



changemakers[®]

DISCOVERY FRAMEWORK

UNLEASHING COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKING:
SOLUTIONS AND STORIES FROM COURAGEOUS LEADERS

UNLEASHING COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKING

SOLUTIONS AND STORIES FROM
COURAGEOUS LEADERS

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ABOUT THE DISCOVERY FRAMEWORK

Ashoka, in partnership with the Bush Foundation, seeks to enable community problem-solving or “changemaking”. With over 30 years of expertise in social entrepreneurship, a global network and an online community of innovators, Ashoka works across many fields including health, education, civic engagement, employment, and human rights. Additionally, Ashoka seeks to understand and accelerate the underlying patterns to bring about widespread positive change. The work of the Bush Foundation offers a complementary vision that includes supporting and connecting community problem-solvers. Together, we seek to understand how to unleash and sustain changemaking communities.

UNCOVERING BARRIERS & PRINCIPLES

Ashoka’s approach to answering this question is an integrative one that relies on an understanding of how solutions work together in context to effect change. It considers the multiple components of a problem (“barriers”) and the varied insights (“principles”) necessary to shift them. These barriers and principles are then summarized in a grid format to allow a visual mapping of solutions. “Solutions” address a particular barrier using a design principle and illustrate how individuals and their organizations are bringing about positive social change. Taken as a whole, this approach is called a “Discovery Framework.” It is a different way of thinking about systems change—one that values practice and on-the-ground invention over theory.

FINDING PATTERNS AMONG SOLUTIONS

This report is built on an analysis of solutions created by world’s leading social innovators and select subset changemakers from Minnesota. Our team studied these individual approaches in an effort to distill collective insights from their work. The Discovery Framework format not only allows us to uncover patterns of what works in the field and what solutions are missing, but also illuminates how change is happening.

The building of this Discovery Framework began with our team conducting in-depth interviews with 12 individuals to understand the barriers and principles most relevant to their work. Ashoka and the Bush Foundation drew from our existing networks with a focus on identifying leaders in Minnesota. Many of the individuals interviewed had

launched an organization or initiative while others had extensive experience in mobilizing large numbers of individuals to address a social issue. Many of the individuals we interviewed were also connected to Ashoka’s Youth Venture program in Minnesota so the number of young changemakers featured here is significant. Some of these individuals are working to tip entire systems while others are looking at creating smaller ripples that flow outward into their communities. Each of them is looking to make impact and create a community of changemakers around themselves and their work.



A different way of thinking about systems change—one that values practice and on-the-ground invention over theory.”

Ashoka and the Bush Foundation then convened a diverse group of 22 leaders from across Minnesota to conduct an in-person discussion and reflection group on the topic. During this session, the leaders shared stories of changemaking and drew insights from the patterns they identified across these stories. Together, this group then drafted a preliminary set of barriers and principles which Ashoka further refined to assemble this version of the Discovery Framework.

We then combed Ashoka’s database of more than 3,000 Ashoka Fellows and the solutions they’ve developed. These leading social entrepreneurs, each of whom has gone through a rigorous vetting process, are working to create systems change on a broad scale. Our team selected Ashoka Fellows’ work that felt most relevant to the barriers and principles initially outlined in the Discovery Framework and populated the grid with these solutions.

This Discovery Framework is intended to yield insights on how innovators – and the institutions that support them – might systematically identify and analyze solutions as they seek to increase the changemaking capacity of all community members. The stories from local changemakers and examples from Ashoka Fellows complement the Framework, showing the first-hand experience of those tackling these issues. The analysis examines why they succeed and how cross-cutting patterns can then drive new innovations and sector-transformation.



1 UNDERSTAND
CONTEXT



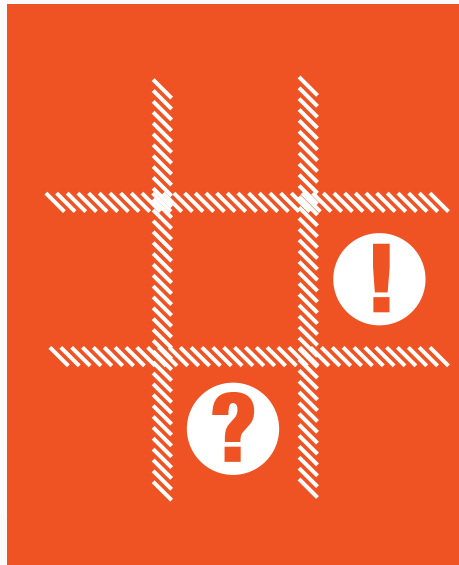
2 FRAME
QUESTION



3 IDENTIFY
BARRIERS



4 IDENTIFY
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

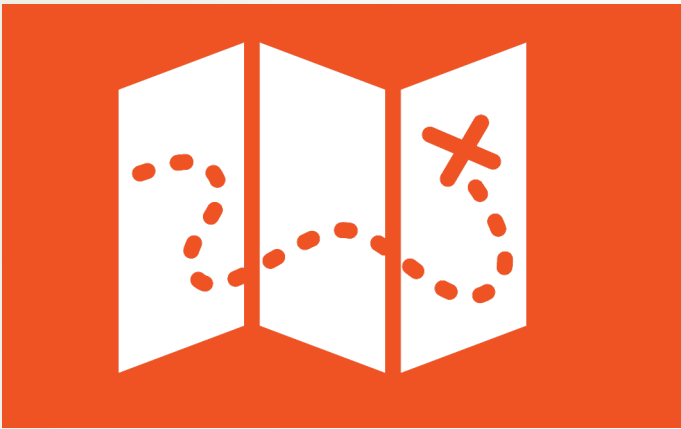


5 CREATE DISCOVERY
FRAMEWORK



6 MAP
SOLUTIONS

1.0 CONTEXT



A young person starts a community garden to address health disparities in his neighborhood; an environmentalist reaches out to farmers despite longstanding tensions; and a financier leaves a secure position to ensure his immigrant and refugee community have access to capital for starting new businesses. Taken in isolation these actions look unrelated – the ‘heroic’ efforts of a few talented individuals. Look closer, however, and you will see threads of commonality as these and countless others lead us to an “everyone a changemaker” future.

