tell the story of their virtual, transnational feminist network with 20 associates and a small complement of staff based in 10 countries that support organizational and institutional change to end discrimination against women and build cultures of equality in organizations. They strive to change deep structures of discrimination and social norms; and they continue to structure and restructure their organization so that it is consistent with feminist principles and does not replicate traditional forms of organizational power relations so they can continue their work promoting social justice and gender equality.

They share important lessons about how to create a resilient organization, which can operate globally and remain nimble, flexible, and mission-driven. The chapter traces their beginnings as a networked organization, their many structural changes,

and their vision for how they will structure and restructure themselves as they move into the future.

Shana Hormann and Pat Vivian, in Chap. 11, "Intervening in Organizational Trauma: A Tale of Three Organizations," offer ways to deal with organizational trauma. Organizational trauma may result from a single devastating event, from the effects of many deleterious events over time, or from the impact of cumulative trauma that comes from the nature of the organization's work. Whatever the source, organizations are wounded, sometimes severely. Trauma and traumatization overpower the organization's cultural structure and processes and weaken the organization's resilience and agility to respond to external and internal challenges. These experiences leave the organization feeling vulnerable and helpless and create lasting impact on the organizational psyche and culture. While all organizations might have dysfunctional patterns, trauma-genic organizational cultures reproduce traumatizing dynamics and circumstances so that the entity never completely heals from traumatic events.

Hormann and Vivian caution that unless the effects of organizational trauma and the resulting dynamics are addressed effectively, organizations are doomed to repeat them. Without developing approaches that work in these persistently traumatized systems, usual interventions, even those developed for use in nonprofits, are less effective or not effective at all. Many situations are complex with more than one type of trauma affecting the health of the organizations.

Through three case studies, Hormann and Vivian present an overview of organizational trauma they have observed, contributing factors, and examples of interventions.

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Chapter 8
Learning for Purpose: Challenges and Opportunities for Human Capital Development in the Social Sector

Ramon Wenzel

> Learning is not attained by chance.
> It must be sought for with ardour and attended to with diligence.
> —Abigal Adams

Social sector organizations (SSO) provide services and support that are diverse and complicated, and often in the fields where private and public entities are not able or willing to engage—they shape and sustain an attractive and functional society. Meanwhile, SSOs are held more accountable to deliver better quality services, whilst being forced to adapt to heightened regulatory compliance and policy uncertainty, develop complex strategies, compete for limited resources and clients, navigate collaborations or mergers, seek balanced work load and fair pay, address multiple public and private stakeholders, manage shifting volunteer and donor preferences, and face increased costs and fiscal restraints (ACOSS, 2013; Cunningham, Baines, & Charlesworth, 2014; Deloitte, 2012; Kong, 2008; Suárez, 2010).

SSOs must address these issues through their human capital: the knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, personalities, and interests embodied in the employees and volunteers seeking to realize social change (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). They can perform to the maximum when their competence is consistent with the work demands and the organizational requirements (Boyatzis, 2008; Leitch, 2006). That is, the right knowledge, skills, and abilities make employees and volunteers more effective in their jobs, which, in turn, facilitates organizational resilience and success (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011; Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012). Even minor changes in productivity and performance can have significant positive impact on social problems (Bradley, Jansen, & Silverman, 2003).

Accordingly, the ability of the social sector to respond to complex challenges effectively rests on the strategies, policies, and practices that affect the capability of its people. The question of how to gain and sustain this crucial human capital for the social sector thus increasingly occupies the attention of managers, policy makers,

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funders, training providers, and researchers. In the broad context of strategic human resource management, one can decide to buy (i.e., sign), borrow (i.e., contract), or build (i.e., develop) human capital. This chapter focuses on the latter.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that developing human capital is not mysterious, accidental, or something that can be postponed. Instead, human capital development ought to be considered as a strategic and deliberate activity of the social sector. By integrating evidence from the US, Canada, UK, and Australia, the present chapter argues that there is considerable need and scope to improve the understanding and management of human capital development so that SSOs can fully realize their mission and community objectives.

The chapter is selective and illustrative; it complements other excellent reviews on the social sector (Anheier, 2009, 2014; Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Mintzberg, 2015; Salamon, Sokolowski, Megan, & Rice, 2013) and its human capital (Carson, Maher, & King, 2007; Earles, Lynn, & Sciences, 2010; HR Council for the Voluntary and Non-profit Sector, 2008; Kong, 2007; Lawson, 2008; McIsaac, Park, & Toupin, 2013; McMullen & Schellenberg, 2003). What follows integrates practical relevant knowledge, scholarly findings, and emerging debates on human capital development as it relates to the social sector.

To provide the necessary background, the concept and importance of human capital and its development is reviewed. It is consequently argued that all social sector stakeholders need to (1) revisit the key competencies required in the social sector (i.e., What has to be learned?), (2) rethink approaches of work learning (i.e., How to go about developing the key competencies?), and (3) revise the underlying funding models (i.e., What actions by whom can facilitate this?). The conclusion provides some summative calls to action for practitioners and scholars.

Human Capital and Its Development in the Social Sector

Human capital comprises the full range of workers' cognitive features, such as general cognitive ability, knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as non-cognitive features, including personality, values, and interests (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Depending on their configuration, some of these characteristics may be considered context generic, whereby they are broadly applicable outside the organization (e.g., transferable skills), or context specific, so that they have limited applicability elsewhere (e.g., proprietary knowledge) (Campbell, Coff, & Kryscynski, 2012). Accordingly, human capital is not simply an aggregate headcount of transactional human resources (i.e., someone to do the job), but rather the transformational product of workers' multiple psychological attributes. Human capital is thus viewed as a particular class of resource that can be a significant driver of organizational viability and success (Nyberg, Moliterno, Hale, & Lepak, 2014; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001).

Indeed, a recent meta-analytic research spanning sixty-six studies concludes that human capital relates strongly and positively to organizational performance (Crook et al., 2011). A growing body of evidence supports the positive relationship

between strategic human resource management and multiple favorable organizational outcomes. For example, a recent global study of over 1000 organizations found that organizations that do well in attracting, motivating, developing, and retaining staff, enjoy better overall and economic performance than organizations that are weaker in those areas (Benson-Armer, Otto, & Webster, 2015). Accordingly, because other firm-level resources such as economic capital (i.e., financial and tangible assets such as equipment) can often be easily imitated; human capital has become the most important competitive and economic driver for many industries and organizations (Huselid & Becker, 2011).

Furthermore, skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing, and opportunity-enhancing organizational practices constitute so called "High Performance Work Systems" (HPWS; Huselid, 1995; Posthuma, Campion, Masimova, & Campion, 2013). This construct has been studied in the social sector context; for example, non-profit organizations adopting HPWS demonstrated higher employee satisfaction and performance (Selden & Sowa, 2014) and social impact (Wenzel, 2015). Indeed, instead of simply managing benefits, compensation, and compliance from the distance, the human resource function and its officers are increasingly required to adopt more integral roles that closely align with, support, and shape an organization's strategy and success (Barney & Wright, 1997; Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Wright & Collins, 2008).

More generally, a meta-analysis based on 120 samples that represent 31,463 organizations found HPWS to be positively related to human capital (i.e., employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities) (Coff, 2002); employee motivation (the direction, intensity, and duration of employees' effort) (Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008); and financial and operational outcomes (Jiang et al., 2012). Findings further indicate that skill-enhancing practices have the strongest relationship with what employees are capable to contribute. In other words, it is fair to say that strategically well aligned and implemented human capital development will lead to multiple positive effects for individuals, organizations, and society (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Moreover, there are additional reasons for why the social sector crucially needs to focus on developing its human capital.

First, the world is changing in a variety of complex ways. The social sector does not operate in isolation, as it is affected by more general economic, technological, and social trends, for example: a volatile economy and labor market, increased globalization and mobility, ongoing developments in information and communications technologies, growing emphasis on measurement and data-driven decision making, complex and changing organizational structures, issues that require team- and collaboration-based solutions, increasingly diverse workforce, employees who seek a broader mix of total rewards and growth, highly diffused and cognitively demanding work means and outcomes, reduced supervision, and continuously changing jobs (Frese, 2008; Grant & Parker, 2009; Halpern, 2006; SHRM Foundation and The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2014; Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Those changes bring about the need for continuous professional development.

Second, specific capabilities are required by individuals and organizations to succeed in the changing work and societal contexts. To illustrate, the fiscal environment of the social sector is changing significantly. Many SSOs are painfully realizing that the

hamster wheel of chasing scattered donor appeals and external grants is not working any longer. As the output of those sources is dwindling, there is an increasing shift from fundraising to financing. It thus has been argued that SSOs need to improve both effectiveness and efficiency by better leveraging their rich and existing assets (CCA, 2014). This may involve improving operations, outcome measurement, and risk management; strategizing social entrepreneurship and mergers; and leading collaborations and people. In Australia, a governmental think tank concluded about the nonprofit sector: "board members may lack the skills required to conduct their duties. Similarly, management in the sector is often made up of service delivery employees looking for career advancement who may not necessarily have sufficient management skills" (Productivity Commission, 2010). Ultimately, this changing context necessitates awareness and expertise of new concepts and complexity, alongside the ability to derive and implement sophisticated solutions that can differ markedly from what might have worked well just some years ago (Bernholz, 2015).

Third, finding and attracting the right people is a challenge. The social sector continues its impressive growth, and this requires more staff, funding, leadership, governance, partnerships, and professionalism in multiple functions (Hwang & Powell, 2009). All of the above factors quickly exceed the passion, capacity, and dedication of the initial founders and supporters (Bodary, King, Moir, Schaps, & Schoenbach, 2009; Bradach & Grindle, 2014; GEO, 2012). Meanwhile, a global shortage of skilled workers is one of the principal concerns for the foreseeable future (Tanton, Phillips, Corliss, Vidyattama, & Hansnata, 2014). Current labor market trends include increased global competition for talent, higher demand for specialized jobs, and a changing demographic of the current workforce with many skilled people about to retire and the new generation of employees being more "sector-agnostic" (Earles et al., 2010; Edelman, 2015; SHRM Foundation, 2014). As a result, SSOs have to progressively compete with public and private organizations to resource the talent that will ensure their mission success (Tierney, 2006).

Taken together, whilst some SSOs clearly do well, there are signs that suggest many may not be sufficiently equipped to meet current and future challenges. There is evidence that those working and volunteering for SSOs ought to constantly become more adept at developing and managing new services, processes, and ways of doing things. The social sector also has to better leverage, and thus develop, the people working in it and those who intend to join it. All of the above suggests that developing human capital is critical. To successfully move the social sector forward, the case is made to (1) revisit key competencies, (2) rethink work learning, and (3) revise funding models.

Revisit Key Competencies

Competencies are understood as the prerequisites to fulfill the demands of a particular professional role (Boyatzis, 2008). The term "competence" is used as an aggregate label for any combination of interrelated cognitive, affective, and behavioral capacities including factual and procedural knowledge, mental models,

self-regulation, metacognitions, action routines, and personal qualities such as values, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and emotions (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993; Weinert, 2001). These components are mobilized for effective cognitive, functional, and social action in a particular work context (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Accordingly, competence as a holistic abstraction is useful for a broader discussion about what individuals in the social sector are expected to achieve as a result, in an event, or in a way of behaving at work.

The prefix *key* denotes those competencies with strategic, and thus, social impact, displaying high variability in the performance of incumbents (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005). Developing such key competencies has the greatest potential to generate significant returns through increasing revenue or decreasing costs, thus representing an upside potential (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007; Cascio & Boudreau, 2010). Traditionally, executive-level and leadership competencies were considered as key. However, more recent workforce differentiation literature suggests that key competencies are to be found anywhere (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Huselid & Becker, 2011), and include, for instance, social media skills to engage donors and volunteers, strategic thinking for non-executive directors, and the ability to conduct social research for evaluating and demonstrating the effects of programs and services.

However, there is no overarching framework for social sector key competencies, and this defies effective human capital development. Whilst the private, public, and nonprofit sector share some similarities, and certain industry profiles overlap, the social sector at large is fairly distinct in its purposes and needs. Indeed, given the state of SSOs today, it is prudent to understand them as distinctive yet similar institutions, despite their many differences, to be represented, serviced, and studied as a group (Salamon, 2012). Therefore, although a number of organizational roles and responsibilities are of universal nature, social sector endeavors can command unique competence demands. For instance, many nonprofit organizations operate within a fragmented and complex system, comprising a governing board, community representatives, client base, contractual relations with government and business, volunteer and membership components, numerous funders, and service providers. It has been shown that those stakeholders require distinct management and leadership approaches (Bish & Becker, 2015; Dempsey, 2015; Myers, 2004; Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, 2011; Schwartz & Austin, 2008; Thach & Thompson, 2007), while the legal, technical, and operational features can be fairly idiosyncratic (Anheier, 2000; Cornforth, 2003; Jegers, 2008).

As an example, nonprofit directors require a wider range of skills than for-profit directors (Gilchrist, 2012; Steane & Christie, 2001), including strategic campaigning and ability to work on multiple bottom lines (Kanter & Summers, 1994). Relatedly, people management skills become ever more critical to mission success. Though this might be true for the success of any organization, SSO leaders face some idiosyncratic challenges, for instance: "you're always, always, always fundraising and you haven't got much time, and I think that people management is critical because they're not getting paid much and you need to really look after them" (Dempsey, 2015).

Developing a competence framework for the social sector is crucial so that founders, executives, funders, policy makers, human resource managers, training providers, scholars, among others, can better align human capital with the purposes and strategic needs of SSOs. Such framework could be used to determine workforce needs and to assess how the current and anticipated future workforce compares to these requirements. This in turn enables evidence-based strategies for establishing human capital, including recruitment plans, specific training activities, performance management, tertiary curricula, and broader capacity development schemes. It will also assist those currently working in the sector seeking to enhance their capability and progress their careers, as well as aid individuals seeking to enter the social sector to become aware of the key competence requirements.

What is needed are standardized and social sector-specific competence descriptors that promote systematic SSO workforce planning, recruitment, and development. It is not argued to over-regulate social sector jurisdictions by introducing more legislated occupations that restrict access to and the exercise of a work role on the basis of some professional qualifications. Instead, practitioners and researchers should agree on common means for identifying, describing, and presenting valid, reliable information about social sector competencies. The primary goal is a meaningful "lexicon" with which stakeholders can inform the debate and measurement on a given key competence or role and the associated values and relationships within their organization and the purpose it serves (Bolden & Gosling, 2004).

One example of such competence framework is O*NET; developed at the dawn of the new millennium, it is arguably the most complex occupational information system that allows users to look at job profiles through different windows (Peterson, Borman, & Mumford, 1999, Peterson et al., 2001). Surprisingly, although the database has expanded in the recent decades, it contains very little designated information on many typical social sector responsibilities. The underlying data is also US centric and the framework may be considered too complex to be useful for small SSOs and human capital related functions. Nevertheless, a deliberately detailed example of a key competence description from the O*NET, and arguably the only one immediately relevant to the social sector, is provided in Table 8.1: fundraising. The key tasks do not operate independently of each other but are interrelated and may be configured differently as a function of a given SSO context and the actual job responsibility. A typical O*NET description would further provide details about tools and technology used; certain knowledge, skills, and abilities required; and representative work activities and contexts (not included in Table 8.1). Such taxonomic detail is useful to understand what responsibilities might be strategically meaningful, to describe what must be accomplished by the incumbents, to define the *ideal* and to measure *what is*, and then to design respective human capital interventions that address the identified gaps.

Another framework is the UK-based National Occupational Standards (NOS) which provides statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding. Again, the NOS comprises very little designated information on more specific social sector responsibilities, with the

Table 8.1 O*NET summary report for fundraisers (Open source document)

Key tasks involve:
• Identify and build relationships with potential donors. See more occupations related to this task
• Write and send letters of thanks to donors. See more occupations related to this task
• Secure commitments of participation or donation from individuals or corporate donors. See more occupations related to this task
• Develop fundraising activity plans that maximize participation or contributions and minimize costs. See more occupations related to this task
• Develop strategies to encourage new or increased contributions. See more occupations related to this task
• Create or update donor databases. See more occupations related to this task
• Direct or supervise fundraising staff, including volunteer staff members. See more occupations related to this task
• Develop or implement fundraising activities, such as annual giving campaigns or direct mail programs. See more occupations related to this task
• Solicit cash or in-kind donations or sponsorships from individual, business, or government donors. See more occupations related to this task
• Monitor progress of fundraising drives. See more occupations related to this task
• Conduct research to identify the goals, net worth, history of charitable donations, or other data related to potential donors, potential investors, or general donor markets. See more occupations related to this task
• Compile or develop materials to submit to granting or other funding organizations. See more occupations related to this task
• Establish fundraising or participation goals for special events or specified time periods. See more occupations related to this task
• Monitor budgets, expense reports, or other financial data for fundraising organizations. See more occupations related to this task
• Contact corporate representatives, government officials, or community leaders to increase awareness of organizational causes, activities, or needs. See more occupations related to this task
• Recruit sponsors, participants, or volunteers for fundraising events. See more occupations related to this task
• Write reports or prepare presentations to communicate fundraising program data. See more occupations related to this task
• Design or produce materials such as posters, Web sites, or newsletters to promote, market, or advertise fundraising events. See more occupations related to this task
• Write speeches, press releases, or other promotional materials to increase awareness of the causes, missions, or goals of organizations seeking funds. See more occupations related to this task
• Explain the tax advantages of contributions to potential donors. See more occupations related to this task
• Plan and direct special events for fundraising, such as silent auctions, dances, golf events, or walks. See more occupations related to this task
• Attend community events, meetings, or conferences to promote organizational goals or solicit donations or sponsorships. See more occupations related to this task
• Direct or coordinate web-based fundraising activities, such as online auctions or donation Web sites

Organize activities to raise funds or otherwise solicit and gather monetary donations or other gifts for an organization. May design and produce promotional materials. May also raise awareness of the organization's work, goals, and financial needs

Table 8.2 NOS overview for managing volunteers (Open source document)

Knowledge and understanding: promote volunteering to potential volunteers (extract)
You need to know and understand:
Analytical and research techniques: how to identify the types of people who may wish to volunteer their services; methods of identifying people's motivations, and how to select and use appropriate methods
Communication: the principles of effective communication and how to apply them; methods of communicating with potential volunteers, and how to select and use appropriate methods
Diversity and equality: the value of diversity of abilities, styles and motivations amongst volunteers, and how to foster such diversity
Involvement and motivation: the basic principles of motivation and how they apply to your work; how to help people articulate their motivations and understand how volunteering can meet their evolving needs and expectations; the importance of encouraging volunteers to extend their volunteer roles, and how to do so; the importance of getting informed feedback from people, and how to do so
Legal requirements: legislation relevant to the recruitment of volunteers
Organizational context: your organization's goals; your organization's policies; your organization's wider activities in which volunteers could be involved
Resource management: the importance of ensuring communication methods is cost- and time-effective
Volunteering: the importance of volunteering in meeting your organization's goals; the variety of different roles volunteers can fulfil and the different ways they can contribute to organizational goals; the range of abilities, styles, and motivations volunteers have, and how these affect the types of roles and activities they carry out; the volunteering opportunities available; the benefits volunteers derive from volunteering; the type of commitment volunteers need to make; opportunities for people to make a commitment to becoming a volunteer (e.g., verbal commitment, completion of an application form, signing volunteering agreement or code of conduct); other volunteering organizations to which it may be appropriate to refer volunteers; details about particular volunteer roles that volunteers need to know
The ability to motivate people is a key quality for every manager of volunteers. If you are responsible for the recruitment and management of volunteers in your organization, or your part of your organization, you will find that this unit focuses on the nature of your relationship with volunteers, from before they make a volunteering commitment, throughout their time with your organization, to beyond the conclusion of their formal volunteering agreement

exception on *managing volunteers* (Table 8.2 shows extract on promoting volunteering only).

Both examples illustrate how the social sector can define its key competencies more systematically so that all stakeholders can consistently work with these descriptors. Such framework should include competencies that relate to social sector strategy; governance; leadership and management of employees and volunteers; program and service design; impact measurement and evaluation; risk management and legal issues; enlisting funding; financial management and accounting; integrated reporting; attracting, developing, retaining talent; information and technology management; community outreach and marketing; advocacy and public policy; ethics; diversity; to name a few (Dolan, 2002; Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, 2011).

Key competencies for a specific SSO will be determined by its strategy and structure, the underlying business or funding model, and the wider context of the purpose it addresses. Practitioners ought to discuss and define what competencies directly and indirectly facilitate social change both within their SSO and across the social sector. In consultation with funders, government bodies, and learning providers, there should be a clear articulation and understanding of the key competencies required. All stakeholders should not simply assume that certain roles and competencies are of strategic nature, but rather articulate a theory of change: the building blocks, processes, and assumptions that explain the causal linkages. Namely, when analyzing and articulating a key competence, the following needs to be considered: How does this specific competence relate to achieving the overall mission? How will improving this competence facilitate increased organizational viability and more social change? Scholars should assist in this process by investigating the theoretical underpinning and empirically validating the taxonomy that allows more systematic engagement with social sector human capital.

In summary, it is important to develop a meaningful framework of key competencies that directly aid SSO in achieving their objectives. However, revisiting those key competencies only addresses the question of *what* should be learned. The next section addresses how the social sector might achieve the necessary learning outcomes.

Rethink Work Learning

Developing a competence involves learning (Fiol & Lyles, 1985), which can be achieved by an individual via multiple means (Sonnentag, Niessen, & Ohly, 2004). Formal learning typically refers to organized, episodic, instructor-led activities (e.g., training), and informal learning typically refers to activities that are amorphous (e.g., learning by experience) or self-directed (e.g., on-demand reading). Research has consistently demonstrated the positive effects of both formal learning activities (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Cedefop, 2011), and informal learning activities (Eraut & Hirsh, 2007; Tannenbaum, Beard, McNall, & Salas, 2010) on individual and organizational performance. However, this traditional dichotomy of formal and informal learning as it relates to work is too simplistic for how learning to perform is conceptualized, managed, and researched (Billett, 2002; Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Noe, Clarke, & Klein, 2014; Segers & Gegenfurtner, 2013). First, the most heavily invested in human capital development method is instructor-led training; in 2013, about $164.2 billion had been spent on this type of formal learning in the US alone (Miller, 2013). Yet, informal learning opportunities occur frequently and can be equally valuable to individuals and organization (Watkins & Marsick, 1992) as more formal work learning (Birdi, Allan, & Warr, 1997). Given much of the social sector has very limited, if not scarce resources to allocate towards human capital development, employing more informal learning means over costly formal training interventions might be an advantageous and reasonable

solution. For instance, knowledge sharing, secondments, self-directed study, and information curation are extremely potent means to develop human capital (Eraut, 2004; Wang & Noe, 2010). However, without proper organizational learning cultures and structures, this type of informal, unscheduled, and often accidental learning can also become a waste of time, create problems in the workflow, and bring little tangible benefits.

Second, a popular approach in human resource development, termed the "70:20:10 model," argues that individual learning is a result of 70 % of informal on-the-job learning, 20 % of coaching and mentoring, and 10 % of formal learning interventions. Though intuitively appealing, a recent review concluded that "it is clear that there is a lack of empirical data supporting 70:20:10 and… there is also a lack of certainty about the origin" (Kajewski & Madsen, 2013, p. 3). Indeed, even when considering the proportions as mere approximations, the proposed ratio is perplexing as varying types of competencies and worker characteristics suggest a need for multiple distinct learning experience configurations to be most effective. Meanwhile, this type of scholarly invalidated frameworks are promoted in prominent practitioner literature (e.g., Kramer & Nayak, 2013; Maw, 2014; Rabin, 2014), and thus could affect the allocation and effectiveness of limited resources such as time, energy, and money.

Third, broader societal and technological trends dictate the new ways of organizing life and work, which produce ubiquitous learning opportunities, promote the blending of different learning modes, and bring immediacy to and require continuity from learning and development (Maurer & Weiss, 2010; Paton, Mordaunt, & Cornforth, 2007; Sonnentag et al., 2004). Therefore, considering formal and informal learning as discrete categories seems to create a misunderstanding about the nature of learning itself. Instead, it is more accurate to conceive "formality" and "informality" as attributes present in all circumstances of learning (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcom, 2003). Accordingly, workers increasingly craft and undergo hybrid learning experiences that may be more or less deliberate or opportune, episodic or continuous, fundamental or incremental, explicit or tacit, and so on. Table 8.3 illustrates the spectrum of potentially available learning experiences.

For the social sector to gain and sustain the required key competencies, leaders, workers, volunteers, human resource functions, and organizations ought to understand human capital development in a broad sense by incorporating many, if not most, of the learning experiences exemplified in Table 8.3 and avoiding an overly bias towards only few of these learning forms. Much conventional thinking on learning is set to fail because it is based on conditions that no longer prevail in modern organizations. There must be a shift from intuition-driven and ad hoc mechanisms to intentional approaches for human capital development. Available empirical evidence must play a much larger role in the formulation of learning strategy and tactics. At the same time, there is a lack of empirical knowledge about the most optimal use of the scarce resources for developing the social sector workforce. The mechanisms underlying decisions about the allocation of time, energy, and money towards human capital development is poorly understood, and arguably is driven by myths and tradition. At best, there is a number of promoted best practices, though their origin

Table 8.3 An overview of work learning experiences

• Training
• Seminars, workshops
• Webinars
• Conferences
• Coaching
• Mentoring
• Shadowing
• Secondments
• Job rotation
• Fellowships
• Sabbaticals
• Internships
• Experiential learning
• Action learning
• Special assignments
• Games, simulations
• On-the-job training
• Learning by doing
• Performance reviews
• Feedback seeking
• Self-directed media consumption (literature, videos)
• Knowledge sharing
• Social interaction
• Reflection

and generalizability have to be carefully evaluated. Therefore, systematic, robust research can make significant contributions and assist the social sector in becoming more efficient and effective in developing its human capital.

Nevertheless, and irrespective of the learning mode involved, research has identified a number of crucial factors that enable learning for, at, and during work to take place, to stick, and to be applied to meaningful ends. In fact, there is a science of learning as it relates to work (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010; Cerasoli, Alliger, Donsbach, Mathieu, & Orvis, 2014; Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Kyndt, Dochy, & Nijs, 2009; Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012), and social sector practitioners and decision makers ought to use it. Although each situation is unique and circumstances are ever changing, effective human capital development starts and ends by considering the person learning to perform and his or her work experience. That is, successful human capital development is best understood as a function of a system of influences, in which centrally the SSO employee or volunteer determines the way learning opportunities will be experienced, what will be relevant, and how the processes changing knowledge and skills will unfold. Those systemic influences comprise stakeholders and processes nested in the work and learning environment, as well as the learners themselves. Each of these elements

carries a range of characteristics, which interact before, on entry, during, on exit, and after a given learning experience (Wenzel & Cordery, 2014).

A central aspect within this system is the individuals' motivation to learn, which will produce changes in their thoughts, actions, and feelings at work. An overwhelming body of evidence suggests that motivation and closely associated constructs play a key role in whether, how much, and for how long people engage in certain activities, including learning for and performing at work (Blume et al., 2010; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Foss, Minbaeva, Pedersen, & Reinholt, 2009; Kanfer et al., 2008). Consequently, with very few exceptions, the ideal learning experience is one voluntarily initiated, sustained, and transferred by the worker (Hurtz & Williams, 2009).

Self-efficacy is consistently found to be important for an employee's learning intentions, learning outcomes, and the transfer of new knowledge and skills learned to the workplace (Blume et al., 2010; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Sitzmann & Ely, 2011). That is, an individual must believe in his or her own capacity to master the multiple challenges associated with learning, such as extra workload, new concepts to be understood, uncertain outcomes, increased responsibility, and doing things differently at work. Whilst people may have different levels of self-efficacy, it is a malleable psychological feature and so supervisors, peers, and instructors can influence the level of self-efficacy among learners. For example, someone's self-efficacy can be positively influenced through learning design factors, such as task mastery, social persuasion, constructive and timely feedback, as well as work experiences that produce physiological or psychological arousal so that people leave their comfort zones (Bandura, 1997; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). To induce confidence managers may also model how new desirable behavior looks like, refer to learners' past achievements, encourage early errors in a safe environment, and show trust in cognitive abilities (Keith & Frese, 2008; Kozlowski et al., 2001). In short, social sector employees and volunteers must believe that they can successfully learn and this has to be facilitated.

In addition, social sector workers must have a reason to learn. Research shows that people must appreciate the relevance, utility, and importance of a given learning experience to be motivated to learn (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). In other words, people are substantially more inclined to pursue learning experiences when they recognize the importance of change and the desired outcome such as achieving higher work performance, career progression, or social impact (Chiaburu & Lindsay, 2008; Vroom, 1964). Accordingly, human resource policies and practices need to serve as a communication channel that signals employees what is important (Guest, 2011), while supervisors must convey a sense of meaningful returns on exerted learning efforts (Chiaburu, 2010; Lancaster & Milia, 2012). This "What is in it for me?" question may be addressed by linking learning and change to enhanced performance and work quality, improved beneficiary-lives, increased job responsibility, career progression, well-being, recognition at work, personal growth and so on. It may also be discussed how learning experiences fit into the Big Picture comprising organizational strategy, legal obligations, social change etc. Moreover, learners may be provided with clear goals and expectations about what

shall change, subsequently held accountable to demonstrate new skills at work, and also be encouraged to share new knowledge with peers.

Furthermore, a worker might be confident about and appreciative of learning opportunities but not feel energized to engage with learning (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Research shows that positive affect has a positive impact on the individuals' engagement with new experiences (Seo, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004). From a neuropsychological perspective, positive affect is associated with increased brain dopamine levels, which in turn have been found to improve cognitive flexibility (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999) that fosters engagement with more challenging goals and futures (Oettingen, Mayer, Thorpe, 2005). Given that learning and applying new knowledge and skills is a challenging endeavor, it is crucial to create a genuinely positive working and learning environment, characterized by humor, encouragement, and enthusiasm, so as to generate heightened keenness and mental readiness for learning and change. This may be realized by providing learners with optimistic previews of the learning experience and by accentuating highlights (Karl & Ungsrithong, 1992). One may also use positive language (e.g., growing) as opposed to a deficit terminology (e.g., fixing) when communicating about learning interventions. Also, learners experience a sense of flow and joy when the learning process is immersive and interesting, for instance by addressing all senses using visuals, acoustics, aesthetics, and physical activity (Kraiger, Billings, & Isen, 1989; Machin & Fogarty, 2004).

What is more, it has to be clearly determined what needs to be learned, who needs to learn, and which organizational priority learning addresses (Coultas, Grossman, & Salas, 2012). This requires strategic human resource management practices that make use of systematic skill needs analysis, talent pipeline development, and the identification and nurturing of top performers (Aguinis & O'Boyle, 2014; Torraco & Swanson, 1995). It then has to be decided which configuration and sequence of learning experiences might be best suited to achieve intended outcomes, given available resources and constraints. Further, it should be determined whether the work environment is supportive of or hinders the desired outcomes of learning. An open conversation between supervisors, peers, and learner should address expectations, constraints, and implementation to maximize the benefits of a given learning experience.

Importantly, new learning is fragile. People that undergo learning experiences need to be given the time and support to implement what was learned. For instance, a person returning from an external training should be given an opportunity to try and utilize the acquired knowledge, and not just frantically catch up with all the work that remained unattended. Also, it has to be ensured that the essential work resources (e.g., tools) and opportunities (e.g., tasks) are available, so learners can actually apply what was leaned.

Rethinking work learning is a multipronged endeavor, and SSOs should provide strategic leadership to create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, and empower people toward a collective vision (see Yang, Watkins, & Marsick, 2004). For instance, SSO leaders have to make sure people can openly discuss errors in order to learn

from them (van Dyck, Frese, Baer, & Sonnentag, 2005). This involves encouraging an open and honest feedback culture, where issues and problems are viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve. It further means that people in such organizations are rewarded for exploring new ways of working, for example by recognizing initiative taking through badges and making them subject champions (Bess, Perkins, & McCown, 2011; Marsick & Watkins, 2003; for more examples and case studies see Gephart & Marsick, 2016).

In summary, because the world of work and learning is changing, it is important to rethink the management of and research on human capital development in SSOs as an integrated and broad spectrum of learning experiences. There is no magic bullet—real progress requires attention and investing time and resources. As research is tasked with delivering better optimization and decision models, practitioners are asked to use the existing and evidence-based guidelines to successfully manage learning for, at, and during work for social change.

Revise Funding Models

The social sector is characterized by its idealism and altruistic values (Salamon, Geller, & Newhouse, 2012). These features bring about motivated and dedicated individuals that drive social change (Briggs, Peterson, & Gregory, 2010; Tidwell, 2005). At the same time, this ensues in stringent conceptions about financial ratios, overhead, and what matters to realize social change. Social sector organizations and decision makers may be so highly focused on their prosocial mission that investing in human capital is considered too costly, time-consuming, and peripheral (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1998). Relatedly, funding bodies seek assurance that their investments will garner some immediate results, even if they are only incremental, and so prefer to invest in purposes that have a direct and highly visible impact on the community (Bugg-Levine, Kogut, & Kulatilaka, 2012; Pettijohn, Boris, De Vita, & Fyffe, 2013). This type of resource allocation has been described as a "starvation cycle" (Gregory & Howard, 2009; Lecy & Searing, 2014) and the underlying principles are criticized as the "overhead myth" (Pallotta, 2013a, b). Indeed, operating professional, sustainable and effective SSOs costs money. Although the above is not a new dilemma (Cunningham, 1999), there is substantial evidence that it prevails and affects SSO human capital.

In the US, the proportion of nonprofit grant funding allocated to training and professional development from 1992–2011, on average, was about 1.1 % (Jagpal & Schlegel, 2015; Stahl, 2013). In other words, of every grant dollar available, a mere $0.01 were directly designated to enhance the competence of employees and volunteers. Estimations further suggest that businesses spent on leadership development about four times more per person than nonprofit organizations (Callanan, Gardner, Mendonca, & Scott, 2014). Indeed, of about 1100 young professionals in the non-profit sector surveyed, just 15 % reported that their organizations had received any form of funding for leadership development (Dobin & Tchume, 2012).

Therefore, it is little surprising that 7 out of 10 upcoming non-profit leaders consider shifting into the private or public sector due to obscure or lacking career advancement (Solomon & Sandahl, 2011). Insufficient development opportunities (alongside earning sacrifices and long hours) accordingly promote an exodus of motivated talent (Center for Creative Leadership, 2011; Cornelius, Corvington, & Ruesga, 2006).

Research in Australia further concludes that there is a public perception that "money spent on training is wasteful and makes [non-profit] organizations appear less efficient" (Productivity Commission, 2010, p. 273), and the majority of donors considers the current 'overhead' ratio as inefficient (Paul, 2013). Findings from about 300 Australian social service organizations suggest that the importance of increasing staff skill levels is recognized in principle, but hampered by the necessity to fund the training activity, the need to cover for staff undertaking training, and the potential subsequent higher pay implications for trained workers (Carson et al., 2007). Similar trends can be observed in the UK, where employees in the nonprofit sector have a lower training budget, as compared to their colleagues in the private sector (CIPD, 2014), and at least one-third reporting they have no training budget at all (Clark, 2007). Equally, research from Canada shows that employees in the not-for-profit sector have the highest unfulfilled desire for participation in formal, job-related development (Raykov, Taylor, & Abrams, 2013).

Ultimately, it has been found that limited funding and overall perceptions of available time at work constitute barriers to the application of human capital development strategies both on and off the job in the social sector organizations (Dempsey, 2015; Volunteering Australia, 2012; Wenzel, 2015). A number of responses from SSO workers illustrate this: "funding bodies don't fund workforce development, only fund outputs based on direct client service provision," and "We have a 600 km return trip to Adelaide to attend any relevant training. Also the costs are prohibitive and there isn't the funding in the budget. All our money is consumed providing the service" (Carson et al., 2007).

Given these challenges, the majority of social sector leaders argue for more help from their foundation funders to address this (Buteau, Brock, & Chaffin, 2013). Arguably though, typical grant makers and grant seekers use different mental models about how crucial resources ought to be used, which results in an asymmetry that is causing a vicious cycle of underfunding for the development of human capital. Namely, although some social sector supporters dabble with human capital development initiatives, the reviewed evidence suggests that grant makers offer too few designated resources. What is more, anecdotal evidence suggests that SSOs hesitate to request such human capital developmental resources as this could indicate a lack of competence, for example, to undertake a project for which other funds are also sought. Thus, grant seekers typically do not request designated human capital development funding; therefore, grant makers do not see the need for such funding. Consequently, there remains fairly low investment in human capital development.

Altogether, this poses a difficult conundrum with organizational, economic, and social implications. The silver lining: this is a malleable problem, and multiple

stakeholders can address it. First, social sector organizations and their leaders must recognize that workforce development is critical for mission success and requires resources, therefore, this cannot remain a neglected topic. That is, social sector organizations ought to ask for funding that promotes human capital development. Frankly, unless grant seekers do not request designated resources for workforce development, there will not be any.

Second, grant makers hold tremendous fiscal and decisional power over social sector operations, and therefore the viability of the executing organizations. This former group includes philanthropic foundations, regulatory bodies, donors, as well as the media and the wider public; all of whom carry certain assumptions and preferences about the best use of resources. Arguably, the majority has yet to realize that most existing funding models and grant schemes do not permit full cost recovery. To explain, full cost recovery describes SSOs being able to recuperate the total costs of realizing a given program or project, including the relevant proportion of what is typically considered indirect or overhead costs, and of which human capital development is a part (HLF, 2008). Accordingly, when grant makers change their expectations and communication, grant seekers will be less likely to under-report their actual needs and, if sensible, should be encouraged to include funding requests for workforce development.

For instance, it has been recommended that foundations should engage in sub-stantive and regular conversations with all grantees about the ways in which they proactively focus on workforce issues, in particular, those grantees that seek to grow their impact (GEO, 2012). For foundations, this can mean to explicitly address human capital management issues in requests for proposals, grant-reporting guidelines, and other materials for applicants and grantees. In addition, foundations' expertise and experience could be used to provide insights and clues about what kind of human capital development a given SSO may need.

Third, there has to be more evidence-informed policy making (Head, 2015). Specifically, state and federal governments can consider capacity building schemes to aid SSO in gaining the competencies and resources required for further growth, development and impact. For instance, in the early 2000s, the UK government recognized that many nonprofit organizations did not generate sufficient surpluses to invest in capacity building and do not consider using debt finance for such purposes. Based on this analysis, the government formulated a program of capacity building that focused on strengthening leadership, governance and management roles, often with an emphasis on developing financial and enterprise skills (National Audit Office, 2009). Similarly, Canada launched its Voluntary Sector Initiative in 1998 with a budget of $96.5 m that included strong elements of training and professional development (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009). Clearly, the next generation of social sector organizations and society will benefit from such capacity development initiatives that recognize the importance of building human capital.

Fourth, intermediaries can bridge a crucial gap to realize human capital devel-opment. For instance, the Australian Scholarships Foundation is a small, inde-pendent organization that facilitates scholarships for Australian non-profit

employees and volunteers so they can undertake education, training, and development programs (ASF, 2014). The foundation operates on a fairly small budget and facilitates a collective impact approach (Kania & Kramer, 2011), whereby other philanthropic entities and training providers commit funding and enrolments to the common purpose of building human capital in the social sector. Specifically, intermediaries may facilitate individual stipends, reduced course fees, filling empty seats, pro bono repeating for-cost classes, extending online learning solution, among other pragmatic and creative solutions. In return, learning providers might receive unmatched marketing and brand awareness in a growing and lucrative social sector. So instead of investing substantial resources in designing and delivering professional development, additional approaches that harness existing learning opportunities and resources to the benefit of all stakeholders may be considered.

