IDIA
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
INNOVATION
ALLIANCE

SYSTEMS INNOVATION EXPLORATION FRAMEWORK

Version 1.0

The International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) is an informal platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration around development innovation. Established in 2015 with a shared mission of "actively promoting and advancing innovation as a means to help achieve sustainable development." It currently comprises the following entities investing resources into the development innovation space:

This document presents an interactive, explorative framework that has been developed through a multi-disciplinary and participatory process facilitated by IDIA's Systems Innovation Initiative. It does not represent the official policies, approaches or opinions of any single contributing agency or IDIA member, nor reflect their institutional endorsement or implementation of the approaches contained herein.

The objective of the Exploration Framework is to support organisations with the ambition to take on, track and learn from their systems transformation efforts. The framework is not a prescriptive guide to achieving systems innovation, but rather key guidance for Desk Officers to have a more systemic impact through their projects, programs and portfolios.

Acknowledgements

This framework was developed through a collaborative process led by R4D (the IDIA Secretariat) and the Systems Innovation co-chairs. The lead authors of this work were Anna Gillespie and Jite Phido of R4D, with Ben Kumpf of the OECD, Nina Strandberg of Sida, and Fawad Akbari of GCC. We are grateful to contributing authors, Karlee Silver of GCC, Gunnar Löfgren of Sida, and Felicia Khan, Morag Neill-Johnson, and Shayna Saliman of R4D. Thank you to our group of Learning Partners who contributed to the development of this framework and provided thoughtful feedback that helped shape the framework into what it is today–Soren Vester Haldrup of UNDP, Gina Belle and Dias Rahwidiati of CHORA Foundation, Emma Proud (Independent Consultant), Charlie Leadbeater of the System Innovation Initiative / System Shift, Solla Zophoniasdottir of Climate-KIC, and Olugbenga Adesida of Bonako and the Africa Innovation Summit. We greatly appreciate our two intensives who took the time to work through the Framework and provide their feedback on how it could impact their program–Nicole Bardikoff, Brittney Dudar and Sahil Chopra of GCC's Being Initiative and Thomas Alveteg, Karin Borovic, Catarina Nilson, Oxana Paierele, Daniela Vidaicu, and Evghenia Snitco of the Swedish Embassy in Moldova. We appreciate the IDIA member agencies and the Systems Innovation Working Group members who engaged with this work, provided feedback, and shared insights and experiences, as well as the funders of the initiative the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Finally, special thanks to the 2022-2023 co-chairs of the IDIA Systems Innovation Initiative–Fawad Akbari of GCC, Ben Kumpf of the OECD, and Nina Strandberg of Sida, for their leadership and championing of this work within IDIA, and to the IDIA Secretariat for the research and facilitation efforts to create this framework.

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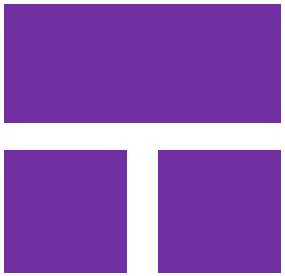

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Systems Innovation Exploration Framework

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WHAT IS THE SYSTEMS INNOVATION EXPLORATION FRAMEWORK?

The Systems Innovation Exploration Framework was created with the aim of assisting agencies in moving from systems innovation theoretical discussions to practical action. The Framework is intended to support program officers/managers/desk officers in international development and humanitarian aid organisations with the ambition to take on, track and learn from their systems transformation efforts.

The framework is not intended to be prescriptive or to act as a guide to achieving systems innovation, but rather will provide key guidance and provoke reflection for desk officers who want to ensure that their programmes and portfolios have a more systemic impact.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

International development and humanitarian aid practitioners working for organisations, especially funders, from the Global North. The framework is designed mainly for colleagues who work explicitly on innovation.

That said, if you work on 'traditional' portfolios, programmes or initiatives and you are interested in infusing strategic innovation in systemic, politically-informed ways, then you should find inspiration here.

THIS FRAMEWORK MAY BE FOR YOU IF:

...In your role you (a) manage part or all of an innovation portfolio, programme or initiative, or (b) have influence over how resources for innovation are allocated, designed and evaluated, and opportunity to contribute to the innovation strategy and approach of your broader team or organization.

...If you are interested in moving to action, are prepared to engage in new ways of working and to be challenged critically to analyse and begin your own current practices for a chance at a more systemic impact.

...If you share a sense of frustration regarding the state of play of innovation in international development and regarding the messiness of the field of 'systems change' and 'systems innovation'.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

We assume that you are very aware of this: Innovation is critical for delivering sustained, scalable solutions to the world's complex problems.

Our world is facing increasingly complex challenges—public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, continued effects of colonialism, climate change, and more. To combat these deep-rooted challenges we as a society need deep-rooted transformations to our health, education, political, social, and economic systems.

While innovation plays an important role in achieving global development goals, innovative technological solutions alone will not suffice to achieve these deep transformations in our societies and systems. There is, in essence, a need to extend our conceptualisation of innovation to encompass the ways in which we approach engaging with the broader system and its various actors.
To tackle these systemic challenges in a way that fosters a more equitable future, funders need to gain an understanding of the system from local stakeholders, identify leverage points or strategic opportunities to intervene within the system, and introduce innovative, multi-faceted approaches across the system to work towards a sustainable, transformed system. An ambition of this framework is to better support local actors and help shift decision-making power to colleagues and organisations from low and middle-income countries.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Many international development and humanitarian aid organisations are predicated upon inflexible multi-year planning instruments, siloed/vertical programming, high risk aversion and often concepts of scale that promote standardisation over adaptation. Total ODA in 2022 rose by 13.6% compared to 2021 and this was the fourth consecutive year ODA surpassed its record levels (Source: OECD). Even with increased ODA investments, progress against the 2030 Sustainable Goals is slow and not on track to meet targets. The integration of systems innovation approaches into traditional development practices may provide an avenue for development and humanitarian actors to contribute to a sustainable, more equitable future.

Systems innovation efforts can have the ambition create entirely new systems, transform current systems or improve the current system to centre equity and minimize harmful impact on people and the planet.

SET EXPECTATIONS FOR THE USE OF THIS FRAMEWORK

Systems innovation is a complex process; it is messy, non-linear, political and involves most likely shifts in power. There is no one way to do systems innovation, and this framework is not a formula that will provide a series of steps to achieve systems innovation. This framework includes reflections, examples and things to consider to begin to work on your project or programme with a more systemic lens.

A system consists of many actors, many with different objectives and values, and relevant and diverse parts of the system need to be involved in systems innovation processes. The inclusion of a diverse array of cross-sectoral systems actors with varied expertise from the local ecosystem will support the systems innovation process in being equitable and representative of the vision of local actors.

While the framework was developed for users to follow a particular pathway through the sections, the sections also can also be used on their own. If you'd like to jump ahead and begin reflecting on mindset or working through the 'entry points' of programatic work where you can integrate systems innovation practices, you are more than welcome to do so.

THEORY

If you're new to Systems Innovation or would like a refresher on Systems Innovation theory, this section may be helpful! Otherwise, you're more than welcome to skip ahead to the mindset section.

This section will provide you a brief introduction to Systems Innovation theory and will include additional resources that may be helpful in getting you started on your Systems Innovation journey.

We know that the fields 'systems change' and 'systems innovation' are closely related, that there are many different and sometimes contradicting definitions and that the increasing number of players, mainly coming from the Global North, has contributed to further messiness and not necessarily to better action. We put a premium on innovation as a concept, arguing that diverse forms of innovations are needed to either transform a system, strengthen it or shape new social-technological systems. We put a further premium on entry points for action, not additional excessive theory and new definitions.

DEFINITIONS OF SYSTEMS INNOVATION

IDIA has deliberately not developed a definition of systems innovation, but rather uses multiple definitions produced by actors in the systems innovation space.

Systems innovation

Systems innovation is "an interconnected set of innovations, where each influences the other, with innovation both in the parts of the system and in the ways in which they interconnect" as per the definition of a **Nesta discussion paper** from 2013.

EIT Climate KIC frames systems innovation as "integrated and coordinated interventions in economic, political, technological and social systems and along whole value chains."

"Systems Innovation is the restructuring of social, economic, and technological systems. It is not just about a specific aspect or end product but the whole system which needs to be improved or replaced. New ideas and innovative methods of accomplishing new tasks and challenges are most important." **-MIT Institute of Design**

"System innovation is needed when two conditions apply: First when society faces a systemic challenge which requires a systemic response. Second, when society has a systemic opportunity to create a new kind of system." -**System Innovation Initiative**

Systems innovation cont.

"...system innovation can be understood as the transition from one configuration of a socio-technical system to a new one, in which the system remains able to deliver its key functions but in a different way. Think of, for example, the shift from a carbon based energy system to a renewable energy based system. Both systems provide reliable energy to users but their technologies, norms, regulations and ways in which these are organised have important differences."

–Motion Handbook: Developing a Transformative Theory of Change

FOUR KEYS OF SYSTEMS INNOVATION

Four Keys of Systems Innovation defines four keys that need to be unlocked for systems transformation. These four keys are referenced throughout the Framework and can be extremely helpful in unpacking Systems Innovation. The Systems Innovation Initiative has a report on each key, which is hyperlinked below.