Although there are many inspiring stories of changemaking that motivate individuals to act, the reality of tackling tough issues can be daunting. The recent recession has meant that conversations among leaders from across the state and country have focused on the ‘new normal’ of our economy. This narrative points to the decreasing resources of our state

“ This difficult situation is exacerbated by a decrease of trust in our social systems. ”

and local governments during a time of increasing social needs. Ashoka sees foundations and corporations trying to fill some of these gaps, but the overall message to the citizen sector is to learn to do more with less. This prospect can feel overwhelming to those trying to make a difference.

This difficult situation is exacerbated by a decrease of trust in our social systems. Individuals are no longer joining political parties or able to stay loyal to large institutions in the way they once did. The focus has shifted to the individual and his or her network, which means that those who are not surrounded by changemakers will have increased difficulty

acting as changemakers. It also means that institutions don’t feel accessible or part of an individual’s day-to-day experience. Issues that impact our own communities start to feel like someone else’s problem to solve, even if we’re not sure who that someone else might be.

“ Surrounded by pieces of the puzzle for change, it is our role as citizens to put these pieces together. ”

As this view shifts, however, it becomes clearer how powerful individuals and their communities can be, and what were once seen as deficits can become assets. One by one, individuals can make an impact that is greater than themselves. Surrounded by pieces of the puzzle for change, it is our role as citizens to put these pieces together. Changemaking is contagious, and there is no community more powerful than one that has made change together.

When we open ourselves to the possibility that we are powerful, we are quickly reminded of the simple truth that we have untapped resources in ourselves and in our communities. These resources are just waiting to be unleashed.

2.0 FRAMING QUESTION



With the preceding context in mind, this Discovery Framework is built to address:

What unleashes and sustains changemaking communities?

“

What we must do now is increase the proportion of humans who know that they can cause change. And who, like smart white blood cells coursing through society, will stop with pleasure whenever they see that something is stuck or that an opportunity is ripe to be seized. Multiplying society's capacity to adapt and change intelligently, and constructively and building the necessary underlying collaborative architecture, is the world's most critical opportunity now.”

- Ashoka Founder Bill Drayton

3.0 BARRIERS



IDENTIFYING MOVEABLE BARRIERS

Barriers are core components of a problem that, if changed, could allow for true systems-change. Barriers are not underlying causes that merely describe a situation. They must be moveable, actionable, and specific to the problem. The social entrepreneurs that we highlight are addressing these issues at key leverage points with pragmatic, innovative solutions. These barriers are a synthesis of the key findings from our research process and are intended as a summary. Solutions addressing these barriers are mapped in the Discovery Framework Grid and stories from changemakers and Ashoka Fellows are included in the appendices.

BARRIER 1: EXPERT/IDOL CULTURE & NARRATIVE

Too often, changemaking is outsourced to experts, the government and large citizen sector organizations or credited to individuals placed on heroic pedestals rather than community members. While it can be helpful to depend on experts for guidance, we often over rely on them, believing “they” will fix problems. Ultimately, it’s rare for experts to move from diagnosing a problem to actually creating pathways for change. Too often, social entrepreneurs are illustrated as extraordinary superhuman individuals with

“Systems change does not happen without ordinary citizens working to make a difference”

talents that go beyond what other people are capable of. Unfortunately, these narratives usually overlook the number of ‘changemakers’ a social entrepreneur engages in order to drive their innovation to scale. Stories of mobilizing large networks fail to capture the attention of donors and are not easy to capture in the media, so stories of “heroes” often become the default approach. These stories provide only a limited view of how change in society occurs. Systems

change does not happen without ordinary citizens working to make a difference. Our persistent focus across sectors on individual leaders — lauded for accomplishments or vilified for failures — is one of the major barriers to changemaking communities.

BARRIER 2: CONDITIONS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING ARE OVERLOOKED

A common barrier to a thriving changemaker community is focusing on ‘solving problems’ rather than looking at the context in which those problems emerge. Too often we are quick to jump to tactical action without reflecting on whether the conditions for problem-solving have been put in place. Changemaking communities need to invest time and resources to ensure they have built a foundation of shared set of values and fostered diverse networks. They need time to explore their history and build relationships across generational, racial and socioeconomic divides. By investing their time initially in deep conversations, they are able to reveal the patterns, solutions, and leaders needed to bring about change.

BARRIER 3: PROBLEMS AREN’T PACKAGED FOR CHANGE

Issues are rarely simple or straightforward in today’s complicated world. One of the greatest difficulties in making change is feeling overwhelmed by the problem one is trying to solve. As a result, many people can feel paralyzed in the face of problem-solving, leaving little possibility for making a difference. This kind of thinking makes changemaking seem burdensome rather than something that can be fun or exciting. In contrast, successful changemakers are able to break problems into manageable pieces. Once they have identified a part of an issue that is moveable, they set up concrete steps that inspire community members to action. And, quite importantly, they make action irresistibly compelling— even fun.