Fifth and finally, it is important to promote the understanding of the cognitions and mechanisms that underpin stringent conceptions about financial ratios and "overhead." Research should make these mental models explicit, if legitimate uncover cognitive biases, and thereby contribute to the overall debate.

Taken together, to avoid a future social sector debacle, it is essential to revise the traditional funding models and beliefs that underpin much of the social sector, and particularly those that affect human capital and its development. It is argued that a multipronged approach is required, including increasing funding and time directed to developing people, maximizing the utility of extant learning opportunities, and changing the conversation about costs.

Conclusion and Calls to Action

The social sector has grown remarkably, continues to do so, and takes on ever more responsibility to shape and sustain an attractive and functional society. Because and despite these impressive achievements, the SSO workforce is under severe strain to continue to lead and serve with purpose. In the future, it will become even tougher to successfully manage uncertainty, fiscal restraints, competitive labor markets, new technology, changing regulations, and more. Most SSO employees and volunteers are dedicated and motivated, they work long hours, make salary sacrifices, and give time. It is not about making them work harder, but smarter. The competence to successfully meet the multiple and often complex responsibilities at work is nothing one is born with. The knowledge, skills, and abilities people have been the result of experiences and learning opportunities and the world is changing so much that we all need constant updating. In view of that, all stakeholders must understand that investment in human capital is not a privilege of successful SSOs. Instead, SSOs are successful in realizing social change, and sustaining it, because they invest in and develop their people. There is substantial evidence to support this.

Correspondingly, this chapter made a strong case for the initial need to revisit and clearly define the key competencies required to aid desired social change on the part of the SSOs. Potential starting points for this applied research task were

illustrated. It then was argued that development of those competencies requires rethinking how multiple forms of learning experiences may be adopted and can be optimally configured. Some guidelines were given that facilitate successful learning at, for, and during work. Finally, it was argued that traditional funding models should be revised to better resource SSO human capital development. The potential contribution of multiple stakeholders has been discussed.

The discussion includes a range of next steps or action items to stimulate managerial action and scholarly research. Ideally, they go hand in hand (Buick, Blackman, O'Flynn, O'Donnell, & West, 2016). That is, the discussed agenda holds promise for yielding both better practical outcomes for the social sector and its impact groups as well as new theoretical insights. Practitioners have a responsibility to seek out sound research, educate themselves, and use evidence for developing ways forward and making optimal decisions on human capital development. Scholars have a pivotal responsibility in advancing the social sector by conducting research that is independent, robust, and applicable to the real world. Without systematic research, developing human capital in the social sector will remain misunderstood, open to easy criticism and de-legitimized as optional. The best knowledge is generated when practitioners and scholars work together to identify what works, what doesn't, and under what circumstances. Undoubtedly, this process will take time and require coherent attention. Thus, the time to start is indeed now.

Ultimately, human capital development ought to become enshrined in the social sector. The argument is not that the associated structural and fiscal changes are easy. They are not. The argument is that those changes are worth it. Although some momentum for addressing these themes is building, it appears these are isolated activities. Accordingly, leaders, funders, policy makers, volunteers, researchers, and everyone linked to the social sector must make learning for purpose a priority.

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Chapter 9
The Next Level: Understanding Effective Board Development

Mary Hiland

The phone rings. It may be an executive director, a board chair, a board member but the request is a common one: "I want to take my board to the next level" and a request for a topic like board member roles and responsibilities, recruiting new board members, engaging the board members with fundraising, etc.

Will this training take a board to "the next level" (i.e., sustainable improvement)? No. It is not that training, or even a day of reflection and discussion, will not contribute to board improvement. It is that we know training alone does not change behavior so it is not going to produce, in my experience, the results that nonprofit leaders expect, hope for, and need. Debra Beck says how training is often used to deal with a problematic board member:

> Training is the 800-lb. metaphorical gorilla in the "board effectiveness" room. Somebody's not quite operating up to snuff, and our natural response is to send him/her off to a training. Or, in the case of our board, we bring in an expert to provide the training for them … That'll fix the problem. Right? Maybe. Maybe not. Probably not. (www.boardlearning.org)

Carter McNamara argues they need more than training:

> Board members rarely struggle because they've simply forgotten their roles and responsibilities. They need more than new knowledge from a training session—they need skills from practicing that new knowledge. So instead of a one-shot training session, they need board development. (www.managementhelp.org)

Taking a board to the next level requires board development. Understanding board development requires answers to some basic questions. First, do boards matter? If your answer is yes, the next questions to ask are: Is it worth putting in the effort and resources to improve a board? Does board development result in more effective boards? What does an effective board look like? And finally: How do we achieve the next level? What practices and/or processes make up board development and which work best? What are the critical success factors?

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I had observed and directly experienced nonprofit boards of directors "improving" over time, but I had not taken the opportunity to reflect more deeply, or to ask others, about those questions. I searched for some answers. I found that questions about boards' impact have been studied. But I also found there was little available—either from practitioners or researchers—that explained the elements of board development and the factors that underlie a successful board development process.

The Study

I decided to explore board development more deeply. In 2009–10, I sought out executive directors and board members who had had positive, direct experiences with board development. Having worked in the nonprofit sector in the San Francisco Bay Area for over 35 years I had access to a wide array of nonprofit networks and nonprofit leaders' membership organizations. I distributed an invitation to participate in the study for "Anyone who has served on or worked closely with a nonprofit organization's (501(c)(3)) Board of Directors over time and has direct experience with its development/improved effectiveness". Examples of organizations that assisted in the dissemination of that invitation include: Center for Excellence in Nonprofits, United Way Silicon Valley, Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits, Compass Point Nonprofit Services, and THRIVE alliance of nonprofits.

I conducted telephone or in-person interviews with 40 people and conducted a focus group with 5 additional executives. With the assistance of Charitable Advisors, headed by Bryan Orander, an online survey was distributed to the subscribers of their Not-for-Profit News in Indianapolis and Greater Cincinnati. There were 21 complete/usable responses from that effort. In all, I gathered the stories of board improvement from 66 nonprofit leaders. Those stories yielded themes identifying the ways boards improved, the elements of their board development processes that resulted in those improvements, and the critical success factors.

Building on what I learned from those executives and board members, I also conducted a retrospective case review of consulting clients. From 2003 through 2011, I consulted with well over 100 nonprofits. Of those, 90 had identified issues involving the board of directors. I used those clients' cases, in addition to the study participants' stories, to develop a list of the boards' presenting problems and issues —both identified by the clients themselves and those that emerged as we worked together.

From the case reviews (and study stories), I gained insights into the dimensions and underlying dynamics of board functioning that motivate the need for change. A framework for going deeper with board assessment and understanding where to best focus board development efforts, emerged from those findings. This article explores the above questions and reports what I've learned from years of experience with nonprofits and the research described above. But, I first explore why this matters.

Boards Matter

Boards matter in many ways. Most people realize that boards are important because they are the legal authority for the nonprofit corporation. Boards' legal authority and responsibilities make them an essential component of the organization's leadership, including setting and modeling the ethical standards. However, legal authority and responsibilities do not guarantee a positive influence in advancing a nonprofit's mission.

We know nonprofit boards influence organizational performance (Light, 2002; Chait, Holland, & Taylor, 1991; Brown, 2007). Is that influence positive? Although limited, research increasingly supports the relationship between *high-performing boards* and nonprofits' effectiveness (Chait, Holland, & Taylor, 1996; Herman & O'Renz, 1998, 2000; Jackson & Holland, 1998; Brown, 2007; Jansen, Kilpatrick, & Cvsa, 2006). How do boards matter? Studies demonstrate that effective boards improve organizational performance in several areas (Herman & O'Renz, 1998; Jansen et al., 2006; Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1992; Chait et al., 1991):

- organizational decision-making and strategic thinking;
- attracting resources;
- engaging the community;
- enhancing reputation and credibility;
- promoting change and setting direction; and
- performance.

Decision-making, reputation, credibility—these are the means through which boards create the ethical culture of the organization.

Clearly effective boards matter. But declaring it so does not help many executives and board members achieve the level of board performance they know their nonprofits need and deserve. This leads us to another question: If it is effective boards that produce results, what are the characteristics of an effective board? What could the next level for one's board look like?

The Next Level

There are dozens of books and articles dictating what boards should be doing, and the best practices to be emulating. The national nonprofit, BoardSource, studied exceptional boards and identified twelve characteristics of effective boards (BoardSource, 2005). That information is readily available in their publication, *The Source: Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards.* In addition, there are hundreds of books written by practitioners and consultants that describe effective boards.

Based on these sources and my own board development experience, I outline the following ten characteristics of board effectiveness:

1. Passion for and focus on the mission. Being passionate about a cause is not enough. Effective boards make decisions and take action with a keen focus on mission.
2. Deep knowledge of the organization. This does not mean board members are getting involved in the day-to-day management. Effective board members know the organization very well.
3. Build trust. It is a cliché but true: it is all about relationships. Effective boards build trust amongst their members, with staff, volunteers, and with the community.
4. Create a team. Boards that are effective have the characteristics of a high-performing working group. They are purposeful about how they work together to get results.
5. Lead. Governance is leadership. How they are and what they do demonstrates if boards are leading or not.
6. Share leadership. Effective boards engage others and share leadership with stakeholders—whether those are the executive, staff, volunteers, clients, or the community.
7. Engage the community. This is similar to #6 but is more about hearing the voices of and involving those who have an interest in, are influenced by, or who can influence the nonprofit.
8. Produce and measure results. This includes for the board as well as for the organization.
9. Steward and grow resources. Boards must ensure there are resources to advance the mission.
10. Create a culture of learning and adaptation. Effective boards assess themselves and learn; they ensure the organization is as well.

So, we know what an exceptional board looks like. It is not our purpose here to delve into the characteristics of effective boards. But each nonprofit is unique and so is every board. In my experience, nonprofit leaders have little trouble articulating what they think should, or could, be better about their boards. But, there is little empirical evidence that illuminates the path for improving a nonprofit board (Brown, 2007; Holland & Jackson, 1998). The challenge is how to develop the characteristics of an effective board—how to take the board to the next level?

The first step in getting to that next level begins with a common understanding of what constitutes board development. People refer to it, consultants claim to facilitate it, but what is it actually?

What Is Board Development?

Too often what is meant by board development is limited to the processes of recruiting, selecting, and orienting new board members. Actually, board development is the result of many activities. Based on the study stories and my experience,

I define it this way: Board development is a cluster of processes by which a group of individuals committed to a common mission learns, creates, and becomes an optimally functioning and contributing board. Let's deconstruct this a bit.

First, a board is a group of individuals committed to a common mission. Gathering together this committed group encompasses the activities of finding, recruiting, and selecting board members. But board development is much more than that. For board development to occur learning must happen (Kovner, Ritvo, & Holland, 1997). That learning needs to be ongoing and it occurs on a board in many ways. Individuals learn about governance—what the job that they have signed up for is all about. They learn from the experience of other nonprofit leaders so they do not reinvent the wheel. They learn about the organization and, ideally, that understanding grows over time and deepens, as the organization evolves. They also learn about each other and, hopefully, how to work most effectively together. Board development requires intentional learning.

Another dimension of board development is creating. So much of what is heard and seen about governance is prescriptive. There actually are very few rules for board members: the three duties from the corporate law cover most of it (Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, and Duty of Obedience to applicable laws and regulations). I have found that most boards are not empowered to be creative in their governing. Board members typically ask: "What is the *right* way to do this?" "How many board members should we have?" "How often should we meet?" Common questions are along those lines culminating, sadly, in "Just tell us what to do." When board members—individually and collectively—intentionally learn together they gain the wisdom to answer these questions in the best interests of the mission and their organization.

Also from the study, I found that effective board development includes these four dimensions:

1. Alignment: working to have the right people doing the right things with the right skills.
2. Individual growth: helping each board member to be the best he/she can.
3. Team building: fine tuning board member's ability to work together as a team.
4. Maturity: gaining the ability to understand the needs of the organization; respond to external dynamics, opportunities, and challenges; and engage the community in support of the mission.

Board development is fundamentally a change process that is different for each organization. It promises that boards can become optimally functioning and contributing. My research provided several insights into what an effective board development process is comprised of and found its impact can be incremental, progressive, and cumulative, as well as transformational.

Like any change process, effective board development begins with an experience of dissatisfaction that motivates one to act in response. Correctly defining that dissatisfaction can make the difference between a lot of effort with little result and an effective process. This means we need to start with a board assessment so we can correctly identify and target the focus of desired change.

Going Deeper: A Framework for Board Assessment

The complexity of a board assessment will vary with each board. A good assessment, though, is needed to enable the people involved to decide what aspect of the board they want to change or improve (Holland & Jackson, 1998). Too often the focus is on symptoms—board issues are not addressed at their roots. Nonprofit leaders, in my experience, typically do not go deep enough to identify and tackle underlying causes and thus miss the chance for greater impact from board development efforts.

The retrospective case reviews identified the presenting board problem articulated at the time consulting services were requested. The stated problems were then compared to the ultimate understanding of the issue that emerged during the consulting engagement. The accuracy of the original presenting problem may have been confirmed—or not. In every case, however, the ultimate problem identified and successfully addressed fit into one of three dimensions of the board: capacity, connections, and/or culture (see Fig. 9.1).

Improving board effectiveness and unleashing the potential for positive impact requires understanding and addressing one or all of these three dimensions. Since each organization, and each board, is unique, these dimensions need to be considered in context. In addition, each dimension deals with characteristics of the people on the board as well as with the processes and activities of the board.

Capacity

This dimension is the most basic and I find many boards and executives plan board improvements here. Does the board have the right capacity to fulfill its roles and

Fig. 9.1 A framework for board assessment
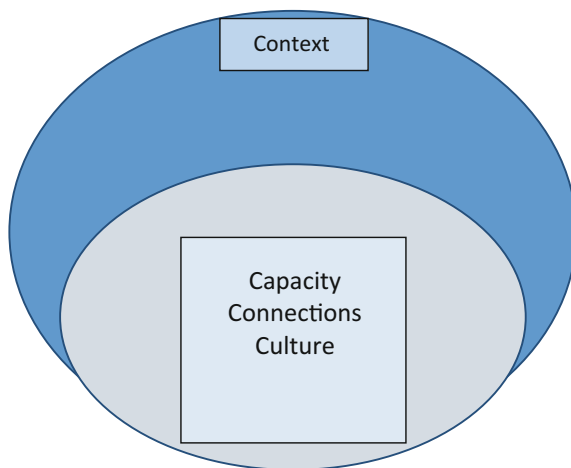
responsibilities and add value? First consider the people. To reference the oft-quoted Jim Collins (*Good to Great*, 2001): Do you have the right people on the bus? Are they in the right seats? It is not just a matter of having enough people, or having the people who can fill in the gaps in the infamous "matrix" that shows us we need a finance person, for example. Boards do this best when they consciously address the questions: What capacity do we need, given our strategic priorities? What competencies do we need? What is our important work and do we have the capacity to do it?

For example, the executive director and board chair of a nonprofit community theatre reported numerous efforts to increase board fundraising. After many fruitless discussions with their board members about the "type" of people to recruit, they began instead to explore more deeply why past efforts with people of influence had not produced the results they expected. By going deeper, they came to realize that what they needed on the board was leadership in this area—someone who was confident about where and how to begin with board members inexperienced in fundraising—more than they needed someone with deep pockets. Recognizing this gap in leadership capacity made all the difference. They recruited with that in mind, found someone, and a year later had an empowered and effective fund development committee raising more money than ever before.

Issues of board capacity are not just about people. An effective board has processes in place for getting important work done efficiently. Examples include: new board member recruitment, selection, and orientation; thoughtful meeting agendas; use of committees; board self-assessment; and the executive director evaluation process. The board assessment should consider if the board has the processes and structures in place to facilitate its important work and fulfill its governance responsibilities.

An executive director interviewed for the study facetiously characterized the board's recruitment process as "Going out on the street and picking people up." It was really not a "process" at all. She said the board had finally committed to increasing the number of board members with fundraising expertise. They recognized that they needed a more effective process. The board chair took the lead. After that, they developed a systematic approach that included putting it on every board meeting agenda, identifying connections among staff and board members, and "getting the word out" to their networks. They agreed on how they would cultivate and follow up with prospects. They created a process that worked.

Many boards' development efforts focus on building capacity—seeking the right people and/or developing the right processes. It is easier to change board behaviors and structure than individuals (Holland & Jackson, 1998). When everything else is working well, unleashing more value from the board may very well just be a matter of addressing issues of capacity. Board value is untapped, though, when the thinking reflected in the following comments prevails:

- "If the board would just get clear on our roles and responsibilities …"
- "Once we get more people on the board … "
- "We just need to figure out what committees we need …"

These "assessments" are sometimes masking underlying issues that go unaddressed and in those cases board development efforts will not be effective.

Connections

We often hear the phrase: "It's all about relationships." Well, it is. The quality and scope of relationships among board members, between the board and the executive director, and extending in and out between the board and the community make a huge difference for a nonprofit organization. So much about boards can be enhanced by focusing on relationships.

Who is on the board hardly matters if we do not have a trusting relationship with that person. All the hopes for the gifts someone will bring to the board, and the nonprofit, will be unrealized if we are not in relationship with each other in a meaningful way. And, you certainly will not be tapping into the person's spheres of influence!

Social capital is the asset we, and organizations, have by virtue of our relationships. Nonprofits need lots of social capital and board members are one of the best sources for getting and growing it. Having an effective board requires attention to the quality and scope of connections. It depends on the relationship building competence and interpersonal dynamics of board members as individuals and as a group.

Thinking of the people involved, the board's effectiveness is influenced by connections in at least the following three ways:

1. The ability and willingness of each board member to build and nurture trusting relationships. I think we take this for granted. Not everyone is able or willing to build strong interpersonal relationships. Trust is cumulative and boards with high trust relationships will bring great value and lots of social capital. Unfortunately, we all know people who dismiss the importance of connection, are insecure and self-focused, and can actually do more harm than good. The strength or lack of board members' interpersonal skills will play out amongst board members, with the executive director, and with the staff.

   A board member (I will call her Janet) shared her experience with a very challenging board relationship. "I chaired the committee working on our fundraising event. The committee had agreed that one of the items would be in our silent auction and not the live auction. One of the board officers (not on the committee) had obtained that item. She was furious that the item was not going to be in the live auction. She went off on me. She stated that it better be a live auction item 'or else'." In addition, she refused to follow-up on other contribution commitments unless Janet complied. Janet expressed that she felt verbally abused by this person. The interpersonal challenges between this officer and other board members were also difficult and taking their toll.

2. The strength of the board as a team. Lencioni (2005) tells us that being an effective teams starts with strong, trusting relationships. These relationships are the foundation for other necessary group dynamics: constructive conflict, commitment, accountability, and attention to results. When assessing a board, you should ask: Is this a group of individual contributors or are they a team? The results of a board self-assessment done by a home health care nonprofit, revealed that board members felt they did not know each other. The average tenure of this group of board members was 6 years. Even after all that time together, they did not feel connected to each other. Comments in the assessment results indicated that several board members characterized the experience as coming together once a month to get some business done with no time to get better acquainted or really know each other's strengths or the way each contributed to the nonprofit's work. One of the improvements this board took on as a board development goal resulting from the assessment was to promote interpersonal connections toward building a real team.

3. Board members' social networks. Are board members willing to introduce friends, work colleagues, etc. to the mission of your nonprofit? Are they ambassadors externally? The extent and nature of this bridging function of the board influences its effectiveness.
   Developing an effective board may also require attention to the board's processes for relationship building. Examples are: rules of engagement, agreements for holding each other accountable, structuring time for social exchange, and getting to know each other and being purposeful about how to identify and connect with board members' networks.

Boards and executives too often look to structure, role clarification, and rules to improve functioning or solve issues. Without exploring how relationship dynamics may underlie the issues, these structural interventions do not have lasting impact and may have no impact at all.

For example, the board chair of a youth services agency had worked as a youth counselor herself for many years. The agency was growing and the board needed to evolve with it. Because of her work experience, the board chair frequently asked questions that drew the board into day-to-day operations. Meetings were long and inefficient; things just were not getting done that needed the board's attention. The real issue underlying the board's ineffectiveness was the weak relationships among the board members, and between the executive director and this board chair. But, this was not recognized. People were uncomfortable raising concerns with the board chair directly and did not talk to each other about it either, so the real dynamic was "undiagnosed." Instead of assessing the real issue as the target of change, the board's efforts to improve meeting efficiency resulted in them deciding to reactivate the executive committee. They thought the executive committee could streamline the board agenda and even deal with things they felt would not need to go to the full board. This structural solution did not work. The executive committee soon became the platform for lengthy inquiries and discussions. Board members not on the executive committee began to feel marginalized. It added a layer of work for both

board officers and the executive director that was unnecessary, and, it did not fix the ineffective and inefficient dynamic at the board meetings.

Culture

The third dimension of nonprofit boards that can be the cause of issues is culture. Like any group or organization, each board has a unique culture that develops over time. Much of the culture of a board is manifested as the shared set of assumptions and beliefs that are present in its practices. As with the capacity and connection, there are people and process elements of culture.

People bring their own world views, their own beliefs, assumptions, and values to everything they do. Building an effective board requires a good match between the board members and the nonprofit's values. But, there is a lot more than that to understanding how individual board members influence board functioning as a result of their cultural views. Culture, by definition, can be unconscious—it's just "the way we do things." Sometimes, for board development efforts to work we need to identify underlying cultural factors that are influencing, even driving, what is going on.

Assumptions and beliefs that I have seen influence board decisions include:

- "We will lose continuity and valuable board members if we have term limits."
- "We can't have both a fundraising and a diverse board."
- "We need people with money on the board to get money."
- "The executive director should not be recruiting new board members – it's a conflict of interest."

Sometimes it is important and necessary to surface and discuss underlying assumptions and beliefs in order to move a board forward. Too often boards want to move forward fast, or are just unaware, and thus only deal with symptoms that have underlying cultural causes. The issues re-emerge eventually as a result.

"We need to recruit board members who will raise money for us" the executive director told me. "Will you come to our board retreat and do a training on the board's role in fundraising and recruiting?" I agreed. The training was followed by discussion, led by the person who chaired the Governance Committee. She made several comments like: "We can't find people who are willing to fundraise for us." "The people here in Silicon Valley who could help us are just too busy." "We don't have the connections we need to find the right people for our board." All the while her fellow board members were nodding their heads in agreement. This was a clear example of how individual beliefs—a mindset of scarcity—influences board performance.

Board culture is manifested in board processes too—such as traditions and norms. Do board meetings start and end on time? Where do people sit? Does the board celebrate and, if so, how? Does the board assess financial position from a

perspective of scarcity or abundance? How risk averse is the board when deliberating opportunities or challenges? How are you using technology in the board room? Is it conducive to attracting younger board members?

I joined a board without having observed a board meeting (*not* a good practice). The first meeting I attended was scheduled for an hour and a half. It was still going two and a half hours later when I had to leave! The bulk of the meeting was taken up in reports by committee chairs who provided detailed descriptions of activities since the last meeting. The culture of this board as manifested in its meeting process was excruciatingly inefficient.

To aim at the right target of change, nonprofit leaders sometimes need to go deeper to surface underlying causes; using this framework can help. Are the issues the board is struggling with being understood at their roots or are you trying to change things by addressing symptoms? Nonprofit leaders will do well to ask: what's really going on? Effective board development begins with assessing the needed improvement(s) correctly. Once what needs to change is assessed and agreed-upon, the board needs to implement an effective board development process to achieve it.

Critical Success Factors for Effective Board Development

In my study, executive directors and board members were asked to identify the factors that were critical to the success of their board development efforts, regardless of the assessed change they wanted to make (which varied widely). Almost all the study participants mentioned the following three factors. No one factor was more important than the other two.

1. Outside governance expertise or training—what I call a "nudge."

Earlier it was noted that training is not going to take a board to the next level. What I learned from the study is that training, or some exposure to nonprofit governance expertise, has a role in motivating board change. The nonprofit leaders in the study said that having an outside consultant or facilitator interacting with the board, or at least key board leaders, contributed to a new vision of what the board could be. "We recognized we could get better." "We set expectations higher." "It took someone from the outside to give us the benchmarks of a healthy board." These were typical comments. Here's a board development story, in one board member's words, that demonstrates a nudge:

> I think we had a great bunch of people on the board but they were mostly first timers. In retrospect, I see that we didn't really know what we were supposed to be doing so we weren't very helpful. We didn't do a good job of looking at the big picture. The board wasn't living up to its potential but we didn't realize things could be different.
>
> Then we had a full-day off-site with a nonprofit governance consultant. We spent part of that day talking about what we should be doing and then, where we wanted to go. As a result of that day, we committed to doing a self-evaluation. After that, among other things

we initiated a strategic planning process. The board came out of it [board development process] way more involved, more aware of what the organization did, and understanding where we could and should help.

Although not as impactful (because the whole board does not experience it), study findings indicated a nudge can happen even when just a few board members attend training on governance away from the organization (e.g., a conference or class). Thus, the common request for training to "take my board to the next level" is a good place to start, just not sufficient. It can provide the "nudge" that results in initiating a board development process.

2. The board chair

We know purposeful organizational change requires leadership. If it is the board you want to change, it is the board chair, *not* the executive director, who must lead the process per my findings.

In every case of effective board development in the study, the board chair played a critical role in creating movement and building momentum for the change. Importantly, in almost all the cases this was in partnership with the executive director but not led by him/her. Typically, the board chair engaged a few other board members, building a small group of champions for change. Representative comments from the study included: "The board chair drove the agenda for better structure and better processes." He was "a role model" in risking a new board role in fundraising—the "key to our turnaround." "The President set the tone."

In contrast, a new executive director of a housing agency shared that she was proud of several improvements she had made in operational processes she found inefficient when she was first hired. She went on to share that, now that those challenges were on the mend, she was turning her attention to the board of directors. The board was very involved in day-to-day operations and the executive director wanted to tackle that problem by engaging board members in a board development process she hoped would focus them on more strategic matters. I shared what a good process should include, starting with a board assessment. Having learned about the importance of the board chair's role, I prompted her to have a discussion with him to gain his support.

Unfortunately, the board chair did not see any need to conduct an assessment and felt that the board was too busy to take on any more "projects." And, "There's nothing wrong with how we are operating now," he stated. The executive director decided she needed to wait until this board chair transitioned (about six months). After that happened, the new board chair enthusiastically embraced the project and, two years later, the executive reported that the board stopped delving into day-to-day operations inappropriately.

3. Intention

The word "intention" came up over and over again in participants' identification of critical success factors. When board development efforts work there is a specific, articulated intention: "We were obsessed with board development." "Status quo was not OK." "Yagottawanna." "We had to choose to change."

This is consistent with other findings that "limited investment on the part of the trustees for change" was a key impediment to board development (Kovner et al., 1997, p. 87). Other studies have affirmed the importance of intention for board development effectiveness (Brudney & Murray, 1998; Jackson & Holland, 1998; Bradshaw et al., 1992).

Supporting, Secondary Factors

In addition to the three critical success factors, the research revealed three secondary factors that characterize effective board development. These supporting factors helped build momentum and sustain the board development effort over time. Like the critical success factors, no one of the supporting factors was more important than another. The three were:

1. Some (any) change in board functioning and structure

   With intention came change and the changes reported by study participants covered all aspects of board functioning and structure. Small, incremental changes begot more changes, and momentum was built.

2. Recognition and celebration of success

   Positive change and momentum were supported by recognition and celebration of successes. This was a conscious, purposeful effort that fueled excitement and engagement. (The board chair had a role here.)

3. Team building

   As the boards were changing and evolving, many were strengthening relationships among the board members and developing a sense of unity and identity as a team. Several people reported increased trust levels and improved interpersonal dynamics—all of which supported the developmental process.

   Board development is not quick. In fact, for real effectiveness, it is ongoing. Their specific board development efforts were reported by study participants to take an average of four years. Really? I know; I was surprised too. It does not mean nothing changed for four years. It means that the promise of the intentional development effort these nonprofits made took that long to be fully realized and demonstrate impact. Others found effective board development took years as well (Jansen et al., 2006).

   The board chair of a YMCA told of their five-year board development journey. When he (let's call him Jim) became board chair he was committed to doing something about a long-time goal: creating a teen center that had been on the agenda, but *only* on the agenda, for years. Jim realized that in order to achieve this ambitious goal the board needed to be transformed. Board members wanted to increase the Y's capacity to serve teens but they did not have capacity, commitment, or culture on the board to achieve it.

His first step was to recruit another board leader to partner with as a change champion. They worked together to rally board members around the common goal of creating the center. Once they had a clear vision "it was the selling point for recruiting people," Jim shared. They had to transform the board to embrace a norm of fundraising. Jim said that no one resisted the idea of the teen center but they resisted the fundraising it would require. They left the board as a result. New people came on—and not just people with money, but people who embraced the vision. It took 2–3 years to build the board with the fundraising capacity they needed.

After that, they spent time in strategy meetings. They shifted attention away from too much focus on existing program tactics to the broader community and engagement needed to create the center. The board evolved and developed a "new personality" Jim said, and "We built momentum in small steps." It took 5 years for the board changes that ultimately resulted in making the teen center a reality.

The Benefits of Board Development

Effective board development results in the board getting the basics right, building a board infrastructure, becoming more strategic, attracting resources and social capital, and engaging with the community in powerful ways. In recounting how their boards improved, each study participant mentioned some aspect of board responsibility: better meetings, more board ownership, committee functioning, governance policies and practices, clarity of roles, leadership, team-building, diversity, and/or fundraising.

It seems anything could improve and a lot did. The benefits for each organization were those they chose to work on—those that mattered to them at a particular point in time. The implication is that the underlying success factors of board development that work to engage board members in fundraising will also work, for example, to move a board from hands-on involvement in operations to a more strategic role.

The reported results of board development in my research were similar to those of other studies (Green & Griesinger, 1996; Herman & O'Renz, 1998; Jansen et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 1992) and included improvements in:

- Leadership—more and better leaders.
- Interpersonal dynamics—better, stronger relationships among the board members and with the chief executive.
- Engagement—increased meeting attendance and participation; more energy and momentum.
- Better quality discussion, better preparation.
- Board functioning—better meetings, more ownership of the board's work, more effective committee work, and recognition that the board needs to work on itself —not just the organization.
- Boards being more strategic and less involved in operations.
- Composition—More diverse; better "quality" of board members

- Community engagement—Board members increased engagement with the external community, "got it" regarding fundraising, increased identification and use of board members' networks, and/or strengthened advocacy.

When done right, board development has many and varied benefits. Study participants' experiences demonstrated this: "It makes a huge difference." "It [board development] turned the whole organization around." "They are more critical than they know they are … [with board development] they come to understand how the board is critical to the success or failure of the organization."

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the critical role a board plays as well as the importance of continuous board development to ensure its effectiveness. While these developmental efforts require investments, their results make them worthwhile. Effective board development may begin with a nudge. It is rooted in an assessment that correctly defines the issue(s) and proceeds, with intention and board chair leadership.

Effective board development is not a linear process. It is not dependent on the characteristics of the organization or the life cycle stage. For some organizations, board development is urgent and transformational, for others it is an ongoing evolution; the work of a board dedicated to making an impact requires an on-going commitment. Now you understand the factors that will help you and other nonprofit leaders know where and how to begin when you want to take a board to the next level.

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Chapter 10
Gender at Work: An Experiment in "Doing Gender"

Aruna Rao, David Kelleher, Carol Miller, Joanne Sandler, Rieky Stuart and Tania Principe

> The notion of a separate organism is clearly an abstraction, as is also its boundary. Underlying all this is unbroken wholeness even though our civilization has developed in such a way as to strongly emphasize the separation into parts.
>
> —David Bohm,
>
> *The Undivided Universe: An Ontological Interpretation of Quantum Theory*

It's Monday morning. Michel is facilitating a gender action learning process for five trade unions in South Africa to support their collective action to end sexual harassment in their sectors. Kalyani has traveled from India to Bangladesh to work with the Gender Justice and Diversity Division of BRAC to help them with their strategic plan. Rex is in Ghana working in a gender action learning process with Oxfam America partners engaged in extractive industries. Rieky is interviewing staff in a large multilateral organization to support the gender team to update and improve their gender equality policy and strategy. Joanne and Aruna are at Sussex University coordinating a 2-week immersion on gender and organizational change for 15 graduate students getting master degrees in gender studies.

That is a typical day for Gender at Work. We are a virtual, transnational, feminist network with twenty associates and a small complement of staff based in 10

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countries that support organizational and institutional change to end discrimination against women and build cultures of equality in organizations. The linking of virtual and transnational aspects of Gender at Work enables us to be in many places at the same time, to explore approaches to organizational and institutional change that are acutely sensitive to context, and to exchange and co-create knowledge that subverts the traditional North/South divide.

This chapter will discuss the development of Gender at Work's organizing strategy, how it functioned, how it was challenged by the growth of the organization, and how Gender at Work dealt with those challenges. It will also discuss how Gender at Work's strategy may differ from other Social Sector Organizations (SSOs) and what difference that makes to "doing gender."

What Is Gender at Work?

One of the challenges of Gender at Work is the difficulty of describing ourselves to outsiders. For example, an advertisement (Fig. 10.1) for a G@W Associate in The Economist might look something like the following:

This advertisement would probably make perfect sense to those who are already actively involved in Gender at Work, and it hints at some of the distinctive aspects of our organization. In an increasingly wired world, a virtual network is not unique. In a world increasingly aware of feminist values, an organization professing feminist values is also not unique. Our experimenting combines those ideas and values with the belief that "doing gender" requires finding new ways of working, including forms of organizing, to subvert deep structures of power relations and discrimination within organizations (Batliwala, 2011), including our own.

In preparing to write this chapter, we asked members of the Gender at Work community (Board, associates, and staff) to suggest an image that most closely described Gender at Work. What we got back was "meshworks," "adhocracies," and "chaordic" organizations. "Meshworks" according to Escobar (2004) have neither a center nor periphery; rather each node within the meshwork can play a unique role vis-à-vis the whole web. An adhocracy (Mintzberg, 1989) is the opposite of a bureaucracy—it is an informal organization that is flexible and adaptable. Chaordic organizations (Hock, 2000) combine aspects of chaos and order because they are built around a flexible network structure with some key principles such as clarity of purpose, self-governance, equitable power, rights, responsibility and rewards, embedded command and control methods, and fostering of complexity and change. While Gender at Work does not strictly fit any of these definitions, we reflect aspects of each. Common to all these images are non-traditional, non-hierarchical ways of structuring and working. The ongoing challenge Gender at Work faces is growing a structure that reflects our feminist values and the interests of members and helping to grow a field of work on gender and institutional change while also staying afloat amidst the unpredictable waves of funding trends and shifts in priorities in the social sector as a whole.

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Wanted

Gender at Work Associate

Join an innovative collaborative that works around the globe to build cultures of inclusion and gender equality. We want people with a wide range of superior skills that share our commitment and values. We offer opportunities to use your expertise to create knowledge and respond to requests from organizations that want to be more inclusive in their programming and their way of working.

The way we are structured puts our values into practice. We offer flexible work options, so your earnings will depend on your expertise, availability, and initiative. While your base of work can be anywhere in the world, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with others virtually and on site in a wide variety of countries and settings.

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Fig. 10.1 Advertisement for a G@W associate

In the early years, when we began our work, it was difficult for us to describe what we did and equally difficult for outsiders to understand what we were saying. For example, a founding Board member, Kumi Naidoo, with a puzzled look on his face once said, "This is too abstract. Can you come up with examples to explain what this looks like in real contexts?" Well, we believe that organizations are fundamentally gender biased in their structure, systems, and ways of working, and that power dynamics in organizations keep exclusionary practices in place. What organization would not want us to come in and disrupt that dynamic? Joanna Kerr, another founding board member of Gender at Work, has described Gender at Work as an organization "that tackles what is hardest to change – deep structures of inequality," knowing that to stop culture from eating strategy for breakfast, we had to change culture! To make it even harder, we were determined to work globally and cross-sect orally—which meant we had no sectoral constituency and easily identifiable allies,

little intellectual history to draw on, no national identity to springboard from, and few funders whose criteria we would fit. Fourteen years after Gender at Work was born, we have a better handle on describing what we do and what impact we make having now worked with over a hundred organizations all over the world; however, the cross-sectoral, systemic, and global nature of our work continues to be challenging in terms of building a constituency and attracting donor funding.

A key understanding driving our work is that to change systems of power that hold inequality in place, relationships between people, institutions, and organizations have to shift. We also believe that the culture of discrimination against women and other exclusions operate in the consciousness of individuals, in families and communities, as well as within formal systems and organizations. Within formal systems and organizations these individually and collectively held values and norms shape the rules that determine women's and girls' access to resources, their ability to voice their interests and priorities, take action to secure their rights, improve their lives, and create new futures. Gender at Work's goal is to change these deep structures of discrimination and social norms by supporting individuals and groups in systems and organizations wherever they are around the world to promote social justice and gender equality.

Our work, and sometimes our own personal experiences of working within organizations, has highlighted forms of what we have referred to elsewhere as "the toxic alchemy" of institutional power that maintains discriminatory social norms and deep structure within organizations.[1] These include work place practices such as hours of work, timing of meetings, rigidly enforced workplace hierarchies and power relations, sexual harassment and threat of violence, poor work-life balance, plus a clear delineation between the heart (public) and the mind (private) in terms of what is considered part of the world of work. Against this backdrop of knowledge and experience and given the specific focus of our work, we wanted to try something different. We asked ourselves:

- How do we structure ourselves to make this change happen?
- How do we embody our values and principles?
- How can opportunities like new technology and the trend towards leaner, more flexible organizational structures facilitate our model?
- What are the opportunities and costs associated with this model?

History of Ideas, Work Principles, and Organization

Organizational structure and culture arise in response to a particular mission and context. In organizations where the first generation of founders and members are still in leadership positions, structure and culture are also strongly affected by the values of its founders and key associates. This is certainly true of Gender at Work.

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[1]See Rao, Sandler, Kelleher, and Miller (2016).

Three key members of what is now Gender at Work came together in 1994 to work with BRAC, a large Bangladeshi NGO, to build capacity for change toward gender equality and women's empowerment. The three shared knowledge and skills but each was also a specialist in women's rights in development, adult education, or organizational learning. This mixture of disciplines and experience and those of the BRAC staff they worked with led them to an understanding that changing gender relations required (at least) contextually relevant, individual change at a reasonably profound level coupled with systemic change in discriminatory norms and structures. These understandings were influenced by what they were reading - emerging theoretical work on the gendered nature of organizations such as Acker's (1990) work on the gendered substructure of organizations, Kabeer's (1994) work on gender hierarchies in development thinking, Goetz's (2003) work on the gendered nature of development bureaucracies.

Joan Acker had pointed to the pervasive way that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion were all patterned through the distinction between male and female. Kabeer showed how gender relations were "a product of institutional practice [and therefore] genuine change entails institutional transformation" (1990, p. 299). Goetz's (1994) work focused on the administrative practices of development organizations and described how structures, cultures and purposes of these organizations institutionalized male dominance.

As we thought about how to facilitate institutional change we were inspired by new explorations into leadership and organizational behaviour such as Margaret Wheatley's work on the implications for leadership and organizations of insights drawn from quantum physics to chaos theory, Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline*, and Karl Weick's work on loosely coupled systems.

