Developing A Common Agenda: Three Helpful Tools
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Three Ideas

1. Efforts to tackle complex issues - including collective impact efforts - tend to evolve through multiple cycles comprised of distinct phases.

2. Each phase requires different types of leadership, practices and supports.

3. Leaders and managers must navigate traps between these phases of innovation.
Close ... but too narrow
A forest fire: Good? Bad? Good & bad?
The birth, growth, destruction and renewal of a forest

Renewal

Conservation

Exploitation

Creative Destruction
Widening Our Gaze To Tackle Tough Issues

The Performance Loop (The S Curve)

The Renewal Loop (The Reverse S Loop)

The Adaptive Cycle
(aka Panarchy Cycle, Eco-cycle, Infinity Loop)
Example 1: Micro-Lending
watching, researching & talking with villagers in Jobra and ‘failing forward’ with small experiments
**Insight Into the Challenge: A Pattern of Systemic Barriers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of People Living in Poverty</th>
<th>Bangladeshi Banking Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require small amounts of funds</td>
<td>Provide only larger loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>Multiple forms and applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No assets</td>
<td>Collateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can only make small payments</td>
<td>Larger lump sum payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly women</td>
<td>Prefer to lend to men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot afford not to repay loans</td>
<td>Perception of poor as high risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing a Peer Lending Model

Personal Loans

Jobra Loan Guarantor

Tangail Pilot: Peer Lending
Competition from other micro-lending programs

Plateau of borrowing

Delinquency on rise

DECLINE?
Entrepreneurial * adaptive * inefficient * flexible * trial 
& error * dead ends * variation * lag times * 
flexibility * tolerance for risk 
Effective Practice

Neutral zone manage new engagement confusion 
develop & adapt relationships perspectives conversations 
research * probes & prototypes hunches * emergence 
Insights, Empathy, Options

Efficiency * certainty * stability * predictability * hierarchy * standardization * 
specialists * fast returns * low risk tolerance * rigidity 
High-Predictable Performance

Exploration exploration

Place bets expand possibilities & buy-in new engagement

Birth develop & adapt refine

Maturity mature

Conserve cope with decline

Manage itching to proceed confusion

Neutral zone unraveling chaotic loss anger * blame * conflict * angst 
Little structure or process * heavy reflection 
* lean on relationships * values 
New Energy & Hope

Growth growth

Refine conserve

Cope itching to proceed

Conservation

Release release
Cross Scale Mapping Exercise

At each level, how do you assess your challenge at this moment in time? What “cascades down” & “revolts up” are flowing?
Where would you place USA special education systems and practices in May 2016?
Adaptive Cycle Worksheet

EXPLORATION

What's our criteria for expanding or reinventing something?

DEVELOPMENT

What's our criteria for starting something?

MATURITY

What's our criteria for identifying where we can get more without investing more?

RELEASE

What's our criteria for ending something?
#4

Social innovators – and those who support them – must navigate traps between phases.
Traps in the Adaptive Cycle

- **Scarcity** (insufficient resources, commitment)
- **Parasitic** (dependent on ‘birthing’ conditions)
- **Chronic Disaster** (can’t get traction)
- **Rigidity** (stuck in old patterns)
Rigidity Traps

- Can’t escape the performance engine culture and arrangements
- Organizational self-interest
- Too big (or important) to fail
- Unclear about options – no innovation pipeline

Stuck in old thinking, patterns and institutional arrangements
Chronic Disaster Traps

Unable to get sufficient traction to leave the past and move forward

- Putting out fires
- People come and go
- The context shifts constantly
- Still stuck in the past
Insufficient time, energy resources to give an idea a robust birth and good start.

Scarcity Traps

• Resources for trying something new don’t exist

• An excessive demand for clarity and predictability (tough in the early stages of innovation)

• Ideas are not compelling nor appear robust

• Trying to move on too many things and not investing enough in any of them
The innovation is parasitic on the host(s) that gave it birth and nurtured it in the early years.

Parasitic Traps

- Reliant on the founding innovators
- Requires flexibility of development phase
- Depends on experimental resources (aka “pilot project junkies”)
- Works in unique context, time or scale
Traps in the Adaptive Cycle

Scarcity (insufficient resources commitment)

Parasitic (dependent on ‘birthing’ conditions)

Chronic Disaster (can’t get traction)

Rigidity (stuck in old patterns)
In Pairs

1. What **traps** are you experiencing in your work?

2. How are you **complicit** in perpetuating these traps?

3. What could you do to help **overcome** these traps?
SUMMARY
Three Ideas

1. Efforts to tackle complex issues - including collective impact efforts - tend to evolve through multiple cycle comprised of distinct phases.

2. Each phase requires different types of leadership, practices and supports.

3. Leaders and managers must navigate traps between these phases of innovation.
RESOURCES

1. **Crisis & Renewal**
   - *Meeting the Challenge of Organizational Change*
   - By David K. Hurst

2. **Getting to Maybe**
   - This book is for those who are not happy with the way things are and would like to make a difference.
   - By Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless

3. **The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures**
   - Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation
   - By Allen Peck and S. David Hix

The Adaptive Cycle

Social Innovation

Planning Techniques
Pairs

What is **most alive** for you after today’s session (e.g., a thought, a feeling, a question)?