BARRIER 4: LEARNING IS ONE TO ONE

Mastering the art of changemaking can feel like a lifelong pursuit of what are often deemed “soft skills”—networking, building relationships, and mobilizing others. There are few formal environments in which changemaking skills can be learned. Most often, becoming a changemaker is a result of having been in close proximity to someone who is already a changemaker. This one-to-one spread of changemaking will never be as efficient as traditional ways of learning other essential skills. Without schools, universities and employers valuing these skills enough to formalize their teaching, it can be difficult to build a changemaking community.

4.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES



IDENTIFYING INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES

Design principles are insights and strategies distilled from the work of changemakers, leading social entrepreneurs, and the institutions that support them. They do not encompass tools (like technology or education) nor do they name specific organization-level approaches. They are clarifying ideas and insights that identify what makes the positive impact possible. By uncovering the principles underlying the innovations, the Discovery Framework is able to reveal where additional support is needed in a field or where there is a clustering or critical mass of innovations using certain principles.

PRINCIPLE 1: LINK PERSONAL STORY WITH SYSTEMS PICTURE

The first step in making change is to see the system that the problem is part of. Moving from seeing a problem as something that only impacts an individual to seeing that same problem as one that affects many people in a systematic way is a significant shift. Once a changemaker comes to see his or her individual experience as an outcome of a systemic injustice or challenge, they become better able to develop a vision for social change.

PRINCIPLE 2: RECOGNIZE HIDDEN ASSETS

Change making starts at home. Too often, people look externally for resources or talent when there is already great abundance in a local community. The move away from “deficit thinking” toward the recognition that communities have the assets to transform themselves is an important principle for changemaking.

PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN FOR DIVERGENCE AND CONVERGENCE

Making change requires escaping day-to-day reality and being able to think differently and experiment. Many changemakers stress the importance of fostering “beginner’s mind” or a state of receptivity and openness. Sustaining changemaking also requires the creation of space for diverse collaboration between individuals and communities. Convergence of a diverse network will bring together a variety of perspectives and abilities, leading to novel solutions. In this way, it’s important to break down walls, both mentally and physically, to allow for unlikely collaboration and insight.

“The move away from “deficit thinking” toward the recognition that communities have the assets to transform themselves is an important principle for changemaking.”

PRINCIPLE 4: CREATE SELF-REGULATING NETWORKS

Successful changemaking communities reduce dependence on one anointed leader or institution. Flat networks and peer-based accountability structures are necessary if a community is to sustain change beyond one individual’s involvement. True sustainability is built into a network’s structure when the network is community-based and self-regulating.

4.0 DISCOVERY FRAMEWORK MAPPING - A

For the purposes of this framework, changemakers and Ashoka Fellows have been categorized by the predominant design principle they are applying and the barrier on which they are focusing. This does not suggest that individuals are limited to those principles and barriers. Blank

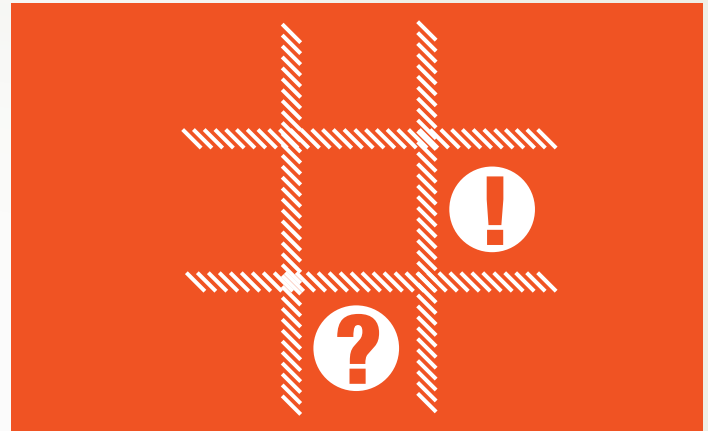
sections for the Discovery Framework Grid indicate that Ashoka did not identify a changemaker or Fellow with an appropriate Solution. This indicates that there is room for innovation to bring more change into this space.

					🔒 BARRIERS				
					Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative	Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked	Barrier 3 – Problems aren't packaged for change	Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1	
🔧 DESIGN PRINCIPLES	Principle 1 – Link personal story with systems picture	Solome Tibebe, Anxiety in Teens	Sonali Ojha, Dream Catchers*	David Lubell, Welcoming America*	?				
	Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets	Freesia Towle, Project s.t.a.r.t. Immanuel Jones, Eco-City MN	Erie Sudewo, Dompét Dhuafa* Eric Dawson, Peace Games*	Dina Buchbinder, Deport-es para Compartir * Dana Mortenson, World Savvy* Betty Makoni, Girl Child Network*	Philipp Schmidt, Peer 2 Peer University*				
	Principle 3 – Design for divergence + convergence	Nancy Henkin, Communities for All Ages*	Patrick Moore, CURE Al Etmanski, PLAN*	?		Matthieu Ouédraogo Réseau, MARP*			
	Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks	Sanjeev Arora, Project Echo* Narcís Vives, Atlas of Diversity*	Rene Lafflam, RNeighbors	Sascha Haselmayer, Living Labs Global* Brent Kopperson, Windfall Ecology Centre*	Jan Hively, MN Vital Aging Network Kara Andrade, HablaGuante*				

*Ashoka Fellow

4.0 DISCOVERY FRAMEWORK MAPPING - B

The grid below explains how design principles can overcome common barriers to changemaking. Populating the grid are short summaries of the types of solutions we sought to better reveal our process.