Weick's (1976) work showed us how apparently stable, unchanging, and deterministic organizations did have parts of the system that were not as tightly coupled and that these systems were changeable under certain conditions. Margaret Wheatley (1999), invoking the laws of quantum physics, reminded us that order was different from control and that relationship was at the heart of change.

> Nothing exists independent of its relationships. We are constantly creating the world—evoking it from many potentials…this is a world of process, the process of connecting, where "things" come into being because of relationship. (p. 69)

Senge's (2006) work encouraged us to consider the importance of systems thinking and that "the fundamental learning units in an organization are working teams" (p. xiii). The key skills of helping participants understand complexity by engaging in dialogue and building new mental models were important building blocks in our approach.

Taken together, these authors and others pointed to a complex sub-structure of power and gender relations, which would not be dismantled as a result of a new policy or injunctions from the top. Change would mean challenging basic institutional norms and that this would be done through a process of dialogue and relationship. This meant that from the beginning the three were committed to a holistic (head and heart) change as well as a systemic one. In retrospect, this was a very challenging theory of change to carry. Few others in development were thinking this way.

This theory of change led to other key principles. Because of the nature of what the founders were trying to do, it was clear that this work required people with experience and a good reputation of working in this emerging field, with the skills for supporting organizations to confront deep structure—which is not a tick box kind of approach. Change agents needed a capacity to respond effectively to somewhat unpredictable interpersonal and organizational events.

Another implication was that because what Gender at Work was doing was new, it needed to connect with others on similar paths it could learn with. The early members knew they were trying to fit somewhere on the continuum of organizing models that includes networks, communities of practice, and more formal organizations. Much of their early work, before Gender at Work became an organization was to build informal networks of people interested in this multi-disciplinary approach. Over approximately 5 years, the early members convened two international meetings, edited a book, and held countless informal discussions in the midst of other projects. All of this learning happened outside of the traditional spaces of university departments, academic publications, and established scholarly conferences. This meant that the learning was unconstrained by formal institutional structures such as a university and academic and scientific definitions of what constituted knowledge.

The founders prioritized the informal—meeting around kitchen tables, in airports and borrowed conference rooms, drawing on the wide networks of relationships developed over the careers of key members. These informal meetings not only advanced their learning, they alerted them to the importance of the informal in work itself—individuals' values and consciousness and how those shaped their ideas; power dynamics in groups and how they include and exclude; and differing responsibilities of family and work and how they shaped participation. These meetings also taught them they could identify potential associates best by informal contact and long conversations rather than traditional job interviews.

Their strategy was opportunistic. They did not wait for substantial grant funding, although early "on-faith" funding was crucial. They did not have an "organization"; rather, they had a set of ideas and took every opportunity to further them. Their organizing principle was, "Think big, start here." They used existing projects to meet people and advance their ideas. Often, they had opportunities to experiment but few resources to pay fees. They grabbed those opportunities.

Our early history (1994–2003) was a period of innovation, experimentation, informal learning, and network building without the benefit of an organizational structure. More importantly, Gender at Work developed a theory of change that required very particular types of experience and skills to implement it with partners.

In 2003, Gender at Work was formally established as a nonprofit organization. The co-founders became co-directors. Together they could raise resources and deposit them into a Gender at Work bank account; and they hired technical competency to help meet the financial management and auditing requirements of a

registered NGO. They set up a board of directors comprising representatives of the four organizations that together founded Gender at Work.[2] The Board members provided the fledgling organization with material and moral support, strategic advice, and fundraising help.

The co-directors continued to focus the bulk of the resources they generated on the work. They supplemented their mostly unpaid time with Gender at Work with consultancies and functioned out of home offices without organizational support. They transferred this ethic to the work in what they called "the network." There would be no offices or administrative staff; Gender at Work would buy or borrow services that were needed. This was in part a reaction to their earlier experiences with bureaucracies but also a response to very limited resources and a determination to do as much as possible with what they had.

The organization was built around the need to attract experienced people whom it could not afford to pay full-time. Associates were paid for their work on projects but much of the thinking and writing was unsupported. Thus, Gender at Work's organizational structure was characterized by:

- experienced associates from many countries linked by personal relationships and an interest in the work;
- minimum administration;
- temporary project teams with maximum flexibility;
- minimal management, personal development rather than career development; and
- volunteer organizational development work expected.

The co-directors realized that they were asking a lot from associates but hoped that associates would see benefits such as the opportunity to contribute, be part of cutting edge projects and thinking on gender and organizational change, freedom to respond to project needs with best thinking not constrained by organizational norms, and association with interesting, congenial professionals from around the world. This turned out to be the case.

This organizing structure gave Gender at Work two substantial advantages. First, the co-founders and early members could connect to the people with considerable knowledge and expertise who shared an interest in a holistic and systemic approach to shifting discriminatory social norms and deep structures of inequality; and they had a learning path unhindered by traditional academic constraints. Associates could move in and out of Gender at Work based on need and interest. The strange attractor was the respectful approach to addressing gender equality, the organizational values, and the deepening of meaningful practice with talented peers. This combination of people and freedom led to a string of innovations: The Gender at Work Analytical Framework, and the Gender Action Learning Process, and later to

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[2]The four founding organizations of Gender at Work are the Association for Women's Rights in Development, Civicus: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and Women's Learning Partnership.

adaptations of strategic learning, collective impact, and emergent learning.[3] This combination also made possible high quality work with a range of partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and influential writings and publications.

Gender at Work's Approach

Gender at Work understands institutional change as being multifactorial and holistic. Therefore, our approach links organizational change, changes in the "rules of the game," and gender equality. This is based on an analysis of the role of social institutions or rules—both formal and informal—in maintaining and reproducing women's unequal position in society. It is concerned with the individual psychology and capacity of women and men, their access to resources and the social structures in which they live. From the point of view of an organization intervening to change gender-biased institutions, change must happen in two places—outside the organization and within.

In the Gender at Work Framework (see Fig. 10.2), the top two quadrants are *individual*. On the right are changes in noticeable individual conditions, e.g., increased resources, voice, freedom from violence, access to health and education. On the left, individual consciousness and capability—knowledge, skills, political consciousness, and commitment to change toward equality. The bottom two clusters are *systemic.* The cluster on the right refers to formal rules as laid down in constitutions, laws, and policies. The cluster on the left is the set of informal norms and practices—including those that maintain inequality in everyday practices. Of course this analysis is deeply contextual.

Furthermore, our conception is intervention focused—it began from the point of view of an organization attempting to change the norms and structures underlying inequality. This means change must happen in many places. It needs to affect individuals, organizational norms and capabilities, access to resources and community norms.

Our initial work on the framework was to understand gender inequality and the power relationships between women and men in communities. Explicit rules embedded in patriarchal understandings define what's important and prescribe behavior and associated rewards. These rules restrict or prevent access to information and other resources required for change. The lack of resources starves efforts of individual change. The implicit norms colonize minds, exert invisible power, and make the whole thing feel reasonable.

We have used the framework to analyze and strategize for change in gender relations within organizations. It is also possible to use the framework to look at issues of inequality beyond gender. To do that, each quadrant would be re-conceived as encompassing a concern for equality that includes all genders. We

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[3]All these resources are available on Gender at Work's website, www.genderatwork.org.

**GENDER AT WORK
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**
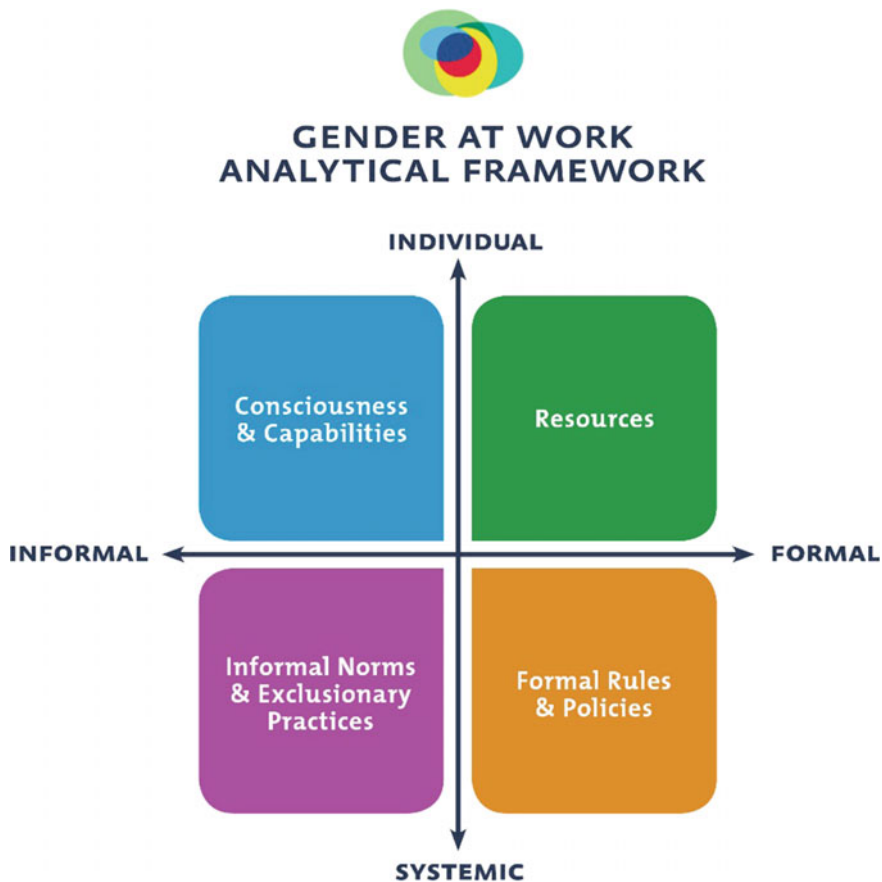
Fig. 10.2 The gender at work analytical framework

acknowledge that we are more than our genders. Our class and race and a variety of other factors also define us. This framework can help us think more broadly about the injustices that are embedded in difference.

Gender Action Learning Process

In our work with international development organizations and trade unions we use the framework to first develop an assessment; secondly, develop strategies that respond to the issues raised in the assessment; and finally to understand the impact of the various threads of intervention. The framework is used as a key part of the Gender Action Learning (GAL) process.

In the GAL process, we highly value the importance of reflective space, recognizing that reflection on self and on organizational practice is a key tool for learning and effective action. Another key factor is the ability for people in the process to work together and to learn from each other in the context of significant organizational goals. The GAL process happens over 16 months to two years and has at least 4 aspects:

- Gender at Work facilitators visit the organization and lead a reflection on history, existing programs, readiness for change, and the reasonable next step. Generally, participants feel energized and engaged in the problem of how they could take their work for gender equality to the next level.
- Following the visit, Gender at Work facilitates peer-learning workshops of three to six organizations to allow the participants space to think, plan, and to get supportive feedback from facilitators and peer organizations.
- The peer-learning workshops also build a social group that supports the participants' personal explorations related to the work. The peer group also brings a sense of accountability. Participants are determined to have something to share at the next meeting.
- The Gender at Work teams bring facilitation skill, knowledge of change for gender equality, and a fine sense of balance between support and challenge. Each organization has access to a Gender at Work facilitator for coaching and support through the change process in their organization.

Although the program can be different in response to circumstance, generally, it unfolds in a series of steps similar to:

1. Inception Workshop: this first workshop includes the Gender at Work team and representatives from potential partner organizations. This meeting allows potential partners and Gender at Work to talk about what we do and to explore whether the action-learning program would be helpful for them at this time. Following this meeting, the organizations decide whether or not to participate. Each program would include 3–6 organizations.
2. Organizational Visits: A Gender at Work team visits each organization and sometimes their community to hear the story of that organization. Using storytelling, drawing, and analysis we facilitate the examination of that organization' s history, current work, and potential directions related to gender equality. This stage allows the participants to see their organization in a new light and begin to think about what they might learn and how this learning would be translated into action in their organization. In many cases participants would be introduced to T'ai Chi exercises that open up energy and introduce the connection of body, mind, and spirit to the process.
3. Workshop 1, Telling Stories, Sharing Doubts and Re-thinking the Work: this first three-day workshop is attended by a change team from each organization. The Change Team is made up of 3–4 people including at least one from senior levels and in most cases including men as well as women. At this workshop we hear the story of each organization. We also introduce the G@W Analytical Framework as

an assessment and strategic planning tool. This discussion uses the Framework to look at gender relations in their communities as well as in their organizations. Participants are asked to do this analysis and share it with the other change teams. This activity builds analytic skill as well as building a community of learners. The activities and the facilitation are carefully designed to build a learning community characterized by trust, respect, and openness. In the latter stages of the workshop each organizational team meets with their facilitator and develops a change project that will significantly affect at least one aspect of their organization's capacity to promote gender equality. These plans are then shared with peers and revised following the discussion. A key dynamic of this workshop is the empowerment that comes from doing this type of analysis. Participants often say that this analysis was previously only done by the men or by bosses.

4. Work in Organizations: participants carry out a change project in their organizations and communities. This project focuses either inside the organization (on informal norms and power relations, for example), or on the relations between the organization and its community. The work is supported by a facilitator who visits periodically to coach, advise, and in some cases facilitate meetings.

5. Workshop 2: Telling our Stories, Re-vitalizing our Practice: This workshop, also three days, hears the stories and experiences of the participants' change efforts. Other participants and resource people offer analysis and advice. Typically, the facilitators introduce ideas they think may be helpful in understanding the unfolding dynamics of the change projects (often the focus is on power and how it is used to maintain norms). The other important feature of the second workshop is the growing sense of community that allows participants to share their personal stories of change and understand how personal struggles are related to organizational change. Finally, organizational teams and their facilitators plan the next stage of their change work.

6. Work in Organizations: participants continue to work on their projects with the support of their facilitator.

7. Final Workshop: this workshop hears how the change projects are going and reflects on the change process itself. Participants reflect what has happened in each of the quadrants and how these changes were linked to each other. In some of our programs, the participants have been supported to write about their experience. This writing, for some, turned out to produce the most powerful learning of the program. See for example, *Transforming Power: A Knotted Rope* (Friedman & Meer, 2012)

The GAL process has been quite successful in chipping away at the deep structure of communities and organizations. We believe that the key factors in this success include:

1. The GAL process supports the participants in a deep analysis of the dynamics of gender inequality in their context. This discussion surfaces issues that have not been talked about in other meetings.

2. The change team includes one or more senior people who can be a force for change regarding budgets, policy, and plan approvals.

3. The process builds the commitment and energy of the change team.
4. The process recognizes that transformation is seldom the result of one meeting; it unfolds over time with the support of an outside facilitator and coach.
5. The process builds individual capacity of change agents as well as a plan for change that is developed by local change agents who understand the particular dynamics of their context.

In summary, participants use the Gender at Work Analytical Framework to examine the deep structures that hold inequality in place and create barriers to women's rights and gender equality. Then, they develop a collective project to shift these deep structures. Peer-learning workshops, shared accountability, deep reflection, individual coaching, and mentoring from a G@W facilitator and, resources and writing—these are the core tools of the program.[4]

Emergent Learning and Collective Impact

In recent years, we have used the Gender at Work Analytical Framework for an organizational diagnosis together with the Emergent Learning Framework to frame emergent learning questions to shape a strategic learning agenda for organizations. Used together, these frameworks can help to build a shared sense of what it means to be a learning organization and a shared sense of the most important questions and assumptions in how the organization thinks change happens. By mapping the current organizational initiatives onto the Gender at Work Analytical Framework, we could show where the organization was placing major emphasis, areas that might need additional attention, and discuss the organization's theory of change. Then using the "Because-If-Then" sequence from the emergent learning framework, organizational participants framed learning questions which got to the heart of their assumptions about how change happens and then determined how they would gather information to answer those questions in the course of their day-to-day work.

A more extensive use of emergent learning and collective impact principles was carried out by Gender at Work's South Africa team. In September 2013, the team, initiated a feminist inspired social change process in the Vaal area of Gauteng, a resource poor area, to experiment with the possibility of creating greater "collective impact" in relation to violence against women and non-conforming genders. Collective impact is a structured approach to collaboration that aims to achieve substantial impact on a large scale social problem. Such initiatives share five key conditions that distinguish them from other types of collaboration: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous

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[4]This summary of the GAL process was based on Friedman and Gordezky (2011), Kelleher (2009), and an unpublished article on Gender Action Learning with Trade Unions by Michel Friedman.

communication, and the presence of a backbone organization (Hanleybrown, Kamia, & Kramer, 2012).

This initiative was created to innovatively respond to the extremely high levels of gender-based violence in South Africa, where Gender at Work has been working for many years. We asked ourselves how we could build upon the experience of our partners in using the G@W approach to change and in creating safe, non-judgmental, and respectful learning spaces that were conducive to building trust, openness, and authentic relationships. We knew that high levels of violence impacted people's ability to trust each other and be receptive to innovation. We wanted to use the resources, skills, and relationships we had already cultivated to make a difference to ordinary every day social relations that have become normalized as violent. Mostly we were concerned with the question of how could we help to create new norms that are not so violent at heart.

With the support of Gender at Work colleagues across the network, the South Africa Gender at Work team developed an initial theory of change in answer to our core framing question. They used the Gender at Work Analytical Framework to help focus actions specifically on violence, with the aim of encouraging new actions that start addressing norms, current actions continuing but in a way which more consciously takes account of norms, and/or changes in all four quadrants and greater synergy between them. They encouraged, as much as possible, those who have to live with the consequences of the strategies chosen to be involved in their development and implementation to build stronger ownership and leadership. They used a forward thinking focus framed by the question What might be done to create a rape and domestic violence free society in the Vaal? to facilitate greater innovation and impact.

In December 2014, thirteen months after beginning, a number of participants were interviewed about their experience and what they felt had changed in the interim as a result of their engagement with Letsema. Participants spoke of profound changes at the personal, family/household, neighbourhood, and broader community levels. Impact had been increased because participants had taken on actions that they felt passionate about and committed to, which means they were driven by a principle of self-organizing and self-motivation. While all groups were working towards answering the same core question, they had freedom and flexibility to creatively generate responses and actions that were meaningful to them and that they care about.

Challenges of Growth

Inevitably Gender at Work needed to grow from the founders and a few associates to an organization capable of expanding our impact. Over the years we have grown, and shrunk, and grown again. Each stage of growth came with its own set of challenges Between 2005 and 2009, when we grew to between 6–10 associates, we continued with a networked organizational structure to permit flexibility and to

avoid being burdened by hierarchy and commitments to costly administrative support structures. Gender at Work developed a way of working based on "nodes" of work undertaken by one or more associates with core staff who supported these nodes by soliciting associates to respond to requests, by fundraising, and by ensuring reporting, monitoring, and financial administration. These nodes would come together for a project and would disband when the project is completed. This meant that a few centrally located people were in touch with all the nodes of work. Most associates worked, in some capacity, directly with the core. Associates also connected with each other along the wheel, bypassing the center.

An example of how Gender at Work associates came together in 2006 in response to a request for support is our work with Oxfam Canada's Partner in Cross Sectoral Engagement (PACE) Program—a capacity building program in the Horn of Africa. The request came to Gender at Work's Co-director, David Kelleher, who had a long standing working relationship with Oxfam Canada. The request was for Gender at Work to carry out a 2-year gender action learning process with six civil society organizations in Ethiopia, Somaliland, and Sudan. Kelleher contacted Michel Friedman, a longstanding associate based in South Africa who had been developing and carrying out gender action learning processes with organizations in South Africa.[5] Each brought their specific expertize—organizational learning and capacity building and gender action learning—to the program. Together they worked with the PACE program staff, one of whom subsequently joined Gender at Work as an associate. When the program was completed in 2009, Kelleher and Friedman wrote about their experience working with these six organizations (Kelleher & Friedman, 2009); the paper was distributed to and discussed by Gender at Work associates. In 2009, when funding for this program ended, Gender at Work's connection with these organizations ended but Oxfam as a whole (including Oxfam International, Oxfam Novib and Oxfam Belgium, in addition to Oxfam Canada) still uses the Gender at Work Framework in program planning and in monitoring and evaluation.

To supplement grant funding, Gender at Work carried out contract work, which came our way through our network or by bidding on open calls for proposals. This income stream generated small overheads used to support administrative and management functions. In Gender at Work's organizational model, financial management functions in much the same way as would typically happen in feminist organizations. However, the program management and administrative functions related to programs is outsourced to Gender at Work's global management team. In more typical organizational structures, programs or consultancies are run by program managers who oversee the administrative functions related to their program, and the program manager makes decisions that are approved by the Director of Operations. In Gender at Work's case, the Associates play a greater role in determining what is necessary and the Director of Operations is tasked with operationalizing their requests.

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[5]For more detail on this program, see "Change is a Slow Dance," Gender at Work, 2007 http://genderatwork.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Resources/Change-is-a-Slow-Dance.pdf.

When grant funding went up, contract work went down and vice versa. Grant funding allowed us to test our frameworks and carry out approaches and processes, such as gender action learning programs to address gender inequality in specific organizations that our network identified as important, interested, and committed to change and where internal change agents could lead and sustain the processes we put in motion. For example, with grant funding we have carried out gender action learning processes in over 10 trade unions in South Africa, and over 25 NGOS in India. Importantly, grant funding allowed us to analyze and write about what we learned through these processes and also enabled us to support writing for change activists themselves. In contract work, on the other hand, the client defines a priori the parameters of the work; the ask ranges widely from conducting a gender audit of a multilateral agency to carrying out a global evaluation of a bilateral's gender mainstreaming program worldwide; facilitating capacity building workshops on gender and organizational change for an international NGO; to carrying out a strategic planning process for an NGO. Such opportunities often enable us to test out the applicability of our frameworks in new contexts and extend our thinking into new spaces and organization; sometimes these spaces are more limited to the task at hand and limit our ability to engage new actors in participatory process to discuss and address power dynamics and deep structures of inequality.

The knowledge and tools generated by grant-funded programs and contract work were often shared with the center, other associates, and with the broader community interested in our work. For example, the South African team's reports on gender action learning processes such as Change is a Slow Dance was widely shared; the evaluation of the Swiss Development Corporation's gender mainstreaming program worldwide was extensively downloaded from our website; and gender strategy audit tool that Gender at Work developed for Plan International was shared with associates and widely used in Plan.

Most associates were attracted to this model, in part, because it freed them from management and administrative responsibilities, and enabled them to concentrate on program development and implementation and knowledge production. Associates volunteered time every year to support aspect of Gender at Work's development, from strategic planning to thinking through the role of associates and continually examining and refining our ways of working, processes of consultation and decision making, and responsibilities of accountability of associates to core staff and vice versa.

From 2009 to 2015, however, Gender at Work grew substantially—our program budget doubled by 2012 and then tripled, and the number of associates more than doubled. But the staff complement continued to be small. At this stage, we faced the most significant challenges to the values that underpin our organizational model. First is the challenge of supporting learning to drive innovation. Despite our best efforts, we found less and less time to learn because we were all so busy doing. Programs and projects had their own trajectories and timelines, budgets, and deliverables. Inevitably, associates involved in one node, were less informed of the other. Each person's workload was full, and associates wanted to maintain their part time status. Associates also wanted to engage in what interested them but not necessarily what interested the whole. This meant that communication as a function

became staff-led and the back and forth of ideas, questioning, reflection, and learning, which is the cornerstone of this kind of network, increasingly happened in small groups or nodes. Knowledge products, program approaches, and tools were generated and in demand, but the cross-network learning and collective knowledge building got short changed.

In our current liminal stage in transition from 20 associates and staff who connect both informally and formally to a significantly larger, chaordic organization, we are challenged on several fronts: How to support communication across the network and beyond? How to facilitate learning and knowledge building? How to develop approaches to accountability that resonate with our values? And most important how to develop and resource institutionalized ways of supporting such functions and processes that don't by default lead us into a hierarchal mode of operating or push up operating costs. We are trying to address these challenges through multiple pathways: bringing in a knowledge strategist to catalyze and coordinate knowledge building and knowledge outreach across our change interventions and network; building a more interactive website with interviews of associates and partners and knowledge products; blogs and videos on programs; and experimenting with strategic learning processes, particularly how to build learning methodologies into the early design of new initiatives.

Regarding communications and learning, we continue to work to develop approaches that are respectful of flexibility and creativity so essential to growing the associates network, and to nurture reflection and learning both among ourselves and with a larger pool of social change agents with whom we work. Wherever possible we build in monitoring and learning oriented exercises within our gender action learning processes that generates information as useful for program partners as it is for our network learning and evaluation purposes. For broader learning, we facilitate electronic discussions, for example, e-discussions such as one held in 2012 on gender and organizational change for associates and other colleagues to reflect on remaining and new sets of challenges and opportunities for organizations committed to advancing gender equality in their policies and programs.[6] Over time we have developed a greater appreciation that lean structures nonetheless require resources and time to maintain inclusive, participatory, horizontal, and democratic decision-making, and to create spaces for reflection and for defining organizational strategies.

A related challenge has been the tension between the requirement to maintain a solid cohort of experienced practitioners to respond to the increasing demand for kinds of processes supported by Gender at Work and the desire to build the field and reach a much broader network of people interested in gender and organizational change. Now, we are inviting people with different skills and experiences—from moviemakers to academics, and from students and young professionals to artists to join the Gender at Work network. We are experimenting with creating and supporting collaborative spaces that use gender action learning, innovative ideas, play,

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[6]The summary of this e-discussion can be found on the Gender at Work website (www. genderatwork.org).

and other creative methods to re-frame and generate knowledge that advances gender justice and cultures of equality. We held a global contest, End Gender Discrimination Now! in collaboration with three other organizations, to spotlight stories about changes that organizations implement that are chipping away at gender discrimination workplace and communities. Recently, we have teamed up with TMI project (a storytelling training and performance partnership) in developing storytelling colaboratories. We invited gender experts in development bureaucracies and women's human rights defenders to use powerful storytelling techniques to tell their stories of the deep structures that hold gender inequality in place where they work, in their organizations, communities, and countries.

Another challenge is that of accountability. Anne Marie Goetz says that accountability systems are shorthand about how power works in any system (Goetz, 2003). At Gender at Work, we focus our work on uncovering layers of gender power dynamics that keep discrimination in place. When we focus the lens on ourselves, we see a complex picture and interesting challenges. Gender at Work's structure was built on accountability to a vision, values, and set of operating principles. Given our democratic, feminist principles, we prioritize accountability to our program partners over upward accountability to the small organizational core. Our structure means that self-regulated horizontal accountability exists among associates and Gender at Work staff. Associates self-manage more than they evaluate performance. They take their accountabilities to the work and to one another seriously, and recognize this as part of their contribution to the whole. Often, associates ask for support or input when struggling with a particular challenge, with the volume of work, or they want to deepen their learning or practice. The South Africa program has drawn extensively on the monitoring and evaluation skills of one of Gender at Work's associates, and the Indian team also drew heavily on yet another associate to provide input into the design of their program evaluation. More often still, associates provide feedback to the larger network on activities or processes they support to further opportunities for organizational learning. Over the years, this system has generated a substantial body of work and innovative knowledge products and tools. But associates are not directly accountable for the organizational and strategic growth of Gender at Work itself. A small organizational hub has grown at the center to nurture growth and manage critical day-to-day support functions including financial management and fundraising. During the most recent period of growth, there were more people in the centre to communicate to and more associates to communicate with; when everyone is busy with their multiple commitments to their own work and Gender at Work, and decisions needed to be made quickly, a small team of the Executive Director and staff have done so without associate input, or with input from only a few, creating a dynamic we hoped to avoid.

At our strategic planning meeting in 2014, which brought together Gender at Work Board, ED, staff, and associates, we confronted this issue head on. Associates asked: how did decisions get made? By whom? Was there a consistent structure or process; was it visible or visible only to some? And if this structure was not wholly transparent, then how do we make it so? At the beginning of the meeting, there was considerable unease about this lack of clarity, but by the end of the meeting, associates agreed it was neither feasible nor desirable for all associates to be

involved in every decision. Instead, we agreed that associates, ED and staff, together, would determine broad directions, and within this, those most concerned would make decisions. An important learning from this reflection was that it was important for everyone to know who was involved in decision-making and what the outcomes were so associates who were not involved did not work at cross-purposes, and could approach those who were involved for more information. Out of that meeting emerged consensus on the broad contours for our work together leading to 2020. Compass 2020 reiterates our values as an organization, articulates the outcomes we collectively hope to achieve by 2020, elaborates the set of strategies we will employ to bring about the changes we hope to see and specifies what kind of organizational structure and funding base we expect to establish to enable us to move forward. As a collective vision and strategy, it is the glue that keeps us on the same page despite our different contexts, partnerships and activities.

Accomplishments

Gender at Work's structure has supported significant accomplishments over its 13- year history. We have made the compelling case that transforming the unspoken, informal institutional norms that perpetuate gender inequality in organizations is key to achieving more gender equitable options and outcomes for all. The wide use by practitioners and scholars of the Gender at Work Analytical Framework attests to the power of our concepts. A 2014 literature review on gender equality in organizations found that over 40 articles and publications cited Gender at Work and/or its founders, and that Gender at Work's analysis of the "deep structure" of organizations is widely cited in the literature including "research and writing on gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, NGO management, higher education, disaster relief, climate change, media culture, disability inclusion, and development policy" (Khan, 2014, p. 9).

Gender at Work has worked with over 100 organizations—ranging from community based organizations, to trade unions to multilateral agencies—to shift unequal power relationships, and to develop and assess plans, strategies, and programs intended to improve results and learning for gender equality and women's rights. Drawing on over 15 years of work, our 2016 publication, *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations* (Rao et al., 2016), catalyzes a new body of theory and practice emerging from scholars and practitioners in the global south and north. The book offers knowledge and support to internal and external change leaders who want to become adept at diagnosing, strategizing, and motivating others to use creative and effective strategies to foment multi-pronged organizational change. Most importantly, we have been able to leverage our wide-ranging experience at multiple levels to influence larger movements of change in influential organizations and networks.

The Gender at Work experiment is still a work in progress as we continue to evolve in response to challenges, particularly those associated with strategic growth. Over the past (nearly) two decades we explored new ways of working we believe are consistent with our feminist principles and our belief there are different ways of organizing that

can subvert traditional forms of organizational power relations, transcend geographical boundaries, and unleash creativity and learning. We have called this "doing gender" at Gender at Work. As a feminist network, our experience contributes to debates on what feminist organizations and leadership of those organizations can look and feel like, and how the way feminist organizations or networks are structured can reinforce social justice goals. We have tried to bring our feminist principles to our organization structure and practice by rethinking power dynamics and creating as much possible non-hierarchical, loosely networked, and participatory ways of working that value reflective processes and learning and have a deep appreciation of the capacities and contributions of network members. Most importantly, Gender at Work continues to draw in incredible talent, whose collective wisdom enables us to bridge theory and practice and speak to a diverse audience interested in gender equality, women's empowerment and rights, and organizational change.

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Chapter 11
Intervening in Organizational Trauma: A Tale of Three Organizations

Shana Hormann and Pat Vivian

Parallel to individuals' experiences, organizations can suffer from trauma; the entity as a whole feels the impact of the experience. Organizational trauma may result from a single devastating event, from the effects of many deleterious events over time, or from the impact of cumulative trauma that comes from the nature of the organization's work. Whatever the source, organizations are wounded, sometimes severely. Howard Stein defines trauma at any level as "an experience for which a person-family-group is emotionally (not only cognitively) unprepared, an experience that overwhelms ones' defensive (self-protective) structure and leaves one feeling totally vulnerable and at least temporarily helpless" (personal communication, September 28, 2004).

Trauma and traumatization overpower the organization's cultural structure and processes and weaken the organization's ability to respond to external and internal challenges (Kahn, 2008). These experiences leave the organization feeling vulnerable and helpless and create lasting impact on the organizational psyche and culture (Stein, 1994). While all organizations might have dysfunctional patterns, trauma-genic organizational cultures, cultures that reproduce traumatizing dynamics and circumstances so that the entity never completely heals from traumatic events, exacerbate that dysfunction. These cultures harbor effects of unhealed sudden traumatic events as well as insidious cumulative traumatization (Vivian & Hormann, 2015).

Our experience and research are grounded in highly mission driven nonprofits. Highly mission driven organizations are organizations that entice individuals to make wholehearted commitments to achieve important changes in society or help

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those suffering from societal ills. Such organizations have compelling visions and missions. For example, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's mission is "to support individuals and organizations working to protect children from abuse and neglect worldwide." The YWCA "is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all." The redemptive nature of their work, that is, the aim to cure societal ills as well as enable personal transformation, makes these organizations susceptible to organizational trauma (Couto, 1989).

Unless the effects of organizational trauma and the resulting dynamics are addressed effectively, organizations are doomed to repeat them (Vivian & Hormann, 2013; Kahn, 2003, 2005). Without developing approaches that work in these persistently traumatized systems, usual organization development interventions, even those developed for use in nonprofits, are less effective or not effective at all. Many situations are complex with more than one type of trauma affecting the health of the organizations. We have encountered a wide variety of organizational trauma. This chapter provides an overview of organizational trauma we have observed, contributing factors, and examples of interventions. Our intention is to use three case examples to help leaders and consultants identify and intervene in appropriate ways to heal organizations and promote organizational health. Of the three case examples, the first and third are named and the second one is anonymous.

Types and Sources of Trauma

The types and sources of organizational trauma are summarized in Table 11.1. They are: single devastating event, ongoing wounding, empathic nature of the work, and redemptive nature of the work.

Single or multiple devastating events are the most noticeable and may receive public press. Sources of devastation may be external such as the bombing of a clinic, or internal such as a leader embezzling agency funds. When the source is external, the organization's place in the community may be called into question

Table 11.1 Types and sources of trauma (Vivian & Hormann, 2013, p. 23)

Type	Source	Example
Single devastating event	External	Attack on a workplace, loss of funding
Single devastating event	Internal	Suicide of leader, abusive behavior, insider embezzlement
Ongoing wounding	External	Threats or overt hostility directed at organization from community
Ongoing wounding	Internal	Abusive or destructive management practices
Empathic nature of the work	Internal	Unclear boundaries, over-identification with clients
Redemptive nature of the work	Internal	Internalized judgment, guilt, depression, despair

(Stein, 2004a). When an internal source is responsible, questions are raised about the organization's values and structures. The organization's culture may be torn apart and some or all of the organization may die; individuals experience grief and survival guilt. Devastating events require a strong, effective, and timely response (Hudson, 1998; Noer, 2009; Stein, 1998, 2004a, b).

Ongoing wounding is collective emotional and psychological injury that builds over time and disables an organization with an accumulation of harm. External sources of ongoing wounding include community members repeatedly vandalizing an agency building or place of worship (Stein, 2004a). When this occurs, the organizational culture takes on a defensive stance to protect itself and hardens against "outsiders" often to the point that the organization's functioning is constricted. Internal patterns of wounding include harassment of employees and workplace abuse. Eventually staff become isolated, distrust anyone in a leadership role and the culture is marred by fear and helplessness (Kahn, 2003, 2005; Kusy & Holloway, 2009; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994.)

The effect of the work of an organization on its culture is a central component of our conceptual framework (Vivian & Hormann, 2002). Much of our consulting practice has been with agencies in which staff members use empathy and compassion to address needs of individuals who have been harmed directly or whose needs have been neglected. Over time the organization's culture becomes infused with the stories of trauma suffered by clients. Organizational trauma caused by the empathic nature of the work is the harm to an organization's culture of repeated exposure to trauma through the organization's work (Figley, 1995, 2002; Fisher & Abrahamson, 2002). Similarly, the redemptive work of an organization can also be a cause for organizational trauma. For example, continuous internalized judgment that an organization is not doing enough to reach its mission can spiral downward into despair and loss of hope (Couto, 1989).

Consultative Approach

Our approach to consulting with traumatized organizations or those at risk for traumatization has been influenced by the work of several organization development practitioners. Block (2000), a seminal thinker in organization development, describes how to succeed in work with clients by using a collaborative consulting approach. Howard F. Stein, whose practice is drawn from psychoanalytic anthropology, continues to explore the cultural unconscious and its pervasive influence on organizational functioning (1994, 1998, 2004a, b). In Great Britain Vega Zagier Roberts and Anton Obholzer investigate unconscious sources of stress in human service organizations and ways to work effectively with staff of those organizations (1994). In addition, William Kahn, a professor at Boston University's School of Management, has written about care giving entities experiencing distress, including trauma (2003, 2005); and Hopper (2012), associated with the Institute of Group

Analysis (United Kingdom) has consulted to many traumatized systems and continues to write extensively about his insights and ideas.

Block (2000) explores various ways to consult and concludes that a collaborative approach offers the most effective partnership for change. In that approach the client and consultant join with each other to take advantage of the knowledge and perspective each brings to the situation. According to Block the success of this kind of consultation rests on relationships, and the success of those relationships depends on authentic interactions between the consultant and the client. Problem solving tasks—the focus on the content of the issue at hand and what to do about it—operate at one level of the consulting process. Attention to feelings, building trust, noticing expressed and unexpressed needs, and being present and responsible all operate at a second level. Block postulates that authenticity is key to succeeding at this second level. Though a consultant by definition has no direct organizational authority in any consulting efforts, by integrating both levels of work he or she can partner with the client organization to achieve the desired change.

Stein takes consulting further by describing his practice of seeking to unearth what is beneath the "crust" of culture (2004a) in order to more fully understand its reality. Using a psychodynamic perspective, he maps the contradictions between the espoused (visible and spoken about) story of the culture and the organization's unconscious processes and hidden dimensions. This mapping allows both a deeper analysis of the situation and a more compassionate connection to all of those individuals working within an organization. Ultimately Stein offers a practice framework "of emotional inclusiveness in which the consultant becomes an advocate not for one leader, one member or one group but rather for the maturity and integrity of the whole system" (1987, p. 364). Hopper addresses the parallels between individual and systems experiences and the necessity of paying attention to a multi-level focus—"organism, person, relationship, group, committee, organization, society and globe"—and being aware of where that focus is at any given time in a consultation (2012, p. xix).

Obholzer and Roberts (1994) focus specifically on the individual and organizational stress in human service organizations. With contributions from psychoanalysis, open systems theory, Wilfred Bion, and group relations they explore a variety of situations in which the unconscious dynamics of the work are little understood and almost completely unmanaged. Roberts, Obholzer, and other practitioners immerse themselves in the powerful undercurrents of the organizations that they study. In doing so they experience firsthand the complex effects of these dynamics. Their writing offers compassionate descriptions of the pain in these systems and a poignant understanding of the impact of this kind of consultation on the consultants themselves. Likewise, Kahn's work illuminates the issues of care-giving systems, "institutions whose members directly provide healing, growth, or support of one kind or another to individuals seeking help" (2005, p. 4), and those systems' unique susceptibility to stress—and possibly trauma—because of the nature of the work itself.

Block, Stein, Roberts, Obholzer, Kahn, and Hopper together offer a deeply complex picture of organizational life and the consulting process and with those a

set of implications for the consultant's role. As Block comments (2000, pp. xv–xix) consulting is akin to therapy, philosophy, and art. The process is nonlinear rather than a determinate set of steps to follow, and delving into the unconscious and emotional life of groups and organizations as a whole is not for everyone. Love for organizations and their people and a ready willingness to immerse oneself in the relational aspects of consulting are fundamental to consulting to traumatized systems. This article is an invitation to this challenging and healing work.