Purpose

"The most powerful way to shift a system is to change what it is for, the philosophy underpinning it and therefore what its purpose is. System innovators shift systems by developing solutions based on this very different operating philosophy that demonstrates a new system purpose, around which further activity can be organised. The purpose should provide the point around which people, activities and resources are organised. Creating a new system invariably involves framing a new purpose. That process involves argument, challenge and dispute as well as imagination, vision and inspiration."

Power

"It is almost impossible to shift the purpose of a system unless there is also a shift in who has the power to determine how resources flow, what takes priority, who matters and what is counted as a good outcome. Power works within systems in complex ways which those embarking on systems change need to think about carefully. Power can be both hard and soft; embedded in culture and observable in explicit instructions; for good and for bad, for public benefit and private gain. System innovators develop solutions that challenge and change the distribution of power within a system."

Resource Flows

"A system only shifts when the resources flowing through it change in a fundamental way. Radical change can happen when the resources a system relies upon are suddenly heavily constrained, for example as a result of a crisis. Current operating models are rendered untenable. Innovators have to find a new way to meet needs without the resources they normally rely on."

Relationships

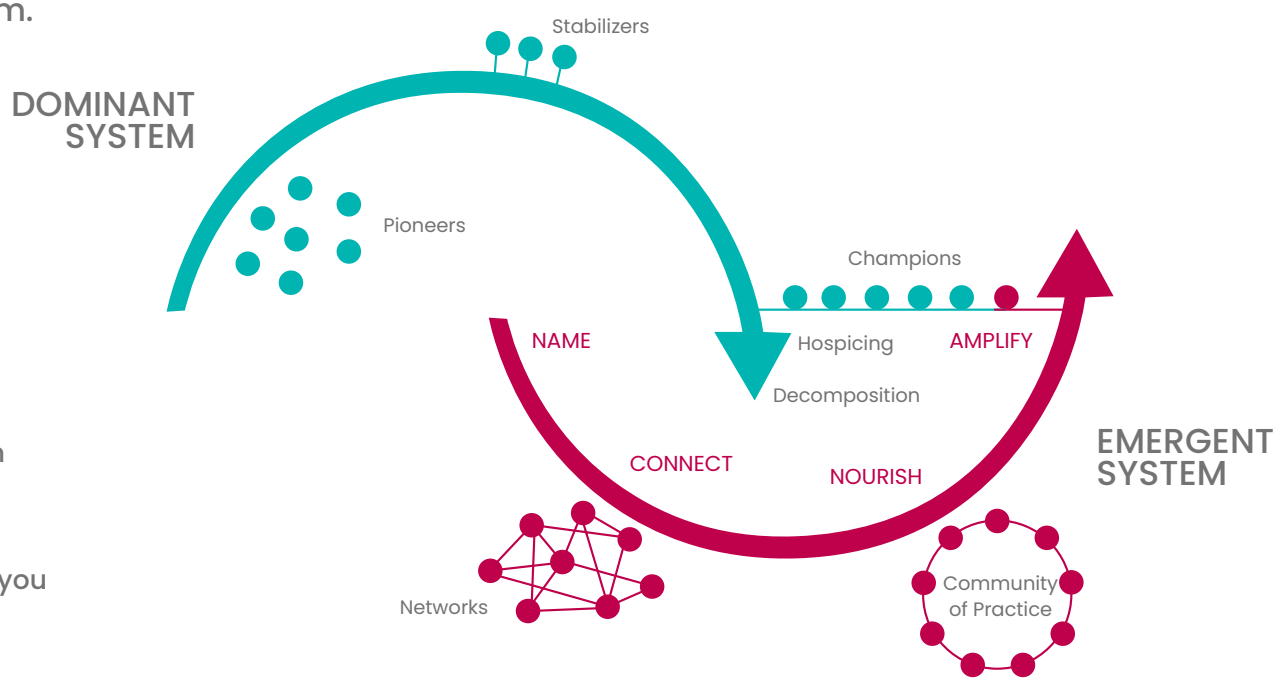
"A system is a collection of parts which come together repeatedly to achieve an outcome, a constellation rather than individual points of light. Each part on its own has limited significance; it is when they are brought together that they form a system. The way they are brought together - the pattern to the relationships - gives the system its character. All systems are fundamentally relational in this sense but this is especially true of social systems which are formed around a key relationship: landlord to tenant, doctor to patient, case worker to client, teacher to pupil, employee to employer. One sign that a systemic challenge is building up is growing strain within the system as frustration mounts with how it is working. That can affect the quality of relationships within a system."

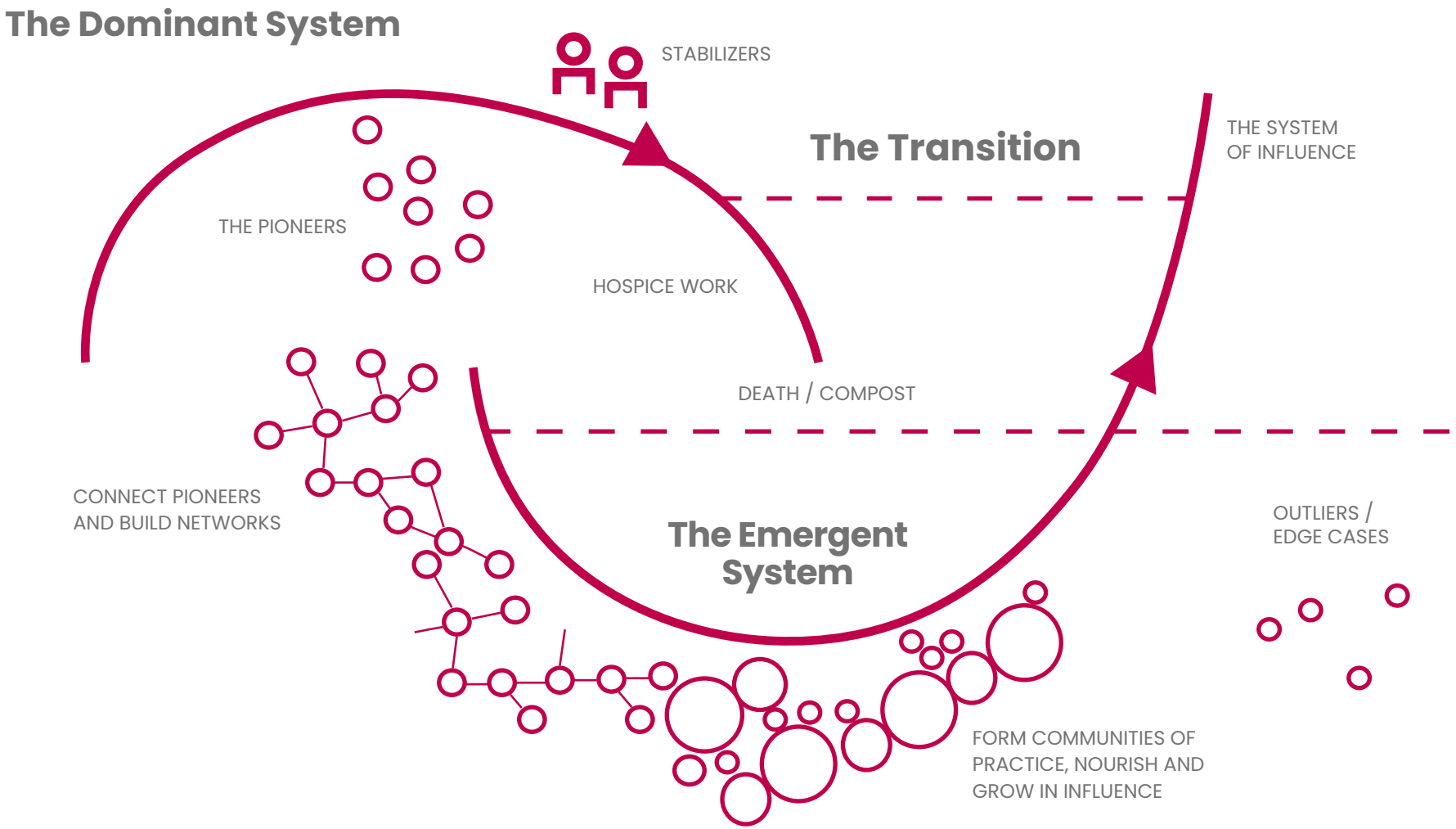
THE BERKANA 2-LOOP MODEL OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

The Berkana 2-Loop Model is a model of systems change which captures the life cycle of the current system and the transition points for the emergence of a new system, underpinned by the idea that as times and contexts change and evolve, systems must also evolve and change and emerge to suit the emerging needs of the people it serves. In International Development and Humanitarian Aid sectors, those who create the vision for the Emergent System (aka System 2) should be people who represent the respective system and country (aka the local context), as opposed to development professionals setting the vision for a better system.