		🔒 BARRIERS			
		Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative	Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked	Barrier 3 – Problems aren't packaged for change	Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1
🔧 DESIGN PRINCIPLES	Principle 1 – Link personal story with systems picture	Individuals draw on personal experience to address unmet need and question the status quo	Community members activated through processes that deeply explore the present and past, deepening collective understanding of systems	Experience or empathetic understanding are translated into clear, tangible actions that compel engagement	Learning experiences offered through major institutions reveal systems and personal relevance
	Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets	Typically marginalized or underutilized individuals are supported and recognized for their changemaking endeavors	Barriers to citizen action are identified and fixed, providing more people the opportunity to contribute in big and small ways	All are invited to contribute their strengths through clear and compelling actions that engage them beyond traditional methods	Structures are created that allow individuals to share their knowledge and skills with others
	Principle 3 – Design for divergence + convergence	Outsiders are invited to solve problems, bringing fresh perspective	Relationships and trust are built across traditional divides, bringing new solutions	Issues are broken down systematically to identify the greatest leverage points	Networks regularly and systematically bring together unlikely individuals to share approaches
	Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks	Expertise is shared and extended to a much larger community	Social capital and skills are developed in an ongoing way, ensuring capacity to collectively tackle any problem that arises	Clear structures and mechanisms exist to share challenges and develop solutions	Structured non-traditional avenues arise to bring people together to share and learn

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APPENDIX: MAPPING SOLUTIONS

FROM LOCAL CHANGEMAKERS AND ASHOKA FELLOWS



IDENTIFYING INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES

Ashoka staff in Minnesota developed six stories to illustrate the barriers and principles at a local level. These stories were selected based on our staff's familiarity with these solutions in addition to their sense of fit with various barriers and principles. Complementing these stories are shorter examples culled from the global Ashoka Fellowship. The goal of the stories and examples is to move beyond theory to concrete and actionable examples of successful approaches. Examples are organized by the principles addressed.

PRINCIPLE 1: LINK PERSONAL STORY WITH SYSTEMS PICTURE

Anxiety in Teens

Principle 1- Link personal story with systems picture

Barrier 1- Expert / idol culture and narrative

As a middle school student, Solome Tibebu regularly missed class to sit in the counselors' office irrationally worried that her parents had been killed in a car accident. It turned out that Solome suffered from an anxiety disorder – the most common mental health disorder in America.

When Tibebu created AnxietyInTeens.com in high school, she had already spent three years living with the disorder. While counseling gave her insight into her condition, it couldn't offer her a community of peers to share experiences and tips for coping with anxiety. Other websites gave medical information on anxiety but none were specifically directed

toward teens. One day at summer camp, she realized that if there was nothing out there for people like her, she would have to create it.

For a long time the site was only an idea, but eventually she bought the domain name and created a simple platform. The site includes a forum where teens can share their experiences and visitors are also invited to e-mail their stories. The site provides practical tips on controlling an anxiety attack, such as breathing exercises. Tibebu later bartered with a local web development firm to improve the site in exchange for her answering phones and helping with clerical tasks around the office. In recent years, the site has grown through the efforts of other college students she has enlisted at the University of Saint Thomas to work as interns. These students have contributed by conducting outreach and raising funds to grow the offerings.



Tibebu realized that if there was nothing out there for people like her, she would have to create it."

The first step in making change is moving from seeing a problem as a personal symptom –something that only impacts you—to seeing that problem as shared by a larger community. Once Tibebu came to see her individual experience as symptomatic of a systemic challenge, she was able to develop a vision for social change.

Tibebu recently shared her story in front of over 400 hundred students at Brooklyn Center Schools. Rather than missing class because of an anxiety disorder, Tibebu is sharing her experience as a way to motivate others to create solutions to the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives. She's also expanded her focus to developing a service-based software that will offer mental health "homework" in a gaming format for young adult patients, as well as an analytics platform for psychotherapists as a way to further improve the lives of young people with anxiety disorders.

Welcoming America

Principle 1 – Link personal story with systems picture

Barrier 3 – Problems aren’t packaged for change

David Lubell is unlocking the full potential of communities by addressing the fears of U.S. born residents regarding the country’s fastest immigration growth rates since the early 1900s. At community and individual levels, he is helping people understand how and why the U.S. can find pride in upholding traditions of being welcoming. Lubell estimates that of the 273 million non-immigrants in the U.S., about sixty percent are ‘unsure’ about how they feel about immigration (i.e. not dead-set against it, but concerned by it) and another twenty percent (the ‘untapped’) would be more welcoming if only they knew how. Lubell and his team engage members from both groups to participate in and lead welcoming events: spaces where they can openly discuss their fears and build trust-based relationships with foreign-born U.S. residents. These carefully crafted interventions lead to significant shifts in the attitudes and actions of these two population groups. Lubell has identified a number of critical levers that, with low activation energy, can spark deep, scalable change.

PRINCIPLE 2: TAKING MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS

Project s.t.a.r.t

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative

Freesia Towle wasn’t necessarily looking to start conversations around race and culture at her high school. She was just disappointed that, despite attending one of the most diverse high schools in the Twin Cities, she felt isolated within her own racial and ethnic group. It occurred to her that there was little space or support to talk about this challenging subject within the school. Many people would have stopped there, shrugging their shoulders because they didn’t have the expertise to address the issue-- but not Towle.