Case Studies

South Carolina: Safe Homes Rape Crisis Coalition

Safe Homes is a nonprofit organization that provides safe shelter, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence as well as leadership for education and prevention efforts. In spring of 2014 tragedy struck. A domestic violence shelter resident was murdered by her husband just outside the shelter. Many shelter staff can relay a story about a client who was murdered after they left the shelter; this is a terrible reality of domestic violence. However, in this case the violence came home. One of the staff heard the gunshot and others were onsite when police and ambulance personnel arrived. The executive director, Lynn Hawkins, moved quickly to provide staff with support and a critical incident debriefing in the aftermath. Lynn had been with the agency for years and knew her staff team. Within weeks she assessed that the staff members were seriously negatively impacted and decided that additional intervention was needed. She reached out for help to her network, the state coalition, and the state coalition executive director reached out to her network which included New Jersey. Vivian had a client in New Jersey who recommended her. Vivian and Hawkins had an hour-long conversation that Vivian described as "leadership support and coaching," including on-the-spot problem solving.

Vivian was able to be onsite within days of the one-month anniversary of the murder. She met with Hawkins for two hours and learned that the community had expressed strong support for the agency. Vivian then met with every staff in one group for three hours. This event included all 35 staff including those who were highly affected as well as others hired after the tragedy. Staff members ringed the room in one large square, allowing people to see each other. Hawkins sat next to Vivian. Having the executive director next to Vivian was structurally important as she was there for a short time and the agency's leader would continue the process. Vivian engaged the team in a process designed to promote healing from organizational trauma. Specifically, she addressed the following:

- **Ensure stability, safety, and containment**: Voice tone and demeanor are crucial—Be positive and soothing. The consultant is holding the group's range of experiences and emotions and serving as a witness to the organization's

experience. Hawkins, the executive director, let the staff team know that Vivian's presence provided an opportunity to step back, reflect, and share how they were doing.

- **Name and normalize the traumatic event**: Place the trauma in context that is not blaming—"Bad things happen to high functioning agencies." Vivian set the parameters for feelings to be expressed, saying to the group: "Here's my plan. This is an opportunity for you together to make sense of what happened, to share and hear each other's experiences, to acknowledge that every single one of you was affected. It is important to hear each voice. You are the collective; you are the organization." She went around the group and gave each person an opportunity to share, returning to those who passed the first time to give them a second opportunity. Vivian said the group engaged in honest sharing and people respectfully listened. Comments included: "I feel guilty because while the murder did not have emotional impact on me, I know it did on coworkers." "I have only been here a week and I know something happened but do not know all the details. I am excited to be here and doing the work." "This had profound effect on me" (the one who heard the gunshot). "I thought about former clients who died and realized I'm still sad."

- **Integrate the trauma in affirming and meaningful ways**: By hearing each other, organizational members begin to create a shared picture of their experience. Vivian asked questions to deepen their understanding and then assisted the group to identify organizational strengths and patterns.

  – Please reflect on what you heard from each other. What sense did you make from this conversation with each other?
  – What were your insights listening to each other?
  – When you listen to one another what kind of strengths stand out to you about this agency?

Vivian acknowledged the comments, actively witnessing, and extending energy to every single person. She wrote the strengths on the board, visible to all and added the patterns that she heard: "Here are some things that stand out to me about what you said."

- **Move forward**: After the organizational members have reached some common conclusions, shift the energy to an action-oriented framework. To do this Vivian asked, "How will you use those identified strengths as you proceed?"

Vivian concluded her time with the staff team by saying sincerely, "Thank you so much for trusting me enough to let me into your agency and let me be with you in this time." Hawkins and the staff were appreciative of Vivian's interventions as indicated by Hawkins' follow-up email to Vivian: "Our entire staff is talking about you and how wonderful you were yesterday. Everyone feels much better, and we have turned the corner from our free-floating fear. The atmosphere is lighter today. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for your gift of time and

empathy." A year later Hawkins commented, "We are still feeling the positive effects of your visit. We are in a great place."

Because the executive director knew that what was needed was beyond her ability and acted quickly to solicit help, the impacts from this tragedy were contained. Immediate interventions were a one-hour phone call with the executive director, five hours on site (two hours with the executive director and three hours with staff). Follow up interventions were email exchanges within a week of the onsite, and one year later.

Dual Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Organization (DSADVO)[1]

DSADVO is an organization devoted to eradicating sexual assault and domestic violence. A third party requested assistance from Vivian and facilitated an introduction to the interim executive director. When Vivian started in the spring of 2014, the previous executive director had been gone for six months. The staff team was reeling from that executive director's actions over a long period of time. They were immobilized by their own feelings of powerlessness and shame. The interim executive director, Sharon, was a staff member who was trusted by other staff; she was also Vivian's point of entry. Sharon told Vivian that persistent traumatization was the agency's legacy; "it lived in the walls."

The agency had shrunk in size, staff, and reputation over time, and there was cumulative trauma and stress in large part due to behaviors of the former executive director, who many described as abusive. Within the organization staff members were forbidden to talk with each other; they could only talk to the executive director. Individual staff members felt embarrassed by the executive director's grilling them in front of each other. When individual staff members were in good graces with the executive director, she was nice to them; however, they never knew where they stood or how she would act day-to-day. This uncertainty caused anxiety and hypersensitivity as well as strained interactions within the group. Sharon said, "Everything felt like a loyalty test." Organizational trauma also reverberated out into the community. Two examples: (1) A staff person was humiliated publicly by the executive director, and (2) A number of sister programs heard the executive director talk negatively about staff.

The situation came to a head when a consultant, hired to do a strategic plan, unearthed negative, dysfunctional patterns. The consultant reported these patterns to the board, and the board after extensive discussion and soul searching fired the executive director.

Sharon believed that through consultation with Vivian the staff and board members would come to understand the kind of dysfunction they had accepted as

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[1]The organization and executive director's names have been changed to provide anonymity.

an organization. Sharon also wanted staff to understand how the past was affecting the organization and their work with each other, and hoped for healed staff relations and increased cohesion.

Vivian's first onsite consultation took place in summer 2014. It included individual coaching sessions with the interim executive director, a full day session with the staff, and a half-day session with the board of directors. These sessions had the purpose of providing an opportunity for staff, board, and leaders to share and draw collective meaning from recent experiences. Vivian shared conceptual frameworks about organizational trauma and organizational health as well as self-care. She helped all members understand the organization's dynamics and provided an opportunity for leaders (staff and board) to set a healthy foundation for the upcoming executive director hiring process. Finally, Vivian helped to create a basis for a healthy and sustainable organization.

Vivian started the onsite consultation by having dinner with Sharon to build rapport and identify ways to support her during the process. The next day Vivian met with the staff group including the interim executive director. In her overview of how the session would go, Vivian communicated empathy for the pain and suffering of the staff. Staff responded positively to her warmth but still exhibited anxiety about the consultation. Vivian let the team know that they would work together to make meaning of the past five years, that everyone would have an opportunity to share, and that together they would acknowledge the effects on current functioning. Finally, the group would identify issues they wanted to address. She repeated the process the second day with the board of directors. The first onsite consultation focused on (1) Stability, safety, containment; (2) Name and normalize the traumatic event; and (3) Integrate the trauma in affirming and meaningful ways.

- **Ensure stability, safety, and containment**: Vivian realized that this team was saddened and burdened by their experiences. It seemed that staff did not realize the roles they were playing and felt isolated and unable to count on each other. Vivian acknowledged that the events had been harmful individually and collectively and said repeatedly, "I believe you will get through this." She maintained a spirited and positive approach, helping leaders and members tap into their own hopefulness.
- **Name and normalize the traumatic event**: DSADVO staff had been constrained by a "Don't talk" rule enforced by the previous executive director. That rule created an atmosphere of isolation and loneliness. Vivian created an opportunity for individuals to talk and listen to each other. Staff members expressed hurt, anger, and grief. Their comments about the previous executive director included: she caused so much havoc and damage; I have anger that hasn't peaked; I am outraged and feel like a volcano; I was embarrassed and humiliated; she stole my agency; I hate her. Board members described many similar experiences though none of them were as intense as the experiences of the staff. In addition, board members expressed discomfort and guilt about how long it took them to realize the severity of the situation. Throughout the staff and

board sharing Vivian listened empathically and assured them their responses were normal reactions to trauma.

The DSADVO staff, board, and leadership struggled, expressing powerless and helpless feelings. For example, they could see no clear path to the future and no strategy; they were waiting for something to happen to make it better. Vivian pointed out that the staff team had fortitude and they had survived horrendous situations while keeping services available. She expressed faith in their ability to move the organization forward.

- **Integrate the trauma in affirming and meaningful ways**: As they shared with each other Vivian helped them draw out insights about their recent experiences. She emphasized the importance of collective insights as a way to overcome the isolation and individual pain that they were experiencing. Vivian referred back to the organization's strengths and to their history of successes. While not recent, the successes helped the group focus on their mission and organizational worth. Through this process board and staff recognized the importance of acknowledging their more general fears about anyone in the executive director role before embarking on the hiring process.

At the end of the first onsite session Vivian and staff set priorities for their follow up work. Those included positive approaches to managing conflict, building a healthy culture with adequate self-care, and preparing more specifically for the executive director hiring.

The second onsite took place three months later. Vivian focused her consultation to continue to work with the staff on moving forward.

- **Move forward**: Vivian focused on factors that would increase functioning and mitigate future susceptibility to organizational trauma. Staff particularly needed assistance to break patterns of debilitating behavior. As she had in other situations, Vivian realized that the persistent wounding and dysfunction would not be addressed in one on-site consultation. She brought to the second session what she had learned in the first. She was aware of the need to again create a container to help staff deal with remaining emotions so that they could benefit from further insights and meaning making. Vivian used tools and concepts related to conflict management to assist staff in gaining skills and experience dealing with differences. This focus enabled staff to use non-threatening ways of understanding each other and build bridges across past gulfs. It also helped them begin to develop preferred norms of interaction and understand some unspoken expectations they had about an executive director.

1. Vivian identified a pattern that she called "Down the Rabbit Hole." For example, a comment about day-to-day functioning would trigger someone to return to a past set of feelings and experiences and share about them until as a group they were reliving painful past experiences in the present. Vivian would

say loudly, "STOP," and share what she observed. She commented, "What you are doing is re-triggering each other, and nobody is noticing. You are pulling yourselves back into being re-traumatized all over again." She would then encourage the group to think about the original topic and asked, "How can you say this in a better way so no one is triggered?" She observed the group jump Down the Rabbit Hole repeatedly and talked with the interim executive director about retriggering as an ongoing issue. The staff team needed to develop ways to say "STOP" and to intervene on itself.

2. A second pattern was that no one would come to another's aid. When a team member expressed difficulty no one volunteered to assist or expressed empathy. Vivian intervened to support group members to share what they needed from each other in their moments of disclosure. She also encouraged staff to express verbally the impact of co-workers' sharing on them in neutral language.

3. Vivian asked the group to address individual self-care: What do you need to thrive? How can you support each other through the next transition period?

4. As part of her role supporting the interim executive director, Vivian listened compassionately to Sharon's mixed feelings about applying for the permanent position and suggested ways she might imagine herself in the role. Sharon reported that the conversation and suggestions helped her resolve her ambivalence.

In this case example, the former executive director had contributed significantly to cumulative trauma building and becoming embedded in the organization over several years' time. Immediate interventions were a phone call with the interim executive director, dinner onsite with the interim executive director, one full day onsite consultation with the staff team and interim executive director and a half day with the board members. A second onsite consultation of a full day with the staff and interim executive director took place three months later.

Connections[2]

Connections is a program that provided services to homeless people and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and general crimes. Kate Rowe-Maloret, Connections program manager, met Vivian in 2000 when participating on a statewide advisory committee. Vivian met other Connections staff in 2002 and worked with the team on strategic planning. Rowe-Maloret and Vivian developed a mutually trusting relationship and kept in touch over time about Connections' growth and challenges.

In 2007 Rowe-Maloret called Vivian for help. Rowe-Maloret was reeling from a major meltdown that had occurred at a staff retreat a month earlier. The

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[2]Adapted from The Connections Story, Chap. 10, in Vivian and Hormann (2013), *Organizational Trauma and Healing*, pp. 155–161.

conversation focused on actions necessitated by a new contract, but the judgments, vehemence, pain, and hurt from that discussion were out of proportion to the actions and suggested deeper issues were at work. Staff members' usual assertive attitudes and feistiness toward outsiders—often important for advocacy—were turned inward against each other. Staff accused one another of straying from the organization's true mission by taking any money offered for programs on one side and of rejecting new ideas for programs on the other side. A split became evident between longer-term and newer staff, with newer staff feeling ignored and disrespected. While arguing about the meaning of social change and the agency's mission, some staff members trivialized others' pain and stop listening, threatening their relationships and their ability to work together. Rowe-Maloret felt overwhelmed and stunned by the depth of emotion and lack of empathy in the exchanges. She and her staff had weathered crises before, but this seemed different. Rowe-Maloret knew about Vivian's and Hormann's work on organizational trauma and healing, and knew that Connections needed help. The long-standing relationship and trust Rowe-Maloret had with Vivian helped her make a call. Although it was hard to reach out, Rowe-Maloret did not want negative dynamics to damage the program and threaten its existence. She felt confident that with help she and her staff team would work through this situation and be stronger for having done so.

When Rowe-Maloret called Vivian in 2007, they talked about the issues from the retreat, the quality of staff relationships, and the need for revising the strategic plan. Together Vivian and Rowe-Maloret decided an all-day session offered the opportunity for staff to clear the air and make sense of what was going on. Vivian interviewed each staff member by phone prior to the session and proposed an approach that supported reflection, personal responsibility, and compassionate inquiry rather than debate.

When the day arrived Vivian and Rowe-Maloret were nervous. Would staff share? Would they listen to one another? Vivian facilitated staff engaging with one another through conversations in pairs and full group dialogue. One key moment shifted the tenor of the conversation. A staff person burst into tears as she shared what she was experiencing. Vivian maintained a supportive stance and invited each of her colleagues to respond to her. That honest sharing and compassionate listening shifted the energy in the room. Important truths emerged. With further reflection the staff created a set of norms to support their work with each other. Other exercises allowed the staff to see their work over the past few years, to understand how their work with clients who had experienced trauma was affecting their internal atmosphere, and to recognize their collective strengths. They began rebuilding their care for one another and agreed on ways to support that rebuilding. They had started healing their relationships and ended the day with identification of strategic planning items.

Vivian and Rowe-Maloret acknowledged the gains of the day with the team, and agreed to begin a strategic planning process later in the spring. However, that was not to be. By springtime the Connections staff learned that their parent agency was merging with a mental health agency in an adjoining county, and Connections would be folded into that second agency's programs. There was no official

communication with Rowe-Maloret about the changes and whether or not the services her staff provided would continue. From the staff team's perspective, the core identity and existence of the locally-based community program was threatened. Staff were outraged at the merger decision, and on an emotional level felt awful: helpless, abandoned, disrespected, and unvalued. This change might mean the end of the program.

Connections staff steadfastly provided day-to-day services despite stress and uncertainty about the future of their continuing employment. Although some staff members feared Rowe-Maloret would resign and leave the program, Rowe-Maloret stepped into the challenge and said, "Just watch me!" Rowe-Maloret provided critical leadership, managing the relationship with the county as well as providing support to staff and encouraging them to support one another. Vivian and Rowe-Maloret stayed in touch throughout this time. Vivian believed that the work staff accomplished at their retreat provided a foundation to cope collectively with this traumatic situation. They had built trust with one another and could use their organizational strengths to survive.

In February 2009, the commissioners decided to maintain Connections as a county program and not to have it be part of the merger. The traumatizing uncertainty was over, but staff continued to feel its impacts. To put the year behind them, return to their agenda, and begin to create the program's future Rowe-Maloret and Vivian scheduled a full-day session. It was a day to vent, validate one another's experiences, and shift gears. Vivian supported the process by structuring the time and holding a safe and healthy environment for emotional expression. Tears, fears, and laughter were shared. Some staff revealed that they had agonized privately about seeking other jobs, and many shared they had been afraid that Connections might die. Taking time together for honest sharing and compassionate listening cleared space for the team to move on. Later that spring they embarked on a strategic planning process.

Connections staff and director suffered from cumulative trauma due to the nature of their work (the issues that prompted Rowe-Maloret to ask Vivian for help initially). Connections staff also suffered from the trauma related to the threat of the program's closure (the subject of the second staff session). The work the staff did during the first onsite consultation, building relationships and trust with each other, was critical to their coping during the threat of agency closure. Had the team not done that initial work they would not have had the capacity to stay unified as a team and handle the threat.

- **Ensure stability**, **safety**, **and containment**: In each of the day-long sessions Vivian held the group's range of remarks and emotions. Without taking sides or judgment she served as a witness to the organization's experience. She designed activities that allowed for sharing in a healthy way and emphasized organizational members listening to one another with compassion. Vivian paid close attention to Rowe-Maloret's needs for support and encouragement during the whole project.

- **Name and normalize the traumatic event**: Vivian set the parameters for feelings to be expressed, and she acknowledged that what had occurred was traumatizing for the organization. In the first session as part of the naming and normalizing process Vivian reminded them that their work was influencing their relationships with each other and fueling their stress. The splits that were occurring among staff were further examples of the impact of the work on the group's dynamic. In the second session Vivian assured the staff team that concern for clients who might not have services, worry that they and co-workers would lose their jobs, and fearing the organization would die were normal and understandable responses to such events. She assured individuals their emotions were valid and that with each other they were capable of understanding those emotions and working through their experiences.
- **Integrate the trauma in affirming and meaningful ways**: In the first session Vivian created an opportunity for people to share and hear each other and develop compassion for the range of perspectives and experiences in the group. That set the stage for their work on team norms. In the second session Vivian facilitated a forum for organizational members to share, hear each other, and begin to create a shared picture of what had happened. They discovered they had been feeling awful in isolation, and during the session they began to feel better together. Slowly the team relaxed and anxiety lessened. Vivian asked questions to deepen their understanding of their experiences and then assisted the group to identify organizational strengths.
- **Move forward**: In the first session moving forward included identifying and agreeing on a set of norms and priority areas to address in strategic planning. Their work in the second session enabled the staff to clear their collective emotional and mental space in preparation for completing a strategic plan.

In this final case example, the Executive Director and Vivian had built a relationship over several years' time prior to any intervention. The first onsite consultation included meetings with the Executive Director and one full day onsite consultation with the staff team and the Executive Director. Vivian and the Executive Director communicated via email and phone over the next several months. A second onsite consultation, held about five months after the first, again included meetings with the Executive Director and a full day session with the staff team.

Conclusion

Three cases of consultation to organizations experiencing organizational trauma were presented. In the first domestic violence shelter staff members were traumatized by a single traumatizing event, a client who was murdered by her partner right outside the shelter. In the second the staff team was traumatized from ongoing wounding as the result of the previous executive director's actions over a long

period of time; they suffered from the cumulative impact of what they described as "abusive" actions. In the third case the organization faced a merger and possible death, a situation over which they had some influence but no control. Over several months, staff members feared for their jobs and for their clients who would suffer from lack of services. Each of the three organizations benefitted from intervention by a consultant who understood organizational trauma.

Effective consultation was essential because organizational trauma and traumatization put these organizations at risk. The first case highlights an organization that avoided the pitfalls of traumatization by getting help as soon as possible. In the second case the consultant was able to help the organization recognize and work through persistent dysfunctional patterns and begin to build a healthier organization. The third consultation provided a way for staff to recognize the toll their work was taking on relationships and begin to set new norms. Early intervention was critical in enabling the third organization to weather the traumatic uncertainty of closure. In both the first and third cases the Executive Director's early on knew something was needed and asked for outside help quickly. Though in the second case the staff team was not as open—and developing openness took time and patience on the consultant's part—ultimately the three leaders' openness to help paved the way for successful interventions.

Leaders are critical to helping heal organizational trauma. The three cases presented demonstrated that leaders cannot always protect the organization from trauma; however, leaders can help prevent the organization from long-term traumatization. A leader's approach may be a mitigating factor, promoting healing within the organizational culture, or it may exacerbate the negative impacts of the situation (Vivian & Hormann, 2013). All three leaders were called on to perform multiple functions within their organizations during the times of trauma. Once recognition and naming of organizational trauma occurred, the leaders were essential for containing the impacts and offering their energy and skills to the recovery process. They became champions of the organizational strengths. Staff members were worried about the organization, themselves, and sometimes the executive directors. On the one hand staff hoped that their leaders would provide a holding environment; on the other hand, they were wary and even hostile towards anyone with authority. The leaders themselves did not have all the answers. However, they kept attention on issues, did not mandate authoritative solutions, and allowed for invention (Heifetz, 1998). Working with a consultant who encouraged their leadership was crucial for this process.

Organizations with a willingness and ability to get outside perspectives and ask for help can intervene on unhealthy patterns more quickly. Unfortunately, some organizations wait until the "we-are-falling-apart-stage" before they let someone outside the organizational boundaries know that they need help. Clearly when there is organizational trauma getting help sooner rather than later is essential.

We acknowledge that delving into the unconscious and emotional life of groups and organizations is not for everyone. The cases we shared illustrate the relational aspects involved in organizational trauma interventions. Our hope is that we have provided you with an additional lens through which to view organizational life and that we will cross paths with some of you who will take our work even further.

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Part IV
Leading in Social Sector Organizations

Introduction

> Leadership is being the entrepreneur of meaning and the weaver of conversations
> —Chené Swart

In small social sector organizations key staff struggle to perform many of the major leadership and management roles. Key staff in larger, more complex social sector organizations struggle with how to encourage leading throughout the organization. The staff in small social sector organizations are trying to develop an agile and values driven organizational structure; the staff of the larger organizations are often trying to restructure in order to regain agility and an organization that expresses their values and social change goals. Both are dealing with a business environment where change is rarely a stable, step-by-step plan, but more often a continuous and many times volatile process.

In their efforts to develop leadership in small and large SSOs, people too often default to traditional constructs of leadership, command and control hierarchies. Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seers, and Orton (2006) encourage organizations to move past traditional constructs because "hierarchical views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world. Leadership theory must transition to new perspectives that account for the complex adaptive needs of organizations" (2006, p. 2). They argue that leadership "is a dynamic that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone; it is the product of interaction, tension, and exchange rules governing changes in perceptions and understanding" (2006, p. 2). In other words, leading is less about getting people to follow the directions of someone in a leadership position and more about responding to what arises in relationships to make meaning about what is occurring, resulting in mutual change in knowledge and actions. "Individuals act as leaders in this dynamic when they mobilize people to seize new opportunities and tackle tough problems. As the situation changes, different people may act as leaders by leveraging their differing skills and experience" (2006, p. 4).

The three chapters in this part explore aspects of developing a complex and relational approach to leadership. The first describes a leadership development process for women that fosters meaningful connections with other women leaders, helps them determine what leadership looks like for them, and offers ongoing learning. After discussing what fosters strategic alliances, the second chapter explores the fluid, emergent, interactive dynamic by which a variety of leaders address alliance needs. The third chapter pursues complex responsive leading where leading is an emergent process, not confined to one individual, and involves paying attention to the situations in which people are already creating and constructing new meaning.

Marla Solomon and Kerry Secrest, in Chap. 12, "Women's Support Network for Leadership Development: Lessons Learned from the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont," explore the particular leadership challenges women face, and how to help them deal positively with those challenges to increase their strength as leaders. Founded in 2011 and grounded in current research on women's leadership and leadership development, the Women's Leadership Circle of Vermont is a place-based, cross-sectoral, action-learning program that lays the groundwork for groups of 9–12 women leaders to continue leadership "circles" on their own once the program ends. The women leaders who participate in the WLC help each other cultivate their individual determination of what leadership looks like and provide opportunities for ongoing learning, and as result become not only better leaders but their better selves. Solomon and Secrest describe how this happens and what they know about how to create it, so that the WLC experience might serve other leadership development efforts and help shape other leadership development models.

To date, all four cohorts Solomon and Secrest studied have continued their circles. Analysis of evaluation data shows that the women leaders who participate in the WLC benefit in unexpected and often profound ways from having a strong, local, ongoing circle of women. While the WLC model addresses some of the most challenging issues specific to women in leadership, its results also point to critically important lessons for leadership development in the social sector in general, especially among people who have typically not been reflected in the standard leader image.

Merryn Rutledge, in Chap. 13, "Frameworks, Tools, and Leadership for Responding to Strategic Alliances Challenges," uses three case studies to explore the advantages of strategic alliances and what kind of leadership is needed to develop and sustain alliances. The cases include the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), a statewide alliance of early childhood and family support agencies; National Health Affiliates, a group of twenty-one public health organizations; and Wellness for Elders Assisted for Life (WEAL), a statewide strategic alliance to provide a range of wellness services to elder people whether in congregate housing or homes in neighborhoods. The case studies provide a way to explore what happens to strategic alliances over time.

Rutledge begins by illustrating how our terminology for cross-organizational work can be a drawback to successful affiliation and defines the term "strategic alliance." After describing three frameworks for making strategic alliance choices,

Hall and Tolbert's four basic forms (2005), Austin and Drucker's three levels of involvement (2002), and Bailey and Koney's continuum (2000), she explains why Bailey and Koney's approach helps strategic alliances understand why they exist and what choices they have in how they work together. Rutledge then offers eleven questions that can be used to form and solidify the strategic relationship, describes the leadership approaches that facilitate and those that impede strategic alliances, and argues for leadership functions not being set roles assigned to specific people, but fluid and dynamic ways in which a variety of leaders address alliance needs and fulfill responsibilities. She also discusses the key role that consultants can have in helping organizational leaders learn to create and support the strategic alliance leadership system.

John Vogelsang, in Chap. 14, "Complex Responsive Leading in Social Sector Organizations," describes the impact of continuous change and the need for leading throughout complex organizations. In response to financial challenges and increased demands for their services, many social sector organizations are pursuing a variety of complex organizational designs in order to sustain themselves and better serve their constituents. At the same time major changes are occurring in how we conceive of organizations and leading. As open systems became the alternative construct to hierarchic command and control organizations, many different structures are emerging, which are better understood as complex adaptive systems or complex responsive processes where change is less episodic and more continuous, and leading is an emergent event.

After describing some of the current challenges facing social sector organizations, Vogelsang presents some of the innovative responses, the way those responses serve as examples of the changing constructions of organizations and leading, and what skills those in "leadership" positions need to function in this complex and every changing environment of emerging leading. The focus of this chapter is on the different mindset and orientation to organization development these new constructs offer.

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Chapter 12
Women's Leadership Development Through Networks of Support: An Analysis of the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont

Marla Solomon and Kerry Secrest

> Real change begins with the simple act of people talking about what they care about.
>
> —Margaret Wheatley.

As women leaders and as students of women's leadership, we have been persistently perplexed by how difficult it remains for women to become leaders and to grow in their leadership once they do so. A bevy of women's leadership development programs—on college campuses, in political parties, in business, in the community and nonprofit organization world, and elsewhere—has emerged in the last few decades to address this problem. While these programs certainly are helping to drive the world closer to the goal of equitable representation of women in leadership, their very abundance demonstrates that women need a great deal of support to get there. In short, it is not easy to be a woman leader in the world we live in, even with the progress we have made. From the trivial criticisms of Hillary Clinton's hairdos to the persecution of Malalai Joya,[1] barriers both blatant and nuanced still confront us.

The questions of why this is so and how to change it are not simple either. One the one hand, numerous barriers continue to affect women as a group more than they affect men as a group. Issues such as the "double day" for women along with

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[1]Malalai Joya is an Afghani activist and writer who taught in secret schools for girls under the Taliban and later served as a Parliamentarian in the National Assembly of Afghanistan from 2005 until early 2007, when she was expelled for her criticism of the government (Joya & O'Keefe, 2009).

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lack of adequate child care and social welfare systems in many countries, cultural perceptions of the types of problems women should be concerned with (such as education and health rather than finance or trade), the tendency of many women not to promote themselves, and many other obstacles litter women's pathway to equity in leadership. At the same time, we live in complex environments where the needs of "women leaders" or even "women" are not uniform. Just as Hillary Clinton and Malalai Joya do not experience the same types of obstruction, women of color, women of different nationalities, lesbian and queer women, transgender women, poor women, rich women, young women, and older women all have different leadership experiences, complicating the solutions we might propose to remove those obstacles. How can we support women to become, persist, and grow as leaders and in all their diversity?

As one investigation into this question, in 2011, Watershed Coaching, LLC set out to provide a pathway for women in mostly rural Vermont to establish networks of support for their leadership development, called the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont.[2] This chapter, authored by the founder of Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont (WLC) and the researcher engaged to evaluate the program, focuses on how women develop leadership through on-going networks of mutual support, based on research and experience from the Women's Leadership Circles (WLC) of Vermont. From the outset, we intended to explore the WLC's outcomes for women's leadership and we designed a series of data collection procedures to do so. We expected, of course, to obtain results that would benefit the WLC program in its future iterations. But after four years of evaluating the program's results, we also discovered lessons whose importance transcends the WLC. The women leaders who are the WLC's participants benefit in unexpected and often profound ways from having a strong, local, ongoing circle of women. They help each other become not only better leaders but also their better selves. We disclose here how this happens and what we know about how to create it, so that the WLC experience might serve other leadership development efforts and help shape other leadership development models.

To begin this chapter, we describe the origin and context of the WLC. We then explore the WLC's principles and design within a discussion of what works to help women develop as leaders, grounded in key research and models in the fields of leadership development and women's leadership. The heart of the chapter is an analysis of data on the significance of the on-going circles for the leadership of the women in those circles. Finally, we relate the lessons learned from the WLC to broader issues of women's leadership and make suggestions about their relevance to the social sector and to leadership development as a whole.

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[2]In 2014, Marlboro College Center for New Leadership entered into a collaboration with Watershed Coaching in order to bring the program to communities throughout the state.

What Works for Women's Leadership Development: Origins and Design of the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont

Every new venture has its origin story and so we start with the WLC's founder Kerry Secrest's story of how the program was born.

> I have long had an interest in women's leadership development, and in 2010, I was asked to facilitate monthly meetings of a non-profit executive directors' group. Knowing that most of the individuals were women, I offered a three-month pilot program that was the beginning of the WLC. Several of my own experiences shaped my interest in helping women leaders and my ideas on how it should be done. For example, I faced many gender-based challenges as the first female student government president at my university in 1990. As someone who had struggled with leadership roles at a young age and at a time when women in certain leadership positions were even less commonplace than they are today, I wanted to support women leaders to navigate the unique opportunities and challenges they face. In addition, my experience in the nine-month program through which I became a certified leadership coach reinforced my belief that having support over time through deep, personal relationships within a group can strengthen the transformation process. Finally, having moved to a small town in Vermont from Washington, DC, I noticed a dearth of local leadership development opportunities. I was always driving to Boston for leadership programs and wanted to create a program where participants could maintain their relationships after the program was over without the barrier of travel.

And so it was that in 2011, a group of 12 leaders from Windham County in southern Vermont became the first cohort of the WLC.

Vermont

To respond to the needs she observed among local women leaders and to make possible the kind of continuous connection Kerry envisioned, each WLC group has been located in one county of the state of Vermont, the program having added one or two new county-based groups each year to date. Any good leadership development program is driven in part by the needs of its participants and those needs vary by the context the participants come from. So we paint a general picture here of the Vermont context.

Vermont's total population was estimated at 626,562 in 2014, with the female population making up 50.7 % of that number. The state's population is largely white, at 95.2 % in 2013, and, with an area of 9216 square miles and 68 residents per square mile, is predominantly rural. In socio-economic terms, per capita income was $29,167 in 2013, just slightly higher than the national average. The percentage of residents living below the poverty line is 11.8 % compared to 15.4 % nationally (United States Census Bureau, 2015). These statistics tell only part of the story, however. Vermont is a place characterized by broad expanses of forest and farmland, a largest city of 42,284 residents, progressive environmental politics, and a

population mix of generations-old families of modest income, an influx of relo-cators, and second-home wealth from urban centers in New England and New York that have blossomed around resort areas. This latter source of wealth skews the state's higher-than-national-average income; both urban and rural areas are marked by visible poverty that the statistic itself would hide. Vermont's population is also the second oldest in the nation, with a dearth of residents in their 20s and 30s, a situation expected to leave a leadership gap when the baby boomers now in lead-ership retire, leave, or pass away.

Vermont Women in Leadership

For women, the picture of Vermont is a mixture of progress and stalemate, a microcosm of the situations in both the United States and the world as a whole. In state politics and government, Vermont ranks second in the United States for percentage of women in the state legislature at 41.1 % women (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). Madeline Kunin served as the first female governor of Vermont from 1985 to 1991 (Center for American Women in Politics, 2015a), but the state has not seated a woman Governor since. On the national level, Vermont is among the three states that have never sent a woman to either the US Senate or the House. The others are Delaware and Mississippi (Center for American Women in Politics, 2015b).

In the business sector, Vermont women make up 20 % of the leaders of the top ten largest employers[3] and 15 % of the top 99 largest employers (Vermont Commission on Women, 2015). Women-owned firms in Vermont represented 26 % of the total in 2007, compared to 28 % nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). While this figure appears respectable in national context, Vermont was among the five states with the lowest growth in the number of women-owned firms between 1997 and 2014, at 30 % compared to a national growth rate of 68 % in that period, and the five states ranked lowest for women's combined economic clout also include Vermont (Womenable, 2014). Of the top 15 nonprofits, only three were led by women in 2005 (Book of Lists 2004–2005, 2006). While these numbers may represent progress compared to 20 years or even a decade ago, Vermont women are clearly not "at the table" in leadership in an equitable way.

Taking this setting into account, three fundamental ideas shaped the rationale for starting the Women's Leadership Circles (WLC). First, as we argued in the intro-duction to this chapter, women face particular challenges in leadership; helping them deal positively with those challenges increases their strength as leaders. Second, the effectiveness and impact of an organization are dependent upon the effectiveness of its leader. This is especially true in the types of smaller organi-zations predominant in Vermont and in the social sector more broadly. Many

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[3]The 10 largest firms have 1000+ employees, the 99 largest have 200 + employees.

Vermont nonprofits, for example, are made up of just a handful of people; many social enterprise start-ups are lone wolf productions or hire only a small staff. Third, these leaders often work in isolation, partly because of a rural geography and partly due to the demands on their time and other factors. They have a critical need to connect to others in geographic proximity in order to increase the likelihood of maintaining a support network over time that will help sustain their leadership.

Conceptual Foundations: What Works for Women's Leadership Development

The WLC approach draws on an increasing wealth of literature about what works to help women to develop as leaders, including research on leadership and women's leadership as well as a variety of models and programs of leadership development. In this section, we discuss how the WLC built on what is known about what works for women's leadership development, thereby illuminating some of the most interesting and important threads in this literature. We include:

- The Centered Leadership Model (McKinsey Leadership Project);
- The Women's Leadership Program (Center for Creative Leadership);
- Emotional Intelligence (Goleman);
- Authentic Leadership (George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer);
- Embodied Leadership (Schwartz and McCarthy; Strozzi-Heckler);
- Supported Communities (Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb; Fels; women's circles).

The centered leadership model developed by the McKinsey Leadership Project aligns closely with the goals and outcomes of the WLC. This model is based on research showing that women face particular challenges in leadership and that utilizing the dimensions of the model promotes women taking positive action to build on and improve their leadership strengths. The five dimensions of the model are: (1) "meaning," which encourages leaders to find their strengths and use them for their chosen purposes; (2) "managing energy," understanding and working actively with one's energy; (3) "positive framing," focusing on creating constructive attitudes and increasing one's resilience in the face of hardships; (4) "connecting," in which leaders build strong relationships with mentors and others to enhance a sense of community; and (5) "engaging," which involves building courage and confidence through taking on new challenges and their associated risks and through working cooperatively with colleagues (Barsh, Cranston, & Craske, 2008, p. 1).

How does this model relate to WLC's objectives? First, a core element of the WLC is the network of women leaders it creates. In the centered leadership model, "connecting" leaders are shown to enhance their capacity and staying power (Barsh et al., 2008). The Women's Leadership Circle of Vermont program is growing a network of support among women leaders in Vermont through its circle and on-going network-building approach. In addition, several of the other stated

outcomes of the WLC relate quite directly to one or more of the other four dimensions of Centered Leadership, as will become evident further on.

The Women's Leadership Program of the Center for Creative Leadership provides a second rich source of lessons on how best to support women leaders. Ruderman and Ohlott (2002) studied "the experiences of sixty-one high achievers who attended The Women's Leadership Program (TWLP), a five-day intensive leadership development course conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)" (p. 4). The result was a set of five themes for understanding women's leadership challenges and for helping develop women's leadership: authenticity, connection, controlling your destiny, wholeness, and self-clarity. The WLC interprets and utilizes these themes in its objectives, in that the WLC focuses on knowing oneself (authenticity, self-clarity), building the well-being of a leader (wholeness), developing a network of support (connection), and gaining tools to take conscious action for improvement and change (controlling one's destiny).

Goleman's (2004) seminal research on the importance of emotional intelligence for leaders has been used to create numerous successful leadership development programs and the WLC also draws on this work. Within the set of competencies Goleman called emotional intelligence, self-awareness and self-regulation figure importantly as focus areas of the WLC. For example, WLC work on clarifying values and acting based on one's own values resonates with the kind of internal awareness and alignment Goleman sees as critical for effective leaders. In addition, the WLC work with managing difficult conversations aligns with Goleman's concept of cultivating social skills.

A fourth important contribution to women's leadership development and to the WLC program comes from the work of George, Sims, McLean, and Mayer (2007) on authentic leadership. Rather than a model or set of leadership competencies or characteristics, this work discusses what the authors learned from 125 interviews with outstanding leaders in all realms of organizational life and in all life stages/decades (ages 23–93) about *how* those leaders had built on, learned from, and developed themselves to "become authentic leaders" (p. 2). First and most important, they see themselves not as passive observers of their lives but rather as individuals who can develop self-awareness from their experiences. Authentic leaders act on that awareness by practicing their values and principles, sometimes at substantial risk to themselves. They are careful to balance their motivations so that they are driven by these inner values as much as by a desire for external rewards or recognition. Authentic leaders also keep a strong support team around them, ensuring that they live integrated, grounded lives (p. 2). The WLC is built on a similar idea, that by knowing themselves well (self-awareness, clarifying values), leaders can act in alignment with who they truly are, creating a sense of authenticity that others can relate to, believe, respect, and engage with. Continued active seeking of self-understanding allows leaders to change and grow with opportunity, challenge, and environmental changes, and to develop the connections with others that nourish them, their colleagues, and the organizations they work within. Moreover, because women's full identities have often not been welcome in the workplace,

finding authenticity—finding a way to engage their complete selves at work—is a critically important factor in women's feeling empowered to lead.

The emerging work in neuroscience and the importance of a centered presence in the body, sometimes referred to as embodied leadership, point to a critical yet sometimes overlooked aspect of effective leadership. Schwartz and McCarthy (2007, p. 2) assert that "energy comes from four main wellsprings in human beings: the body, emotions, mind, and spirit." This concept is further reinforced by Strozzi-Heckler (2007, p. 21) who writes, "The self is the fundamental power of a leader and the self is indistinguishable from the body…How we presence ourselves through our bodies reflects who we are as persons, reflects our orientation to others and to the world." To this end, the WLC engages with practices to deepen participants' body awareness and to increase their ability to re-center under stress and to pay attention to their physical wellness as a foundation for leadership effectiveness.

The WLC also provides a place where women feel supported and are recognized and therefore gain strength to act. This aspect of the design was inspired in part by the movement of women's circles throughout the world to bring women together to find support and solve problems on individual, community, and world levels. Women have gathered through the ages, using daily events and chores as opportunities to talk together.[4] Today's circles reflect how society organizes itself now; women do not meet one another as frequently without planning, so connecting has to be intentional. Books on creating developmental circles and wisdom circles include Duerk's *Circle of Stones* (1989) and *The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair* (Baldwin & Linnea, 2010). The documentary, *BeComing—Women's Circles, Women's Lives* (Chawla & Ryan, 2006), describes the formation of a long-lasting women's circle for personal development.