To learn more about the Berkana 2-Loop Model:

- Read the original article proposing the model
- Watch this video explaining the model
- Get inspiration from the use of the model in a post-disaster setting to better understand the system in which you work.
- Reflect on your readiness to support pioneers of system transformation as you read this paper




The Dominant System
STABILIZERS
The Transition
THE SYSTEM
OF INFLUENCE
THE PIONEERS
HOSPICE WORK
DEATH / COMPOST
CONNECT PIONEERS
AND BUILD NETWORKS
The Emergent
System
OUTLIERS /
EDGE CASES
FORM COMMUNITIES OF
PRACTICE, NOURISH AND
GROW IN INFLUENCE

COMPLEXITY THINKING

Our world has become increasingly more complex, and therefore the challenges that the international development and humanitarian aid sectors are trying to tackle are also increasingly complex. Although as a sector we are beginning to recognize these complex systems, we are far from truly understanding how they function. Often the current paradigm used to understand complexity is reductionism, where complicated systems and phenomena can be best explained by reducing them into small, simple pieces. This approach leaves us ill-prepared to begin to understand and tackle complex challenges. (Source: Systems Innovation Network Complexity Theory Guide)

Understanding the world, context & challenges you're working within as complex may lead to mindsets that value testing and adapting over detailed planning, that see learning as the important outcome of monitoring rather than control, etc. This can lead to richer and more open dialogues with partners/grantees, leading to trustful and equitable relationships, in turn can lead to deeper learning.

The authors of this Framework have read many books and articles on complexity and systems thinking. A key insight from this literature review is: most resources are conceptually intriguing but very hard, often seemingly impossible, to put into action as a change agent in a small, medium or large organisation.

Example of Systems Innovation in Practice

Costa Rica has completely transformed its healthcare system by integrating public health and individual health into their delivery of universal health coverage. In the 1980s, a large proportion of Costa Rica's population did not have access to consistent healthcare services which led to a high mortality rate from infectious diseases. As the country lacked the money to drastically increase the number and coverage of hospitals, Costa Rica created a community-based health system where doctors work in and with local communities. The community-based health system, titled Ebias, merged public health and healthcare delivery, not only targeting individual health but the communities health as a whole. As a result, Costa Rica has surpassed the US' life expectancy and reduced deaths from communicable diseases by 94%, while spending less than the world average on healthcare.

Ebias is a great example of intentional systems innovation. Costa Rica's healthcare system's purpose shifted from "treat individuals who are ill" to "build a healthy community". In transforming the purpose, the activities and goals of health delivery in Costa Rica shifted, resulting in remarkable health outcomes.

To learn more:

- **Costa Rican's live longer than we do, what's the secret?**
- **System Innovation on Purpose**

Example of Systems Innovation in Practice

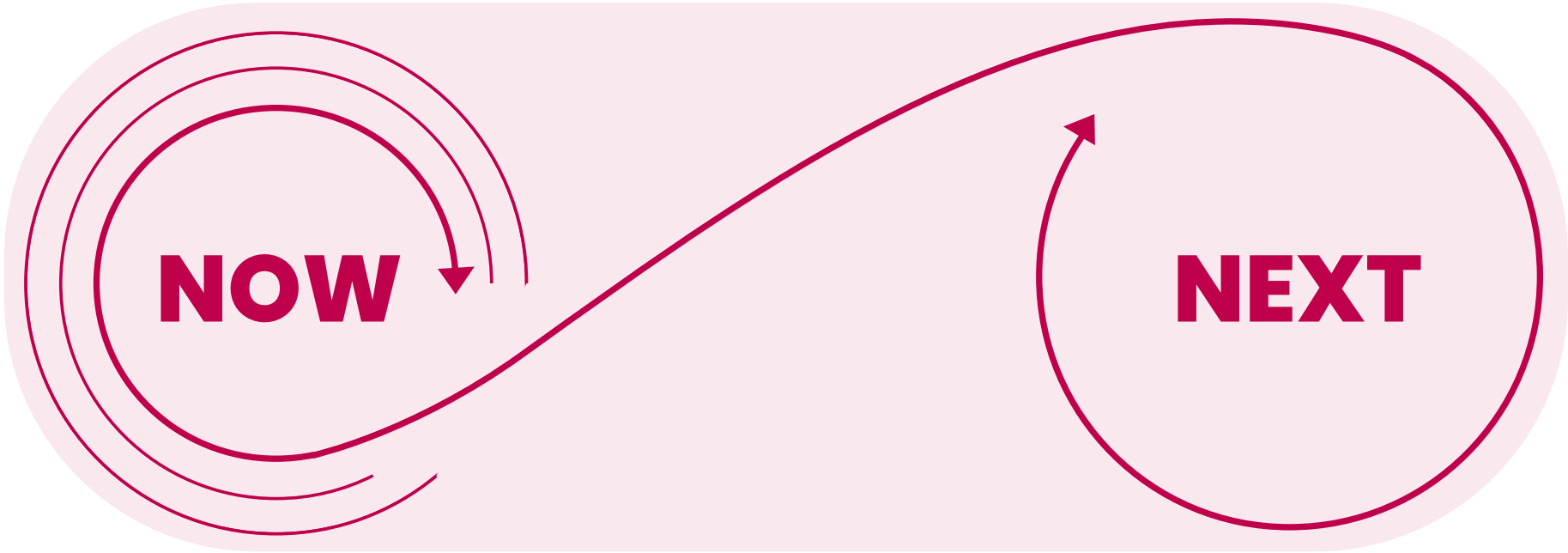
The Bristol Britannia was one of the most efficient long-haul airliners ever when it was introduced in 1957. The aircraft was a prime example of systems optimization: the culmination of years of incremental improvements to propeller powered airlines. This same year, Boeing introduced a game changing jet-powered aircraft, 707. Jet aircrafts opened up the aircraft industry to opportunities that didn't exist beforehand. Flying became accessible to a larger proportion of the population, and therefore the entire airline industry had to adjust. Jet aircrafts needed bigger runways and larger airports, and the tourism industry needed to grow as well.

This shift, from a system organised around the limits of the propeller planes to a system unlocked by the potential of jet airliners, is a relatively straightforward example of what we think of as a shift from the current system to the possible system, from System Now to System Next.

The Bristol Britannia was a brilliant innovation within System Now. Pan Am's introduction of the Boeing 707 opened up the path to migrate to System Next without it being clear at the outset what that would entail and what it would make possible. Eventually the entire industry, including consumers, regulators, airports, hotels and tourism would make this shift and a new pattern of relationships and new ways of life would take hold, which in turn led to huge investments in new resources: planes, runways, airports and air traffic control systems.

To learn more:

- **Systems Innovation Example, Jet Engine Air Transportation**
- **The transformation of aviation systems and the shift from propeller to turbojet**



Explore examples and deep dives from the climate sector

- **OECD's transition to Net Zero**
- **EIT Climate KIC's Deep Demonstrations**

IS SYSTEMS INNOVATION THE RIGHT APPROACH FOR MY CHALLENGE?

"Systemic challenges are characterised by a structural mismatch between institutions, the context they work in and the needs they meet. A systemic challenge reveals fundamental issues about the purpose of a system and how it is organised to serve society. A systemic challenge is deep rooted. The problems it produces keep coming back despite attempts to fix them from within the system. That produces a persistent pattern of failure.

Systemic challenges are connected. A systemic challenge does not affect a single component, nor even a single sub-system. This makes these challenges difficult to deal with because the response requires coordination across many government departments and agencies, as well as the private sector and civil society." **– The System Innovation Initiative Green Paper**

Systems innovation can help tackle systemic challenges, where simply improving the current system will not suffice in getting to the root of the challenge. Not all problems are systemic problems. Before embarking upon this work, it is important to understand that your challenge is complex and well suited for systems innovation practices.

Drawn from Omidyar's Systems Practice Workbook, please review the chart on the next page to identify whether systems innovation is suitable for the challenge in your context.

The problem is well understood. we know what causes it, and there is solid evidence that our proposed actions will have the intended effects.	**WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE?**	We are not really sure we understand the problem fully, let alone the solution.
There is a high level of consensus among stakeholders and experts about what to do	**HOW ARE PEOPLE ENGAGING WITH THE CHALLENGE?**	There is a significant diversity of opinion and even conflict among stakeholders and experts about what to do.
The problem is relatively self-contained and not intertwined with its broader environment, which is stable and predictable (political, social, and economic).	**WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE ENVIRONMENT?**	There are many diverse and dynamic interconnections between the problem and the broader environment, which itself is unstable and dynamic (political, social, and economic).
It is short-term goal.	**WHAT IS THE NATURE OF INTENDED GOAL?**	To make sustained change at a broad scale.
I CAN PROBABLY USE OTHER APPROACHES TO DEVELOP A SOLID STRATEGY. For example, run an effective vaccination campaign	**ADD IT ALL UP, WHICH SIDE DO YOU LEAN TOWARD?**	**A SYSTEMS PRACTICE COULD BE HIGHLY USEFUL FOR HELPING YOUR TEAM GRAPPLE WITH THIS MESSY PROBLEM.** For example, children are prepared and are able to lead happy and healthy lives

NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Systems Innovation is challenging because the world's systems, and their associated challenges, are increasingly complex. Thinking and working in a systemic way may necessitate reflection and significant mindset shifts. There will be resistors along the way who have vested interests in the current system. Nonetheless, the world's increasingly problematic challenges, such as racism, climate change, etc., require a systemic approach to truly solve the problem from the source. To create a more equitable, healthier, and happier future, we must begin to tackle these systemic challenges now.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

FSG Water of Systems Change: A report that clarifies what it means to shift conditions for systems change

All of the reports produced by the **Systems Innovation Initiative**, which go into depth on each of the four keys of System Innovation

Systems Innovation Network: A Global Community of Systems Innovators on a collaborative platform where Systems Innovation resources and examples are constantly shared.