She decided to gather her friends to organize and drum up support from an increasing number of students. She had a great example in her mother, a racial justice practitioner in the Minneapolis Public Schools. The friends canvased the lunch room to drum up support, waited in anticipation for their peers to arrive at the first meeting, and sat through their first uncomfortable conversation about the racial tensions they were feeling. With this, the Project s.t.a.r.t. (Students Together As Allies for Racial Trust) group at South High School was born.

Project s.t.a.r.t. has developed into a group that encourages students to transform racial tensions into constructive

learning opportunities and gives them the tools they need to make this shift. It’s a safe forum within the school for youth to positively respond to cross-cultural barriers. As the group was formed and began to grow, Towle’s mom and other adults involved learned what hundreds of leading social entrepreneurs before them had — when young people engage, the dynamic shifts. Freesia and the other Project s.t.a.r.t’s youth founders have grown into strong equity leaders as they’ve developed their own cultural identities and worked with their peers to increase cross-cultural dialogue. These young changemakers have written about race for their student newspaper, taken part in radio interviews, organized conversations about race for parents, and testified before the Minnesota Integration Task Force.

Rather than wait for institutional leaders to address the racial tensions, the students stepped forward and developed a solution with support from outside experts. Many others may have held back from taking action, believing it was someone else’s role or worrying that they didn’t have the skills, knowledge, resources, time or networks to make change happen.



Adults involved learned what hundreds of leading social entrepreneurs before them had — when young people engage, the dynamic shifts.”

While it can be useful to depend on “experts” for guidance, we often overly rely on them and trust they will solve our problems for us. Our persistent focus across sectors on individual leaders — lauded for accomplishments and vilified for failures — is one of the major barriers to changemaking communities.

In reality, it is often those most affected by a problem that can most clearly see the solution, rather than the outside expert. Change happens when individuals take ownership of their own problems and work together to identify and act on solutions, bringing in experts to contribute alongside. When individual changemakers begin to work together to solve problems, the results can be extraordinary—as they have been for Towle and the students at South High.

Eco-City MN

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative

Immanuel Jones, a 16-year-old young man from North Minneapolis, grew up helping his grandma and aunt in their gardens. He dreamed of starting a garden of his own. His passion was paired with a keen observation that there was a lack of access to fresh food in his neighborhood. Jones saw the opportunity to make a difference in his community and also do something he cared about—but wondered where to start. Jones had no experience organizing a large project and hadn't yet involved other young people in his idea. Jones reached out to his mentor, Selemon Asfaw at the University of Minnesota's JEM (Junior Entrepreneurs of Minnesota) program and, together, they began making a plan.

Jones began working through his peer and community network to find like-minded young people who shared his passion for gardening and also wanted people in their neighborhood to have access to fresh, local food. Meanwhile, Asfaw worked with some of his colleagues at the University of Minnesota to help Jones secure land, obtain plant donations, and build partnerships with other local food justice organizations. Conversation by conversation, the community garden idea began to come to life.

Nine months later, with the support of over 30 volunteers, Jones' team broke ground on their community garden. As the plants began to grow and the team started selling them to community members, they realized their goal of bringing fresh produce to their neighborhood. Along the way, they formed deeper connections with other community members around a shared passion for urban agriculture.

Jones' commitment and Asfaw's support demonstrates the simple truth that changemaking starts at home. Too often people look externally for resources or talent when there is great abundance in a local community. Jones started with nothing more than desire and ended up with a large group of passionate people growing food for their community. His story demonstrates that avoiding "deficit thinking" and, instead, focusing on the assets of a community is what makes change happen. Jones understood that his community had everything they needed to move forward on his vision and he needed only to get others involved.

After a successful year, Immanuel is exploring how to take his interest in food justice to the next level through higher education. Immanuel had the bravery to take the first step in changemaking and his community supported him as he did this. He learned that he was powerful and that others believed in him—and that he believed in his community.

Dompot Dhuafa

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked

Erie Sudewo realized early on that everyone has something to give to others but would not give it, at least through the government system, if they believed the system was corrupt or the process was too complicated. Charitable giving in the form of zakat is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith yet Sudewo realized government corruption and poor stewardship severely limited what charitable resources reach the poor in Indonesia. Sudewo launched Dompot Dhuafa to revive the custom of giving by creating a conglomerate of intermediary institutions, both for-profit and not-for-profit, that are honest, trustworthy, effective, and innovative. In 1997, Dompot Dhuafa launched a network and campaign to create greater awareness about and improved management of zakat organizations throughout Indonesia. Now, fourteen years after its establishment, over 400 citizen-based zakat management organizations have emerged across the country to unleash the power of citizens to support millions of beneficiaries.

“Too often people look externally for resources or talent when there is great abundance in a local community.”

Peace First

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked

In many of America's schools, violence poses a significant threat to children's safety and performance in class. When Eric Dawson realized that no one was engaging children as part of the solution to this problem, he developed Peace First to teach children how to create peacemaking strategies to resolve conflicts and promote peace in ways relevant to their daily lives and experiences. Peace First has trained educators from 32 states and 23 countries to teach peacemaking skills to young people. Peace First currently serves 4,800 students in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York.