The importance of such circles of connection for women finds substantiation in Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) work on support communities and Fels' (2004) writing on recognition and ambition. Ibarra et al. state that

> Creating a safe setting—a coaching relationship, a women's leadership program, a support group of peers—… is critical to their leadership identity development. Companies should encourage them to build communities in which similarly positioned women can discuss their feedback, compare notes, and emotionally support one another's learning. (p. 3)

Fels (2004) explores the role that recognition from a supportive group plays in women's achievement, positing that "…the pursuit of mastery over an extended period of time requires a specific context: an evaluating, encouraging audience must be present for skills to develop" (p. 2). Such structured groups are necessary because "studies have demonstrated that the daily texture of women's lives from childhood on is infiltrated with microencounters in which quiet withdrawal and the ceding of available attention to others is expected—particularly in the presence of men" (p. 3). He claims that women must cultivate ambition, a positive and necessary factor for goal achievement and that "for a woman's ambition to thrive, both

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[4]We acknowledge that in many communities, women still gather in this way.

the development of expertise and the recognition of accomplishments outside of the family are required" (p. 7).

Types of circles fall along a wide spectrum. On one end is The Millionth Circle, a grassroots, international volunteer organization of women who believe that circles are the means through which world consciousness will change. On the other end of the spectrum, while not "circles" per se, a number of international women's gatherings such as the Global Summit on Women, the United Nations Forums on Women, and Vital Voices (Nelson, 2012) bring high-profile women leaders together. These too are modern ways that women get together to solve problems.

The WLC has culled from these concepts and research to craft a particular process and set of goals. We know that continuity and support are important. We know that women need holistic whole-person approaches. We know that self-awareness is at the core of growth processes. Many of the other existing women's leadership programs also utilize these same principles, but in most cases, they do not offer a structure that motivates and sustains learning and growth over time.[5]

The WLC's design elements are intended to do just that, and include:

- Commitment to a specific geographical area. By engaging women county by county, the goal is to build a network of support-in-place where women live. This also builds the region's leadership capacity because it helps retain highly talented women in a state (Vermont) they might ordinarily leave due to scarce resources (the push factor) or better opportunities elsewhere (the pull factor).
- Intention from the outset that the circles will continue. From the recruitment phase, the WLC creates the opportunity for the circles to continue and the expectation that they will. The groups spend time establishing safety, and members meet one another between meetings as learning partners and to get to know each other individually. Post-program, the WLC facilitator checks in with the circles formally two times a year as well as through intermittent emails to maintain connection.
- Intention to recruit women leaders from a number of sectors: corporate, non-profit, government and small business. This cross-sectoral approach started primarily because it reflected what Vermont communities look like; it is pragmatic to recruit leaders from all sectors because the numbers in each sector are small in any given Vermont community. But when we look at the results, we see that women gain new perspectives from this inter-sectoral conversation that they might not otherwise experience. Consequently, the WLC program now plans cross-sectoral group composition with an eye to not only the practicalities but also the benefits.

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[5]The majority of other women's leadership programs we investigated are of short duration, with the exception of those that target undergraduate college women over an academic year. Most other programs gather women from many places, such as in executive leadership programs like Smith-Tuck, The Women's Leadership Program (Center for Creative Leadership), or Harvard's Women's Leadership Forum.

Program Objectives and Design

In line with similar programs that focus on the leader's personal development alongside skills development, the major objectives of the WLC program fall into these categories[6]:

1. Increase awareness of and ability to act in alignment with strengths, weaknesses, values and motivations.
2. Increase understanding of the link between personal well-being and leadership, and ability to take action in support of well-being.
3. Enhance knowledge of a variety of leadership tools and concepts to increase leadership effectiveness.
4. Increase sense of connection and support by engaging in a peer network.

WLC program activities consist of a launching overnight retreat and a full-day closing retreat bookending four monthly half-day meetings, all designed to support individual and collective learning and to provide peer mentoring on emerging leadership topics. In addition, the facilitator of the WLC provides a one-on-one coaching session with each participant to help develop and reinforce individual leadership goals. Other design elements support the group-building goals of the program, including peer learning partners to help participants with accountability for their goals and to reinforce learning, optional social gatherings between sessions, and an email listserv for participants to share resources and pose questions. The group determines any follow-up plans at the closing retreat. So far, all four groups have chosen to continue meeting and all four groups continue to meet as of the date of this writing.

Program Structure and Participants

From January 2011 to June 2014,[7] four cohorts of 9–12 women each engaged in the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont program, starting in Windham County and expanding to one additional county each year, with the end goal of creating a vital sustaining network of women leaders working at both grassroots and high levels throughout the state. Each program cohort brings together women leaders from the nonprofit, corporate, small business, and government sectors with various levels of leadership experience and from a range of organization sizes. Figure 12.1

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[6]How these are expressed has changed slightly for WLC5, but the categories are the same.

[7]The WLC is ongoing as of this writing. WLC1 (2011) and WLC2 (2012) took place in Windham County, WLC3 (2013) in Bennington County, WLC4 (2014) in Washington County, WLC5 (2015) and WLC6 (2015) in Chittenden County, WLC7 (2016) in Upper Valley, and WLC8 (2016) in Windham County. This chapter is based on data from the first four years of implementation and research, WLC1-4.

displays the types of organizations and Fig. 12.2 the size of the organizations for all 41 participants, the total in the four groups combined.

The groups ranged in size from 9 to 12 and the proportions in the above categories varied somewhat among the groups, but the total is generally representative of the types of organizations of the women involved. Figures 12.3, 12.4 and 12.5 paint a portrait of the women leaders themselves: the positions held (Fig. 12.3), the

Fig. 12.1 Types of WLC participants' organizations

My organization is:

No response	1
Other	2
Public/State	5
Private for-profit	13
Private non-profit	20

Number of responses, N=41

Fig. 12.2 Size of organizations of WLC participants

The number of employees in my organization is:

>150	7
51-150	2
11-50	14
2-10	14
1	4

Number of responses, N=41
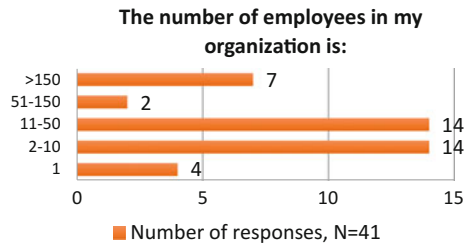
Fig. 12.3 WLC participants' positions or roles

My position is:

Board Officer or equiv	2
Shared Leadership	1
Independent	1
Middle mgmt	8
Senior mgmt	10
President/ED/CEO	19

Number of responses, N=41

Fig. 12.4 WLC participants' leadership experience

Number of years I have held leadership positions:

More than 15	19
10-15	8
5-10	8
Less than 5	6

Number of responses, N=41

Fig. 12.5 WLC participants'
perceived leadership
experience level

I think of my leadership experience as:

Advanced — 14
Intermediate — 23
Novice — 4

0 5 10 15 20 25

Number of responses, N=41

number of years they have held leadership positions (Fig. 12.4), and their perceptions of the level of their leadership experience (Fig. 12.5).

How We Evaluate

Extensive evaluation of all four groups and the ongoing circles they have birthed provides the results we analyzed to understand the WLC approach. Our evaluation data sources include a pre-assessment of capacity in the four outcome areas, goal-setting and action plans as part of program activities, a reflection guide completed by each participant at the end of the six-month program to self-assess learning and change, a final program evaluation with post-assessment of capacity in the four outcome areas, and follow-up questionnaires and group representative interviews at six and twelve months after program completion and then annually thereafter. Through these instruments, we collect quantitative and qualitative data, seeking to understand both the extent of change (quantitative) and the nature of change (qualitative) for the WLC's women leaders.

In other writing, we have examined in depth the array of learning and change that women participants experience during the six-month WLC program, as expressed in both quantitative and qualitative data. The major categories of reported change include self-understanding, self-efficacy, centered presence and embodiment, and strength through connection. However, in this chapter we concentrate on what we have learned about the impact of the "strength through connection" outcome in particular and why the continuation of the circles *post-program* is so important.

Strength Through Connection: A Window into Why Networks of Support Work

We chose to focus on how the on-going circles support women's leadership development because WLC participants emphasize their identity as a collective most strongly among the things they value about the program. In a range of quantitative and qualitative data, participants from all four years remarked

frequently and emphatically in both end-of-program and post-program evaluations on several aspects of how they gain from being in these women's leadership circles. First, many understand more deeply or for the first time the power of and need for peer support. One WLC participant stated that she realized: "[t]hat I need more peer support than I have built into my work life now." Another said, "I have learned that there are so many others that 'struggle' with the same kinds of topics in their leadership and personal lives. I have learned that there are many, many great women right here to turn to." We also saw evidence of women attributing individual changes they had made to their work with and in their circles. Given the importance the participants assign to the continuation of their groups, we wanted to understand what makes these groups continue, why the women see them as important, and what effect women's participation in these circles over time has on their leadership. The concept map below (Fig. 12.6) captures our three main findings:

- Key aspects of the circle methodology help the circles persist.
- The circles gain deep meaning for their participants.
- What happens in the circles supports the growth of participants' leadership capacities and their ability to make life changes.

As illustrated in the sequentially built layers of the visual model, features of the circles' methodology create the foundational conditions for meaningful experiences among the women participants to occur. In turn, those meaningful collective experiences provide the means for the individual women to grow in their leadership and to create change.

Throughout the rest of this section, our analysis is based on topics mentioned by the majority of, and in some cases all, participants. The quotes we use for each topic capture the main characteristics of a broader set of data on that theme.
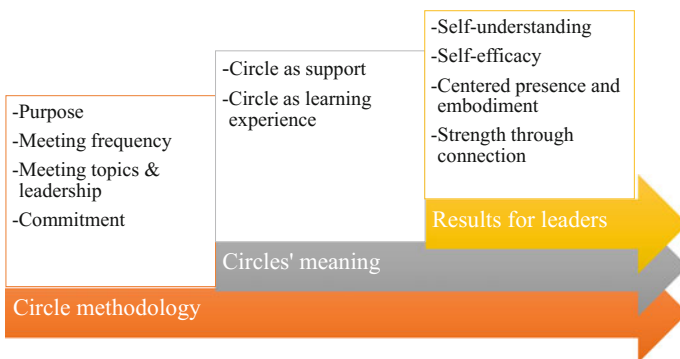

Fig. 12.6 Conceptual map of the WLC's process, meaning, and results

Circle Methodology

The intention behind the initial program lasting six months is to create a container of safety and connection and a felt experience of the possibilities for professional and personal learning through being part of a circle. The program so far has achieved this goal, evidenced by the fact that, as of this writing, all the groups have chosen to continue their association. This choice is not to be taken for granted or treated lightly. Typically, groups formed through leadership development programs fall apart when the formal program structure falls away. As one participant stated, "We have a deep connection thanks to the time and sharing that we did while working together. This continues to deepen and is very satisfying."

In this section, we highlight aspects of the circle methodology that the participants themselves have identified as helpful to the persistence of their collectives, describing *how* they find them helpful. These aspects are:

- purpose,
- meeting frequency,
- meeting topics and leadership, and
- commitment.

Purpose. The circles have to serve a purpose that has value for the individual women, busy as they are with both professional and personal obligations. In the annual check-ins with the circles, the women have noted a deeper and different purpose than that of other groups they might belong to. One member stated, "I think we appreciate that this group is not just a social group, it is a group of women with whom we can be really honest and get support and accountability." One of the circles actually created a purpose statement as they started out:

A community of women professionals inspiring each other's careers [and lives]

- Hatch a personal goal, use the Circle to establish a structure to achieve the goal.
- Goal setting and focus (with a light touch!)—personal development, well-being.
- Tell the truth.
- Encourage and witness.
- Celebrate.
- Skill development, select themes for each meeting.
- Unravel issues at work and in life.
- Touring Vermont together, mini adventures.
- Collaborate to study, understand, and distinguish women's style of leadership.

While other circles did not create such formal purpose statements, their aims are similar.

Meeting frequency. Most of the circles reported meeting monthly, with a lighter schedule during the summer. One circle meets for a full day retreat every other month; another circle schedules an annual day-long retreat. Additionally, circle members communicate one-to-one outside of the designated circle meeting times, whether to socialize, to confer on a work or personal issue, or to discuss circle-related logistics. Quantitative reporting of these communications shows that

members have both individual face-to-face meetings and one-to-one email communications with one another as often as four times per month or more.

Meeting topics and leadership. Topics are generated by the group, with some people offering to share an area of expertise. One participant noted the importance of keeping "a good mix of professional and personal topics to continue growing in both areas." Another commented, "We recognize that the personal stuff connects to the leadership. We have moved to topics that are life in general rather than just work specifically."

In addition, shared leadership seems to be an integral component of the circle. As one participant stated, "We are good at taking turns at leadership—no one is stuck with the major burden." Yet, while shared leadership (rotating responsibilities fairly) is deemed critical, several circles acknowledged that certain individuals play a key role in perpetuating the group. As one circle participant noted, "There are a couple of members who act as glue for the group, and I find that really helpful."

Commitment. Commitment factors into how the circles persist and issues surrounding commitment also provoke learning, challenge, and change. In response to the question, "What makes your circle successful?" one participant replied: "Commitment. We are all over the top busy, so it is sheer commitment." Circle representatives all spoke of how the groups had discussed expectations for attendance and had learned a great deal through this process. While none of the circles has a required number of meetings, many have created informal expectations that members will do the best they can to attend and will communicate if they can't attend. In fact, it is around the issue of attendance that circles seem to have breakdowns as they establish themselves. For example, in two of the circles, several people failed to attend a meeting, which negatively affected those who were there, especially the facilitators who had worked hard to prepare. Those groups worked to address the breakdowns, creating norms and expectations which reestablished and deepened their commitment. This process is an important part of the group's development. It is a similar process to the individual growth seen in the coaching frame of "breakdown to breakthrough." Breakdowns create critical openings for potential breakthroughs (significant shifts in thinking and acting); groups have to work through a breakdown to emerge with something new.

Why this intense attention to commitment? Despite these women leaders being pulled in many directions, they recognize that they simply could not derive the circle's benefits without being there. In fact, one of the most frequent recommendations current circle members give to other women beginning a circle is simply to go to the meetings. As one woman noted: "Stick to it and keep getting together! It really pays off!" In all the groups, only a few people have officially left the circles. One moved out of the area, and for a few others, life-changing priorities caused them to decide that they could not or did not want to continue with the circle. In two circumstances, participants requested informal "leaves of absence" and later returned.

What is apparent is that each circle evolves, as does any group. The members experiment with various structures, rules, and norms. Members' needs and learning goals change and the circles change with them, which is part of the reason the

groups survive. One woman shared, "To continue and move into longevity, the Circle needs to be responsive to the developmental and practical needs of the women in the Circle. Inherent in this is a need for flexibility of each group to structure itself in a way that is responsive while figuring out what commitment is required of members to maintain the integrity of the group." The strength, commitment, flexibility and resilience needed for the circle's success are also parts of a process of successful leadership. In the end, the circle is a place where leadership is practiced.

Circles' Meanings for Participants

As evidenced above, circle participation requires commitment of both time and energy from busy women leaders, suggesting that the circles would not persist without some significant benefit to their participants. The data we have collected support this conclusion. Sheer commitment is a necessary but not sufficient contributor to the circles' survival; the perceived rewards of being in the group soon take over as the participants' reason to keep going. One participant described this shift: "Now, commitment is maintained more organically by virtue of (1) the meeting times feeling rich and personally beneficial, and (2) by frequent articulation of the appreciation for what the group brings to each of us."

Responses to the questions posed in annual data collection indicate that the on-going circle is a valuable and meaningful aspect of the women's lives. One participant found the WLC circle stood out among her other group experiences, stating, "I have been a member of other 'women's groups,' but the WLC is by far the most satisfying and meaningful." Another participant stated that the circle has a "priceless value" and she "can't imagine where [she] would be if [she] had not participated in WLC and fully committed to the program." In this section, we explore what "the group brings," the meaning and benefits of the circles for the women who participate in them.

Circle as support. The most frequent response for why women continue and what the circle means to them is professional and personal support. As one participant stated, the WLC "continues to support me to 'reach for the stars' in my professional career." Another participant describes support by stating that "[we] work together mentally, emotionally, spiritually… to enhance each other's lives." It seems that as the circles continue, the women create a deep connection; as one participant articulates, her sister participants have touched her on "a deep soulful level. We all need support in life and I choose the group as a means of support." In particular, two respondents from WLC1 wrote at the end of their third year together, "It's hard to imagine leaving it" and "Participating in the WLC has become an integral part of my life…I have a strong and reliable circle of women that I could turn to for just about any need."

But what actually constitutes "support"? In our data, two main behaviors emerged: concrete feedback and intimate sharing. First, the participants appreciate

the ability to get feedback and perspective from one another and to serve as a sounding board for one another. As one participant stated, "We are supportive of each other professionally and personally. Our group is a confidential resource when we have a professional issue to discuss. Plus, we know we can call on a single member of the group and if they can help us they will." Another participant described it as an important "circle of support for new changes and directions; a sounding board."

Second, while sometimes the women may ask for and receive specific feedback on work-related or personal challenges, they also have a broader sense of support which involves intimate sharing of self and knowing that others in the group just "have your back." As one participant explains, "We can allow ourselves to share our raw, honest personal situations." Another reinforces, "WLC has become a spiritual gathering, a safe place to share." Additionally, because of the deep level of sharing, participants felt that just knowing that the group was behind them was often helpful, as one participant recounted, "The group is a valuable source of support. I felt that the entire group was 'with' me as I presented in the Netherlands and shared in my success."

Circle as learning experience. In addition to support, the other meaningful element of the circle experience is the continuous learning that occurs. Clearly the initial purpose of the groups formed during the six-month program was to learn; we see this learning broaden and deepen as the groups persist. "Participation in the circle means growth and learning more about myself to be a better business woman," sums it up in the words of one participant. Another contrasted the WLC experience with that of other relationships. "Meeting with them has offered me a way to consider, create, act and reflect on various experiences and learnings in my life in a way different than one-on-one friendships." Finally, another participant cited the importance of the circles as a rich learning space. "The longer we're together, the more we see dynamics evolve among leaders who are driven to meet their goals… So the group is a laboratory of sorts."

This learning lab can lead to profound results as the women stay connected together over time. In a conversation with representatives from one of the groups, a participant explained how important the support of the group had been during her treatment for breast cancer. Her colleague described the deep learning experience this had provided for the rest of the circle. "We were in a real listening place … watching someone navigate something really challenging is great mentoring for handling things (in our own lives)." As the groups continue, they witness one another going through life challenges and this is significant for them. As another participant said, "three people have changed professional lives, three have lost their fathers. … commonalities of life transitions have pulled people together. What does it mean to be professional women and what do we need to learn (in life)?" This last remark in particular is notable because this recognition characterizes an authentic, integrated, embodied leader. Such a holistic perspective on leadership highlights the integration of the personal and professional, breaking down artificial distinctions

between interconnected aspects of our lives. Clearly, the learning that occurs in the circles benefits their participants in integrated and profound ways.

Results for the Individual Women Leaders

We are also interested in the practical results of the circles' existence and indeed, so are the women members. What happens in the circles supports the growth of participants' leadership capacities and their ability to make life changes. Here we mention some of the concrete results that have occurred in the workplaces and lives of individual participants, that is, *effects* as differentiated from *learning*, since the latter is certainly also a result in and of itself. It is useful to bear in mind that the ongoing circles *begin* during the six-month program; they are not a thing apart from what is built during that phase, rather they build upon it. Likewise, the kinds of individual participant results that we see from the ongoing circles fall mostly into the same four categories of change we see from the six-month program period—self-understanding, self-efficacy, centered presence and embodiment, and strength through connection. We mention an example or two in each area, although we have evidence of many more.

Self-understanding. While enhanced self-understanding has broad-reaching and long-term implications, it is often hard to see how it leads to specific action outcomes. Some of the WLC participants, however, have been able to do exactly this. One example is the participant who found that new understanding of her own tendencies led to improved ability to manage difficult conversations and tense situations. She was possibly referring to difficult supervision situations when she reported,

> Dramatically, WLC helped me to manage communication/interaction with managers in difficult circumstances. I have developed the ability to hold others responsible without apologizing. I have come to understand that if others around me are unsuccessful, it is not the result of me not giving enough, … not being supportive enough. It is not a reflection of my irresponsibility.

This kind of strength is often a challenging area for women who have been socialized to care for others and hold themselves responsible for others' well-being. This participant found a skill that could serve her at increasing levels of professional responsibility, should she desire to take those on. She went on to explain that this new understanding and strength had affected her personal life as well. "Though this is in the workplace, this has had a dramatic effect on me personally, hence in my personal world. Somewhat of an emancipation!"

As she noted, the WLC process of self-understanding often leads to deep realizations and dramatic changes in personal as well as professional domains, further illustrated in this participant's experience of identifying that she needed to leave an unsatisfactory marriage. "I'm getting a divorce—the values exercise I did with you —ever since then, I was trying to get my marriage to be true to those values, and

I'm giving up because of the group. I can see that I can't expect my husband to be someone different then he is. If not part of the group, I wouldn't have come to that realization."

Self-efficacy. Results in the area of self-efficacy are numerous. One participant was most concrete when attributing a new chapter in her professional life to the sense of ability engendered by the circle.

> I have begun to develop a business plan for private duty nursing services. I am extremely excited about this. I have been researching this on a local level and recently met with an accountant. I just purchased my own health and liability insurance. My business cards will be arriving soon. I have been inspired by the whole experience in the WLC to believe in myself and my capabilities.

Starting a new business can be daunting. This participant felt that without the WLC, "I know that I would not have had the confidence to start my own small business. This has increased my salary, personal satisfaction, and independence."

A second example of newfound confidence appeared in another domain that is often challenging for women, negotiation. "I asked for and got a raise. It was a surprisingly bumpy and complicated process and I felt myself starting to slip into some old ways of thinking—dis-investing as a defense mechanism, e.g., but saw that and got back on track pretty quickly when it was done." This success then led to more positive action, with very concrete results. "Since then I've been full steam ahead with some fundraising, future plans for a capital campaign, and making the most of [my organization's] upcoming 125th birthday. To date, I think I could credit $2000 of our recent spring appeal to the WLC and am sure returns with these future projects will be enhanced."

Centered presence and embodiment. Centered presence and embodiment encompass the aspects of leadership that connect the cognitive and emotional to the physical. Embodied presence, groundedness, energy, and being relaxed are all facets of this category. Women stated in many ways that they felt "more present" in their daily activities, leading to better decisions and more conscious action. Some felt "more energy and organization to accomplish my goals" or new "enthusiasm and energy to share insights with colleagues that might be helpful/valuable for them." Others felt more "centered," "unified within myself" or "integrated." This led to an increased level of focus which helped women to accomplish goals and, in general, to better "support an effective work environment."

Similar results emerged in the women's reflections on results of being in the group over time, although they were sometimes expressed more indirectly. One participant mentioned how her shift toward a more centered feeling had allowed her to work in a less stressed way even while she was increasing her professional responsibilities. "I'm more relaxed, even when I'm super busy. I also have new roles, more responsibility, and I'm able to view them as opportunities and not burdens." In another instance, a participant recounted how she had gained two qualities of a centered leader, "Patience and ability to listen." She went on to describe how these had helped her contribute in specific ways to her company's

success. "I think this is part of what gave the president confidence to add to my responsibilities, some of which are directly revenue producing as it is a sales position. I've earned the company close to $50 K in funds that [otherwise] might not have been secured in the last six months."

Strength through connection. Strength through connection appeared in many of the participants' comments about benefits as well, often in very tangible ways. A robust example is in one group's ways of connecting and supporting each other professionally out in the community. A participant in that group reported that many of them had gotten practical support from other members through attending each other's public events such as fundraisers; in another instance, the group connection facilitated a contract that two of them were working on together because they knew each other well. While some aspects of this report remind us of the "old boys' network" that could be as exclusionary when run by women as it has been when run by men, it is also necessary for women leaders to have such networks of relationships; they are part of what make a community function effectively at the leadership level. Being conscious of others' values by knowing each other well can help determine who might work well together for a larger common goal in the community.

We could add myriad examples of how the support of the group continues to have real practical implications for leadership, such as the experience of one member who found that she was "calmer in the face of challenges knowing there are others there who care and support me," or another who recounted, "I struggled with the loss of my job during this time. This was very traumatic for me. I found some peace and support from being in this group and learned more about myself." Instances of individual change multiply with the circle's development. In fact, they are made possible, at least in part, by the circle's existence.

Further Questions About the WLC of Vermont

As the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont program continues, we are reflecting on additional questions we would like to investigate more thoroughly over time, including:

- What are common challenges as the circles continue on their own? Are there "natural" or typical stages to the circles' ongoing development? Will some circles end in their current form and, if so, what will they morph into? How do we offer support to their growth and help the circles continue to provide value? What would a circle's development cycle look like in different organizational and community contexts?
- How can we support the intermingling of circles across the state? Is that important? What would it accomplish? How could women across circles help each other? Should a goal of the program be to connect these circles formally to larger efforts such as the Vermont Commission on Women, Vermont Works for

Women, or The Millionth Circle, in order to cultivate this social change possibility? How could a Vermont state-wide network of women's circles learn from other social movement models and what could a Vermont women's circle movement offer as lessons in return?

• What are the relative costs and benefits of having a more homogenous circle of women versus one with more diversity? Given our society's deep-rooted biases and structural injustices, would the participants feel as strong a sense of belonging or of being in a "tribe" if there were a wide variety of diverse attributes in one circle? To what extent would conversation be edited as a result of more diversity in the room? In what ways might courageous conversations about race and other differences be brought into the center of the circle, and what would or could be the potential positive impact for these leaders and their communities?

The answers to these questions are important not only for the Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont, but also for other leaders and leadership educators hoping to learn how best to strengthen women's leadership.

Why We Should Care About What Works for Women: Implications for Leadership Development in the Social Sector

Leadership development programs are key to supporting and sustaining the growth of women leaders. The McKinsey and Company (2010) *Women Matter* report analyzes data from over 1500 business leaders from mid-level management to CEO's about how to attain gender diversity at top levels of organization management. "Although everybody agrees that there is no magic formula for success, according to this study, CEO commitment and *women's individual development programs* stand at the heart of any effective gender-diversity ecosystem" (p. 23, emphasis added).

But if women's leadership development programs are a large part of the answer, what is the question, especially as regards social sector leadership? In nonprofits in the United States, the passageway to powerful organizational leadership roles continues to be a narrow one. The large philanthropic organizations are overwhelmingly run by white men. A *Chronicle of Philanthropy* survey found that among leadership positions in the Philanthropy 400 organizations, 18.8 % are held by women and 6.3 % are occupied by non-white people (Joslyn, 2009). Similarly, in the nonprofit sector overall, women make up almost 75 % of personnel, but only one in ten can be found in upper management, compared to one in five men (The White House Project, 2009, p. 76). Further, young women in nonprofits and, interestingly, especially those working in women's organizations face burnout as a result of low budgets and an absence of mentoring and training. The question, clearly, is: how can we change this situation?

The WLC offers important contributions to the response. From the data above, we see evidence that the WLC works well to increase women leaders' self-confidence, leading to positive changes in their leadership capacity. This is critically important to learn from because the lack of self-confidence acts as a self-imposed barrier for so many women who have the potential to lead. As Kay and Shipman (2014) argue,

> …there *is* a particular crisis for women—a vast confidence gap that separates the sexes. Compared with men, women don't consider themselves as ready for promotions… and they generally underestimate their abilities. … Success, it turns out, correlates just as closely with confidence as it does with competence. (p. 59)

As we have presented in earlier sections, self-efficacy (which encompasses self-confidence) and self-understanding were clear areas of learning and change for women in the WLC. Self-understanding has obvious sources in the main tools used in the program. But what helps self-understanding grow into self-efficacy, the sense that one is capable, in this case, of leading?

Part of the answer at least is that the participants take immediate action related to new self-understanding as it develops during the program. Three design features of the program make this possible. First, the program takes place in situ. Women do not leave their organizations to participate in the WLC, so they are able to immediately apply and test out their learning, instead of waiting to apply it post-program as they would have to do with an intensive or non-place-based program. Then as its members learn and change, the circle can adjust to their new needs; it is a flexible, context-sensitive, and participant-responsive container. A second design element is that the program occurs over time, which offers the opportunity to practice and reinforce learning which in turn supports further long-term change. Humans spend a lifetime building habits; likewise, changing behaviors does not happen in a single workshop. Third, participants engage in change action *as an intentional part of* the program, primarily through an action learning project and monthly new skills practice, and reflect on the results and meaning of those changes. This cycle of new understanding, action, and reflection leads to *self-efficacy*, the sense that one *can*. The sense that one *can* act powerfully in fact leads to powerful action.

The WLC is also not your standard leadership skills curriculum in that it engages both directly and indirectly with women's power but not just in the sense of gaining positional power. It goes deeper by affecting the whole leader, changing the paradigm of what power looks like, not only *allowing* individuals to be authentic, vulnerable, and real as powerful leaders, but actually casting those qualities as *necessary* components of powerful leadership of a type that does not negate others' contributions to an effort or goal. The WLC approach is a way to help women at any level dismantle a persistent, narrow paradigm of what leaders are and broaden possibilities for themselves and for others to follow.

Moreover, the circle itself has a kind of power, as it supports women to accomplish their goals, which is critically important given the factors that work against their leadership. Often, women leaders are isolated from one another, maybe especially in rural settings, but also in circumstances where other factors insulate them. Among these factors, for example, women in many contexts set aside their networks for home responsibilities that are the equivalent of a second (or first) job or they may be isolated by being a lone woman in an organization, department, or field dominated by men. As one WLC participant put it, "Being a leader can be very lonely. I value connection, ideas, and feedback from fellow women leaders I respect. It's also usually fun."

It is no small thing to build ongoing, lasting relationships of mutual support and growth. If we see in this micro-context of Vermont the significant results of these relationships for women's achievement, we can only imagine how such relationships might benefit women and their communities elsewhere. In other parts of the world, traditional ways that women associate, such as savings groups and religious communities, may be providing avenues for them to develop strength and accomplish goals. Innovative modes of sustaining collective efforts, such as twitter feeds and blogs, are enhancing traditional models and also contain lessons. The evidence of powerful benefits of the WLC echoes what we know about women gathering in community and action around the world. What WLC has that's unusual, however, if not unique, is the intentional emphasis on laying the groundwork for the circles to continue and therefore for the women in them to continue to grow and change. We know that any kind of skill development, attitude shift, or knowledge building requires time. The circles provide the women the opportunity to continue to grow in the same container of support that helped them learn in the first place.

We hope that by having described both how the ongoing circles persist and the benefits of their continuation, we will have helped others build on or adapt circle processes to benefit many leaders, most especially women leaders. First, we trust that examining the WLC model will encourage leaders to reflect on their own leadership learning processes and how they might enhance them. Further, we urge leadership educators and those creating leadership development programs to consider how they might incorporate some of the major lessons of the WLC experience.

- There is great strength in meaningful connection. Leaders should be encouraged to form their own ongoing networks of support whether that means engaging with a formal "circle model" or simply reaching out to others at critical junctures.
- Cultivating authentic leadership provides ways into leadership for those who might not see themselves reflected in the standard leader image. Allowing vulnerability in connection with others can help non-traditional leaders feel free to offer their fullest selves in their leadership roles. Moreover, all leaders should be supported to create their own paradigms of leadership in line with their

values, as understanding one's values and purpose is critical to long-term success and fulfillment.

• Leadership development is an ongoing process. Leaders need and should seek opportunities to stretch and grow in their learning.

Although they represent only one of many worthy efforts in the leadership development panoply, leadership development circles embody a deep commitment to such lifelong development and learning, which can only be for the better where the future of leadership is concerned.

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Chapter 13
Frameworks, Tools, and Leadership for Responding to Strategic Alliances Challenges

Merryn Rutledge

The complexity and cross-disciplinary nature of challenges like climate change, emergency preparedness, and, in the United States, ongoing health care reform suggest that inter-organizational and cross-sector alliances are increasingly important (Marcus, Dorn, & Henderson, 2005; Kapucu, 2006; Prybil et al., 2014).

At the same time, when a group of organizations considers working together, they face myriad difficulties and challenges, even while at least some of the potential partners see how joint work would enable them to tackle an issue that is beyond the capacity of any single organization, and see joint-venture benefits for the community or society that one organization could not create. These substantial difficulties and challenges include, for example, mission differences; power differences; ways in which some organizational cultures, history, and particular leaders impede collaborative effort; and the vast, daunting unknown of discovering ways to address the issue an alliance will work on.

In addition, potential conveners and/or partners often lack a common framework for understanding collaboration, both as a range of choices for joint work and in terms of how to organize and operate the partnership. Lack of a common framework confuses inter-organizational conversations from the outset and may even put the collaborative endeavor at risk.

This chapter updates and extends work that I published in 2011 (Rutledge, 2011), in which I discussed how a strategic alliance model and a set of questions that guide formation of provisional structures and operating agreements helped inter-organizational alliances for whom I have consulted. In the 2011 article, I

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presented two case studies to illustrate the usefulness of the strategic alliance model and guiding questions.

In this expanded essay, I wanted to add to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities of strategic alliances by interviewing leaders, both of the alliances I had written about, and several other leaders who have led and participated in strategic alliances. These eight leaders gave me insight into how strategic alliances respond to flux and change, both within the strategic partner group, and in the environment around the alliance. In addition, I sought insight that would test and add to my own observations as consultant and executive coach as to the leadership that is important for creating, organizing, and sustaining (or dissolving) a strategic alliance.

In this chapter, I begin by illustrating how our terminology for cross-organizational work can be a drawback to successful affiliation, and I define the term "strategic alliance." Three strategic alliance models are compared in order to highlight advantages of one proposed by Bailey and Koney (2000). Two case studies, written in 2011, illustrate how I have used Bailey and Koney's model to help strategic alliances clarify their purposes and their relationship, and how, with the model as a foundation, eleven questions have helped members organize their work and make operational agreements. Both case studies, enriched by leader interviews, provide a starting point for exploring what happens to strategic alliances over time, and what kinds of leadership are needed to create and lead such alliances.

Terminology as a Drawback to Successful Affiliation

The plethora of terms that are used to describe cross-organizational and cross-sector work can create misunderstanding (Bailey & Koney, 2000; Austin & Drucker, 2002). For example, Straus (2002), like many facilitators and organization development practitioners, uses the term "collaboration" to describe a set of group processes, regardless of whether group members come from different organizations. In contrast, "collaboration" can describe a relationship among several organizations, such as the New England Multicultural Collaboration, a group of independent school activists. To make it more complicated, "collaboration" may imply value judgments, as in the statement, "that NGO is good at collaboration."

The word "network" is similarly confusing. Following Barringer and Harrison's definition of a network (2000), the Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse, which operates in a New England state, coordinates activities among member agencies. But a network can also describe organizations whose only connection is through sharing information. Yet another way to conceptualize a network does not define exactly what it is, but uses the term "network age" (Clarke, 2005) to suggest how "organizational forms and work redesign often facilitated by new technologies mean that partnering and collaborative arrangements are requiring new responses," to meet the challenges of "interorganizational collaboration, where developing effective working relationships poses unique sets of difficulties" (p. 30).

The different meanings of words like "collaboration" and "network" suggest that one way forming a strategic alliance is problematic is that parties come to the table with different ideas about their purposes, relationship, and social processes. Hence, I use the term "strategic alliance" throughout this article, not to argue for one right term, but rather to suggest that "common terminology enables organizations that are discussing or forming strategic alliances to engage in more precise conversations and to have a clearer mutual understanding of what it is their participation means" (Bailey & Koney, 2000, p. 5). "Strategic alliance" describes a "relationship between two or more entities with similar interest…in ongoing relationship-building" in order to achieve "an expressed purpose or purposes" (p. 4).

Three Strategic Alliance Models

There are several frameworks for describing strategic alliance choices. Hall's four basic forms–dyads, sets, networks, and joint ventures–conflate the number of relationships (dyads and sets), length of affiliation (sets), kinds of social systems (networks), and a specific purpose to exchange goods or services (a joint venture) (Hall & Tolbert, 2005). Hall sees a set, for instance, as a temporary alliance, whereas a network is a social system. Hall's four forms of affiliation suggest that depending upon the chosen form, the emphasis of the affiliation is on size, length of affiliation, or purpose. In my experience, alliance size is not often a critical issue and length of affiliation is much less important than strategic purpose. But except for joint ventures, Hall's four kinds of alliance do not help clarify purpose. Hall's kinds of alliances provide no guidance for clarifying structure or making operating agreements.

Austin and Drucker (2002) also proposes a framework. He focuses on one combination of organizations, that is, NGO's forming alliances with for-profit companies. Austin offers a continuum of three levels of involvement: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative. These three stages (p. 19) describe the kind, duration, and scope of exchange. Both because he is speaking of relationships between NGO's and for-profit companies and because he focuses on exchange, Austin's framework is not a useful framework for many strategic alliances.

Bailey and Koney's continuum (2000) shows four choices for partner involvement (see Fig. 13.1). Continuum choices range from low to high formalization and low interdependence to integration and merger (p. 9). The least formal and most loosely coupled (Weick, 1976) relationship is cooperation, where "fully autonomous entities share information in order to support each other's organizational activities" (Bailey & Koney, 2000, p. 6). Moving along the continuum, when parties act in coordination, "autonomous groups align activities, sponsor particular events or deliver targeted services in pursuit of compatible goals" (p. 6). Accomplishing tasks together suggests a closer affiliation than merely sharing information. Parties "in collaboration…work collectively through common strategies" (p. 6), each giving up some degree of autonomy as they jointly set and implement goals. Finally, the most fully integrated connection, coadunation, describes mergers, consolidations, and acquisitions—
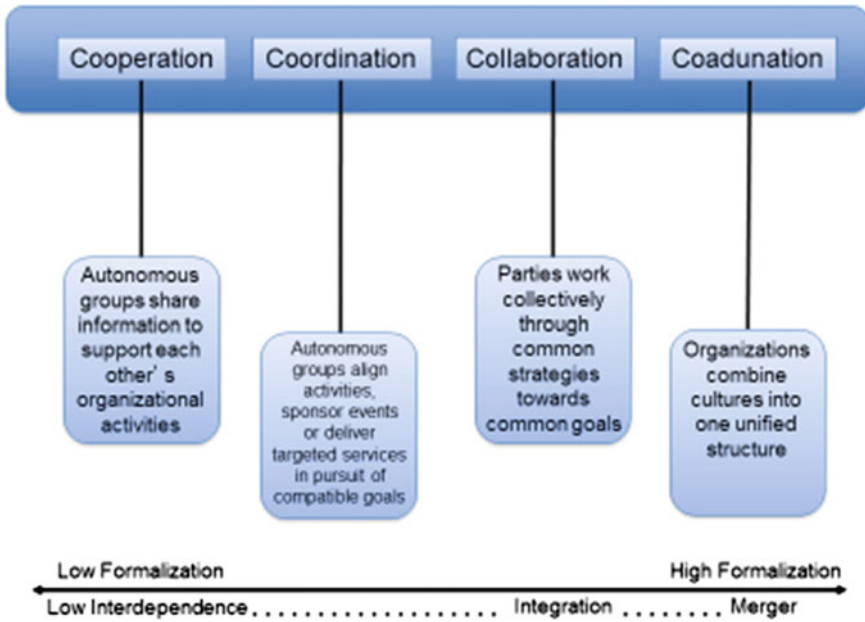
Fig. 13.1 A continuum of strategic alliances

organizations combining cultures into one unified structure. Here one or more organizations "relinquish…autonomy in favor of a surviving organization" (p. 7).

