



REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE

Appreciating Systems Change

NOVEMBER 10, 2017

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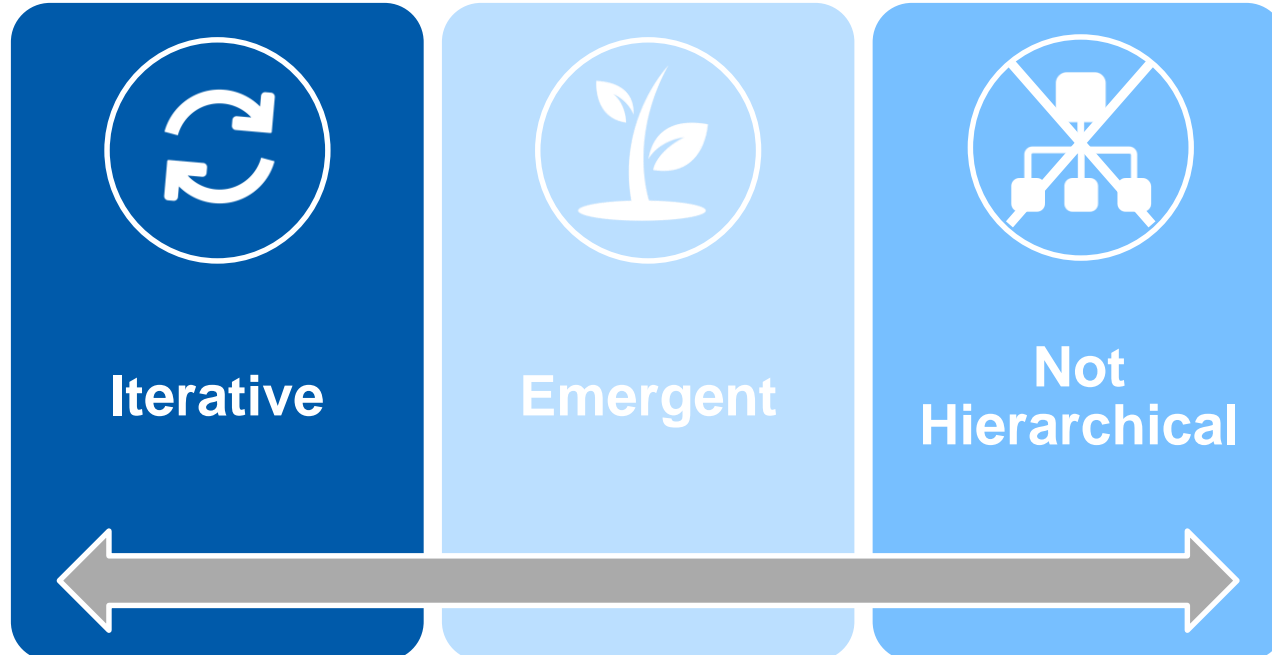
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The Importance of Systems Thinking

“Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes.”

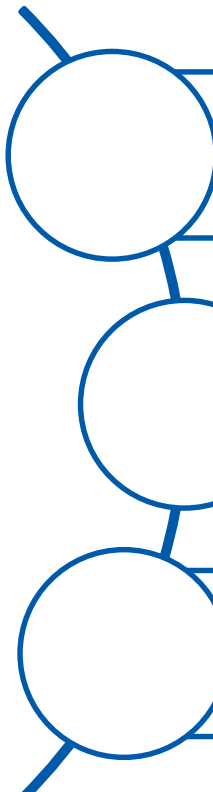
-Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

Systems thinking is a framework for revealing the interconnected and layered nature of social systems and social problems. By definition, this framework is:



Systems Thinking Jumpstarts Systems Change

*Systems are generally designed to produce and support the status quo.”
- Unknown*



Systems change starts with systems thinking; problem resolution is attempted with the whole in mind.