Girl Child Network

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 3 – Problems aren’t packaged for change

Betty Makoni is building a new generation of strong, active women citizens. In Zimbabwean society, girls are discriminated against, often abused, and given limited opportunities for expression and development. Through her Girl Child Network, Makoni creates safe spaces for girls to grow and connect with each other. The blueprint for the Network came from an after school meeting Makoni held in her own classroom. In response to girls coming forward in need of help to deal with sexual harassment and abuse, Makoni established a safe space where girls could come together and talk openly about their experiences and needs. The response was overwhelming, and word of mouth led to demand for similar spaces in more and more schools in the area. Today, the clubs remain the GCN’s core program. Makoni has developed a step-by-step manual for creating a club that makes the concept easy to understand, implement, and expand. She further uses advocacy campaigns, media projects, and works with community leaders to raise awareness and change attitudes at community and national levels.

World Savvy

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 3 – Problems aren’t packaged for change

In order to thrive in an interconnected world, one must learn a number of crucial, non-academic skills such as understanding and relating to perspectives other than one’s own; mastering teamwork, critical and creative thinking; and being an adept problem-solver. Dana Mortenson, like many others in the field of education, recognizes that such abilities must be taught at a young age. Whereas many schools and organizations in the U.S. today are encouraging teachers to participate in their students’ global education through extracurricular activities, Mortenson is leading an effort to mainstream global competency in K-12 schools by integrating it into regular class time. She is thus ensuring that students and educators stop relating to global affairs as a separate subject. Instead, she is introducing them to global competency through an interdisciplinary lens with applications in math, science, English, art and history classes, among others. Teaching the skill of empathy is at the core of her work. She is working with hundreds of educators each year to provide their students with project-based learning opportunities that introduce them to the outside world, help them relate to it and facilitate their transformation into global citizens. The business model behind her approach also makes it one of a handful of affordable global competency programs accessible to some of the country’s least-resourced public schools.

Deport-es para Compartir (DpC)

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 3 – Problems aren’t packaged for change

Dina Buchbinder Auron has introduced an innovative, action-oriented education model called Deport-es para Compartir to a Mexican education system that has long struggled with passivity and rigidity. Passivity and boredom have long plagued formal schooling in Mexico. Very few teachers actively encourage student participation, while even fewer focus on creative problem solving and teamwork. The poorest, most isolated communities—which generally



In order to thrive in an interconnected world, one must learn a number of crucial, non-academic skills.”

are predominantly indigenous—often suffer the worst problems with educational quality. To some extent, the rigid structure of the Mexican education system influences broader societal attitudes, with widespread paternalism and apathy in place of active civic participation. Deport-es para Compartir empowers teachers from a variety of school settings to foster social and environmental awareness while also teaching values, such as teamwork and fair play. The content covered by DpC revolves around three main topics: The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), healthy lifestyles, and diversity. By structuring lessons around the MDGs, DpC allows children to discover how the problems that they see in their own communities, such as poverty, disease, and discrimination, are related to global problems that are similar in nature—a comparison that undoubtedly heightens their awareness of social and environmental actions. This interconnectivity applies equally to solutions as it does to problems

Peer 2 Peer University

Principle 2 - Recognize hidden assets

Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1

Philipp Schmidt is combining the best in open education with leading technologies for social networking and collaboration to create a revolutionary model for online learning. Beginning with the premise that people learn best in groups and that a person learns as much from designing a course as from participating in it, Schmidt has set out to change not what we learn, but how we learn. Through Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU), peer learners from around the world connect around topics they care about and skills they wish to master, harnessing the vast wealth of high-quality openly-licensed education materials currently available over

the internet. Unlike traditional courses, however—which match those who want to learn a subject to those able to teach it—P2PU enables learners to come together around a shared goal, and to collect and share whatever resources are required to meet those challenges. Students act as both teacher and learner, and are thus able to collaborate throughout the entire course development process, beginning with design, and extending through co-teaching and peer evaluation.

PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN FOR DIVERGENCE + CONVERGENCE

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)

Principle 3 – Design for divergence + convergence

Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked

Growing up in an Irish Catholic family, Patrick Moore believed that the best way to organize a community was to mobilize around a shared enemy. In his work in the environmental community, he saw this framing used time and time again. And while he felt this strategy had been effective - at least in the short-run - in addressing environmental threats, he was often disappointed in the long-term results and the distrust it created between neighbors. As he found himself facing one of Minnesota’s biggest environmental challenges, Moore knew he needed long-term solutions for a long-term problem.

Nearly 20 percent of Minnesota’s land runoff finds its way into the Minnesota River as it flows from the South Dakota border to the Mississippi River near downtown St. Paul. Once surrounded by prairies and wetlands, the Minnesota River Basin is now dominated by two major landscapes - agricultural fields and urban sprawl. Years of land use changes and an increase in pollution and runoff have taken their toll on the river and its 13 tributaries: the Minnesota River is often cited as one of the most polluted rivers in the country.

A challenge of this magnitude and complexity called for a new kind of solution. In response, Moore and his colleagues from Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) partnered with several other organizations and proposed a radical idea. They would facilitate an exchange where ‘upstreamers’ from rural southwestern Minnesota and ‘downstreamers’ from Lake Pepin in the southeast would visit one another to see firsthand the issues facing the other region. Some of Moore’s peers were openly against the approach, fearing the collaboration would compromise their position against the agricultural interests they often fought with at the State Capital.

Undaunted, Moore went through with the exchange and came to understand that it was more important for people

to be together than to be right (and it was a lot more fun!). The exchanges got people out of their normal contexts, challenging them to find common ground and uncommon solutions. As farmers and environmentalists built stronger personal relationships, people have begun to back away from their polarized positions and new arenas for collaboration have emerged. As a result, more compromise has been reached.