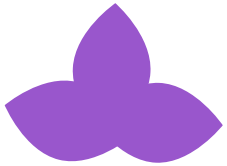
The IDIA Systems Innovation Blog Series - A 5-part blog series that shares lessons on advancing systems innovation in international development organizations.

Part 2

MINDSET

Mindset

Values



Principles

MINDSET

Working in a systemic manner disrupts how the international development and humanitarian aid sectors have worked for decades. Being a champion of this process can be extremely challenging and draining. There will be resistors along the way who push back against many things you are trying to do, and there will be setbacks and mistakes as you work to integrate systemic approaches into your work. We acknowledge that integrating systems innovation into your work within the current international development paradigm will likely be incredibly challenging. Thus, centering your systems innovation efforts with values you closely align with may be helpful in keeping you grounded during this process and reminding you of why you persevere.

Reflecting on your mindset, including your biases and assumptions, is essential for systems innovation. It can be a first step to shifting your mindset to view the world through a systems-lens that includes reflections on the purpose of systems, power and other components, and envisioning new possibilities completely outside of the realm of the current dominant system and its ways of thinking and working. Our goal is to support you in challenging yourself, your organization, the system and the status quo.

In this mindset section you will surface values and principles that speak to your own priorities in this work. In identifying aspirational values you most closely align with, it can be easy to fall into a virtue signalling trap. Virtue signalling refers to the display of morals or values with the intention of gaining social approval, validation or appearing superior to others. In this mindset section, no values (or principles) are "better" than others, and it is important that you surface values that are truly important to you and your work.

There are two parts to the mindset section—Values & Principles.

VALUES

Self Power Analysis

A power analysis is a tool used to assess power dynamics within a group or organization, and to identify ways in which power is distributed and exercised. While power analysis is often used to assess power dynamics between individuals or groups, it is less common to use it to analyze one's own power. However, it can still be useful to reflect on your own power in order to better understand your role in relationships and interactions with others. Work through the following steps individually to conduct a power analysis on yourself:

1

Start by reflecting on the sources of power that you have. Consider the different types of power, such as:

- **Coercive power** (the ability to punish or harm others),
- **Reward power** (the ability to provide incentives or rewards),
- **Legitimate power** (the power that comes from a formal position or role),
- **Expert power** (the power that comes from knowledge or expertise), and
- **Referent power** (the power that comes from being respected or admired by others).

Think about which types of power you possess and how they influence your interactions with partners in your project and those in the local context.

2

Reflect on the ways in which you exercise power in your relationships with those involved with the project. Think about how you communicate, make decisions, and influence your partners and the local community. Consider the impact that your actions have on others, and whether they are perceived as fair, respectful, and empowering.

What can you do to make interactions more fair, respectful and empowering?

3

Consider the ways in which power is distributed within your agency. Think about who has formal authority, who has informal influence, and who has access to resources and information.

- **Who has power over you? Who do you have power over** (in your agency or in the local context)? Consider whether power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or groups, or whether it is more evenly distributed within the organization.
- **Who in your organization might you be able to recruit to support new ways of working towards systems innovation?**
- **Who has power/authority over you and who do you have power over that might be supportive?**
- **Who can you influence and bring on board?**
- **What mutual interests can you align with to ensure their buy in?**

4

Reflect on your own biases and assumptions, and how they might influence your perceptions of power dynamics. Consider how your identity (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, class, etc.) might influence your own power and privilege, and how it might impact the way others perceive you and respond to you.

How might you create a safe space for you and for others to freely ideate and innovate within your work based on this?

5

Finally, think about ways in which you can use your power to promote equity, inclusion, and justice in your interactions with others. Consider how you can share power, amplify the voices of marginalized individuals, and create space for diverse perspectives and experiences.

How might you ensure you use your power to amplify and create space for other systems actors and pioneers?

By conducting a power analysis on yourself, you can gain a deeper understanding of your own power and how it influences your relationships with your partners in the local context. This can help you to be more aware of your own biases and assumptions, and to use your power in a more intentional and equitable way. The power analysis may also help you reflect on opportunities for harnessing or recruiting collective power and agency for systems transformation.

Once you have reflected upon and answered the above questions, you are encouraged to discuss any insights you gained with your team. Discussing power with others can be challenging but helpful in discovering how your collective power impacts your programmatic work.

Check out **this article from the Stanford Social Innovation Review for examples of the relational work of systems change**, and see particularly Tips #4 and #5 on inner and outer change, and transforming power dynamics.

Now that you have completed the power analysis, this next activity will prompt you to reflect upon which values are most important to you and create value statements for each of your three chosen values. This exercise is pulled directly from **Elhra's Humanitarian Innovation Toolkit** (page 21).

1

Reflect on the values that are important to your organization, this project/program/portfolio, and you yourself. Write them all down. You may include any of the suggested values that are described below (or that are listed on page 24 of the linked toolkit), but please know that these are only a starting point, and you can select any values you align with whether or not they're listed in this framework or in the toolkit.

2

Once you have all of the values written down, reflect on how the values relate to one another. Are there any values that complement one another well? Any that are contradicting?

3

Choose 3 values that you believe are most important to you personally in carrying forward this systems innovation work. For each of these values you will write a 'value statement' as to why this value is important to you and your project specifically. For example value statements, please see the table below.

Inclusion	Collaboration	Participation
To recognise power structures and to reimagine an inclusive future	To create meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations with our partners	To question whose voices we value and why

4

Now that you have created your three value statements, reflect on and respond to the following questions:
How do you hope to live these values during the process of using this Framework for your work?
What do you think might get in the way of you living out these values? How can you foresee yourself working around these possible challenges?

5

Come together with your team and share your three value statements. Does anyone have similar values? How can you support one another in living out this values in your work?

Elhra's Humanitarian Innovation Toolkit has many exercises available that can support you in this mindset process. The toolkit includes six sections—Recognition, Search, Adaptation, Invention, Pilot & Scale. Although this is toolkit is for humanitarian innovation, many of the exercises are also applicable to systems innovation work.

Please do not choose your values based on what you believe they "should" look like. Create value statements that speak to your own personal and team values.

With your team, look at the four categories of values below. Identify if there's a category of values that most aligns with your chosen values and value statements. Please choose a category (or multiple) that you would like to move forward with throughout the mindset section. You do not have to select all the values within a category, just the ones that most resonate with you and your work. This means you might have values from different categories.

Click on your chosen category to move forward.

Relational Values

Relational Values that speak to equitable partnerships and greater localisation

VALUES

- Collaboration
- Shifting Power
- Equity

Mission-Driven Values

Mission-Driven Values that speak to being an innovator

VALUES

- Openness to Explore
- Persistence
- Courage

Knowledge-Centred Values

Knowledge-centred Values that speak to our ways of knowing and our approach to learning and tracking what we do

VALUES

- Continuous learning
- Positive Deviance
- Adaptability

Ethics-Based Values

Ethics-Based Values that speak to our engagement with the local ecosystem at large

VALUES

- Mutual accountability
- Sustainability
- Integrity

01 RELATIONAL VALUES THAT SPEAK TO EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND GREATER LOCALISATION

COLLABORATION, SHIFTING POWER, EQUITY

The Guild illustrates values of **Collaboration, Equity** and **Shifting Power.** (Drawn from the **System Innovation Initiative's Learning Festival** in 2022)

The Guild is a non-profit organization based in Atlanta, Georgia dedicated to job training and expanding economic development opportunities. The Guild found itself leading the way to enable the first cooperative ownership of housing and commercial space in Atlanta when it learned that previous inequitable policies and systems made it almost impossible for BIPOC communities to afford and own homes and commercial space.

This example also highlights a range of Systems Innovation Principles outlined in the next section. Learn more about the Guild's approach to systems innovation **here**.

RELATIONAL VALUES

COLLABORATION

CHALLENGE	• Collaboration may be only through formal partnerships with MOUs • Collaboration may be top-down rather than horizontal, with partnerships serving to achieve predetermined outcomes (rather than exploration) • Collaborations may not serve the learning and goals of the local partners

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Systems innovation efforts need to include diverse perspectives that reflect the local system • View system as a whole rather than its parts • Shared expertise • Local stakeholder leadership and buy-in • Resilience in the face of challenges is strengthened when there is support from a diverse set of partners
PROVOCATION	• What collaborations / partnerships current exist within your work? • Who / what do these collaborations serve? • Who is typically excluded from our programmatic processes? Who is working parallel to us that we're not engaging with?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

How we're defining Collaboration in Systems Innovation:

An ecosystem collectively working to transform the system. A flat collaboration structure where expertise and accountability is shared horizontally.

Collaboration and relationship structure center the partnership vision, interests, and norms of the local partners.

Possible examples of Equity in Systems Innovation:

- Examine who enables new relationships to exist
- Identify what types of relationships are present in your system (review Systems Innovation Initiative report **'The Patterns of Possibility'**). Many systems contain a hybrid of many types of relational patterns.
- Engage a wide array of stakeholders while co-creating solutions and compensating them for their time
- Build in time for networking and community building within the system

RELATIONAL VALUES

SHIFTING POWER

CHALLENGE

Like most global systems, international development, humanitarian aid, philanthropy, and other social change ecosystems exist at the intersection of capitalism, neocolonialism, racial injustice, gender inequality, and ableism, thus creating a power imbalance between funders and local innovators that further entrenches the same inequalities they aim to fix.