Using Bailey and Koney's Strategic Alliance Continuum to Clarify Choices

I have worked with a number of strategic alliances whose joint work was complicated by members having little concept of distinct kinds of alliances. A case study will illustrate how Bailey and Koney's (2000) strategic alliance continuum helped one alliance navigate through a crisis.

My client, the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) is a statewide alliance of early childhood and family support agencies.[1] The Council met profitably for many years before it faced a crisis of identity. A change in the Federal Head Start Act required each state to form a new super-council, the Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Advisory Council). As an important player in the constellation of early childhood support, ICC was one of half a dozen organizations and alliances invited to the Advisory Council table.

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[1]The state in which this ICC operates is not given in order to protect client confidentiality.

After several meetings, ICC co-chairs were feeling restive and insecure. The Advisory Council convener unilaterally created the meeting agendas and dominated meetings. As a result, ICC felt that their value, proven by achievements like creating statewide measures of child wellbeing, was being questioned. At the same time, the Advisory Council's mission and goals were not clear, and so the ICC did not know where it fit. They experienced being co-opted by the Advisory Council, which was mandated but dysfunctional.

When I began working with ICC, some members believed that because the new Advisory Council had a broader mandate and more influence in state government, Advisory Council's dominance meant ICC must merge with the Council. Other members believed that precisely because ICC's voice at the Advisory Council table was muted, ICC must continue as an autonomous alliance. The ICC hired me to help them figure out how to be in relationship with the Advisory Council.

Noticing the way ICC members framed their choice in stark either/or terms, I began to wonder whether ICC members lacked an understanding of kinds of affiliation. I thought that helping ICC clarify their *raison d'être* might expand their view of choices for relationship with the Advisory Council.

I used Bailey and Koney's continuum to help ICC members clarify why they exist. After explaining the continuum, I invited the group to locate the ICC along the continuum. How would they do that? An existing strategic alliance uses its mission to figure out what kind of alliance they are. ICC's mission is to:

• Advocate for early childhood and family support at the local, state, and Federal levels.
• Address any issues having to do with practices and/or quality of supports and services.

They quickly saw that while they certainly share information, both in and between quarterly meetings, their purpose for affiliating goes beyond cooperation. On the other end of the spectrum, ICC member organizations knew they did not wish to merge. Indeed, our discussions reinforced their conviction that the value of the alliance lay in the diversity of organizations, each with its own resources, expertise, and perspective, and proven ability to accomplish joint work.

As has often happened when I use Bailey and Koney's (2000) continuum, the ICC decided that they belong in more than one spot. Depending upon what activity they engaged in, ICC's purpose was to coordinate or collaborate. When they acted upon their advocacy mission, for example, convening a meeting with legislators to focus attention on a particular issue, they were coordinating. Such a meeting was an activity that reflected "compatible goals" (p. 6). While ICC member organizations' goals for a specific piece of legislation were likely not identical, they were compatible.

When the ICC convened a committee to address a specific early childhood system challenge like defining measures of child wellbeing, members were working in collaboration. That is, they shared a common goal of creating one set of measures. In Bailey and Koney's definition, collaboration involves "integrated

strategies" (p. 7). The ICC's strategies were integrated in the sense that individual organizations, some using one set of measures, some others, and some using no measures, would share their practices and dilemmas, do research on measures used by other organizations, and then mutually decide on one set of measures.

What difference did these continuum choices make to the ICC? First, the four choices helped members realize that they had been acting from a narrow mindset: organizations either affiliate for an indistinguishable variety of purposes or they consolidate. Secondly, ICC realized that pressure to merge with the Advisory Council was likely caused by both the Council's and the ICC's narrow perception of choices for connection. While acknowledging that at some future time it might be appropriate to merge with the Advisory Council, the ICC decided that merger should be considered only *after* members worked with the new Advisory Council to clarify its purposes and identity. ICC members decided to bring the strategic alliance continuum to the Advisory Council in order to clarify the Council's purposes. Then the co-equal parties within the Council could decide upon the forms of strategic affiliation that would serve members and the whole early childhood system.

The Alliance Continuum Is not a Developmental Path

Bailey and Koney imply that their continuum not only describes choices for levels of engagement but also suggests a developmental path (p. 8). In other words, they suggest that with the exception of coadunation, increased connection and interdependence are a good idea. In my experience, such a developmental path only applies to a few alliances and should not be embedded in or suggested by the continuum. To do so would have been detrimental to the ICC, who needed to see a range of non-prescriptive choices. Leaders I interviewed in 2016, who have been involved in many alliances, agree that prescribing the continuum as a developmental path would increase conflict in existing alliances and scare potential alliance partners in emerging alliances. The idea that low formalization and integration are less desirable or less mature introduces unhelpful value judgments.

Building on the Continuum: Eleven Questions to Solidify Relationship

Broadly speaking, strategic alliances have two components: a set of strategic purposes and ways to build and solidify relationship (Bailey & Koney, 2000, p. 4). ICC's experience with the Advisory Council illustrates how to use the continuum to address both components. In this section I will use another case study to show two additional ways for alliances to address both strategy and relationship: (1) members create alliance structures that align with where they are along the continuum;

(2) alliances make agreements about communication, decision-making, the source and use of resources, and other operational matters, as appropriate to low or higher levels of formalization called for by their place(s) on the alliance continuum.

In their work, Bailey and Koney (2000) offer many lists of questions that are intended to help alliances work. I have found these and other lists (Austin & Drucker, 2002; Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001) to be impractical for use with clients. The sheer number of questions, as well as the range of topics they cover, causes alliance members to get bogged down in process detail. Such detail upsets the balance among "three dimensions of success" in collaborative endeavors: results, process, and relationship (Straus, 2002, p. 116).

At the same time, such detailed lists have helped me reflect upon the issues that contribute to relationship difficulties among my clients. I distilled eleven questions that help alliances make sturdy agreements about mutual expectations. These agreements lay the foundations for the structures and processes that make the alliance work. The questions are:

1. What does the alliance wish to accomplish?
2. What activities are shared or combined?
3. What members or groups are responsible for seeing that each goal and activity gets done?
4. Who convenes the alliance?
5. Who leads and how are leaders designated?
6. How do alliance members communicate among themselves?
7. How do alliance members communicate to their own organizations and other stakeholders?
8. How are decisions made?
9. How are disagreements handled?
10. What resources are available and by whom?
11. Who is accountable to whom and how is accountability monitored?

The ICC's experience shows how the first question helps an existing alliance relate each part of its mission to a specific place on the alliance continuum. In order to illustrate the practical use of the other questions, I will relate my experience helping a national strategic alliance.

National Health Affiliates, a group of twenty-one public health organizations, had met fitfully for a decade when they asked me to work with them. Although they had articulated a set of Relationship Principles when they formed in the late 1990s, the alliance had, members agreed, failed to achieve its potential.

In my experience, it is common for alliance members to want to work together and to experience ongoing tensions. For Affiliates, changes in the grant requirements of the Centers for Disease Control had exacerbated competition. In addition, tensions arose over Affiliates' differing positions on public policy and pending legislation. Furthermore, small organizations resented larger ones that could afford more programs and more member services, such as sophisticated web resource pages. Such factors illustrate how combinations of external forces and differences,

for example, in member organization's purposes, interests, power, and resources contribute to the challenges alliances face as they form and maintain a relationship.

At the same time, with health reform rising to the top of the national policy agenda, alliance members wanted to explore how they could strengthen the Affiliates in order to achieve a greater good: enhancing the public health of the citizenry. I was hired to help the alliance figure out how to achieve this aspiration.

The Affiliates' Relationship Principles articulated several alliance purposes:

- To communicate effectively;
- To help shape policy decisions;
- To offer consultation to each other on matters of individual organizational development and share training resources for economies of scale.[2]

As was the case with the ICC, the Affiliates' mission was not helping them define their relationships or organize their work. When I asked members to describe the alliance, they said they were "a common enterprise," a "coalition," and "a process," and admitted that these rather vague descriptions reflected unrealized aspirations. Once they understood the strategic alliance continuum, they, like the ICC, quickly agreed that their work belonged in three places on the continuum: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

They needed cooperation when the purpose was to communicate effectively, coordination when the purpose was to help shape policy, and collaboration when the aim was to share training resources, expertise, and programs. The correspondence between these purposes and the strategic alliance continuum choices is depicted in Fig. 13.2.

In the list of eleven questions, they had answered the first and second questions, which directly address the strategic component of an alliance. Their answers laid the foundation for clarifying the relational component, which is strengthened and maintained by the way they organize work and by operating agreements. The third question asks, "What members or groups are responsible for seeing that each goal and activity gets done?" This question invites alliance members to create structures that organize their work.

The Affiliates could sequence their work so that the lowest level of formalization (cooperation) was tackled first, then the next level (coordination), and then the next (collaboration). They could also create temporary or permanent structures, for instance, a steering committee and other committees.

The Affiliates took both approaches. One organization offered their website as a portal for Affiliate communication. This was an immediate step that would allow members to build mutual trust and confidence in the usefulness of the alliance. At the same time, the Affiliates created a structure for operating (see Fig. 13.2). Standing committees were organized, each operating at a particular place along the alliance continuum. Committee names reflected and reinforced their purpose in

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[2]For clarity, I have simplified the Principles, as well as the organizational structure that grew from them.

relation to the continuum, for example, the policy coordination committee and the organizational development collaboration committee.

Members agreed that ongoing communication was a fundamental reason for affiliating and that twenty-one organizations could not all meet regularly. Therefore, they created a steering committee. This committee would meet regularly and convene quarterly conference calls for cross-fertilizing committee work. The steering committee would also be responsible for refining communication vehicles. Finally, the committee would help members identify new opportunities for new coordination or collaboration that arise from state or national policy issues, individual member needs, and/or funding opportunities.

Maintaining Relationship: Making Clear Agreements

With committees in place, the Affiliates were ready to make other agreements that would help them operate smoothly. In the list of eleven questions, numbers four through eleven provide guidance for making agreements about roles and responsibilities.

Questions four and five invite an alliance to clarify its leadership system: "Who convenes the alliance?" and "Who leads and how are leaders designated?" These questions also help alliance members surface and negotiate power dynamics that naturally arise in organizations and are salient in change processes (Marshak, 2006; Morgan, 1997). For the Affiliates, overt conversation about the large public health organization that had heretofore convened and funded Affiliate meetings helped the members air grudges about that organization's power and correct misperceptions about motives. The Affiliates agreed they wanted the convening organization to lead in two specific ways: hold periodic summits to bring the membership together and find funding to do this. Question five also ensured that Affiliates discussed and agreed upon leadership structures, processes for identifying specific leaders, and leadership succession plans for the steering committee and the other committees.

Questions six and seven focus on clear communication. Question six is: "How do alliance members communicate among themselves?" The Affiliates created written communication protocols. Examples of these protocols are: a standard meeting agenda calls for discussion and agreement upon what business is communicated, to whom, by what deadline, and who is responsible for this communication; guidelines specify when as-yet-unresolved business stays within a task group or committee.

Question seven, "How do alliance members communicate to their own organizations and other stakeholders?" helped alliance members map stakeholder relationships and create communication methods for staying in touch with these stakeholders. For example, the ongoing core groups, the steering committee, and the three other committees agreed upon ways to communicate, when, and by whom. Communication methods would include quarterly meeting reports on important initiatives and postings to a member web resource page.

Questions eight and nine are: "How are decisions made?" and "How are disagreements handled?" Like question four, these questions helped the Affiliates
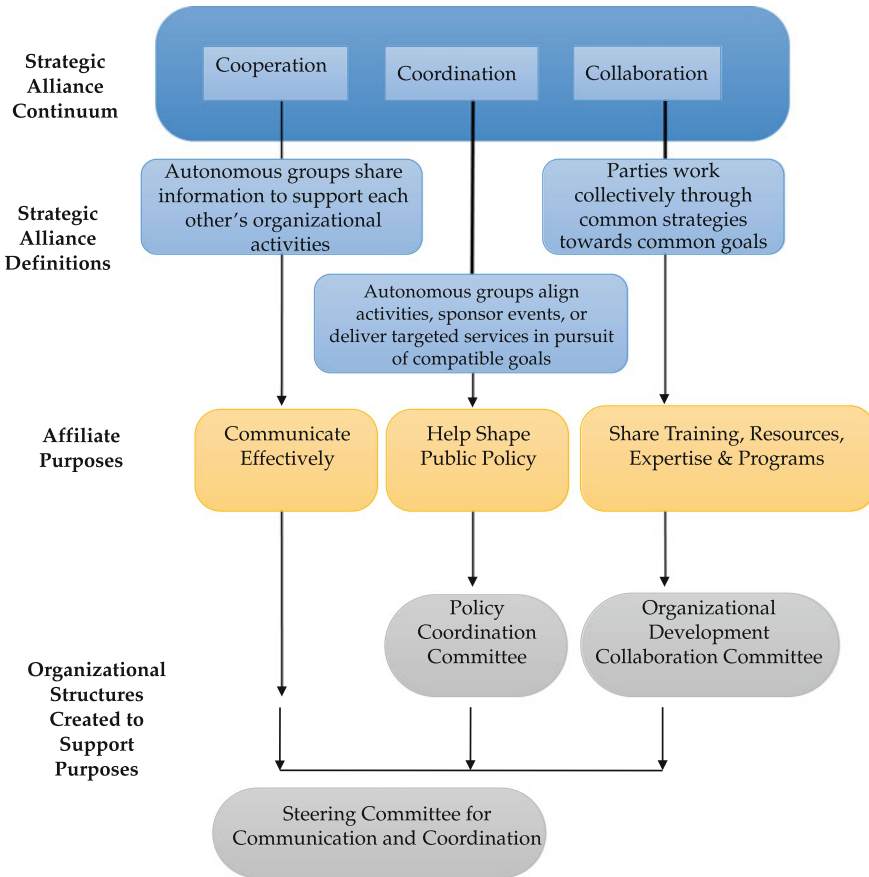
Fig. 13.2 National health affiliates

negotiate power dynamics that arise during decision-making. The Affiliates agreed that each committee would use consensus decision-making. Group norms about surfacing disagreements would be engendered by using Schwarz's (2005) group guidelines, which, for example, invite participants to disagree openly and find ways through differences. The Affiliates decided that unresolved differences would go to the steering committee.

Question ten, "What resources are available and by whom?" also surfaces power issues. As I have explained, smaller Affiliate member organizations had long resented the larger ones. Discussions helped these smaller organizations appreciate the money and staff support that the convening organization had been providing. In addition, another large organization stepped forward to offer the technology that would support web-based Affiliate communication.

Question eleven asks, "Who is accountable to whom, and how is accountability monitored?" This question formalizes areas of responsibility, invites ongoing

self-monitoring, and encourages continuous improvement. For the Affiliates, these areas of responsibility would be documented in a new charter, drafted by a "principles working group," reviewed by the steering committee and the three other committees, and then ratified by all member organizations. This charter was created, ratified, and, as I will explain later in the chapter, was updated in 2015.

The purpose of each of the eleven questions is summarized in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 The eleven questions and their purposes

Question	Purpose
Focus is on the strategic component of the alliance	
1. What does the alliance wish to accomplish?	Identifies the goals of the alliance.
2. What activities are shared or combined?	Encourages matching these goals with alliance continuum choices.
Focus is on the relational component of the alliance	
3. What members or groups are responsible for seeing that each goal and activity gets done?	Invites creation of structures that organize alliance work.
4. Who convenes the alliance?	Invites alliance to clarify its leadership. Surfaces and invites members to negotiate power dynamics.
5. Who leads and how are leaders designated?	Invites alliance to clarify its leadership: structures, processes for identifying leaders, and leadership succession plans. Surfaces and invites members to negotiate power dynamics.
6. How do alliance members communicate among themselves?	Focuses on clear communication within the alliance, including among committees or task groups.
7. How do alliance members communicate to their own organizations and other stakeholders?	Encourages alliance to identify all stakeholders and create clear communication methods.
8. How are decisions made?	Members prevent misunderstanding by agreeing upon decision making methods. Surfaces and invites members to negotiate power dynamics.
9. How are disagreements handled?	Members prevent misunderstanding by agreeing upon norms for surfacing disagreements. Encourages disagreeing openly and finding ways through differences.
10. What resources are available and by whom?	Surfaces power issues based on who has more or fewer resources to contribute.
11. Who is accountable to whom and how is accountability monitored?	Formalizes areas of responsibility. Invites ongoing self-monitoring and continuous improvement.

Leading Strategic Alliances: Initial Lessons from the Case Studies

The ICC and Affiliates case studies illustrate how the strategic alliance continuum and eleven questions are helpful. These stories also suggest leadership approaches that contribute to alliance success. I will make brief observations here and expand on alliance leadership later in the chapter.

ICC and Affiliates leaders brought an essentially optimistic outlook about the potential of joint work. They hired me, not because they were at wits end, although some members *were* frustrated and discouraged, but rather because they believed their strategic purposes could be realized. They brought, in other words, qualities of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994), namely, wanting to construct "a relationship in which to raise and process tough questions" (p. 85), and encouraging the participation (p. 121) of all alliance members.

In addition, whether they articulated it or not, the fact that they sought consultant help showed that they knew "learning is required both to define problems and implement solutions" (Heifetz, p. 57). Consultants facilitate learning by listening for what is present in and what is missing from the system, and by raising awareness of the system. For example, what terminology do members use to describe their relationship? Whether they are expressing them or not, what are their aspirations, frustrations, and conflicts? What factors and circumstances in the environment surrounding the alliance influence and interact with it? The consultant also leads by choosing frameworks and tools, such as the alliance continuum and eleven questions, that respond to the clients' particular needs. Because learning takes time, both consultants and alliance leaders encourage open dialogue that does not reach too soon for answers (p. 87). At the same time, outcomes of my engagement with ICC and Affiliates show the value of guiding alliance leaders toward decisions and clear, actionable agreements.

Alliances Over Time: Continuing Challenges, and Responding to Flux and Change

To prepare for writing this chapter, I interviewed one leader with current information about ICC and two who are knowledgeable about National Health Affiliates. These interviews, together with interviews with five other leaders with vast experience with many strategic alliances, show that even strategic alliances that are in what has been described as a "sustain action and impact" (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012) phase continue to deal with factors that challenge and test the alliance. Flux and change call for periodic or constant adaptation, and may even threaten the alliance's existence. Examples from the ongoing ICC, Early Childhood Advisory Council relationship, and also the National Health Affiliates, will help me illustrate the challenges and adaptations.

Lauren,[3] a key leader of a state agency involved in the continuing relationship between the ICC and the Early Childhood Advisory Council (now called Thrive) agreed that our use of a continuum of alliance choices in 2010 did facilitate creating a fruitful working relationship between these groups. The focus of the ICC partnership of organizations is sufficiently different that it was not subsumed by Thrive. Lauren did point out that waves of change caused both alliance member organizations and the alliance itself to frequently revisit and redefine how they work, and these changes continue to make discussion and agreement difficult. For example, various members of the alliance give their target populations as birth to three, birth to five, and even birth to eight. Because two goals of the ICC are to support and improve data collection, and then identify and address service gaps, the different age ranges make it difficult to agree on what data to use, how to define gaps, and how to measure impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011). One alliance member added mental health to its early childhood mission; this change means that this member comes to the table with concerns that may not align with other member organizations' missions. Lauren believes that the ICC and Thrive would be well served by once again using the alliance continuum and the eleven questions to redefine their strategic purpose and update operating agreements.

National Health Affiliates continues to provide structures and venues for cooperation and coordination that advance public health initiatives. Current Relationship Principles explicitly state that the Affiliates uses the Bailey and Koney choices to help them decide how to respond to opportunities for joint endeavor. Differences in power continue to create tension, with smaller, less well-resourced organizations and larger, well-resourced ones. Funding the Affiliates' activities is difficult for many reasons, for example, program funding is often awarded to single organizations; grant guidelines require the Affiliates' work to be counted as overhead, which funders severely limit; grant awards from the main federal funding agencies are smaller because of Congressional action. Turf issues also continue to pose challenges, especially when a member wishes to take over the work another is doing. Because of staff and leader turnover, and, until recently, lack of a steering committee leader succession plan, institutional memory—including lack of written records—is an ongoing challenge that makes onboarding new steering committee members, periodically revisiting the alliance Relationship Principles, and other issues more difficult and time consuming.

The Affiliates continue to change their structure and operations to manage these challenges. Two structural changes and a shift in culture have made power differences easier to manage. First, the organization that convened the Affiliates during its first decade, and was resented by some members for its perceived primacy, no longer leads or convenes the alliance; that organization is just one of the twenty-one Affiliates. Secondly, while the original convener continues to pay for the one Affiliate operational staff person, the steering committee chair is now an *ex officio*

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[3]Names of all interviewees and their organization and alliance affiliation have been changed, as interviews were confidential.

board member of that organization. Giving the steering committee chair ongoing insight into the staff person's organization helps mitigate and manage the perception that the Affiliates' operational decisions are partisan, and also creates direct communication between the steering committee and the organization that provides operational support. Beyond these structural changes, one leader I spoke to attests to a culture of collaboration (in the informal sense of collaboration as a participative, mutually appreciative way of working together) that is now the norm, thanks to concerted effort over a number of years.

Relationship Principles that were revised in 2015 improve the leadership system, and also respond to changes in the external environment surrounding public health. A chair and vice-chair from two different member organizations lead the steering committee; they are elected by all the Affiliates' members and have overlapping terms so when the vice-chair becomes chair, she/he knows the job. Because permanent committees based on common interest did not respond to emerging needs, these committees were disbanded. Instead, as crosscutting needs emerge, ad hoc work groups tackle these issues. In addition, United States President's Initiatives, which are identified each year, provide new opportunities for the Affiliates alliance to organize cooperative, coordinated, or collaborative work.

Other leaders I interviewed told me of other ways in which alliances they are or have been involved in continuously anticipate and respond to a myriad of challenges that affect their strategic purposes, relationships, and operations. Some challenges are addressed through relatively straightforward solutions, like creating a new memo of understanding between two rural transportation NGOs I am familiar with. Often, however, the challenges and/or multiplicity of challenges are more perplexing, and alliance partner tensions pose risks to the alliance. Circumstances that Heifetz (1994) calls "Type III situations" arise when "the problem definition is not clear-cut, and technical fixes are not available" (p. 75). When dealing with such "adaptive problems" (p. 87) my interviews with leaders indicate that adaptive leaders doggedly, with difficulty, and with considerable investments in energy, time, and other resources, keep their eyes on alliance outcomes, keep surveying the strategic landscape, look for opportunities for movement, and, above all, endeavor to keep alliance partners in the conversation.

Leadership that Facilitates and Impedes Strategic Alliances

These ways of dealing with "adaptive problems" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 87) suggest the kind of leadership that is important for creating, organizing, and sustaining (or dissolving) a strategic alliance. The eight leaders I interviewed have all been successful in creating strategic alliances; in four cases, creating alliances is a self-avowed theme of their careers. I asked respondents what leader attributes, attitudes, and approaches they believe are key to creating and sustaining a strategic alliance, and I also asked them to comment on attributes, attitudes, and approaches that interfere with a strategic alliance. To find themes, I coded (Patton, 2002,

Table 13.2 Leadership approaches that facilitate and impede strategic alliances

Leaders who facilitate successful alliances	Leaders who impede alliances
• Believe in the potential of joint work.	• Seek to protect turf, and/or personal or organizational power.
• Welcome dialogue that tackles tough questions, includes co-created learning, and entertains open-ended possibility.	• Operate from a mindset of either/or thinking, such as "my way or no way."
• Discover and articulate, from seemingly disparate events, facts, data, or contexts, a community or societal need.	Give primacy to their own organization's set of services.
• Believe that solutions to the focal issue can be found.	• Measure their professional success by how well they maintain the status quo.
• See a strategic landscape broader than their own organization.	• Value the status quo; prefer not to take risks.
• See broad and ongoing stakeholder engagement as a moral imperative, and a strategic and practical way to address the focal issue.	• View potential partners with suspicion, as competitors, or as threats.
• Create and value relationships characterized by mutual regard, respect, trust, and candor.	• Approach joint-venture relationships in a defensive or self-protective way.

p. 463) detailed interview notes; however, the themes I will present also reflect my beliefs and observations from many years of consulting with strategic alliances and coaching alliance leaders. Table 13.2 summarizes the themes. As I have done earlier in this essay, I will again demonstrate how the themes play out by presenting them as a case study about Wellness for Elders Assisted for Life (WEAL), a statewide strategic alliance.

WEAL began when Naomi, the CEO of Affordable Housing, Inc. (AHI), began to imagine how elder people's homes, whether congregate housing such as AHI manages, or homes in neighborhoods, might be optimal settings for providing a range of services to help seniors age, in wellness, and in place. Naomi was also seeking solutions to intractable problems like a high rate of seniors' use of hospitals, insupportably low Medicaid reimbursement to housing management organizations during residents' hospital stays, the infeasibility of building enough assisted living facilities to accommodate seniors as they age, and the heartbreak involved in moving seniors into nursing homes as they grow more frail. The challenges were huge and involved multiple bureaucracies; her dream was untried and contrary to current systems, including funding streams and regulations; many people held the fixed notion that a housing corporation's only job is to provide a roof over people's heads.

Naomi demonstrates a combination of attributes seen in leaders who embark on strategic alliances: the ability to clearly articulate a community or societal problem, a vision of and belief in finding creative solutions, and a view of a strategic landscape that is broader than their own organization. In the case of the ICC, leaders bring a shared belief that we should be trying to provide children with a better start in life, and recognition that joint work by both public and nonprofit organizations is

part of the answer. Members of the National Health Affiliates hold the conviction that they "are greater as a whole"[4] in representing and promoting public health. Another leader who has been involved in many strategic alliances said the alliance leader must have "the ability to map [one's own] organization onto a spectrum of alliances" as a way to approach solving a community problem, and still another leader described the successful alliance leaders' belief that "the pie is not fixed in its size, nor in its content."

Naomi floated the initial concept of WEAL to several stakeholders, such as the AHI board of directors, her senior staff, and a couple of key leaders with expertise in health care in general, and geriatric issues in particular. At the time, I was an AHI board member, so I recall the early, inspiring conversations with the board. (After serving my board term, I worked as a consultant and external executive coach for AHI.) The systems changes Naomi and her colleagues were working on called for "radical social change," as one respondent put it, and some of the leaders around her shared this bold aspiration and the conviction that making the change would involve many stakeholders, some as alliance partners, and others in a variety of assisting roles.

Soon, and over time, an expanding group of stakeholders got involved, some as alliance members and others helping to create and operationalize WEAL. Area organizations that would provide WEAL services, like the Visiting Nurse Association and the hospital systems, became alliance members. In addition, influential early supporters were able to call on national experts to create an evaluation system to prove the proposition that WEAL elders would have better health outcomes while saving health care dollars. Two influential state legislators advocated for WEAL as societal and fiscal priorities.

A second theme of leadership for successful strategic alliances, then, is that alliance leaders know the importance of thoughtfully identifying and analyzing stakeholder groups, bringing key constituents together, and engaging with them throughout the life of the alliance. Some leaders I interviewed see early and constant attention to stakeholders as first and foremost reflecting an ethic about involving others. Tamicka, who has formed, participated in, and been a consultant to strategic alliances, said that a leader must first have exploratory conversations with others, and then "enter the space with colleagues," to find where "there is a core" purpose to build on. The image "enters the space with…" suggests a desire for open-ended dialogue and co-creation. For her, it seems that stakeholder relationships are about cultivating an ethic of care, where "interdependence rather than individualism is emphasized, along with the mutuality of giving and receiving more than entitlements" (Oruc & Sarikaya, 2011, p. 388).

Other leaders believe that inviting and tending stakeholders—meaning both alliance members and other interested parties—improves alliance outcomes, is a practical way to manage work, and is important to achieving the overarching community or societal mission, such as maintaining and improving elders' well-being. Right at the beginning of WEAL, AHI leaders could see that AHI needed to

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[4]Direct quotes from interviews are in quotations.

involve residents in the design by asking them what they valued, lacked, and needed. Involving residents was, quite simply, the right thing to do, as one leader put it; in addition, with resident involvement, WEAL would be better designed; furthermore, WEAL participants would not want to participate in services that were "done to them." A National Health Affiliates leader said one reason the affiliation continues is that "Congress doesn't understand that the public health community is people with some different interests"; members realize that as a group, they advance individual public health organization's interests by presenting public health as a "whole."

"Stakeholder engagement" is a lofty term; the glue, according to WEAL and other alliance leaders, is respectful relationships. When Naomi first began to work toward what WEAL would become, she and other leaders who worked with her already had a wide, deep network of people to draw on. Later, even when partners or potential partners resisted the WEAL effort, leaders pointed out that, as one put it, "at least we liked each other" and had come to trust each other over a long period of time. Another WEAL leader spoke of "holding the agenda of the partnership" by asking questions that show you are "interested in hearing other people's perspectives," and then listening and hearing, and trying "to find common ground." Another leader described the importance of leaders below the executive director and CEO level who cultivated relationships by openly and repeatedly inviting people to the alliance table, saying, "come, come to the meeting, join us."

Looking back on the ten-year journey from the initial idea to WEAL's design, pilot phase, evaluation, and statewide deployment, the three leaders I interviewed said that diversity in leadership roles and talents has been critical to the success of the complex endeavor, and they all readily named thought leaders, practical thinkers, and advocates who have brought a variety of strengths to the table. One was a highly respected leader in the medical community. One was "an astute evaluator of personalities" who could always "sort the facts from the riffraff." Two would call leaders "to the carpet when" they were "off the mark." One, a veteran of failed alliance and health care reform efforts, could, "always see where we were going" and "get up in the morning and keep going" even when WEAL faced stiff challenges. Another leader described one alliance partner's contribution as enforcing "a whole ethic around data and accountability around data;" after demonstrating "significant reductions in cost, people couldn't turn their back on the…financial and health outcomes." Leaders reflected on the fact that the partnership needed both visionary thinkers who could "see the overarching dome" of system change, and also the talents of partners who could pose and answer difficult questions about how to create WEAL's infrastructure of funding, staff, technology, and services.

Other leaders I interviewed agree that diverse leaders and leader talents are important. "I think different leaders are needed in different situations," said Lauren, who watched the ICC/Thrive alliance change over time. A National Health Affiliates leader described how two well-respected Affiliate leaders were the driving forces behind the Affiliates' ability to develop "a culture of collaboration." They did so by relentlessly articulating the value of working together, patiently cultivating and enabling relationships, and dealing with tension as a creative force.

WEAL leaders, along with all the other leaders I interviewed, have experience with mindsets and attitudes that impede an alliance; anticipating these barriers may help alliance partners be alert to and manage the way they threaten the joint endeavor. These attitudes, summarized by a number of respondents, include: protecting one's individual organization's turf, power, and financial resources; wanting to maintain or expand personal power; not wanting to take on or even share risk, such as financial risk; being caught in either/or thinking, as in, "my way or no way;" impeding alliance movement by practicing sabotaging behaviors, like bringing up the same issues over and over again at meetings. Summarizing the mindsets that impede alliance work, one leader said, "the common denominator is status quo…an allegiance to a certain way of doing things that has been in place for many years, and also measuring professional success by how well they maintain the status quo."

Other alliance leaders embroidered this theme. One said it was destructive to "hold on to old stories," suspicions, and resentments. As a fairly new operations director for the Affiliates, Miriam does not conclude that the old stories are untrue; rather, they do not reflect the current structure, operations, or conduct of the Affiliates. Tamicka characterized the stance of "this is mine, we do it the best, and we've always done it this way" as defensive behavior that takes understanding, patience, and strategies to "find the spaces where we have maximum movement possibility—and mission is one of those possibilities." Perhaps Tamicka's experience as both executive director in and consultant to strategic alliances contributes to a sense that defensive behavior is a manifestation of tensions that are an inevitable dynamic in alliance relationships.

Alliance Leadership as a System

My interviews with alliance leaders also suggest ways to go beyond conceptualizing alliance leadership in terms of leaders' qualities and approaches. In this section, I explore how Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007) can help consultants and leaders as they form, organize, and sustain (Hanleybrown et al. 2012) a strategic alliance. Complex systems are "neural-like networks of interacting, interdependent agents who are bonded in a cooperative dynamic by common goal, outlook, need, etc." (p. 299). Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) are not merely complicated, that is, composed of "a lot of pieces or parts," (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009, p. 632) where one can understand the system by analyzing its components (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 302). Rather, complexity "conveys a sense of rich interconnectedness and dynamic interaction that is generative of emergence" (2009, p. 632). While it is not my purpose here to focus on distinguishing complicated alliances from complex ones, it should be clear from this brief description of complexity that all three strategic alliance case studies in this essay share features of complexity, namely, their common need and aspiration, their interdependence, and emergent change.

Complexity Leadership Theory "requires that we distinguish between *leadership* and *leaders*" in which "*leadership* [is] an emergent, interactive dynamic that is productive of adaptive outcomes" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 299). Looking at leadership as a system of "neural networks" goes beyond merely recognizing the value of having diversity in strategic alliance leaders. Thinking of leadership as an interdependent and emergent system can help strategic alliance leaders articulate the need to have different leaders over time, serving different functions, playing different roles, and creating, learning, and adapting together.

Indeed, conceiving of a strategic alliance leadership system challenges notions about stakeholders—a term I have used in this essay and that all interview respondents used to describe the people and organizations involved in the strategic alliances they described. In stakeholder theory (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004), a stakeholder is a party with a stake in the value of the business; an organization's managers articulate the purpose of the organization, and then they think about "what kinds of relationships they want and need to create with their stakeholders to deliver on their purpose" (p. 364). Here "stakeholder" is defined as a relationship to one organization. At National Health Affiliates' inception, a single organization identified twenty other organizations as its stakeholders. For WEAL, the central organization was AHI. Yet, as we saw in the case of National Health Affiliates, defining other organizations in relation to a central, founding organization can contribute to or perpetuate the sense that this organization is, variously, first among equals, the main driver, or even (especially for leaders whose mindsets make them suspicious of the alliance) a threat to alliance member organizations.

A focus on building a leadership system can help both the convening organization or group and other participants by changing the question, "Who are our stakeholders?" to "What functions, roles, and players in a leadership system will help us achieve our purposes?" This is, I think, a different question than the fifth question in the eleven questions: "Who leads and how are leaders designated?" In the list of eleven questions, this fifth question is an operational question about how to organize and operate the alliance. For National Health Affiliates, the answer to this operational question involves a steering committee with a succession plan.

The Leadership System Performs Three Functions

Complexity Leadership Theory can be helpful to strategic alliances by further conceptualizing three leadership functions: adaptive, administrative, and enabling (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 305). These leadership functions are not set roles assigned to specific people, but fluid and dynamic ways in which a variety of leaders addresses alliance needs and fulfills responsibilities.

One such leadership function is "*adaptive leadership* [which] refers to adaptive, creative, and learning actions that emerge from the interactions of CAS as they strive to adjust to tension…[It is] an informal emergent dynamic that occurs among interactive agents (CAS) and is not an act of authority" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007,

p. 305). Within WEAL, my interviews point to many examples of adaptive leadership, for instance, the creative dynamic among AHI's CEO's (both Naomi and her successor), the leader of a public-private partnership for managing chronic disease, and an array of NGO and public sector leaders with whom AHI's CEO's have worked on WEAL and other endeavors. Picture these leaders standing together in a large room, passing the strands of a skein of yarn from one to the other, around and around. Viewed from above, the people and yarn make a vast interlacing pattern, unfolding, as they do in complex systems, in nonlinear and unpredictable ways.

A second leadership function is administrative. "*Administrative leadership* refers to the actions of individuals and groups in formal managerial roles who plan and coordinate activities…[It] structures tasks, engages in planning, builds vision, allocates resource to achieve goals, manages crises and conflicts, and manages organizational strategy" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 305). Miriam's role in National Health Affiliates shows one way administrative leadership occurs in a strategic alliance. Miriam works with the steering committee chair and vice-chair to foster communication among members, arrange meetings, hear and channel member concerns to other leaders, and assure continuity by seeing that Affiliate members have a documented history and use it as a resource.

In complex systems, the third leadership function is *enabling leadership*, "which works to catalyze the conditions in which adaptive leadership can thrive and to manage the entanglement…between the bureaucratic (administrative leadership) and emergent (adaptive leadership) functions" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 305). Enabling leadership creates "enabling conditions to foster effective adaptive leadership" and "facilitates the flow of knowledge and creativity from adaptive structures into administrative structures" (p. 305). In my experience, enabling leadership is not just a go-between (between administrative and adaptive leadership), but may overlap with one or both. The AHI board has, for example, performed an enabling role by helping WEAL leaders do contingency planning in the face of a changing national health care context. At National Health Affiliates, Miriam variously plays an enabling and administrative role. As the staff member for the Affiliates, she facilitates the flow of communication and knowledge by channeling information to and from steering committee members, and gauging the levels and kinds of member needs and concerns. She is also, as she put it, "a diplomat," listening openly, practicing inquiry, not over promising, maintaining an even keel in her disposition toward all Affiliate members, and practicing tact and discretion when tensions arise.

The three leadership functions in Complexity Leadership Theory can help alliance leaders understand how to create, change, and expand their networks to serve all functions. Alliance leadership systems will include alliance members and sometimes, as in the case of WEAL, a vast and changing network of organizational leaders who are called upon to contribute expertise, influence, resources, etc. A focus on the leadership system and its three functions shifts mental models away from the centrality of one alliance organization or core group who may have started the alliance conversation, and away from a hierarchical relationship between alliance members at-the-table and ancillary, albeit important other stakeholders. Finally, continuously attending to its leadership systems and functions encourages

alliance participants to see differences among alliance members as an asset, and to ask what leaders and functions they will use to manage the tension arising from the ever-changing, unstable contexts in which many alliances operate.

The Consultant's Role in Alliance Leadership

Organization development practitioners can play critical roles in helping organizational leaders learn to create and tend the strategic alliance leadership system, and learn frameworks and tools like the strategic alliance continuum and eleven questions. Consultants can assist alliances by participating in all three of the functions of the leadership system.

Consultants model and encourage adaptive leadership by co-creating a dialogic space for the difficult conversations leaders have. They do this in at least two ways. First, consultants bring awareness of the dynamic complexity of the systems in the alliance and the systems in which the alliance expects to or is operating. As I have shown, elements of systems complexity can exist even in seemingly straight forward alliances, such as the relationship between two rural transportation NGOs one of my interview respondents described. Dynamic, shifting, and interactive tensions inside each organization, between the two organizations, and in the external environment include, for example, felt vulnerability of the staff of the company that had been failing; the fact that the now shared executive director had already been running the more successful company; fear of change; resource differences between the two organizations; board dynamics in and between the two boards; and resource constraints caused by Congressional reluctance to fund transportation infrastructure at levels both organizations need. As Tamicka, who has been a consultant, alliance leader, and participant put it, "the facilitator has a fundamental responsibility to be aware of the conditions inside the room and outside the room."

A second way consultants bring this complex systems awareness to bear on conversations is by judiciously raising covert processes (Marshak, 2006) for group consideration, and by helping leaders navigate between natural self-interest and the social good that is the group's *raison d'être*. The consultant, said Tamicka, can help everyone "see threads of where they are in the final fabric of the alliance." These threads are woven by inviting "outliers to find where their point of view or concern" can be integrated into the whole, and helping those with power "be open to people with less power."