Moore’s upstream/downstream exchange demonstrated that the art of changemaking often simply requires a shift in a person or group’s day-to-day reality. Moving into a new space to be able to think differently and open up to experimentation can generate new relationships and ideas. Many changemakers stress the importance of fostering ‘beginner’s mind’ or a state of receptivity and openness. Sustaining changemaking also requires the creation of space for diverse collaboration between individuals and communities who don’t often spend time together. In this way, it’s important to break down mental and physical walls to allow for unlikely collaboration and insight.



Many changemakers stress the importance of fostering ‘beginner’s mind’ or a state of receptivity and openness.”

Since Moore and his partners developed this approach, they have gone on to work with other groups to put on similar events using the same principles. This new model is also finding success in several watersheds to facilitate rural-urban exchanges about renewable energy policy advancement.

PLAN

Principle 3 – Design for divergence + convergence

Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked

Al Etmanski is helping to alleviate the financial and social challenges commonly faced by people living with disabilities by working directly with families. His thinking crystallized during a community planning meeting in a small town in British Columbia, Canada where he heard the only two disabled people in the room talk about what services they wanted. Not smaller group homes, more staff, or better service—but a parade where everyone could have a good time and meet someone to love and maybe to marry. He describes the experience as a transformative moment that drove home the knowledge that we all want the same things, joy and celebration, love and intimacy. Etmanski started PLAN, which helps to develop personal networks and provide advice, assistance and advocacy on government

benefits, home ownership, and legal and financial solutions for persons with disabilities. He also successfully initiated the world's first Registered Disability Savings Plan to benefit 500,000 individuals with disabilities, and the organization has mentored over 40 similar organizations worldwide.

Réseau MARP (Méthodes Actives de Recherche et de Planification)

Principle 3 – Design for divergence + convergence

Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1

Matthieu Ouédraogo was born to a poor family in the northern and driest region of Burkina Faso. He worked from a very young age to support his family and eventually began managing a series of agro-forestry projects. Ouédraogo experimented for six years with this concept until he felt certain that selecting and working with innovative small farmers held the greatest promise for harnessing the ideas of innovators and creating a realistic basis for guiding future agro-development. By assisting the growth and regeneration of local plants and helping to build communities of small producers that replicate local innovations, Ouédraogo hopes to foster a spirit of entrepreneurship among farmers across the region.

PRINCIPLE 4: CREATE SELF-REGULATING NETWORKS

Atlas of Diversity

Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks

Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative

Narcís Vives is developing a new education model that makes learning fun and effective while also closing the digital gap between those communities who proactively use new technologies and those who do not. Many education systems around the world are failing. Quite often children become bored with the predominantly lecture-based methods of teaching, and adopt a passive, disengaged attitude toward education. Consequently, many young people come to dislike learning and choose to drop out of school. In Atlas of Diversity, he has designed a simple, cheap and far-reaching resource. Thousands of teachers in over 20 countries are currently using his telecommunications tools to engage their students more proactively, exchange best practices with each other, and engage in projects that contribute to the welfare of the planet and its people.

Project Echo

Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks

Barrier 1 – Expert / idol culture and narrative

Dr. Sanjeev Arora is using communication technologies to dramatically reduce disparities in care in the United States for patients with common chronic diseases who do not have direct access to healthcare specialists. Project ECHO creates a one-to-many “knowledge network” of specialists and up to 40 rural providers. These individuals meet by videoconference to co-manage specific patients and share two-way teachings. ECHO staff works with remote clinics to coordinate and educate their healthcare staff. Arora calls this aspect of ECHO the “workforce multiplier.” Through the “knowledge networks” of the clinics, specialists co-manage patients and teach rural medical professionals to be mini-specialists, to whom patients from that area are increasingly referred. This eventually saturates the state with providers who have the ability to treat certain diseases and also helps deconstruct prejudices that often have existed between specialists and providers.

RNeighbors

Principle 4- Create self-regulating networks

Barrier 2 – Conditions of problem-solving are overlooked



Successful changemaking communities depend on reducing dependence on one anointed leader or institution.”

New initiatives often start with a motivated individual driven to near obsession by a need to solve a problem. Inevitably, that person realizes he or she can't do it alone and that's where they often get stuck. That's where Rene Lafflam can help. Her job at RNeighbors, the Rochester Neighborhood Resource Center, is to help people interested in making a difference in their neighborhoods avoid this common pitfall.

It sounds like a simple thing, but just getting people talking to one another can often be a huge challenge. Lafflam understands this and credits a challenging childhood for fostering in her a strong set of people skills. These skills allow her to help people break through their isolation and self-reliance and get over the seemingly simple hump of just talking to someone else about what they want to do.

When someone wants to organize a neighborhood group, Lafflam starts by encouraging them to get three to five other individuals involved. She developed this simple action step after seeing too many people getting too focused on process, bylaws, and large complicated initiatives. As Lafflam says, “It isn't about the bylaws. It's about the people.” She's seen

that early successes, such as organizing a local tree planting, can sow seeds for later action. What Lafflam has unearthed are the simple principles used worldwide by effective community organizers and social entrepreneurs. These changemakers understand that individual action isolated will likely fail and that building a strong network is key to success.



Power is no longer concentrated in the same way, but most communities haven't yet acknowledged and embraced new ways of working together to address community issues."

It

can be tempting for individuals and organizations to focus squarely on their own issues and solutions, feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders. But successful changemaking communities depend on reducing dependence on one anointed leader or institution. Flat networks and peer-based accountability structures are necessary if a community is to sustain change beyond one individual. The need for change communities and networks to be self-regulating is vital for their sustainability.