- Funders often have the power in setting development priorities, eligibility criteria, structures, and procedures that inform funding decisions, thus inherently marginalising the voices of local systems actors about what areas need funding in their communities.
- Funding is also often done in silos, with resources allocated to certain sectors without taking into account the rich diversity of innovative movements emerging around the world or the cross-sectoral interconnectedness required for real systemic impact.
- Money and decisions flow top-down from donors to grantees / partners
- Locally led organisations and actors actors are often beholden to the compliance rules of international development agencies and aren't given the agency to set systemic agendas or lead programmatic processes

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?

- Systems innovation efforts need to include diverse perspectives that reflect the local system
- View system as a whole rather than its parts
- Shared expertise
- Local stakeholder leadership and buy-in
- Resilience in the face of challenges is strengthened when there is support from a diverse set of partners

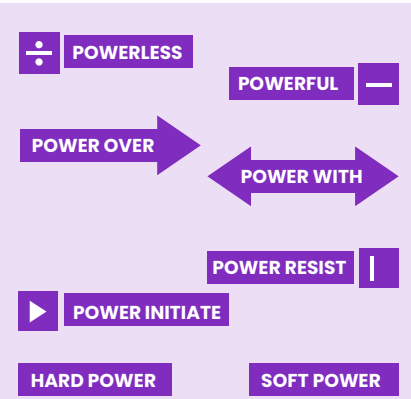
WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

How we're defining Shifting Power in Systems Innovation:
Donors shed their power in the system, enabling local partners to set priorities and programmatic objections.

Possible examples of Shifting Power in Systems Innovation:

- Enter direct partnerships with locally-led organizations (or a coalition of local organizations) rather than international intermediaries
- Take a participatory approach to project design, involving local communities where diverse local systems actors close to the problem set the agenda
- Recognize the expertise that local actors bring to your work and utilize the expertise in your decision making
- Support local actors agency to contribute to set donor agency's systemic priorities in a given context
- Pay local partners an equitable salary commensurate to the scope of work.
- Support institutional development of innovators and local system actors to support institutional sustainability for long-term systemic work.
- Give local organizations multi-year, unrestricted or flexible funding so that they can decide how to best allocate these funds for their systems-focused efforts & their organizational mission.

PROVOCATION



- What collaborations / partnerships current exist within your work?
- Who / what do these collaborations serve?
- Who is typically excluded from our programmatic processes? Who is working parallel to us that we're not engaging with?

To read more about different types of power, we encourage you to read the System Innovation Initiative's report '**The Power to Shift a System**'.

RELATIONAL VALUES
EQUITY

CHALLENGE	• Equitable partnerships and developing equitable donor practices go against the typical ways of working in development • Achieving equity metrics is often viewed as a check-box activity where mindsets don't truly shift • In programmatic work, equity may be defined by donors rather than through a collaborative process with local stakeholders • Truly respecting and centering local voices and ways of working in donor agencies work may require large-scale change within the donor organization which people may resist • Simply inviting diverse stakeholders to the decision-making table isn't enough. Equity means you must create a safe environment where they feel safe to speak freely.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Embedding greater equity in organisational practices will lead to fairer, more equitable practices, which will result in greater agency and systems change in the local ecosystem. • This could manifest in more sustainable programs that have the buy-in and commitment of local systems actors, who may have defined and co-designed the agenda and program. • Simply including ecosystem actors may not create a space for them to be able to freely, without fear of retribution, contribute to donor's activities, if they do not feel that the partnership is equitable.

PROVOCATION	• Embedding greater equity in organisational practices will lead to fairer, more equitable practices, which will result in greater agency and systems change in the local ecosystem. • This could manifest in more sustainable programs that have the buy-in and commitment of local systems actors, who may have defined and co-designed the agenda and program. • Simply including ecosystem actors may not create a space for them to be able to freely, without fear of retribution, contribute to donor's activities, if they do not feel that the partnership is equitable.

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Equity in Systems Innovation:** Ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, valued, and taken into consideration. Making accommodations for those typically excluded, leveling the playing field for participation and input. Respect for local agency. Local actors are in charge of the program, not just in decision-making power but in resource allocation. **Possible examples of Equity in Systems Innovation:** • Making accommodations for those typically excluded can level the playing field for them to fully participation and provide input • Learning about local ways of working and incorporating their norms into programmatic processes • Consult with local stakeholders when developing donor priorities • Enabling local partners to develop programmatic objectives

02 MISSION-DRIVEN VALUES THAT SPEAK TO BEING AN INNOVATOR

OPENNESS TO EXPLORE
PERSISTENCE
COURAGE

MISSION-DRIVEN VALUES

OPENNESS TO EXPLORE

CHALLENGE	• Donors are often hesitant to fund "exploration" without concrete activities that will lead to the pre-defined outcomes. • There is also sometimes a hesitancy to explore new partnerships and build relationships with unproven systems pioneers. • Risk of funding exploration is high for big donors as it may not lead to results and good value for money.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	Systems innovation does not have a roadmap/equation to follow for success. The steps needed to shift a system are dependent on the challenge and the local systems involved. Indeed it requires experimentation and testing alternative ideas as part of the process. There is thus, a need to explore various solutions, and viewpoints, while not working solely to meet predefined outcomes. Everything is worth exploring as systems innovation necessitates imagination.
PROVOCATION	• How open is your project to exploring various activities and outcomes? • If your project has pre-defined outcomes it aims to achieve, who defined these outcomes? • How flexible are the activities in achieving these outcomes?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Openness to Explore in Systems Innovation:** • Challenging the status quo by embracing diverse perspectives and fostering a program where these perspectives can feed into unique programmatic activities. Thinking beyond incremental improvements and exploring what the system could look like in the future. Adopting an agile and flexible mindset where testing and iterating is fully supported in programmatic work. **Possible examples of Openness to Explore in Systems Innovation:** • Exploring alternative ways of knowing and iterative learning • Challenging assumptions on the 'status quo' of activities and why the particular outcomes were chosen • Co-creation of solutions with the local community, enable their vision to be central in prototyping and experimentation. • Donors can increase their level of 'acceptable' risk to allow for experimentation in systems efforts • Embrace uncertainty and ambiguity in protoyping through reframing it as testing and continuous learning. Every 'failure' is a step closer towards success

MISSION-DRIVEN VALUES

PERSISTENCE

CHALLENGE	• Systems innovation takes a long time in a development system that is used to seeing fast, clear results in the short-term. • There is often limited long-term support from international development agencies, and systemic efforts may lose momentum as a result, especially without a strong, sustainable ecosystem nurturing such efforts. • Failure is often not an option in development funding. If results aren't being met, funding is often cut. Yet the path to systems innovation is not straightforward and is naturally full of failures and unintended outcomes, that require persistence in trialling new solutions.. • Challenging dominant hierarchies and ways of working in the current system can be challenging. There can be push-back from within organisations and from the entrenched system itself, which can affect motivation and perceived self-efficacy to do the work.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	In systems innovation you are constantly testing and iterating, and it is important to move forward even in the face of failure or setbacks. Moving towards a different way of working in the development/humanitarian aid sector (such as integrating Systems Innovation practices) is challenging and it may seem easier to continue with how things are done. Systems innovators must continue to persist forward even when staying in the current system may seem easier. Enabling and supporting local partners to persist forward even when initial solutions may not work can lead to strong final programming and outcomes

PROVOCATION	• How does your project or programme handle setbacks? • What kind of support do you provide to innovators to move forward in the face of challenges? • What opportunities/mechanisms exist in your organisation to speak about or advocate for more systemic practice on an on-going basis?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Persistence in Systems Innovation:** • Continuing to move forward with Systems Innovation efforts even in the face of setbacks, challenges and failures. Donors can provide additional support to innovators and local partners when they are faced with challenges in their Systems Innovation efforts. They can also find allies of systems innovation in their organisation to join forces with to continuously work on changing the system from within. **Possible examples of Persistence in Systems Innovation:** • Continue to provide funding even when the programme faces setbacks • Utilise principle-based reporting rather than mainly outcome-based reporting to encourage testing and iterating • Foster programme processes and a culture that encourage learning from challenges & failures • Seek potential supporters of systems innovation in your organisation and discuss how to advocate for more systemic practice across the organisation.