In terms of the administrative leadership function, frameworks and tools that include the strategic alliance continuum and eleven questions assist alliance partners in creating structures and making agreements that form the basis for alliance operations. In addition, in some cases consultants can provide or assist in setting up what the collective impact framework calls "backbone support" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 40). The backbone exists to "plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology, and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details…" (p. 40) and, "in the

best of circumstances…embody the principles of adaptive leadership…" (p. 40). While the collective impact framework claims the backbone must be "a separate organization and staff" (p. 40), my consulting experience, reading (Clarke, 2005; Goldkind & Pardasani, 2012; Prybil et al., 2014), and interview respondents' perspectives do not support the notion that the backbone needs to be a separate organization (or consulting firm.)

Consultants participate in the enabling leadership function by sharing their knowledge and facilitating effective use of frameworks and tools. Every leader I interviewed told me the alliance continuum and eleven questions were or would have been helpful to clarify alliance purposes, create understanding through a common language, and conceptualize choices for affiliation. Since alliance participants cannot be expected to have an organization development professional's knowledge of alliance forms, frameworks, stages, and social processes, consultants must contribute their know-how.

Conclusion

We live, as Jean Lipman-Blumen has written (1996, p. 15) in a connective era, in which connective leaders must "discern the connections between their own and others visions"; "negotiate, persuade, and integrate conflicting groups"; use their power to collectively "solve group problems"; and take action "that uses the self and others ethically as the means to mutually beneficial ends". As strategic alliances grow in significance, especially for solving challenges beyond the scope and ability of any one organization or sector, the importance of know-how about forming, organizing, and sustaining alliances also grows. In this chapter, I have explored several elements of this know-how. I have shown how a strategic alliance continuum and eleven questions help alliances clarify their purposes and solidify relationships. Leaders' reflections on their alliance experiences have allowed me to suggest leadership attributes that alliance partners will want to call on, in themselves and in others. Finally, I have explored how conceptualizing alliance leadership as a fluid system instead of as discrete groups of participants will facilitate alliance partners' ability to form and continuously adapt.

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Chapter 14
Complex Responsive Leading in Social Sector Organizations

John D. Vogelsang

In response to financial challenges and increased demands for their services, many social sector organizations are pursuing a variety of complex organizational constructs in order to sustain themselves and better serve their constituents. At the same time major changes are occurring in how we conceive of organizations and leading. As open systems became the alternative construct to hierarchic command and control organizations, many different structures are emerging, which are better understood as complex adaptive systems, discursive constructions, or complex responsive processes where change is less episodic and more continuous, and "leading is an emergent event in which knowledge, action preferences, and behavior change" (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seer, & Orton, 2006, p. 4).

After describing some of the current challenges facing social sector organizations, this chapter presents some of the innovative responses, the way those responses serve as examples of the changing organization and leading constructs, and what skills those in "leadership" positions need to function in this complex and every changing environment. The focus of this chapter is on the different mindset and orientation to organization development these new constructs offer.

Current Challenges

Many social sector organizations face significant financial challenges and increased donor demands for accountability while they struggle to provide the best services for their constituents. In the US, The Nonprofit Finance Fund's 2015 survey of nonprofits found that 53 % of the 5,451 respondents from 50 states and Puerto Rico

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said funders were interested in supporting program expansion and never or rarely interested in covering the full cost of programs. NFF also found:

- 76 % of respondents reported an increase in demand for services, the 7th straight year of increased demand.
- 52 % were unable to meet the demand in 2014.
- More than half of nonprofits (53 %) have 3 months or less cash-on-hand.
- 24 % ended their 2014 fiscal year with a deficit.
- Only 6 % can have an open dialogue with funders about developing reserves for operating needs, and only 4 % about developing reserves for long-term facility needs (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2015).

Funders are calling for greater accountability and performance measures (Aviv, 2004; Strom, 2008; Chan & Takage, 2011). However, tracking the relevant data and producing the required reports can strain the organizational capacity of small social sector organizations (Campbell, 2003; Gammal, 2006). Respondents to the NFF survey said that more than 70 % of their funders request impact or program metrics. While 81 % of the respondents agreed that the metrics were helpful for making decisions, 69 % reported that funders rarely or never cover the costs of impact measurement.

Emphasis on performance measures can also contribute to mission drift. "On the one hand, performance measures drive nonprofits to focus on outcomes, instead of just inputs and outputs. On the other hand, an obsession with particular measures can lead to mission drift and the cherry-picking of services and clients, such that performance looks best along just the dimensions measured" (Brooks, 2003, p. 504). In order to be accountable, social sector organizations focus on what can be measured and not on what contributes to long term change. There are limited methods and resources for collecting, storing, and analyzing the data required for performance measures (Carnochan, Samples, Myers, & Austin, 2014) and for measurement of long-term social change efforts (Taylor & Soal, 2003). For International NGOs (INGOs) those measurements may have little to do with what local partner NGOs want to achieve. INGOs often utilize rational and linear planning techniques to hold local partner NGOs accountable for achieving an idealized future that may have little to do with the needs of their constituents. Goals are imposed rather than developed through ongoing dialogue and participatory action research about what can help the local community in both the short-term and long-term. As Mowles, Stacey, and Griffin (2008) describe the situation, the working relationship of the INGOS and the local partner, "turns on the ability of the partnership to produce the kinds of results that may have been conceived in a different context at a different time separate from the local contingencies that INGO staff and local partners will encounter" (p. 807).

Responses

In response to the fiscal challenges, the demand for accountability, and unrealistic goals, many social sector organizations are experimenting with various income generating business approaches and complex organization designs (see Guo, 2004; Shoham, Ruvio, Vigoda-Gadot, & Schwabsky, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2007; Paton, Mordaunt, & Comforth, 2007; Golensky & Mulder, 2008; Miller, 2008; Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008). Some are becoming social enterprises whose primary purpose is to directly deal with a social need as either a social sector organization using earned income strategies to pursue its mission or a for-profit that pursues a social good using commercial strategies (Social Enterprise Alliance, https://www.se-alliance.org/).

In New York City, Housing Works provides integrated services for those living with HIV/AIDS. Besides receiving government grants, individual donations, and Medicaid reimbursement for its direct services, Housing Works includes networked but separate for-profit enterprises that help financially support the client services. Those enterprises include a bookstore café, upscale thrift shops around New York City, and a catering service. They not only provide income for Housing Works but some offer employment opportunities for clients (http://www.housingworks.org/).

In Los Angeles, Chrysalis offers a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless and low-income individuals by providing the resources and support needed to find and retain employment. In order to help individuals with the greatest barriers to employment, Chrysalis offers transitional jobs through social enterprise businesses that include a professional street-maintenance and cleaning service and a full-service staffing agency (https://www.se-alliance.org/).

Some large NGOs are changing hierarchies into heterarchies. Stephenson defines heterarchies as "an organizational form somewhere between hierarchy and network that provides horizontal links permitting different elements of an organization to cooperate while they individually optimize different success criteria" (2009, p. 6). Singh (2015) describes how an Indian organization (Myrada) that promotes the rights of women and the marginalized developed a heterarchy that is decentralized at all levels so that each unit can better serve its constituents, anticipate and plan for change, and respond to increasingly uncertain and complex external environments. This emerging, complex organizational design consists of loosely coupled units that are held together by a common organizational mission, vital information generation, a standardized accounting system across all its decentralized organizations, and diffusion of information through lateral communication processes and forums where staff from different projects meet frequently either at the headquarters or the project office. Those in leadership positions have to find ways to engage, collaborate, share a mission, and hold independent entities accountable for mutual agreements. The senior managers in Myrada have learned to be catalysts and mentors; to build personal relationships; and to support the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge throughout the organization. Each unit develops case studies and documents good practices that are shared in weekly and monthly meetings among the various units and with the main office.

A number of social sector organizations are forming trans-organizational systems, networks of various organizations from social and private sectors who work together to resolve a social issue. These networks include: joint ventures to develop new services; purchasing networks to obtain goods and services at reduced cost; joint research and development consortia; and lobbying associations (Anderson, 2015). The Nike Foundation's "Girl Effect Accelerator" (http://girleffectaccelerator. com), combats global poverty by leveraging the power of social entrepreneurs. Caterpillar's Foundation works through community based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Feeding America and the Global Poverty Project to eradicate poverty (Martin & Agostino, 2015).

Changing Organizational Constructs

Leading complex organizations requires a change in thinking about what are organizations and what is leading in organizations. Hierarchical and even organic open systems are constructs of their time. Given the increased complexity, it is more helpful to view organizations as complex adaptive systems (e.g., Anderson, 1999; Wheatley, 1999; Gharajedaghi, 1999; Pascale, 1999; Rouse, 2000; Boje & Khadija, 2005; Boje, 2006a, b; Burke, 2014), discursive constructions (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004; Grant & Hardy, 2004; Grant, Hardy, & Putnam, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012), and complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2001, 2003; Shaw, 2002; Suchman, 2002, 2005). All three of these interrelated yet different constructs are based upon the premise that organizations are constructed within our patterns of interaction, our discourses, and our responses to each other, our external stakeholders, and our environment.

Complex Adaptive Systems

According to biologist Kauffman (1995) all living systems survive not through reaching equilibrium, but by maintaining nonequilibrium–poised between chaos and rigidity. With nonequilibrium, system order arises by constant use of mass or energy or both to sustain the structure; there is a constant generation of order that self-organizes into often more complex forms. Rather than solely replicating themselves by manifesting innate codes, living systems both reconstruct and construct historic and new patterns in their interactions and thereby constantly create variety.

As Complex Adaptive Systems, organizations commonly include many of the following characteristics (Kauffman, 1995; Pascale, 1999; Anderson, 1999; Rouse, 2000; Stacey, 2001; Vogelsang, 2002, 2008 modified):

1. Agents interact with each other constructing and reconstructing assumptions, expectations, values, habits, power relations—who has power for what, boundaries—what is included/excluded that influences their relations at the local level. They are continually coming together to understand the world and each other, form judgments, fashion the future, sustain their relations, and make meaning of what is occurring.

2. As the agents interact locally, adapt to each other, and generate variety and complexity in their meaning making, they construct coherent and global patterns of interacting: rituals, structured relationships, communication systems, commonly held criteria for making decisions (operating values), a shared purpose, and organizations. This emergence of self-organization comes from a range of valuable innovations to unfortunate accidents. Misunderstandings and miscues offer variable ways of interacting and opportunities to reshape the assumptions and expectations that have become global patterns. Each contributes to the continual change going on in the organization. Each time the members solve problems individually and together they self-organize and release variety into the system. The system will wind down unless replenished with energy generated by internal and external relations and the subsequent innovations and mistakes.

3. Complex Adaptive Systems exist at the boundary regions near the edge of chaos where the frozen components of order begin to melt and the agents in the system coevolve in order to survive and optimize themselves in the changing environment. The agents often have conflicting goals that require them to adapt to each other's behavior. Complex Adaptive Systems are constantly creating variety and are at risk of death when they move toward equilibrium. One cannot predict which variation will have the greatest influence. Often, small variations can have huge effects and massive efforts may have little effect. Simple patterns can combine to generate great complexity and variety, and emerging complexity can create many possibilities and many possible futures. There are many small changes and infrequent, irregular massive changes.

4. In every interaction the agents enact historic patterns with slight or major variations. The agents are able to recognize the patterns, experience the difference, and choose to reconstruct them or construct new patterns. Thus there is consistency yet difference. The agents generate novelty without abandoning the best elements of the past. The agents can risk being flexible and open to learning in order to evolve while being consistent with purposes, values, rituals, and relations.

5. For a Complex Adaptive System to survive it must cultivate variety, but it is an illusion to think that one can direct the variations. One can only disturb the

system and be mindful of what is happening. At the same time one cannot be separate from the system—stand outside and influence its direction. One can only influence the rules, the relationships, the choices made as a participant in interactions while being influenced by others.

Organizations as Discursive Constructions

Social Construction, especially the work of Kenneth Gergen (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Gergen, 2000; Gergen, Gergen, & Barrett, 2004; Shotter, 2014), is a significant influence on the organization as discursive constructions approach. Gergen proposes four working assumptions:

1. The terms by which we understand our world and our self are neither required nor demanded by "what is there."
2. Our modes of description, explanation and/or representation are derived from relationships. What we take to be knowledge of the world grows from the relationships we have, are, and will be part of.
3. As we describe, explain or otherwise represent so do we fashion our future. To sustain our traditions means a continuous process of generating meaning together.
4. Reflecting upon our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being. (Gergen, 2000, pp. 47, 48, 49) Reprinted with permission of Kenneth Gergen, copyright 2000

Words, statements about "reality," social categories (male, female, differently gendered, race, etc.), and the organization where we work are social constructs—what we use to understand and give meaning to what we experience, not what is embodied in what is there before us. Instead of conceiving communication as a sender who puts words to an idea or feeling and then passes that information to a receiver, communication is more about a series of gestures and responses by which each of us together construct the meaning of what we are trying to communicate. Even what we consider "truth" is a collective exercise of constructing an ever emerging agreement. When it ceases to be such, it becomes ideology and a barrier to our continuing to construct "truth."

Barrett (2015) says of knowledge and action, knowledge "is an active social achievement. Knowledge is actively constructed as we relate to others through processes of social negotiation, shared discourse, and the creation of social structures. Knowledge and activity are thus intimately linked" (p. 70).

Fairhurst and Putnam (2004, p. 5) state that "scholars increasingly assert that organizations are discursive constructions because discourse is the very foundation upon which organizational life is built" (e.g., Boden, 1994; Deetz, 1992; Taylor & Cooren, 1997; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Boje, Oswick, & Ford, 2004). Boje et al. (2004) add, "From this point of view, what an organization is and everything that happens in and to it can be seen as a phenomenon in and of language" (p. 571).

If organizations are constructed through the variety of discourses, then if we change the conversation as well as how people are enacting and reconstructing the organization, we can change the organization itself. Marshak (2013, p. 49) states, "language constructs our world(s) rather than reports the objective facts about the world. Therefore, changing when, where, what, how, and which people talk about things—changing the conversation—will lead to organizational change."

Complex Responsive Processes

Ralph Stacey argues that using Complex Adaptive Systems theory to understand organizations can lead to using the metaphor of biological sciences to understand human interaction instead of developing an approach that is based upon observing human interactions and communication. It also reinforces, contrary to what some assert, a construct that "systems" exist outside of the interactions of people and that people exist outside of the systems they form. Individuals both construct and are constructed by the organization.

For Stacy, organizations "exist as an imaginative construct emerging in the relationships between the people who form and are formed by organization at the same time" (Stacey, 2005, p. 478). The "very constitution of organizations depends on its product of local knowledge through local language practices" (Stacy, 2001, p. 144). "Making sense of organizational life requires attending to the ordinary, everyday communicative interaction between people at their own local level of interactions in the living present" (Stacy, 2001, p. 163). Stacey and Griffin also say organizations are "processes of human relating, as the simultaneously cooperative–consensual and conflictual–competitive relating between people in which everything organizational happens. It is through these ordinary, everyday processes of relating that people in organizations cope with the complexity and uncertainty of organizational life…(and) construct their future together as the present" (2006, p. 4).

Complex Responsive Processes "encourages us to pay careful attention to patterns of communication and relationship—how we are present in each moment—and reminds us that most of what we take to be 'reality' is actually reified social process that is created anew in each moment." How the organization forms is influenced by the willingness and quality of how we respond, the degree of diversity, and ability to articulate novel associations, which "are themselves themes forming and formed by the organization's conversation about the nature of its own conversation and patterns of relating" (Suchman, 2002, pp. 9–10, 18).

As with Complex Adaptive Systems, we cannot control the responsive processes. Suchman (2002, pp. 9–10) asserts that control is an illusion. To embrace a complexity perspective, we need to:

- Focus less on asserting control and attend to improving relational processes;
- Reduce anxiety; and
- Foster greater receptivity and openness to change.

Yet, every communicative interaction involves power—setting boundaries about what is part of the conversation, who is included, and how we enter the conversation by positioning ourselves. Stacy says, when we enter "into relationships we constrain and are constrained by others and, of course, we also enable and are enabled by others. Power is this enabling–constraining relationship where the power balance is tilted in favor of some and against others depending on the relative need they have for each other" (Stacy & Griffin, 2006, pp. 5–6). As we form these groupings and figurations, we belong and form a "we" that is inseparable from our "I" identities.

In the communicative act we enact the learned systems of thought and language and the taken for granted social norms and assumptions through which we construct our understanding of phenomena, others, and ourselves; choose what is included in or excluded from a conversation; and position each other in variations of power relationships.

Winslade and Monk (2008) give an example of two power discourse positioning efforts working simultaneously and at odds with each other, producing competing narratives that would need to be "unpacked" to reach a shared meaning. A White woman reporter asks the African American boxer Mike Tyson:

Reporter: Can you tell me where all the rage within you comes from?
Tyson: You know, you're so white asking me a question like that.

The White reporter is possibly offering Tyson an opportunity to participate in a psychological discourse about his individual rage, which also may be shaped by racist assumptions about Black men being more subject to rage than Whites. Tyson offers a conversation about race and the reporter's presumed privileged assumptions about race. Rage becomes a response to historical racial oppression rather than an individual psychodynamic emotion (Winslade & Monk, 2008, pp. 40–42).

Continuous Change

Accepting organizations as social constructs being reconstructed with every interaction, also means accepting that change is continuous and improvisational with occasional episodic change projects.

When we think of change as episodic, we can imagine beginnings and endings, stages of dealing with the challenges, and ways to plan for the inevitable. We can deal with change by uniting the staff to turn everything around or slowly and incrementally modifying the situation. Change is thought of as going through Kurt Lewin's three-phase process of: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing (1947). When externally driven, the presenting crisis contributes to unfreezing current behavior

resulting in efforts to modify the situation and reach a new state of stability. When internally driven, someone in a leadership position in the organization is the prime mover, the change agent, who seeks points of leverage to unfreeze the situation and foster the change that is needed. There can be first order change—a difference in procedures and practices; and second order change—restructuring the organization and instituting new ways of operating.

Another approach to change sees variations and intensifications of differences that are continuously happening. Change is not a distinct event to be avoided, controlled, or managed. Change is ongoing and needs to be recognized in the constructing and reconstructing going on in local interactions. Unlike Senge's systems thinking approach (1990), the ability to comprehend and address the whole and to examine the interrelationship between the parts, Luoma says of change from a Complex Responsive Processes and a systems intelligence approach: "systems may change due to a small but significant change in one's behavior…change has less to do with the identify—design—implement cycle and more to do with something subtler. Indeed systems intelligence emphasizes that things could, virtually all the time, be different in most situations" (2007, pp. 290–291).

Staff members act and react to form modifications aligned with the purposes at hand. There are multiple modifications in work processes and social practices and numerous small accommodations that accumulate and amplify in noticeable differences. There are parallel organizations forming every time employees work together on a project, create informal working relationships, or help each other with problems. These organizations within the organization offer the opportunity to generate new approaches, new ways to relate, and new directions for the organization. There are continual modifications and possibilities for outright surprise. And there are continuous opportunities to identify the power positioning and privileged assumptions that may be impeding the change that needs to occur.

The continuous approach to change can follow a different three-phase process:

- Being mindful of the change already happening in order to identify and name it;
- Interpreting, reinterpreting, or reframing the change in order to relate it to current goals or to work with possibilities for future directions;
- Letting the change loose to continue reforming the agency. (Weick & Quinn, 1999)

To see change as continuous is to treat any "change effort" in an organization as an ongoing process that does not wait for a master plan. People are already in motion or can be encouraged to claim their movement. Change and leading can come from anywhere in the organization. People have set out and they can find their way together.

To see change as continuous is also to accept what Beinhocker (1999) recommends. Instead of choosing singularly focused strategies, people cultivate multiple strategies, many of which operate in parallel in order to encourage co-evolution and increase the resiliency of an organization. Those leading can be mindful of the continual changes happening in order to:

- Acknowledge the changes that are already happening and are deepening and extending current practices;
- Influence the changes that need some support and direction and have the potential to further improve current practices and/or create new practices; and
- Pursue the changes that are new possibilities: new practices or the seeds for future development

Complex Responsive Leading

Complex organizations and continuous change call for different approaches to leading. Re-imaging the theory that leading is not a person or a symbol but a process, Lichtenstein et al. (2006) say that "leadership emerges through dynamic interactions in which any particular person will participate as leader or a follower at different times and for different purposes… Individuals act as leaders in this dynamic when they mobilize people to seize new opportunities and tackle tough problems" (pp. 2–3, 4). Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) speak of leadership not as a trait or behavior but a relational process; "leadership is co-constructed in social interaction processes" (p. 1043).

For example, in a group discussing how to better serve the organization's constituents, leading can emerge when one member of the group identifies the group's patterns of describing the constituents' interests and helps the group counter and disturb those patterns with other words or images that generate new thinking and new approaches. Some group members may use the language of structural causes and argue that the most important focus for their work is to empower the constituents to join with them in bringing about institutional and systemic changes. An equal number of group members may use the language of direct services and argue that there is a need for more education, skill training, and health care. Others in the group lean one way or the other but worry most about getting the grants and community support that will allow them to continue as an organization. The meetings may regularly reach a road block, leaving the direct service providers to continue doing what they do and letting those dedicated to institutional and structural causes to continue working on policy, practice, and legislative changes. At one meeting, one of the members could say and demonstrate, "I am hearing this (a fist). I am not hearing this (an open hand). What will it take to move from a fist to an open hand that can engage our constituents?" Out of the subsequent conversation could emerge a commitment to partner with their constituents in a community centered research process to discover how the organization and the constituents could work toward mutually identified goals.

Quoting Stacey, Luoma argues that instead of doing what is expected of leaders —"making more plans and designing better systems and procedures in order to make things better"—leading is paying attention to the situations in which people are already creating and constructing new meaning (2007, p. 289).

In a heterarchy or networked organization, leading emerges as the managers from the decentralized offices engage the executives from the central office to tell their stories of needs met, new behaviors, new practices, and what is still to be accomplished; the executives in turn tell their stories of organization wide goals achieved and those yet to be achieved, and other offices' current and emerging practices. Together they question each other, name what may be missing, construct and articulate what they hear may mean and how it will help them construct future activities, interactions, and conversations.

Leading in complex organizations is recognizing that there are multiple realities within and among the various "offices": to name a few–the discourse constructed realities of client services, income generation, fund raising, accountability, external relations, social change, and how much each office is independent or interdependent. All these different realities "show-up" in each meeting of the "leaders" from the different offices. Every meeting is a process of entering the multiple realities that are influencing each other and changing as people speak. These realities can be acknowledged, recognized for their influence in the conversation, appreciated, explored, and guided, but not controlled.

Leading is paying attention to:

- Who interacts with whom and what information is shared.
- Who influences whom, who has the power to do what, what is the nature of the influence and its effects, and what organizations/individuals need to be considered when making decisions.
- Who is aligned with whom and what is the nature of the alignment.
- Who are not being heard; where are the pockets of creativity or resistance that may need to be brought into the conversation.
- Which members of the network are most connected with (will be affected by or can help effect) a particular change or outcome the organization wants to achieve. (Based on Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012)

Leading is also paying attention to and shifting the discourse patterns:

- Being aware of the prevailing narratives that are reinforced in day-to-day conversations throughout the organization.
- Identifying the discourses that are holding things the way they are in the organization and the alternative discourses that are supportive of change and of the organization's social change mission.
- Deciding how many levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, inter-group, total system, etc.) of the organization will be involved in order to shift social discourses that will give the maximum impact and speed in shaping a change effort.
- Using conversations as opportunities to construct new premises and possibilities.
- Introducing alternative narratives, language, metaphors, and images that can raise different perspectives of what can be done or what cannot be done in regard to change.

- Clarifying the form of organization power and political processes that can be used to deal with the counter discourses in order to shift perspectives and grow new behavior.
  (Based on Grant & Marshak, 2011, pp. 222–223)

Leading is being curious and living into the discomfort of self-organization. Stacey and Griffin add that leading involves: ability to articulate emerging themes, enhanced capacity for taking the attitude of others, greater spontaneity, greater capacity to live with anxiety, and enhanced capacity to think, feel, reflect, and imagine (2005, pp. 10–12).

Leading also includes co-creating a discourse that encourages people to reflect together to find meaning and coherence; to be present to one another and express themselves more authentically; to invite and attend to each other's gestures; and to enact individual differences (diversity) (Bushe & Marshak, 2014). In addition, leading encourages mutual accountability as Singh (2015) describes at Myrada: processes and forums where staff from different projects meet frequently either at the headquarters or the project office to discuss their projects and share case studies based upon their work.

What leadership education is needed for those who hold executive and management positions? Patton, Mordaunt, and Comforth said in 2007 what still holds. In order to prepare people to lead in this shifting social sector, leadership development and education could benefit from focusing on leadership in complex ambiguous situations with "a greater recognition of the limits of rational management techniques and an appreciation of 'post rational' approaches to management and organization using ideas such as complex adaptive systems, sense making, emergence, and managing paradoxes and dilemmas" (p. 160).

In order to continue serving their constituents, survive financial challenges, and work toward realistic goals, many social sector leaders and professionals are choosing to experiment with complex organizational constructs. These constructs challenge default hierarchical command and control leadership structures and call for new thinking and new leading. Complex Adaptive Systems, Discursive Constructions, and Complex Responsive Processes are post rational approaches that provide innovative ways to transform what has been considered the norm for organizations in order for staff to continue constructing organizations that are responsive to their social change aspirations and their constituents' interests.

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<div align="right">

Part V
Measuring Success

</div>

Introduction

> The measurement of good policy is the well-being of the community. I saw the human faces of failed policies, and they were not smiling.
>
> <div align="right">—Raul Ruiz</div>

Measuring success encompasses measuring various degrees of progress that social sector organizations (SSOs) make towards achieving their overall mission through social performance measurement. This social performance measurement work over the last four decades led to the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) function in social sector organizations (SSOs). The M&E function has become pretty well established and it is now common to find M&E units in a variety of SSOs. In order to demonstrate social performance, most M&E work is built around the two broad purposes: organizational accountability and learning. The purpose of accountability is to demonstrate progress towards organizational and programmatic commitments and is primarily intended to meet demands from external stakeholders (donors, government bodies, and other key constituents). Learning is intended to inform how SSOs current and future actions could be improved. A good amount of progress has been made in strengthening the accountability side of this work, especially financial and activity accountability to funders. However, more work is needed to strengthen social performance measurement to meet higher-level accountability and learning needs.

The first goal of this introduction is to outline the overall importance, methods, challenges, and broad approaches in relation to measuring success in the social sector. The second goal is to introduce the chapter by George Mitchell, which provides an extensive review of approaches, issues, and a framework to strengthen social performance measurement in SSOs.

Why is Measuring Social Performance Important?

Early developments in social performance measurement recognized the importance of demonstrating program impact by focusing on its efficiency and effectiveness. For example, Zappalà and Lyons (2009) observed, "The aim of social program evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of a program (achievement of objectives over inputs), as well as its efficiency (outputs over inputs)" (p. 6). There have been multiple calls in recent years emphasizing the importance of improvement in social performance measurement (Kleszczowski, 2015). Cordery and Sinclair (2013) argue "…the need remains for TSOs (Third Sector Organizations) to show the difference they make in their communities, to be clear about the outcomes they are working towards, and to use performance frameworks to utilize scarce resources effectively" (p. 5). This observation eloquently brings out a number of reasons, which highlight the importance of social performance measurement. First and foremost, it is important to demonstrate what social sector organizations deliver to their key constituents as stated in their organization's mission and programmatic goals. Second, it emphasizes the importance of being clear and transparent in terms of the specific outcomes towards the SSOs broad goals and missions. Finally, the observation about effectiveness indicates the importance of being accountable with regards to the use of scarce resources.

What Methods are Used to Measure Social Performance?

A number of social performance methods have emerged over the last several years and are widely used internationally. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), along with a few other international donors, popularized the use of logical framework, or "logframe," which continues to be the foundation for many M&E initiatives. A logframe articulates a program's interventions (inputs and activities), outputs, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate impact. At a basic level, a logframe is a planning tool and not an M&E tool. Indicators within it may be used to guide the type and frequency of data collection needed to track an initiative's progress towards its stated goals. It also includes a list of indicators and means of verification to determine progress in relation to the interventions, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

In recent years attention has been given to approaches such as Social Return on Investment (SROI). This is not an established approach and there is some experimentation around it by a few organizations.

A number of methodologies fall between the established approaches such as logframes and newer initiatives like SROI. These include results frameworks, theory of change, participatory approaches, developmental evaluations, process tracing, etc. Ebrahim and Rangan (2010) offer a useful synthesis of social performance measurement approaches that have been prevalent in the social sector. Their work provides a broad conceptual map of social sector performance measurement and some practical ways to inform practice. They categorized the social performance methods in six groups. Those categories along with some brief examples of approaches are listed below. For a full description of these categories and additional examples see Ebrahim and Rangan (2010).

1. Logic Models—USAID's Logic Models
2. Participatory Approaches—Institute of Development Studies' Participatory Rural Appraisal
3. Strategic Measurement—New Profit Inc.'s Balanced Scorecard
4. Experimental Methods—MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Lab's Randomized Control Trials (RCT's)
5. Expected Return—REDF's Social Return on Investment (SROI)
6. Integrative Approaches—ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS)

What are the Challenges Faced in Some Performance Measurement?

Social sector organizations face a variety of challenges in designing and implementing effective social performance measurement approaches and methods. These challenges include: difficulty in identifying what to measure in terms of predicting change, identifying the right indicators for that change, and then using rigorous methods to collect data on the indicators; difficulty in attributing success (where complex multi-organizational efforts lead to change); expenses associated with social performance measurement; and staff capacity to carry out the necessary responsibilities effectively (Cordery & Sinclair, 2013). Difficulty in collecting longitudinal data (necessary to demonstrate ultimate impact) and use of proxy measures that are dependent on social research (Zappalà & Lyons, 2009) pose additional challenges to social performance measurement.

What are Some Broad Approaches to Strengthen Social Performance Measurement?

While the answer to this question is not straightforward, the social sector is moving in the right direction in this regard. We believe the chapter included in this section provides a very good example of an integrated approach towards social performance measurement. Before introducing the chapter, we briefly share a framework developed by Ebrahim and Rangan (2010), which provides conceptual and practical guidance for social performance measurement. Drawing upon literatures from philanthropy, nonprofit management, and international development, they provide a framework called "The Contingency Framework" as a way to navigate through the complex maze of social sector performance measurement. Their central proposal is that the decision about what to measure should be determined by the nature of a SSO's work. The nature of work in turn is determined by the juxtaposition of an organization's theory of change and operational complexity. For example, organizations active in the relief sector may have complex operations but a relatively simple or focused theory of change. On the other hand, organizations active in the advocacy and campaigning arenas may have complex theories of change and comparatively less complex operations. According to the contingency framework, it may make sense for advocacy organizations to focus on intermediate outcomes or influence on policy changes instead of long-term impacts as they measure their performance (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2010). Basically, this framework invites practitioners to carefully consider the most critical elements their social performance

measurement should focus on and not every organization should feel compelled to measure impact to demonstrate success.

George Mitchell's Chap. 15, "Accounting for Outcomes: Monitoring and Evaluation in Transnational NGOs Sector," outlines a measurement system based on principles of outcome accountability. With a focus on transnational NGOs, Mitchell begins his chapter by describing some of the key reasons for measuring SSOs performance and then goes on to outline the fundamentals of monitoring and evaluation. These sections extend some of the introductory information about social performance measurement covered above. Mitchell then goes on to describe major evaluation designs, which includes a discussion on randomized controlled trials—a popular social performance measurement approach. We believe this section provides a very helpful description of the evaluation designs, identifying their key characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses.

An important contribution of Mitchell's chapter is the introduction to and the description of The Outcome Accountability Framework. As a precursor to the framework description, he identifies some of the major issues, which lead to lack of integration in measuring organization wide effectiveness in SSOs. The proposed outcome accountability framework is an integrated social performance measurement approach and this chapter describes its various components and overall guidelines needed to implement it. Mitchell closes his chapter with a synthesis of some major controversies in the monitoring and evaluation arena and some ways to strengthen social performance measurement.

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Chapter 15
Accounting for Outcomes: Monitoring and Evaluation in the Transnational NGO Sector

George E. Mitchell

> Success depends on knowing what works.
> —Bill Gates, Co-Chair
> Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Like other social sector organizations, transnational NGOs exist to create social and environmental change. The nature of the changes that NGOs seek to achieve vary widely from temporary emergency relief to long-term political empowerment, but all NGOs aim to make some kind of difference in the world through their programs. Since achieving meaningful impact is the goal and raison d'être of every NGO and every NGO program, it stands to reason that an NGO requires a strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to understand the progress it is making (or not making) toward its mission.

This chapter provides a conceptual introduction and overview of M&E design and practice in the transnational NGO sector and offers a managerial framework for NGO performance measurement. The chapter is organized as follows. The next section considers motivations for undertaking M&E, and the section after that provides an introduction and overview of key terms, concepts, and principles of M&E. The subsequent section continues this discussion through the introduction of several evaluation designs that can be used to measure programmatic impact. This is followed by a section outlining a framework that integrates program evaluation with agency level performance management. The remaining sections discuss controversies in M&E, offer recommendations for strengthening M&E within social sector organizations, and finally provide a brief conclusion.

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Why Undertake M&E?

Monitoring and evaluation within transnational NGOs and other social sector organizations may be animated by a variety of factors, and the specific motivations for undertaking M&E in a given instance often influences the nature and quality of the resulting evaluation. Perhaps most commonly evaluations in the social sector are undertaken for funder compliance (Campbell, Lambright, & Bronstein, 2012; Mitchell, 2014b). However, evaluations undertaken for compliance purposes tend to be ornamental, ceremonial, and perfunctory, and rarely produce meaningful evidence of program effectiveness that is useful to the NGO internally (Carman, 2011; Gandia, 2011; Mitchell, 2014b; Mitchell & Berlan, 2016). Worse, organizations performing compliance-oriented evaluations for multiple funders may find that different funders require information to be gathered and presented differently, requiring a multiplicity of overlapping data systems that can create significant burdens for staff and management. Since these systems are typically put in place at the request of donors, they seldom correspond with the informational needs of the NGO. It is then perhaps no surprise that some NGO practitioners perceive evaluations more as a means of donor control that consumes scarce time and resources, rather than a mission critical activity that promotes genuine learning and effectiveness (Gordillo & Andersson, 2004).

Internally, when M&E activity within NGOs is not directly the result of funder mandates it may be undertaken as part of a communications or marketing strategy to publicize organizational success. Needless to say this type of activity does not constitute M&E since the evaluation process is tendentious and the results are therefore biased. Nevertheless, these kinds of success story narratives often fill the pages of annual reports and web pages under the banner of "impact." While such information may certainly be valuable to organizations and their stakeholders for reputational and fundraising purposes, this type of communication is more properly regarded as marketing activity and should not be confused with impact evaluation.

NGO practitioners most commonly report that their organizations undertake M&E to understand and improve the effectiveness of their programs (Mitchell, 2014b). Research finds that organizations that prioritize or require evaluation activities and that exhibit a favorable culture toward evaluation tend to produce higher quality, more methodologically rigorous evaluations (Mitchell & Berlan, 2016). Organizational culture and the presence of a "culture of analysis" appear to be major drivers of quality M&E in the social sector (Houchin & Nicholson, 2002; Poole, Davis, Reisman, & Nelson, 2001), along with commitment at the top, management support (Plantz, Greenway, & Hendricks, 1997; Poole et al., 2001), and the involvement of diverse stakeholders (Poole et al., 2001). Research even suggests that quality program evaluation may be driven more by internal stakeholder buy-in than by external resource availability or requirements (MacIndoe & Barman, 2012; Mitchell & Berlan, 2016).

Monitoring and evaluation is useful not only for internal learning, but when evaluations are transparent they can be useful for sectoral learning as well. NGOs can look to the evaluations from their peers to learn more about what works and

what does not, to replicate success and to avoid having to reinvent the wheel, or to avoid unwittingly reproducing flawed programs.

Perhaps most importantly, practitioners in the social sector may believe that they have a moral obligation to know how their organizations' programs are impacting their intended beneficiaries, especially since NGOs so often intervene in the lives of the most vulnerable people in society. NGO programs are specifically designed to create change, but there is no guarantee that the actual change achieved will be positive. Without rigorous M&E, practitioners have no credible empirical basis for assuming that their organizations' programs are causing a positive effect. In lieu of meaningful evaluation activities, an organization's programs could—for all anyone knows—be making people significantly worse off, not better off. And not only might a program have a negative effect or no effect at all, but every dollar spent on an ineffective program is a dollar that is not available to support a proven program that is effective. This "tragedy of ignorance" is a critical, mission-centric argument in favor of rigorous evaluation in the social sector. Good intentions are just not enough, especially when the livelihoods of vulnerable people are materially at risk. An NGO that does not systematically and rigorously evaluate its programs cannot possibly know whether its programs are inefficient, ineffective, or harmful. Above all else, practitioners in social sector organizations may have a moral obligation and ethical imperative to know how their work is affecting their intended beneficiaries. The means by which this is accomplished is through M&E.

Fundamentals of M&E

Monitoring and evaluation are two separate but related categories. Monitoring refers to the process of gathering and interpreting evidence to continually revaluate a program's assumptions and to ensure that a program is being implemented appropriately. Monitoring activities may include tracking inputs such as staff time and budgets, counting outputs such as the number of goods distributed, hours of services provided, or number of people reached, and continually observing the context in which the program is taking place for pertinent changes in the environment, changes among the intended beneficiaries, and deviations from prior assumptions that may impact program effectiveness. These kinds of monitoring activities are critical for ensuring that a program is implemented correctly and appropriately reacts to external feedback. Most NGOs conduct ongoing monitoring activities, tracking their finances, counting or estimating how many people they reach, and collecting data over time measuring various characteristics of their intended beneficiaries, but these kinds of activities do not constitute evaluation.

Evaluation, as the term is used here, refers to the process of determining the difference that a program has made in the world relative to what would have happened in the absence of the program. This definition of evaluation may be more specifically labeled *impact evaluation*. Although most social sector organizations are rhetorically committed to impact evaluation in name, examples of evaluations in

the social sector that can be properly labeled impact evaluations remain relatively rare. More commonly, communications referred to as impact evaluations are actually monitoring reports or marketing materials.

Additionally, M&E is often described as being either formative or summative in nature. *Formative* M&E generally takes place before or during the early stages of a program with the intention of refining and improving the program technology. *Summative* M&E typically takes place at the end of a program with the intention of determining what impact the program has caused. Monitoring activity tends to be formative, while evaluation activity tends to be summative, but this need not necessarily be the case.

In response to criticisms that summative impact evaluations sometimes treat programs as a "black box," failing to consider contextual factors that may condition program effectiveness, heterogeneity among intended beneficiaries, and intermediate causal linkages, many evaluators have adopted the language of theory based evaluation (White, 2009). *Theory based evaluation* is a holistic process of assessment that examines the context, assumptions, and logic of a program in addition to determining whether the program achieved something that would not have been achieved in its absence. This approach to M&E relies both on qualitative techniques focusing on words, such as interpreting conversations from interviews and focus groups, and quantitative techniques focusing on numbers, such as addition, subtraction, and regression analysis. Since theory based evaluation involves both qualitative and quantitative techniques, it may be referred to as a mixed-method approach.