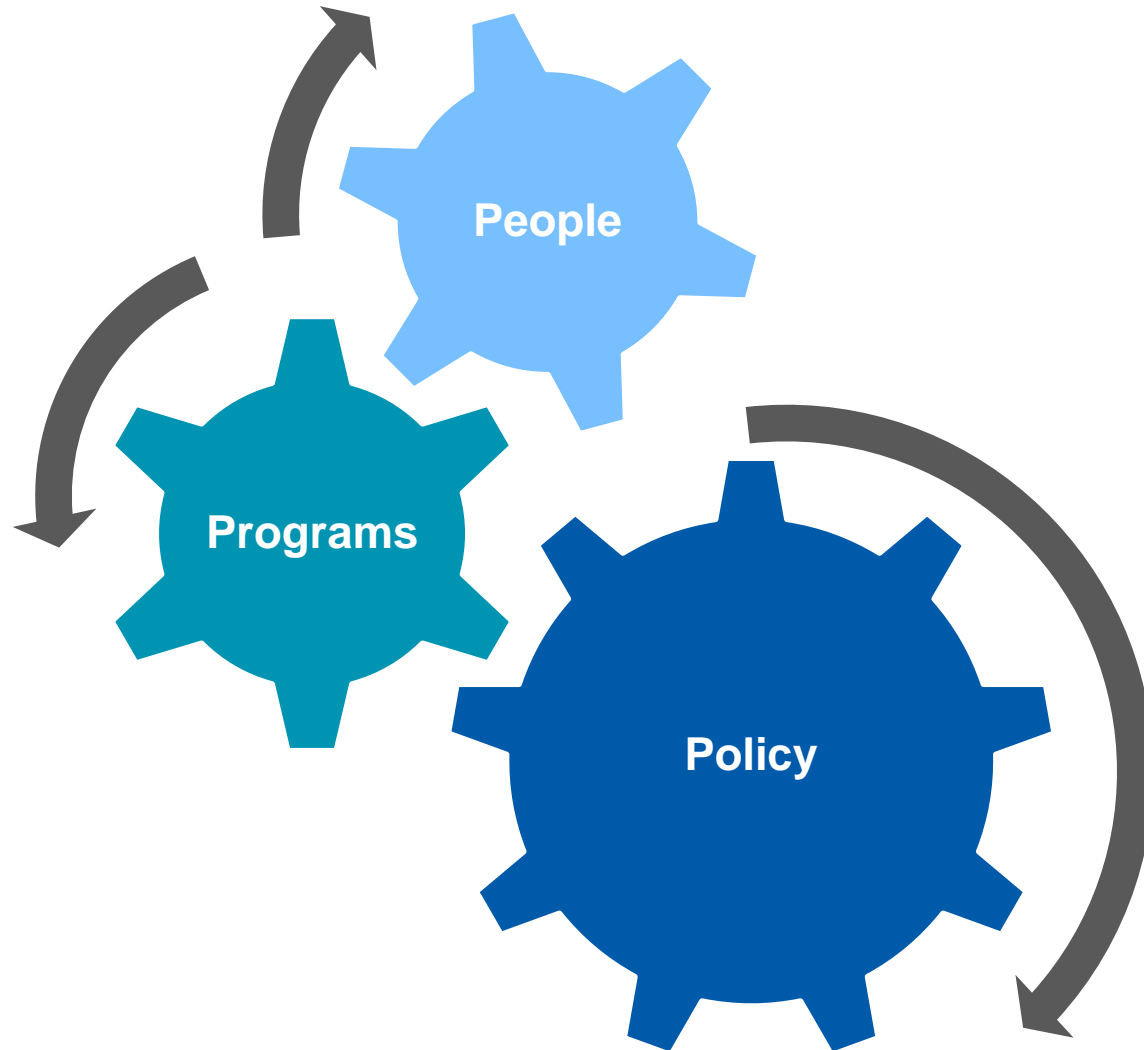
Systems change is a process that aims to alter the status quo in a sustainable way.

The complex dynamic nature of systems has a tendency to produce unintended consequences.

Questions for Jumpstarting Systems Change

1. What is the future we want to create?
2. What are the key levers for enabling this vision? What has kept up from getting their already?
3. How do we influence the key levers to bring about our desired vision?

Systems Change is the Only Way to Sustainably Address Complex Social Problems



**Change happens at the
speed of trust**



Tips for Approaching Systems Change



Remember that everything is **CONNECTED**. Complex problems cannot be treated in isolation.



LIVED EXPERIENCE may provide better insights than traditional evidence or experts.



MEASURE your progress **USING SHARED TOOLS**.



Allow room for **EXPERIMENTATION**.

Tips for Approaching Systems Change (cont'd)



BUILD on **EXISTING TRENDS** and momentum in the system.



Employ **RIGOR** after the strategy has been developed.



BE THE CHANGE by building internal **ADAPTIVE** capacity.

Benefits of a “Collective” Approach to Systems Change

1 Understand pressing systemic community challenges

- Understanding the issues
- Clarify questions that arise about the challenge

2 Co-create solutions

- Spark innovative problem-solving rooted in “lived experience” of the community Identify and spread unique solutions that exist within the community

3 Verify the direction and prioritization

- Get feedback on specific strategies and indicators from selected communities, particularly those who will be the end users of new programs or activities

4 Expand the reach of strategies

- Expand the reach of adoption of initiative strategies
- Evoke and sustain the will to take aligned action

5 Build community capacity to lead and sustain change

- Train stakeholders in skills of effective collaboration and strategy execution
- Share resources and learning across the community to help scale best practices

Authenticity and Iteration are Key

Increasing Level of Stakeholder Engagement



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To **provide the public with balanced and objective information** to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions

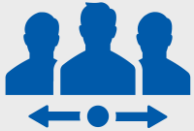
To **gather feedback from targeted stakeholders** on the project's goals, processes, shared metrics, or strategies for change

To **work directly with stakeholders to ensure that concerns are consistently understood** and considered

To **partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision-making**, including the development of alternatives and priorities

To **place final decision making in the hands of stakeholders** so that they drive decisions and implementation of the work

Tips for Sustaining Systems Change and Appreciating the Journey



MOBILIZE new allies and resources.



Support advocacy efforts to improve **PUBLIC POLICY**.



Contribute to the **EVIDENCE** base.
*If necessary, create the **EVIDENCE** base.*



BUILD PUBLIC WILL by changing hearts and minds.



KEEP THE MAIN THING, THE MAIN THING!!!



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