MISSION-DRIVEN VALUES
COURAGE

CHALLENGE	• Operating in the current ways of working doesn't leave room for courage to try new models of working. Doing something in a new way is risky and may not lead to tangible results • Development / humanitarian systems are large and can have relatively consistent ways of operating. • Those working in your organisation or those who hold power in the current system may resist systems innovation efforts because they could stand to lose power, security, and even relevance in an emerging system.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Questioning a system and challenging current ways of working requires courage, resilience, and perseverance • Standing out as a pioneer and pushing forward despite resistance to make a system more equitable necessitates courage • Changing a system from within is difficult and can be full of risk, as is challenging a dominant entrenched system with a certain path forward. • In addition, it can be challenging to reflect on and acknowledge your biases and power, and to shift power in the system. • The complexity of systems innovation and the uncertainty around its specific processes and outcomes be uncomfortable to practitioners and can require courage to embark on the process without a clear map
PROVOCATION	• How open is your project/program/ portfolio to challenge from within the system? How does it respond? • How open is your project/program/ portfolio to exploring promising innovations and activities with uncertain outcomes? • If your project has pre-defined outcomes it aims to achieve, who defined these outcomes? How flexible are the activities in achieving these outcomes?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Courage in Systems Innovation:** • Continuing to work towards the envisioned emerging system in the face of challenges from within your organisation and from the dominant current system. Being a pioneer advocating for new practices, solutions, ideas and collaborations that often differ from current ways of working and programming. **Possible examples of Courage in Systems Innovation:** • Find a supportive community to support you on your systems innovation efforts • Continue to ask difficult questions of those in power • Consult with the local stakeholders to understand what their priorities are so you can advocate for them in closed-door donor conversations • Encouraging challenge to your practices from those you work with and adapting your systems innovation efforts to address those challenges as they arise, understanding that every 'failure' gets you closer to the best solution

03 KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED VALUES

THAT SPEAK TO OUR WAYS OF KNOWING AND OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING AND TRACKING WHAT WE DO

- CONTINUOUS LEARNING
- POSITIVE DEVIANCE
- ADAPTABILITY

KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED VALUES

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

CHALLENGE	• Learning is typically done at the end of projects or at pre-determined check points to inform MEAL efforts. • Learnings mid-project may not be able to change the course of the project. • Learning may be only for a small proportion of activities or incremental changes, rather than feeding into larger systems change efforts. • Current learning efforts may serve the interests of those in power (donors), not those who are impacted by the system. • For the most part, positive outcomes are privileged and shared, failures which provide rich opportunities for systemic learning are often hidden or covered up.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Systems innovation necessitates consistent iteration and adaption, which can only be done through constant and thorough learning from successes, failures and the unexpected. • Individuals working in systems innovation need to be constantly learning as well, reflecting on their own biases and assumptions. • Systems innovation is a long process, and continuous learning at every phase of the work and in every aspect can inform overall success.
PROVOCATION	• What does learning look like within your project? Who informs the learning agenda? • How much room is there to deviate from the pre-planned learning agenda stated at the project outset? • How do learnings inform programmatic efforts moving forward?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Continuous Learning in Systems Innovation:** Ongoing improvement, exploration, and adaptation. **Possible examples of Continuous Learning in Systems Innovation:** • All systems actors working on systems innovation efforts have 'adopted' a curiosity and growth mindset. They are consistently reflecting on and learning from their own experiences working on systems innovation efforts. • Staying informed on what is happening within the project at all times--including what is/isn't working, what local actors think about the project, etc. • Seeking feedback from all stakeholders on the systems innovation efforts, create a safe space so honest feedback can be shared • Experimenting and prototyping of solutions facilitated by continuous feedback • Embrace interdisciplinary approaches in systems innovation approaches -> draw upon different domains to address complex systemic challenges • Sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience widely to support broader systems innovation efforts

KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED VALUES

POSITIVE DEVIANCE

CHALLENGE	• Positive deviance emphasizes the notion that solutions to problems already exist within the community itself, rather than relying solely on external expertise or interventions. • Expertise is often believed to be a resource external to the system that needs to be imported to carry out the project • Ideation of the strategy or theory of change may be so explicitly done by the donor in the published RFP, that there may not be much room for innovative local solutions that deviate from the stated strategy. • Reconfiguring knowledge and learning practices will likely difficult for those who are giving up power or those who hold biases and assumptions about the capabilities of the system and the people within it. • Donor funded projects are set up to succeed to provide the best value-for-money, failure and experimentation are often viewed as waste or not a responsible use of funds and thus, frowned upon

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Likely to increase project sustainability if solution comes from local community building on local knowledge and capacities. • Supports development and agency of the local community • True understanding of the local system is not likely to come from those external to the system who might be lacking context or nuance on the systemic challenges.

PROVOCATION	• How does your project value local/ indigenous knowledge? • How do you prioritise the input of diverse ways of knowing in your strategy, project or portfolio design?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Positive Deviance in Systems Innovation:** • Positive deviance emphasizes the notion that solutions to problems already exist within the community itself, rather than relying solely on external expertise or interventions. It is honoring and centring indigenous and local knowledge and expertise in the project processes and activities. **Possible examples of Positive Deviance in Systems Innovation:** • Co-design strategies with members of the local ecosystem and create less prescriptive RFPs that allow for unrestricted innovation and include diverse local ecosystem actors and leaders in the decision-making for funding. • Shift power for decision-making around which ideas are tested to the local ecosystem. • Source solutions from the local context to support local innovators and leaders • Support and strengthen local knowledge systems including consulting diverse ecosystem pioneers and stakeholders. • Fund a local convener (see **roles section** for more info) to identify the communities most pressing challenges, release an RFP that is open to all local innovations that target identified challenges **Example in the field:** • USAID and GCC Country Innovation Platform

KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED VALUES

ADAPTABILITY

CHALLENGE	• Programme activities and outcomes are pre-defined by the donor and are difficult to change mid-project • Adaptations to the project or programme may only come from the donor rather than the local partners • Funding is often restricted and inflexible and closely tied to a log frame, and it can be difficult for local systems actors to modify, adapt or pivot significantly from the pre-stated strategy and outcomes.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Learning from failures can provide key insights on next steps for projects • Systems are constantly changing and donor programming needs to adapt to the evolving system. • Systems innovation is a learning and adaptation process that needs to prioritise learning and adapting over fixed, predetermined outcomes. • If a project is adapted to evolving local needs it is more likely to have long term impact because it is responsive to the realities of the system rather than of a fixed agenda.
PROVOCATION	• How does your program adapt the unexpected? • How does learning in your project inform activities? • If your project has pre-defined outcomes it aims to achieve, who defined these outcomes? How flexible are the activities in achieving these outcomes?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Adaptability in Systems Innovation:** • Programmatic activities are adapting to new learnings unearthed by the project team and local context on an ongoing basis. Project is resilient to the unexpected by allowing room for failure and the ability to adapt programs based on it. **Possible examples of Adaptability in Systems Innovation:** • Build flexibility into the budget and strategy for continuous learning and adaptation. • Collaboratively make sense of interim learnings with other systems actors and collectively adapt strategy to respond to learning. • Regard failure or unintended outcomes as opportunities for rich systemic learning that can be addressed by adaptation or much-needed programmatic pivots. • If changes to the program are going to be made, have these changes be decided upon by local partners and systems actors, informed by programmatic or systemic learning and knowledge exchange.

04 ETHICS-BASED VALUES THAT SPEAK TO OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM AT LARGE

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, INTEGRITY

Example: Podcast by Indy Johar and Annette Dhami from Dark Matter. This example centers on building new institutions and explores relational-based values of learning and ethics-based values of accountability and governance.

The podcast series centers on discovering, designing, and developing the institutional "Dark Matter" that supports a more democratic, distributed, and sustainable future.
Value themes include:

- **Learning:** shifting our approach to learning to create space within organizations to learn and also across sets of stakeholders.

- **Accountability:** Our current accountability structures are architectures of control. The overhead of control has become more complex and costly. The control model of governance was put in place under the industrial view of the world. In today's world, a different view of governance would include meta learning – where the system becomes a model for learning. Not just internal learning at the organization level, but stakeholder learning. This would move accountability from an 'overhead' to a 'value'. We need that shift the landscape – to create space for this learning and trust.

- **Governance:** Governance in organizations needs to be built on trust, acknowledging cultural bias. There is tension in the spectrum between "patronising" governance and fostering independent and autonomous entrepreneurialism. We need to acknowledge the cultural biases we have and think about how we consider risk socially, not technically, and to reflect on what are incentives to make this shift from a culture of viewing system certain categories of people as inherently untrustworthy or corrupt.

ETHICS-BASED VALUES

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

CHALLENGE	• Current accountability mechanisms are often top-down and underpinned by the belief that accountability only needs to flow from grantee to funder • To shift the discourse about accountability to the accountability international development agencies also have towards the system may be challenging, as it may flip the entire partnership model on its head.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Everyone involved in your project or programme needs to be accountable to an agreed upon set of expectations.
PROVOCATION	• Who is currently accountable to whom in your project/program/portfolio? • How does accountability to the wider system show up in your work? • What would it take to embed mutual accountability across your project/program/portfolio and your organisations ways of working? What first steps could you in your role take towards embedding this value in your engagements with those you work with?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

How we're defining Accountability in Systems Innovation:

- Mutually-created and agreed upon expectations; Responsible and transparent behaviors of all stakeholders; reciprocal accountability mechanisms.
- Accountability may necessitate vulnerability and courage as keeping yourself and others accountable to expectations may provoke challenging conversations.

Possible examples of Accountability in Systems Innovation:

- Programmatic expectations for all stakeholders involved in the project (donors, international intermediaries, local implementers, etc.) are developed through an inclusive co-creation process and mechanisms are developed to stakeholders accountable for these agreed upon expectations
- Donor openly communicates their expectations with their grantees, creates space for grantees to freely share their expectations for the donor. Donor is held accountable to these expectations
- Identify community expectations and create accountability mechanisms to encourage donors and implementing partners to fulfill these expectations and to collect feedback from the wider system and act on it.