Theory based evaluation is guided by a program's *logic model*, which is a graphical illustration of the causal logic of a program depicting how its inputs, activities, and outputs are expected to generate short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes or impacts. Typically, logic models are tables that contain a column for each of these headings from left to right, while the rows represent chains of causality. Items are linked to other items in adjacent columns with causal arrows (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2010). For example, money and staff time (inputs) might enable an NGO to purchase mosquito nets (activity), which causes the NGO to distribute those nets (output), which causes the intended beneficiaries to install the nets, which leads them to sleep under the nets, which causes them to have a reduced incidence of malaria (outcomes). Logic models are used extensively for program design, building consensus over goals and strategies among stakeholders, communicating program logic to internal and external audiences, and in the design and evaluation of programs.

Logic modelling provides stakeholders with an excellent opportunity to clearly define the goals of a program in ways that are observable and therefore measurable. Many NGO programs seek to achieve abstract goals related to outcomes such as empowerment and well-being, and some practitioners may believe that such abstract programmatic goals are unmeasurable, and that in consequence, rigorous methods of program evaluation are inappropriate. However, a program that truly makes no observable (measurable) difference in the world is necessarily—by definition—not accomplishing anything. But rather than this, it is more likely that the goals of the program simply require a more complex measurement strategy.

Abstract goals are often measured using composite variables. A *composite variable* measures a single latent or unobserved phenomenon based on multiple manifest or observed indicators. For example, many NGOs seek to empower their beneficiaries, but what does this mean? How do program administrators know empowerment when they see it? Every NGO might have a slightly different way of conceptualizing empowerment, but for a particular organization it might involve political, economic, and social dimensions. For each dimension an evaluator could develop a few questions that respondents could answer with reference to an ordinal scale (e.g., from never to always, from low to high, from 1 to 10, etc.) and then the responses could be transformed into a single numerical value measuring empowerment by, for instance, calculating the mean. How this transformation takes place can be as simple or as complex as stakeholders desire, but the logic of the process of measuring abstract variables is, at least in principle, relatively straightforward. Additional questions to consider include whether to weight the underlying dimensions differently and whether to use more sophisticated methods to construct and validate the composite variable such as factor analysis and structural equation modelling. These methods are well-documented and can be implemented in most modern statistical analysis software packages, although practitioners unfamiliar with these more advanced techniques may need assistance. This notwithstanding, creating a simple composite measure based on a mean of numerical scores can easily be performed in a basic spreadsheet application. For qualitative manifest indicators that are not scalar but binary, evaluators can simply assign a value of zero to indicate the absence of something and a value of one to indicate its presence. Evaluators should also be mindful that their indicators all move in the same direction and that if they measure different manifest indicators on different scales that they should convert them to the same scale prior to averaging. Variables can be converted to the same zero-to-one scale by dividing each by its maximum value.

Occasionally, practitioners may find it difficult to reach consensus on a measurement strategy as different stakeholders may conceptualize the same goal very differently. *Goal ambiguity*, or the lack of clarity and precision over the nature and measurement of goals, sometimes emerges as a means of sidestepping disagreements. However, goal ambiguity should be avoided because it provides unclear direction for program administrators who will likely fall victim to contradictory expectations from multiple stakeholders and consequently become confused about what precisely a program is supposed to be achieving. Programs with ambiguous goals are therefore unlikely to be very effective, partly because of the confusion that goal ambiguity creates in program design and implementation, and partly because programs with ambiguous goals are so difficult to manage and evaluate.

Another difficulty evaluators may confront in the process of developing measures, particularly for abstract goals, is goal displacement or "teaching to the test." *Goal displacement* occurs when the original goals of a program are overtaken by ulterior motives, usually a desire to conform to performance expectations. Practitioners worry that if program goals are measured then the organization will work toward producing desirable measures at the expense of genuinely achieving the intended goals. This criticism is often levied as an argument against evaluation

in general, but it is more properly a problem of poor measurement. If a test is well-designed, then teaching to it should accomplish the relevant goal. Since measures create accountability, logic modeling and measurement development can be very controversial within organizations and can generate much criticism, but perhaps no other process is more critical to the success of a program than clearly defining its goals and measures. To mitigate the risks, practitioners should take care to solicit input widely to secure buy-in from the relevant stakeholders and to carefully consider the incentive systems created through the use of specific measures.

The language of logic modeling and M&E is sometimes confusing, with different observers often using the same words to mean different things. Here, the term input refers to resources that are expended for a program, outputs are numerable products or services produced by an organization, activities are the processes that transform inputs into outputs, and outcomes are characteristics of intended beneficiaries. Some students and practitioners of evaluation find it hard to differentiate between outputs and outcomes. Outputs are goods and services produced by an organization's program, while outcomes are qualities of intended beneficiaries. For example, the number of mosquito nets distributed is an output because it is a good or service directly provided by the program, while a reduction in the incidence of malaria is an outcome because it is an attribute of the intended beneficiaries. The terms *outcomes* and *impacts* are often used interchangeably among many students and practitioners, but here the term impact is specifically reserved to describe changes in the world that would not have happened in the absence of a specific program and are causally attributable to that specific program. The term outcomes, by contrast, does not imply causal attribution.

The term program *impact* is widely deployed in the discourse of the NGO community and social sector more generally, but usually when a practitioner discusses program impact they are referring to outcomes, not impact. Impact evaluation rests on at least two fundamental principles, the first of which is *causal attribution*. Causal attribution in the present context means that an observed change in the world is the result of a specific program and not an incidental result of something else or a result that would have occurred even in the absence of the program. For example, if an NGO only monitored the incidence of malaria in a community throughout the course of its program it might observe a decrease in the number of malaria cases per thousand residents over time. However, the NGO would not know whether this decrease was due to its mosquito net program, a dry season that temporarily reduced the mosquito population, a government insecticide initiative, the incidental mitigation of other disease vectors, or any other number of alternative explanations for the observed reduction in the incidence of malaria. An impact evaluation therefore must rule out these alternative explanations to specifically identify the program as the cause of the decrease. When an impact evaluation has successfully ruled out all other reasonable and plausible alternative explanations for an observed change in the world, it is then, and only then, safe to assume that the change must have been the result of the program. In practice, it is seldom (and to many philosophers of science, perhaps never) possible to completely rule out

every possible alternative explanation for an observed change other than the program. However, a strong impact evaluation rules out the most plausible alternative explanations the best it can and is honest and transparent in discussing the plausibility of those that remain.

There are many ways to rule out alternative explanations and to establish causal attribution so that an NGO can reasonably claim that its programs have achieved impact. The best way to do this, hypothetically, would be to create parallel Earth identical to our Earth in every respect except that the program is implemented in one version but not in the other. By comparing the state of the world on our Earth with the state of the world on the parallel Earth, the evaluator could precisely determine the impact of the program with complete certainty. Specifically, any difference whatsoever between the Earth with the program and the Earth without the program must be due to the program. There is no other possible alternative explanation. Causal attribution is clear since all possible rival explanations are completely ruled out. Obviously program evaluators cannot create perfectly parallel worlds, but it is well within the power of practitioners to create or identify counterfactual conditions that serve the same purpose.

In the language of program evaluation, the circumstances that we observe in the presence of the program constitute the *factual condition*. These circumstances are commonly observed by program administrators and are often relatively easy to monitor. For example, an NGO with an anti-malaria program may be able to monitor the incidence of malaria by gathering statistics from local clinics and hospitals. Many, if not most NGOs would stop there. So what if, over the course of the program, the incidence of malaria increases. Does the NGO conclude that the program was counterproductive? If the incidence decreases, does the NGO conclude the decrease was a result of its program? The problem is that the NGO does not know what would have happened in the absence of the program, or the *counterfactual condition*. Since program impact is the difference between what happened in the presence of the program—the factual condition—and what would have happened in the absence of the program—the counterfactual condition—it is impossible to determine program impact without knowledge of both conditions. Unfortunately, this is where an evaluator may encounter the greatest difficulties, because while the factual condition may be obvious, the counterfactual condition is usually more difficult to ascertain.

The type of reasoning that involves examining the difference between a factual condition and a counterfactual condition is called *counterfactual analysis*. Impact evaluation is essentially an exercise in counterfactual analysis. Observe what happened in the presence of the program, speculate about what would have happened in the absence of the program, and the difference is program impact. However, it is not quite that easy. An ideal counterfactual condition is absolutely identical to the factual condition except for one and only one difference, the presence of the program. While it may not be possible to observe parallel worlds, evaluators have many powerful tools at their disposal to create, or at least to observe, reasonably similar counterfactual conditions.

The gold standard in impact evaluation is the randomized controlled trial (RCT), but this evaluation design is by no means the only acceptable method of impact evaluation. Any evaluation that systematically compares a factual condition to a counterfactual condition is capable, at least in principle, of determining program impact. However, different evaluation designs vary greatly according to their degree of quality or internal validity. An evaluation exhibits *internal validity* to the extent that it rules out alternative explanations and establishes causal attribution. The hypothetical parallel worlds example exhibits perfect internal validity because there are no alternative explanations and causal attribution is certain, but this circumstance can never arise in practice, and even RCTs are vulnerable to serious threats to validity. A *threat to validity* is any alternative explanation that impedes the evaluator's ability to establish causal attribution. Another type of validity is *external validity*. External validity is the extent to which a program can reliably produce the same results in other contexts. An evaluation that exhibits external validity can be replicated in other places by other NGOs and still generate the same results. The results are sometimes said to be generalizable or to have a high degree of generalizability. RCTs are frequently criticized for lacking external validity, even though they may enjoy strong internal validity, because they are often conducted under very contrived circumstances in laboratories and classrooms that do not mimic real world circumstances. Potential beneficiaries may behave very differently in a highly controlled experimental setting than they would in their natural environments. There are far too many potential threats to validity to comprehensively describe here, but a few are particularly common and will be discussed in the following section.

Impact evaluations that systematically compare a factual condition to a counterfactual condition can be categorized as either *experimental* or *quasi-experimental*. For many students and practitioners, the term experimental may seem inappropriate in the context of program evaluation because most NGO practitioners probably do not see their organizations' programs as experiments. Technically, however, every program intervention is an experiment because, absent a crystal ball that perfectly foresees the future, the outcome of every program intervention is necessarily unknown at the start. Only after many experiments have been conducted, the results have been confirmed repeatedly under many different conditions, and practitioners have come to fully understand the causal mechanisms that explain why a program produces specific results, do practitioners have an empirical basis for assuming that a specific intervention will yield a specific result without the need for continuous impact evaluation. But absent this extraordinary state of accumulated knowledge, every program intervention is an experiment.

In an experimental impact evaluation, the evaluator has control over who (or what) receives the program and who (or what) does not receive the program, and deliberately seeks to create factual and counterfactual conditions that are statistically equivalent at the beginning of the program. The process of deciding who receives the program and who does not is generally referred to as the assignment of subjects to conditions. In an experimental impact evaluation, the program administrator randomly assigns subjects (potential beneficiaries) to either the factual condition (the treatment group) or to the counterfactual condition (the control group). In everyday speech we may use the word

"random" to refer to something that is arbitrary or haphazard, with little thought put into it. However, in program evaluation random assignment refers to a very specific method of allocation in which each potential program beneficiary has an exactly equal probability of receiving the program treatment. In addition to being a fair method of allocation when resources are limited, random assignment is tremendously beneficial in impact evaluation because when administered properly it creates a factual condition and a counterfactual condition that are, on average, statistically equivalent. In other words, the random assignment procedure creates a set of parallel circumstances that are virtually identical in every respect except for the presence of the program. Random assignment thus rules out virtually all pertinent alternative explanations and enables causal attribution, much like in the hypothetical parallel world example. These beneficial qualities of random assignment are among the most well-established facts in statistics and remain essential to the progress of modern science.

There are many other ways that an evaluator or program administrator can determine who receives a program and who does not. Many practitioners desire to allocate program services based on beneficiary need, for instance. In the case in which an evaluator wishes to assign subjects to conditions based on need, he or she may be able to implement a regression discontinuity design (RDD). In RDDs the evaluator obtains a measure of beneficiary need for each potential program recipient and then chooses a threshold value to differentiate between those who are to receive the program and those who are not to receive it. Beneficiaries above the threshold are assigned to the factual condition to receive the program treatment, while those below it do not receive the program treatment. This design can produce unbiased estimates of program impact when ethical considerations prevent random assignment, but requires considerable statistical expertise to implement correctly. Because this design does not rely on random assignment, the RDD is considered a quasi-experimental design. Any impact evaluation design in which the evaluator or program administrator does not randomly assign subjects to conditions is generally called a quasi-experimental impact evaluation. In quasi-experimental research the control group is sometimes called a comparison group because it is not statistically equivalent to the treatment group and does not simultaneously control for all pertinent alternative explanations. Most impact evaluations in the NGO sector are quasi-experimental.

Evaluation Designs

The experimental RCT, in which subjects are randomly assigned to conditions, is far simpler than quasi-experimental designs such as the RDD, and illustrates many important principles of impact evaluation. Even practitioners who never intend to conduct an RCT will benefit greatly from understanding its underlying logic. This section introduces the RCT as a reference point for disussing important evaluation concepts and then outlines several other useful program evaluation designs.

The Randomized Controlled Trial

In an RCT, the evaluator or program administrator randomly assigns subjects to either the factual or the counterfactual condition. The process of randomization ensures that the two groups are statistically equivalent prior to the start of the program so that any differences between the two groups after the program must be due to the presence of the program in the factual condition. Most other assignment procedures introduce selection bias. *Selection bias* occurs when the group receiving the program treatment and the group not receiving the program treatment are statistically nonequivalent at the beginning of the program as a result of the assignment procedure. For example, a program administrator may wish to admit every eligible applicant to a program, deliver the program to those eligible applicants, and then subsequently compare those who received the program with another group of people who did not receive the program. However, this evaluation design would be biased. The subjects who applied to receive the program treatment exhibited some degree of motivation that systematically distinguishes them from those who did not apply. This means that any observed difference between the two groups at the end of the program could be due to this difference in motivation between the two groups rather than to the program itself. More motivated participants may be more likely to improve simply because of their higher motivation, regardless of receiving any program. The presence of this alternative explanation inhibits the evaluator's ability to attribute any observed impact specifically to the program. With only a few exceptions (such as the RDD), virtually any nonrandom assignment of subjects to conditions will introduce selection bias and therefore reduce the internal validity of the evaluation. Assigning subjects to receive the program treatment on the basis of convenience, friendliness, likelihood of success, and so on, fundamentally damages the integrity of the evaluation. To avoid selection bias, administrators should obtain their treatment and control groups from the same eligible population through random assignment.

The reason why RCTs are considered to be the gold standard in program evaluation is because they eliminate selection bias, ensure group equivalence, and enable causal attribution better than any other available method. A common criticism of RCTs is that they require withholding a program treatment to the control group, at least for a period of time. However, program administrators can certainly provide the program treatment to the control group after the evaluation is finished, and since many NGOs lack the ability to serve all their potential beneficiaries simultaneously, a program can be rolled out across two or more cohorts. In this evaluation design the control group from the first cohort receives the program treatment during the second round. Everyone still receives the program, but the original control group simply receives it at a later time and only after it is known to work.

RCTs remain vulnerable to many other threats to validity. One important threat comes from the contamination of the control group due to spillover effects. Generally, if a program is beneficial, administrators may see spillover effects as a very positive development, as the benefits brought about by the program multiply

throughout a population. Unfortunately, if these effects materialize within the control group prior to the end of the evaluation the counterfactual condition will have become contaminated. *Contamination* occurs when the members of the control group indirectly receive the benefits of the program. If a control group became completely contaminated, for example, then there would be no difference between the treatment and control groups, leading the evaluator to observe an impact of zero and to incorrectly conclude that the program was ineffective.

Other *confounding factors*, or extraneous factors that introduce alternative explanations and inhibit internal validity, can affect an evaluator's ability to establish causal attribution, even in an RCT. People often behave differently when they know they are being observed, and the mere knowledge that beneficiaries are receiving a program treatment may introduce bias. The *Hawthorne effect* occurs when subjects adjust their behavior in response to being observed. This will bias an evaluation when those receiving the program treatment are observed more often or differently than those in the control group.

Another important problem that can arise in program evaluation is *attrition*. Attrition occurs when subjects fail to remain for the duration of a program. If attrition is random and affects both the treatment and control groups similarly, it will not necessarily introduce bias, but will make it more difficult to measure program impact with high statistical confidence. *Differential attrition* will introduce bias, however, as subjects may drop out of either the treatment or control groups for different reasons. For example, if beneficiaries in the treatment group fall out of contact as soon as they improve, leaving only those who have not experienced an improvement to remain, while the control group experiences no attrition, the evaluator's estimate of program impact will be too low.

In an RCT program impact can be formally measured by subtracting the average outcome measure of the control group from the average outcome measure of the treatment group. Statistical significance can be determined with an unpaired t-test, and through many other techniques.

Comparison Group Designs

When administrators or evaluators do not have control over the assignment of subjects to conditions, they may choose to implement a comparison group design. In a comparison group design, the beneficiaries who receive the program treatment are compared to a separate group of individuals who could have received the treatment but did not. At the conclusion of the program, the difference between the two groups is interpreted to be the program's impact. There are many methods for identifying an appropriate comparison group to act as a counterfactual through statistical matching procedures, but these are beyond the scope of this chapter. The general objective in the selection of a comparison group is to identify a group of individuals as similar as possible to those who received the program. Unfortunately, since the individuals in the comparison group will almost certainly differ from those

in the program treatment group in relevant ways, comparison groups will always be vulnerable to additional threats to internal validity. Individuals in a comparison group did not volunteer to take part in the program, for example, and may be less motivated, introducing selection bias. Members of the comparison group may be from another village or city, meaning that any differences observed between the treatment group and comparison group could be due to location rather than to the program.

Comparison group designs can be useful for dealing with other problems related to internal validity, however. For example, if subjects are all drawn from a small population contamination may be likely between those who are receiving the program treatment and those who are not. Choosing a comparison group from another locality may help to minimize the risk of contamination by geographically separating those who receive the program from those who do not.

Generally, comparison group designs are vulnerable to the same threats that may affect RCTs, plus additional threats to internal validity due to group nonequivalence and the presence of additional alternative explanations. In many cases it may be possible to control for these additional threats to validity with statistical procedures. To control for a threat to validity means to remove its biasing effect from the estimate of program impact. The logic is relatively straightforward, but implementation can quickly become complex, especially if a design is vulnerable to multiple alternative explanations. A short example will illustrate the logic. Suppose an NGO administered a program treatment to one village and chose another village to act as a comparison group. The two villages are very similar in all relevant respects, except that residents of the comparison village tend to be older. To account for the confounding effect of age, the evaluator needs to compare young people in the treatment village to young people in the comparison village, middle-aged to middle-aged, and old to old. If people in the treatment village are systematically better off than people of the same age in the comparison group, then the program has had a positive effect, controlling for age. If there are many confounding variables regression analysis can be used to control for multiple alternative explanations simultaneously. There are extensive resources available online and in print about how to control for confounding variables using regression, but the general logic is simply to compare like with like by holding confounding factors constant. Program impact is measured in the same way for a comparison group design as it is for an RCT, but will mostly likely involve regression analysis instead of an unpaired t-test due to the inclusion of additional control variables.

As can be seen, since comparison group designs are vulnerable to more threats to validity than an RCT they are often more complex to undertake. Comparison group designs typically require additional control variables or other statistical corrections to account for problems introduced by group nonequivalence. Nevertheless, even without such corrections a comparison group design is far better than no design at all.

The Single Group Pre-post Design

The RCT and the comparison group design are both multiple group designs. The simplest cases are the two group designs, but designs do not need to be limited to only two groups. A more common design than either the RCT or the comparison group design is probably the single group pre-post evaluation design. In a single group pre-post design, the program treatment group consists of the program beneficiaries after the program and the comparison group consists of the same beneficiaries before the program. The difference between the beneficiaries after the program compared to before is interpreted to be the program's impact.

This design is relatively simple, inexpensive, and straightforward, but suffers from an important threat to internal validity, namely, the passage of time. Over the course of implementing a program, beneficiaries experience many other influences other than the program. For example, personal income tends to increase over time, regardless of NGO programing, simply because people gain work experience. Just because participants in an NGO program designed to increase income have higher income at the end of the program does not mean that the increase was due to the program. Rather, the increase could have been due to an incidental or secular trend that was already occurring irrespective of the program.

To guard against this mistake, evaluators may choose to extend the single group pre-post design to a longer-term single group time series design or more formally, a single group interrupted time series design. These designs seek to take account of, or control for, preexisting secular trends to remove their biasing effect from the estimate of program impact. Simple single group pre-post designs can be evaluated using a paired t-test, while interrupted time series designs can be evaluated using regression analysis.

The Single Group Post-only Design

The single group post-only design is by far the most commonly implemented evaluation design, but unfortunately, this design is fundamentally incapable of measuring program impact (Mitchell & Berlan, 2016). In the single group post-only design, evaluators observe only those subjects who received the program and only after the program has been completed. Since there is no control or comparison group—no counterfactual condition—the evaluator has no estimate of what would have happened in the absence of the program and therefore cannot possibly determine program impact.

The single group post-only design is not a true evaluation design. However, single group post-only measurements may be useful for monitoring or for other purposes such as funder compliance.

Ad Hoc Designs for Programs that Do not Fit the RCT Mold

There are as many evaluation designs as there are programs to evaluate and it is impossible to describe them all in a single chapter. The designs listed above are chosen to exercise the basic logic of evaluation and to demonstrate the necessity of counterfactual analysis. So far, these designs have assumed that a program intends to affect a relatively large number of individuals, but other programs may seek to influence a single person, a piece of legislation, the environment, or something other than a group of individuals or a community. In the case of community level impact evaluators may employ representative sampling, but in many other cases an RCT-style design may simply be inapplicable. Nevertheless, the basic logic of counterfactual analysis still applies.

The primary difference is that an ad hoc evaluation would rely upon a qualitative comparison between an observed factual condition and an imagined or hypothetical counterfactual condition. The credibility of the counterfactual condition will certainly be vulnerable to criticism, but evaluators can attempt to construct a counterfactual condition as best as circumstances allow by collecting information and from a wide variety of credible sources. For example, to estimate the impact of a program designed to influence national legislation an evaluator could interview legislative aids, legislators, lobbyists, and other stakeholders to solicit their opinions about what they think would have happened in the absence of the NGO's efforts. This technique will always be vulnerable to manipulation and bias, but the investigatory process, particularly if it is undertaken by a neutral third party, should help program administrators construct a defensible counterfactual and better understand the nature and extent of the program's impact.

Strong evaluations, whether qualitative or quantitative, employ the best methods available to construct a credible counterfactual condition, rule out alternative explanations, and establish causal attribution. An unbiased evaluation design will reveal a successful program to be successful and an unsuccessful program to be unsuccessful. Evaluators must keep an open mind, and knowledge of the underlying analytical logic of program evaluation will aid in the selection of appropriate designs that fit unique circumstances. Just because an RCT is not practical or appropriate does not mean that evaluation is not worthwhile. Evaluations that measure program impact imperfectly are far better than no evaluations at all, as long as evaluators appropriately qualify their findings and remain transparent about relevant threats to validity.

Outcome Accounting and Agency Level Impact

NGO practitioners often distinguish between evaluation at the program level and agency or organizational level. At the program level, managers may wish to determine not only whether a program achieved impact, but also the extent to which this level of impact achieves the program's original goal. When organizations

simultaneously manage multiple programs, moreover, it may be useful for managers to know which programs are the least or most effective and efficient. At the agency level, leaders may wish to organize and quantify the overall level of organizational effectiveness to ensure alignment with the organization's mission.

The transnational NGO sector has experimented with numerous systems for monitoring and evaluating program and agency level effectiveness and have met with mixed results. One significant obstacle managers often encounter is the multiplicity of often redundant, overlapping, and non-interoperable systems for performance reporting, information aggregation, data analysis, and decision making. To be useful, an M&E system must have a clear purpose, clear ownership, and not be unduly burdensome on staff. Many NGOs, especially those experimenting with agency-level measurement, adopt data systems that measure reach or output such as the number of beneficiaries served or quantity of outputs delivered. However, counting systems rarely provide managers and leaders, let alone external stakeholders, with the detailed information they need to make informed decisions.

While many medium and large sized NGOs have sophisticated integrated systems in place for financial accounting at the program and agency level, relatively few have similarly sophisticated systems for outcome accounting. This is especially unfortunate since NGOs exist to generate programmatic outcomes, not simply to provide evidence of financial effort.

This section introduces an integrated outcome accounting framework for program and agency level M&E. The framework can help managers understand what is working and what is not, where resources can be allocated most efficiently, and to what extent the organization as a whole is achieving its goals. Moreover, the framework can be used to promote performance accountability both internally and externally, while providing stakeholders with sufficiently detailed information to make sound strategic decisions.

The Outcome Accountability Framework

Outcome accountability is about demonstrably accomplishing what an organization sets out to accomplish (Mitchell, 2013, 2014a). The outcome accountability framework links program evaluation together with agency level effectiveness in an integrated performance management system. The framework has five main components.

The first component is the goal. A goal is expressed as a prospective change in circumstances that will be reasonably attributable to a program, or more specifically as a prospective difference between a factual condition and a counterfactual condition. In Table 15.1, goals are denoted by the letter G.

The second component is the accomplishment. The accomplishment is expressed as the retrospective change in circumstances that is reasonably attributable to a program, or more specifically as the retrospective difference between the factual and the counterfactual condition after the program has matured. Accomplishments are denoted by the letter A.

Table 15.1 Outcome Accountability Framework

	Goal	Accomplishment	Program effectiveness	Budget share	Budget-weighted effectiveness
Program$_1$	G_1	A_1	A_1/G_1	b_1/B	$(A_1/G_1)*(b_1/B)$
Program$_2$	G_2	A_2	A_2/G_2	b_2/B	$(A_2/G_2)*(b_2/B)$
Program$_3$	G_3	A_3	A_3/G_3	b_3/B	$(A_3/G_3)*(b_3/B)$
…	…	…	…	…	…
Program$_n$	G_n	A_n	A_n/G_n	b_n/B	$(A_n/G_n)*(b_n/B)$

The third component is the ratio of the accomplishment to the goal, which is interpreted as a measure of program level effectiveness, or the extent to which a program met its goal. The fourth component measures the proportion of the organization's total budget allocated to the program (inclusive of all related direct and indirect costs), or the budget share. The fifth and final component serves as an aggregation mechanism for measuring organizational level effectiveness, and is labeled budget-weighted effectiveness in Table 15.1.

Each row in the framework represents a separate program. A time frame must also be specified for results reporting and analysis, such as a fiscal year. Programs with goals that may take multiple periods to mature may report intermediate goals. Goals can take any form and be qualitative (binary) or quantitative (scalar) in measurement, and programs with multiple goals can be summarized with composite measures.

An NGO's overall level of agency or organizational level effectiveness is given by the following equation:

$$\text{Organizational effectiveness} = \sum_{i=1}^{n}(A_i/G_i)(b_i/B) \tag{15.1}$$

A value of one indicates that an organization met 100 % of its goals, a value less than one indicates underperformance, and a value greater than one indicates over performance. Programs that consume the most resources are given the most weight.

Leaders and managers may also wish to know how cost-effective their programs are individually. Efficiency may be measured as the cost per unit of impact:

$$\text{Cost per unit of impact} = b_i/A_i \tag{15.2}$$

Or by the amount of impact per dollar:

$$\text{Impact per dollar} = A_i/b_i \tag{15.3}$$

The outcome accountability framework requires managers to set goals, measure progress, and tie expenses to accomplishments. The system also provides incentives for program managers to set reasonable goals, as setting the bar too low would make it hard to justify the program's budget while setting the bar too high would result in underperformance. Leaders and managers of medium to large organizations may find this framework especially useful for establishing clear expectations among program staff, managing performance, and organizing large amounts of complex information for strategic decision making.

To be sure, any managerial framework or model is necessarily a simplification and cannot possibly communicate all of the nuance that might be relevant to communicate to organizational decision makers. Any performance management system must be flexible and responsive, and performance information should be interpreted in appropriate context.

Controversies in M&E

The transnational NGO sector is diverse with many types of organizations pursuing goals that span multiple sectors of activity including health, education, the environment, humanitarian relief, human rights, international development, poverty alleviation, and so on. Perhaps the most significant functional distinction within the NGO community exists between service delivery organizations, which provide tangible goods and services, and advocacy organizations, which instead leverage information and communications to pursue change. Although most NGOs are service-oriented, more and more organizations are incorporating advocacy components into their strategies to achieve more sustainable long-term impact, and hybrid and rights-based approaches to development have become more popular than ever (Mitchell, 2015; Schmitz & Mitchell, 2016; Nelson & Dorsey, 2003). As NGO programming technology has concomitantly become more complex, many practitioners have struggled to find appropriate methods of program evaluation capable of accommodating the unique needs of a modern, multifaceted, often multi-agency NGO program. These difficulties occasionally give rise to skepticism over the very idea that results—particularly in the area of advocacy—are even fundamentally measurable. There is not space to adequately address this skepticism here, but the systematic measurement of complex, abstract constructs—such as happiness, well-being, empowerment, awareness, and so forth—is commonplace in social science research and detailed methods for conducting valid measurement are thoroughly treated in psychometrics, econometrics, statistics, and many other related literatures. Any meaningful change that a program creates in the world will reveal observable, and therefore measurable, consequences, and measurement difficulties will generally yield to sufficient creativity and determination.

Another important controversy surrounds the potentially extractive rather than participatory nature of many M&E exercises. Evaluation is occasionally criticized for privileging the perspectives of NGO managers and donors and insufficiently taking into account the views and interests of program beneficiaries. To address these concerns, evaluators should work with beneficiaries to develop measures that are not only valid but also relevant to their needs and concerns. Additionally, evaluators should systematically communicate their findings and learnings to the communities in which they intervene as well as to their partners and supporters to promote sectoral learning.

Strengthening M&E in Social Sector Organizations

Research on M&E in the transnational NGO sector strongly suggests that NGOs are more focused than ever on measurement and evaluation (Mitchell, 2014b), but more general research on M&E among social sector organizations paints a more complex picture. According to a national survey of social sector organizations in the US, inclusive of transnational NGOs but also domestically operating nonprofits, organizations face significant weaknesses but also opportunities for improving M&E (Mitchell & Berlan, 2016).

First, while organizations typically monitor inputs, activities, and outputs, the monitoring of outcomes and impacts occurs much less frequently. Moreover, the most commonly used evaluation designs are the least rigorous, such as the single group post-only design, which does not contain a counterfactual and is therefore logically incapable of measuring program impact. The most rigorous design, the randomized controlled trial, is the least commonly used design. Clearly, the sector could benefit from employing more sophisticated evaluation designs in the context of M&E and performance management.

Second, although managers report insufficient time and money as the most important obstacles to evaluation, these factors are not actually associated with poorer quality evaluation. Instead, technical problems, such as software challenges, and managerial disincentives, such as low prioritization, exhibit far more significant negative effects on M&E quality within social sector organizations. Hiring staff with, or training staff in, techniques of program evaluation could help to improve evaluation quality, but these changes are unlikely if managers do not value and prioritize evaluation activities.

Third, and most importantly, the single largest contributor to M&E quality in social sector organizations is organizational culture. Organizations with a culture that values the importance of evaluation, and with management that incentivizes or requires evaluation, have a significantly higher capacity to produce quality evaluations. Leaders and managers seeking to improve their organization's capacity to conduct meaningful M&E should communicate the centrality of rigorous evaluation to advancing the organization's mission and attempt to foster a culture of constructive accountability that demands evidence and transparency, adopts a learning orientation toward failure, and incentivizes programmatic achievement.

Conclusion

Rigorous M&E is integral to a social sector organization's mission because only through meaningful and ongoing monitoring and evaluation can an organization truly know (and improve upon) what impact it is generating in the world. In addition to having the passion to pursue social, political, or environmental change, NGO practitioners must also have the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to achieve that change effectively and efficiently. Without quality M&E, social sector organizations cannot credibly claim to be doing good, because doing good requires more than just good intentions, it requires achieving good results.

This chapter provided a brief overview of evaluation logic and design, introduced key concepts, offered a performance management framework linking program evaluation to organizational effectiveness, and concluded with brief discussions of M&E controversies and suggestions for managers and leaders wishing to improve M&E quality within their organizations.

NGO practitioners, evaluation experts, scholars and researchers continue to develop new techniques and technologies for higher quality and more comprehensive evaluation in the social sector, and the field continues to expand as interest increases. The literatures on social accounting, program evaluation, and performance management are vast and varied, but the fundamental principles of impact evaluation and outcome accountability remain constant. This chapter has emphasized the fundamental logic of monitoring, evaluation, and outcome accountability, but this treatment is by no means exhaustive. Ultimately, there are as many evaluation designs as there are programs, and every intervention is in some ways unique. Even though the logic of impact evaluation may not change, evaluators will still need to continually adapt to new situations, learn new skills, and exercise practical judgment.

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Part VI
Conclusion

Chapter 16
Conclusion

S. Aqeel Tirmizi and John D. Vogelsang

> Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive
>
> —Howard Thurman

We believe that the chapters in this volume offer comprehensive and practical advice on creating and sustaining impactful social sector organizations. Two recent important studies synthesize and confirm several pieces of this advice. For instance, in one recent study McKinsey and Co. reached out to 200 CEOs and senior leaders and asked them to outline the key competencies needed for the social sector leaders (Callanan, Gardner, Mendonca, & Scott, 2014). According to their findings, the four highest ranked competencies include: (a) ability to innovate and implement, (b) ability to establish and work closely with teams, (c) ability to collaborate, and (d) ability to manage to outcomes. We believe that collectively, the contributions in this book effectively respond to the call for these competencies. Tirmizi's chapter "Leading Innovation in the Social Sector," Chap. 2 in this book, outlines a comprehensive set of considerations and strategies leaders may use to encourage innovation and its effective implementation. Mitchell's chapter on "Accounting for Outcomes (Chap. 15)" includes a robust measurement framework for organizations to understand the progress they are making (or not making) toward realizing their mission. The sections below in this conclusion discuss additional ways the contributions in this book offer a timely response to the competencies identified by social sector leaders.

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Creative and Bold Collaborations

Social Sector organizations and their leaders must continue and increase their efforts to work with other entities within and outside the social sector boundaries. This work may take a variety of forms, including partnership, networks, alliances, and consortiums. Working with others will also increasingly include collaborations and partnership with the government and private sectors. A great example of such partnerships, including social-public sector collaboration, comes from Thailand. Mechai Viravaidya founded the Populating and Community Development Association (PDA) to help Thailand deal with its population explosion and child mortality issues. Over the years, PDA contributed to dramatic decrease in Thailand's annual population growth rate from over 3 % to a little over 0.5 %. In addition, it is also recognized for helping Thailand control its HIV/AIDS epidemic. Among other innovative strategies, PDA's success is attributed to its close working relationships with social sector organizations and Thai government authorities. As Unsicker noted in his chapter in this volume, Crutchfield and Grant's (2012) six practices of high impact organizations include working together with other social sector organizations, businesses, and government through creative and bold partnerships to effect change. The practices also include building and nurturing networks, sharing leadership, adapting to change, and converting supporters to "evangelists" for the organization's mission.

Voice at the Table

We believe that with the growth of the social sector within and across national boundaries it is becoming important to find mechanisms to represent the sector in national and global dialogues, convening, and decision-making forums. This representation is especially urgent considering some of the challenges and barriers we have described in this book in relation to the operating environment of social sector work. Multiple chapters in our book discuss the work of CIVICUS as a global body promoting citizen rights. It identifies itself as a global alliance and currently has members in over 120 countries. Since its inception in the early 1990s, CIVICUS has gained increasing recognition as a collective voice of the citizens and their organizations around the world—especially the Global South. This role was at the center of the vision of social sector organizations that came together about twenty-five years ago. Today, CIVICUS representatives are present in leading global gatherings, convening and advocating for fairness, equity, and social justice on behalf of citizens and social sector organizations. Similarly, InterAction is an alliance of 180 US-based entities and its work focuses on collective action and learning in the areas of international development, humanitarian action, policy advocacy, and accountability. While these alliances are motivating examples of cross-organizational and cross-country cooperation to create united voices, we need

broader and deeper mechanisms like those to represent the social sector voices strongly and more meaningfully at national and global levels. One reason that the important movements of Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street did not succeed was their lack of ability to create or find sustainable platforms representing citizens' voices. Therefore, social sector leaders and organizations must critically think about ways to form alliances, coalitions, and networks to strengthen their voice and have it heard in the appropriate decision-making fora.

ICT Revolution and the Social Sector

For over fifteen years now, information and communication technologies (ICT) have profoundly changed the way we work. Pisano (2015) outlines technology as one of the key dimensions for organizations to consider when they make strategic choices about innovation and strategy. ICT allows individuals and small organizations from around the world to receive and share information crucial to carrying out their work and influence at local, regional, and global levels. Indeed, a social entrepreneur may now innovate in any corner of the world with access to a tablet, and large social sector organizations can monitor the progress of their work on daily basis in dozens of countries. It is abundantly clear that ICT can play a crucial role in all aspects of social sector organizations' work. These aspects include fundraising, communications, operations, accountability, and impact measurement. We believe that social sector leaders and organizations must embrace at least three ICT related challenges. Firstly, many organizations do not fully capitalize on existing ICT's potential. The reasons may range from lack of awareness, limited resources, and insufficient ICT competencies. Secondly, technology will continue to evolve at a fast pace. This means that organizations currently using ICTs effectively must continue to adapt and respond to these changes. Finally, as the social sector continues its fight for social justice, it must also proactively tackle the injustice originating from the digital divide. Vulnerable individuals and communities are being adversely impacted by this divide and lack of action may add further barriers to their access to education, health, and economic well-being.

21st Century Organization Design and Development

How do social sector organizations sustain themselves and be impactful in an increasingly uncertain and complex world? We believe that social sector leaders need to answer this question using a variety of thoughtful lenses. Contributors to this volume have provided a number of meaningful and detailed considerations and pathways in this regard. Rao and her colleagues share a powerful series of lessons from Gender at Work about how to put values at the center of social justice work

through a creative and responsive organization design approach. Solomon and Secrest describe their innovate approach to women leadership development called Women's Leadership Circles of Vermont. Wenzel offers a compelling argument encouraging social sector organizations to invest in human capital development. In his call to action he emphasizes the importance of learning, attention to competencies, and re-visiting funding approaches to make them more aligned with critical human development investments. Vogelsang's chapter on complex responsive leading provides a comprehensive and concrete set of guidelines on how to approach complexity and use creative design and responsive leadership approaches to be effective in an increasingly uncertain world.

Primacy of Social Justice

In social sector organizations, we implicitly or explicitly promise to work on behalf of the most vulnerable populations around the world. This work to improve human conditions must be anchored in a commitment to social justice and driven by rights-based approaches. This commitment to social justice, in turn, requires that the highest standards of ethics must inform the organizational approaches, policies, systems, and stakeholder engagements. Arrival of Big Data is a good example of the importance of delicately managing rights, responsibilities, and accountabilities, in our work. Big data can be tremendously helpful as we navigate various environmental and cultural boundaries, but it can also cause harm if it falls in the wrong hands. The social sector must set the example of holding itself to the highest standards when it comes to handling the intricacies of working for the greater good. It is important that we self-examine our policies and practices, to ensure that we are not only working to improve the human condition, but, in doing so we are not inadvertently placing the people for whom we work in any harm.

The social sector is making an enormous contribution as a force for common good. Its presence offers optimism, hope, and voice to those seeking social justice around the world. By giving primacy to social justice and focusing on human dignity, the sector will continue to have the authenticity and legitimacy to meaningfully advocate and serve.

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