Lafflam uses these principles day in and day out. She helps community members organize sustainable neighborhood associations by engaging people with fun, productive activities. Recently, over 3,000 volunteers trolled for litter in Rochester during the 6th annual A Litter Bit Better city-wide clean-up event. A city-wide tree planting event is also in the works. Rene reminds us that one person can plant a tree or two; but thousands of people working together can create forests.

Living Labs Global

Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks
Barrier 3 – Problems aren't packaged for change

Sascha Haselmayer is creating mechanisms to spread innovation into cities, improve governance, and radically alter the way cities deliver much-needed services. With the use of new technology application concepts—a city as a lab—he is mobilizing a new community focused on making cities more functional for citizens. Haselmayer is creating a new space

for government, corporations, and public sectors to engage for larger social impact. Living Labs Global has scaled its collaboration to 50 cities in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America. Today the platform showcases more than 300 solutions and has commitments by more than 20 global cities to solve major societal or urban challenges in areas such as health and prevention, transport and mobility, sustainable tourism, and waste and energy efficiency.

Windfall Ecology Centre

Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks
Barrier 3 – Problems aren't packaged for change

Brent Kopperson is transforming Canada's electricity generation and distribution systems from highly centralized, dominated by non-renewable resources, to more decentralized, green and locally-owned systems. He is bridging social sector engagement and provincial level policy change to remove the structural barriers that have until now impeded the large-scale emergence of community-led and owned green energy sector. Kopperson is giving citizens the tools and incentives to become energy entrepreneurs, empowering communities across Canada to become self-reliant in energy-use and conservation.

MN Vital Aging Network

Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1
Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks

At a recent gathering of citizen sector organizations, a few local leaders were overheard reminiscing fondly about how they used to be able to talk with just a handful of people in Minnesota to get things done. Power is no longer concentrated in the same way, but most communities haven't yet acknowledged and embraced new ways of working together to address community issues.

Jan Hively has long appreciated the power of collective action and systems-building. She credits her great-grandfather for inspiring her activism. At the age of 14, he led fellow youth workers through a mill strike in New England, and went on to start labor unions and a workers insurance company.

While playing leadership roles in government and education, Hively focused on building networks with the belief that only through aligned action will solutions come to life. It was this belief that drove her to found three organizations dedicated to empowering older adults.

Hively founded the MN Vital Aging Network in 2001 after observing the demographic trends and resulting needs of an aging Minnesota. She was particularly concerned about rural areas, from which generations of young adults had migrated to cities and left behind communities where over half of

the people were over age 65. Working with community organizations in mid-Minnesota, she led an interview survey that showed how the resources and productivity of older adults, when connected to the needs of the regional economy, had a substantially positive impact on the health and vitality of the area. Through both the survey and focus groups, seniors reported their strong interest in remaining healthy and productive – engaged in paid or unpaid work, helping themselves and each other and the community.

The Vital Aging Network was developed to combat ageism and support self-determination and community participation through education and advocacy. The organization was led for and by older adults. The network design was strongly influenced by Hively's philosophy that everyone has the capacity for leadership and that social change networks are more powerful than organizations with hierarchical leadership structures. Through the Network, members organized monthly meetings and a yearly summit, built a website, and spawned education and action programs such as the Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging curriculum and the Creative Arts and Aging Network. The Minnesota agencies providing services that respond to the needs of older adults supported Hively's complementary efforts to

“If we can no longer model ourselves on old models of top-down power brokers, what is the new model of a community changemaker?”

build on older adult assets.

“Networking is everything,” Hively said when reflecting on her the lessons from her career. “Organizations tend to be old-fashioned, with defined boundaries, breeding bureaucracy. In today's economy, no one organization can get the job done. In networks, energy flows across boundaries to the nodes where creativity and resources cluster. Networks are flat, peer-to-peer, accessible, complex, and constantly changing.”

Hively has returned to her native New England where she continues to apply these principles through her work with regional, national and international networks fostering older adult productivity and leadership. Her legacy lives on in Minnesota in the networks she fostered here.

Hively has mastered one of the core arts of changemaking. Developing and fostering action networks takes a conglomeration of soft skills developed lifelong through interaction with our families, friends, employers,

mentors.... in our homes, schools, communities, churches, and workplaces. But these ambiguous skills are often characterized as add-ons to the host of hard skills that are seen to be essential. If we can no longer model ourselves on old models of top-down power brokers, what is the new model of a community changemaker and how do we make sure that everyone has opportunities to learn how to wield this kind of power? In this new context, where we can't turn to the powerful few, the skills that it takes to build and navigate networks aren't optional. They are essential.

HablaGuate

Principle 4 - Create self-regulating networks

Barrier 4 – Learning is 1:1

Kara Andrade is the daughter of generations of United Fruit Company banana pickers in the plantations of Guatemala. When her mother became a coyote, Kara had the opportunity to leave Guatemala as a young child, become a U.S. citizen and work as a public health advocate, community organizer and journalist. She is now using her cumulative skills to develop a citizen-based information-sharing platform throughout Central America, where democracy is gradually beginning to emerge. HablaCentro.com is a local mobile-driven network of regional citizen information websites in Latin America where contributions can be anonymous. Contributors, especially young people, from each country share and discuss information in various languages, including local indigenous languages. People use whatever means is available to them—computers, email and cellphones—to contribute and access the websites. A team of mostly volunteers share information and tools to participate and own the websites within each country. Built on mobile phone networks and Internet “hub” sites, Kara's HablaCentro model has rapidly spread through the region as grassroots demand for a reliable source of information has surged.



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