Example in the field:

- See this **SSIR Article** about approaches to embedding grantee inclusion for mutual accountability

ETHICS-BASED VALUES

SUSTAINABILITY

CHALLENGE	• Projects often work on short funding timelines, which may not be long enough to begin facilitating systems change • Solutions may be implemented in a siloed manner, not taking into account the wider system • Solutions may be imported and not sourced from the local community

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Systems innovation requires a long term vision or a guiding 'north star' that is developed by those in the local context • Sustainability of natural resources, alongside sustaining and centering the local culture and ecosystem • There needs to be a vision for sustainability once the donor funding ends.
PROVOCATION	• How does your project or programme think about sustainability or integrate sustainability efforts into your work? • What gap exists between this project/ program/ portfolio and our vision for sustainable systems transformation? • What is the bigger picture in the project/program or portfolio you're managing? • What is your implicit "end-game"? Where does your work fit into that big picture? • Recognising that our project, program or portfolio will end at the conclusion of a strategic period/cycle, what does that mean for systems innovation in this context which never ends and is in ongoing need of support and resourcing? How will we exit the system without doing harm?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Sustainability in Systems Innovation:** • Ownership, co-creation, and buy-in of programmatic activities by local stakeholders and community. Project has long term vision (guiding 'North Star' defined by those in the local context) that programmatic efforts are contributing to. All activities and decisions in the project or programme centre the sustainability of the local environment and culture. **Possible examples of Sustainability in Systems Innovation:** • Provide multi-year unrestricted funding to locally-led organizations • Have local stakeholders outline a vision for the transformed system that all programmatic activities will work towards • Discuss with the local community the possible consequences if this project is not to be sustainable

ETHICS-BASED VALUES

INTEGRITY

CHALLENGE	• May be challenging to uphold personal values in a system that has set, rigid values that underpin how it operates • Individual values and morals may not be shared by the wider team or organisation • Organisational definitions of value for money in programming may override individual values of shifting power and openness to explore • Integrity can be hard to maintain with strong resistors in the "the mothership" especially when organisational or systemic stated values are not aligned with expectations for actual mandated ways of working in the system.

WHY THIS SYSTEMS ORIENTED VALUE IS IMPORTANT?	• Those who hold power within the system (such as donors) can have profound impacts on the local context, making it important to underpin all activities with strong personal and organisational values, not only in written mission statements, but also in practice. • A donor's integrity can be directly tied to their credibility within the context
PROVOCATION	• What personal values do you bring to working at a donor agency? • How do you uphold these values in the face of resistance? • What values underpin your project, programme or portfolio? Who defined these values?

WHAT COULD THESE VALUES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?	**How we're defining Integrity in Systems Innovation:** • Improved alignment of organisational values of equity, respect and sustainability with actual ways of operating in the system. This involves accountability to stated values and agreements and working alongside the local community to identify local values and seeking resonance with the values of the project/program/portfolio. It also involves continuously monitoring if these values are being upheld. • Those working at international development agencies define their own personal values that they will bring to their work and engagements within their organisations and the system and uphold those values in the face of adversity. **Possible examples of Integrity in Systems Innovation:** • Upholding values of mutual accountability and respect of local partners can encourage the donor to facilitate their own accountability to partners • Measuring values-based performance as part of engagement within the system e.g. through equity metrics and feedback from those you work with in the system • Accounting for local values and ways of working in implementation to build trust within the local ecosystem.

PRINCIPLES

Introduction

The complexity of the societies, systems and systemic challenges we work on, means that addressing them through systems innovation can be a challenging prospect even for those committed to the process. Systems innovation can be a complex, messy process that requires embracing uncertainty because the processes and outcomes are not linear. Moreover, systems innovation is not dependent solely on any single organisation's projects, programs and portfolios but rather on the interconnected multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral collaborations and roles that development agencies, public sector, private sector, civil society and other systems actors bring to the process.

Because we cannot control the systems change we are contributing towards, we need to navigate by judgement, realizing that we might make mistakes, being therefore ready to adapt and pivot accordingly. Embracing the uncertainty of systems innovation can be filled with discomfort, requiring changing entrenched mindsets, practices, ways of working, policies, and interrogating the embedded implicit biases and assumptions we bring to this work.

In the Values section, we explored what values we bring to disrupting current dominant ways of working and embracing more systemic practice. Navigating the evolving process of systems innovation without a predetermined map means we may need a different kind of compass consisting of values and guidance in the form of principles based on those values we've identified as aligning with our goal of working towards systems innovation. To interrogate and clarify your values around the work of systems innovation in your project/program/portfolio, you may choose to take on the values exercise in the Mindset piece above if you have not already done so.

The complexities that make up systemic challenges are not by chance, and thus your approach to tackling those complexities and our selection of entry points for doing so within our work, cannot be arbitrary. It is therefore important to reflect on what values and principles could constitute your project/program/portfolio compass at a given point in your timeline and use that as reflective guidance for selecting your entry points.

In this section of the framework, you will identify guiding principles that align with your project, program or portfolio which will serve as a "North Star" for your work. You can subsequently use them as a point of reflection as you select entry points.

We recommend defining Guiding Principles with your team as this makes your common ground and shared values salient, and these can be used to communicate with partners.

Exercise to Surface Guiding Principles

Below are examples of guiding principles that you may feel your project/program/portfolio closely aligns to and which could guide your selection of (an) entry point(s).

Your work may be most closely aligned with one or more, or even all the examples of guiding principles below. You will need to prioritize what guiding principles are most pertinent at the stage you are engaging with this guide, recognising that the selection of entry points is an evolving process you will engage with differently, at various points in your project/program/portfolio journey.

Task to Surface Guiding Principles for your Project

1. Review the examples of guiding principles in the purple boxes beginning on page 51.
2. Select 1-3 principles which align most closely with your current stage in your project, program or portfolio. These principles should be related to values that are important to you and your organisation, so that there is resonance with your organisation's practice and mandate within the system.

Alternatively, if find that your current work does not resonate with any of the examples below or if you want to create principles that match the unique ways your organisation operates in the system, you can undertake the following task (next slide):

Alternative Task to Develop Guiding Principles for your Project

(Skip Step 1 if you already did the Values exercise and use the Values you surfaced to move to this step, Step 2)

1. Consider your organisation's values. You may surface this from the mission or vision statements or written or unwritten policies about ways of working. Select 3 values that align most closely to your current project, program or portfolio and your ambition to work more systemically within that project/program/portfolio.
2. Reflecting on the values you've surfaced, identify what ambitions of your project/program/portfolio address those values within your mandated ways of working in the system. Come up with a "North Star" (aspirational) principle statement that articulates how that value could show up in your work if you/your organisation was working more systemically

   (E.g. if you've selected a value like continuous learning, you may articulate how your project/program/portfolio aims to demonstrate/align with that value in implementation with a guiding principle like **"we aim to value diverse ways of knowing and learning and to use these forms of knowledge to constantly adapt within our project/program/portfolio."**

   OR if you've selected a value like perseverance, you may articulate a guiding principle like "we aim to strengthen the adaptive capacity of the system through flexible approaches to funding and programs, and fostering the system's ability to learn, respond, and adapt to changing circumstances in the long-term).
3. Develop 1-3 principles which align most closely with your current stage in your project, program or portfolio.

Now that you have reviewed these principles, and/or adopted or created 1 or 2 guiding principles for the current stage of your work, please reflect on how you can integrate these principles and values into your work. What entry point(s) will be needed to move you forward in alignment with the selected guiding principle(s)? What entry points are feasible and how can they contribute to your existing efforts? What would need to change to integrate these values and principles in your work?

If you need extra support, please see the **Moving from Mindset to Entry Points section below.**

RELATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

01

We aim to think beyond vertical top-down projects and individual interventions to adopt a more portfolio-based approach that considers the broader range of interventions, projects and programs and systems actors required to transform a system in the long term.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Identifying synergies between existing projects and programs and networking systems actors within them for shared learning. • Advocating for portfolio thinking within your organisation.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Fostering collaboration and coordination between and amongst teams and departments • Facilitating shared learning and information sharing across the organisation especially for those working within the same ecosystem or region.

02

We aim to shift power to systems actors closest to the systemic challenges to lead the transformation, and to center local voices and vision.
We explore what local ownership means and reflect that in our role in shifting power and resources so that programmes are truly localized (localy-owned, driven, and led).

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Prioritising input and information from diverse local systems actors for co-designing solutions and responding to emerging issues. • Platforming those closes to the system to share lessons learned and solutions on a broader stage (through conferences, meetings, networking opportunities etc).
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Prioritising ecosystem strengthening and development of communities of as standard practice across all projects, programs and portfolios. • Funding coalitions, hubs, and other local intermediaries to make decisions on what solutions are needed and should be prioritised in the system.

RELATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

03

We aim to draw in pioneers and innovators typically excluded from systems transformation spaces who can bring new ideas, knowledge and practices, recognising that equity is an ongoing practice, and the circle of inclusion must only get larger as the systems transformation process progresses.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Constantly seeking to widen the network of local actors involved with your project/program/ portfolio. • Intentionally seeking and prioritising the inclusion of marginalised voices within design and implementation activities.	**WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)**	• Developing funds and mechanisms for engaging with marginalised groups and responding to the concerns of those underrepresented within the organisation and its projects, programs and portfolios.

04

We aim to support the building of networks, ecosystems, and communities of practice that center collaborative design and action.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Seek out existing communities of practice and networks in your practice area within the ecosystem(s) where you work and learn what roles they need you to play. • Organise open workshops or learning events to share and promote knowledge and resources liberally within the ecosystems where you work as part of your project/program/portfolio.	**WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)**	• Engage in local and regional networks with other local and international funding and implementation organisations with similar mandates to avoid duplication and engender learning . • Foster cross-sectoral collaboration across portfolios to speak to the complexity of systems transformation.

RELATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EXAMPLE

Relational Guiding Principles in Action (Part 1)

The Guild: an Example illustrating relational guiding principles in action, drawn from Rockwool's Learning Festival in January, 2023.

The Guild, a non-profit organization in Atlanta, was dedicated to job training and economic development opportunities through it's 10-month program, but realized a new system was needed when it found that the people it was trying to reach struggled to utilise the programs it provided. Mostly affected were individuals from BIPOC communities—and despite completing the Guild's job programs and successfully landing more than one job or launching an enterprise—they could not afford housing or commercial space to enable scaling their businesses in the way initially outlined by the program. This led the Guild to explore systems innovation and resulted in a cooperative ownership of housing and commercial space—the first of its kind in Atlanta, Georgia. The approach highlights how empathy, shifting power and thinking beyond vertical top-down projects can support the building of collaborative networks that design and action transformed systems.

Nikeshka Iyengar, Executive Director, of the Guild shared: "Nikeshka Iyengar,Executive Director, of the Guild shared:
"We did not want to just disrupt the system, we wanted to move to a completely new system. We looked at the root causes BIPOC communities suffered from – gentrification and affordable housing are much bigger issues (that job training and employment alone would not solve). These were human rights issues..." To learn more about the Guild's approach to systems innovation **here.**

MISSION-DRIVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

05

We see systems innovation as an ongoing process and systems as constantly changing, and thus, in need of ongoing support, resourcing, disruption, and innovation. We aim to support the strengthening of the system to take on this long-term work.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)
• Challenging and redefining your own assumptions and perceptions about the system through open conversations with contacts within the system. • Advocating within and outside your organisation for more systemic practice and for systems innovation.	• Prioritising ecosystem strengthening as a cross-cutting practice across all organisational workstreams. • Providing greater institutional support to strengthen the development and sustainability of local innovation ecosystem builders.

06

We aim to disrupt standard modes of practice by taking calculated risks to support systems pioneers and innovative collaborations who are pursuing high-potential approaches to tackling systemic challenges.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)
• Taking a portfolio approach to managing and balancing risk across the portfolio, e.g. supporting promising lower value, higher risk innovative experiments, in concert with higher value, lower risk initiatives. • Openly seek out systems pioneers pursuing high-potential innovative approaches and discuss ways to support them within your network.	• Exploring policy opportunities for encouraging experimentation and calculated risk-taking across portfolios in order to support the testing of innovative ideas and initiatives.

MISSION-DRIVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

07

We aim to transform the boundaries of the current system in the face of resistance, building alliances to sustain this work, and effectively communicating the rationale for change.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Educating oneself about systemic practice and systems innovation and joining communities of practice around systems. • Discussing systemic practice in a way that aligns the systemic vision to organisational vision, mission and objectives. • Organising and facilitating multi-dimensional learning and capacity building sessions within the organisation and externally that demonstrate evidence of the need for systems innovation and showcase early successes and progress.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Developing a clear vision for how the organisation sustainably engages within the systems in which it works. • Mandating a systemic approach for all projects, programs and portfolios. • Dismantling siloed ways of working and engaging with other stakeholders and sectors with a collaboration mindset.

EXAMPLE	**The Levi Stauss Foundation's shift from shorter-term "transactional" grant-making to longer-term commitments focused on strengthening leaders, their organisations and movements.** Based on feedback from those working in social justice, they recognised the need to drive more systemic change over incremental change. By shifting their orientation from grant-making to to to change-making, they began to implement more flexible, longer-term funding, provided technical assistance and resources to pioneers and innovators. One programme implemented under this new approach was their Pioneers in Justice approach which provides emerging social justice pioneers and innovators working systemically to transform their communities with flexible, longer-term funding that provided pioneers with the time and space they needed to collaborate with other leaders, experiment on new approaches, engage diverse audiences in social justice work, and reshape their networks. Recognising systems innovation as a long-term process with need for flexible ongoing support to disrupt standard ways of doing things by taking calculated risks, the Foundation, restructured its practices, moving from 1-year funding commitments to five-years, and committing 15-20% of its overall budget, and encouraging desk officers managing project and programme budgets to commit 15-20% of their budget to innovative, experimental higher risk approaches that supported systems pioneers. This example also appears under the Due Diligence & Procurement entry point. To find out more about the Levi Strauss Foundation and 7 other brave organisations aligning to various guiding principles in their work, please see the resource linked above.

KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

08

We aim to explore alternative ideas, solutions and ways of knowing, iteratively learning and testing new, improved, transformed, (or marginalised indigenous) practices and mechanisms for working to transform the system. (borrowed from OPSI Playbook)

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Building in flexibility and adaptability into project/program/portfolio design to accommodate learning from the system. • Seeking, identifying and amplifying positive deviance within the system. • Setting up feedback loops with partners and others you work with and exchanging feedback on processes and ways of working while collaboratively addressing the feedback received.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Fostering an open culture of learning from successes, failures and the unexpected. • Institutionalising adaptive learning and management approaches that encourage staff to regularly assess and adapt their strategies based on emerging feedback. • Changing M&E standards and practices to include various ways of knowing that are also context-driven and systems-designed.

09

We aim to prioritize learning as a continuous activity with potentially unexpected outcomes, and we will mainstream the diffusion and sharing of learnings to all systems stakeholders

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Allocating adequate resources for adaptive learning in the design phase. • Developing a framework for continuously sharing learning and exchanging knowledge across the system. • Co-designing learning objectives and mechanisms with systems actors. • Sharing learnings across the system from various projects/programs/portfolios managed with systems actors for joint systemic learning, feedback, and exchange.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Reframing organisations learning policy to not punish failure and unintended outcomes but rather to see them as a form of learning and an opportunity to share lessons learned and demonstrate resilience.

KNOWLEDGE-CENTRED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

10 We aim to be responsive to new and emerging data that surfaces as we learn, and to adapt and manage risk collaboratively with inclusivity, transparency.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Within projects/programs/portfolios, fostering multidisciplinary open learning networks, partnerships or program monitoring/management committees with other systems actors to troubleshoot emerging risks and respond to new knowledge. • Regularly engaging with wider range of systems actors and other stakeholders to collect and address feedback on intended and unintended impacts.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Embedding the resourcing of adaptive learning into organisational MEL policies and mandating flexibility. • Providing professional development training in adaptive learning and management for staff.

EXAMPLE	**The UNDP Regional Hub covering Thailand in collaboration with ALC, a Basque innovation lab, supported the UNDP Thailand Social Innovation Platform which developed a methodology of deep ethnographic and digital listening** to capture the emerging and changing perceptions and behaviours in real-time to contribute to co-designing public policies, initiatives and portfolios. The complexity of the narratives that emerged from the deep listening process revealed perceptions on systemic challenges and opportunities within the Southern Thai regions and communities, as well as what behaviours and thinking patterns across different levels and thematic areas were reinforcing the status quo. As the article summarises, **" the data that results from (the process of deep, ethnographic listening to those most affected) is crucial for co-designing a portfolio of interconnected actions that are not only linked to the region's needs and opportunities, but are also supported by the community. Through experimentation and scaling of such portfolios, systemic solutions to complex issues,..., can be created."** This example exemplifies the need to listen closely to the insights of those within the system on a continuous basis and ensure that projects/programs/portfolios are responsive to inputs and feedback from the system.

ETHICS-BASED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

11

We aim to prioritize mutual accountability among all partners and within the ecosystem at large, recognising that accountability is multi-directional and that all systems actors are responsible for their commitments towards driving change.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)
• Collaboratively setting expectations and responsibilities and commitments with other systems actors and regularly checking in to monitor progress. • Creating open channels for dialogue, feedback exchange, mutual support, and collective decision-making. • Making a habit of transparency with partners and other systems actors even when it means difficult conversations. • Instituting feedback mechanisms that stakeholders can feel safe using to provide honest feedback about your practices and ways of working and responding to feedback provided..	• Articulating clear policies around organisational accountability to local ecosystem actors the organisation funds and to the ecosystems of operation.

12

We aim to support systems transformation and innovation processes that prioritise the long-term well-being of society, the environment and future generations.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)
• Cross-sectorally networking the partners and stakeholders your organisation engages with within an ecosystem for long-term engagement beyond project/program life cycles and strategic periods. • Advocating for longer funding cycles and working with systems actors to plan strategically for next sustainable systems transformation beyond project/program funding.	• Embeding flexibility into organisational pract

ETHICS-BASED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

13

We aim to foster transparency and trust within the system through ethical practice prioritises accountability, feedback, and collaboration.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR DESK OFFICERS (EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION)	• Embedding ethical practice in decision-making by involving diverse systems actors and stakeholders and ensuring that decision-making mechanisms are clearly communicated to systems actors. • Seeking to learn about local contexts and understanding of ethics and engendering a dialogue on integrity and ethics for mutual understanding. • Taking the time to engage honestly with local systems actors, clarifying your opportunities and limitations in your role and seeking to build trust in the system.
WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE FOR ORGANISATIONS (EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION)	• Embedding the resourcing of adaptive learning into organisational MEL policies and mandating flexibility. • Providing professional development training in adaptive learning and management for staff.

EXAMPLE

Ethical Guiding Principles in Action (Part 2)

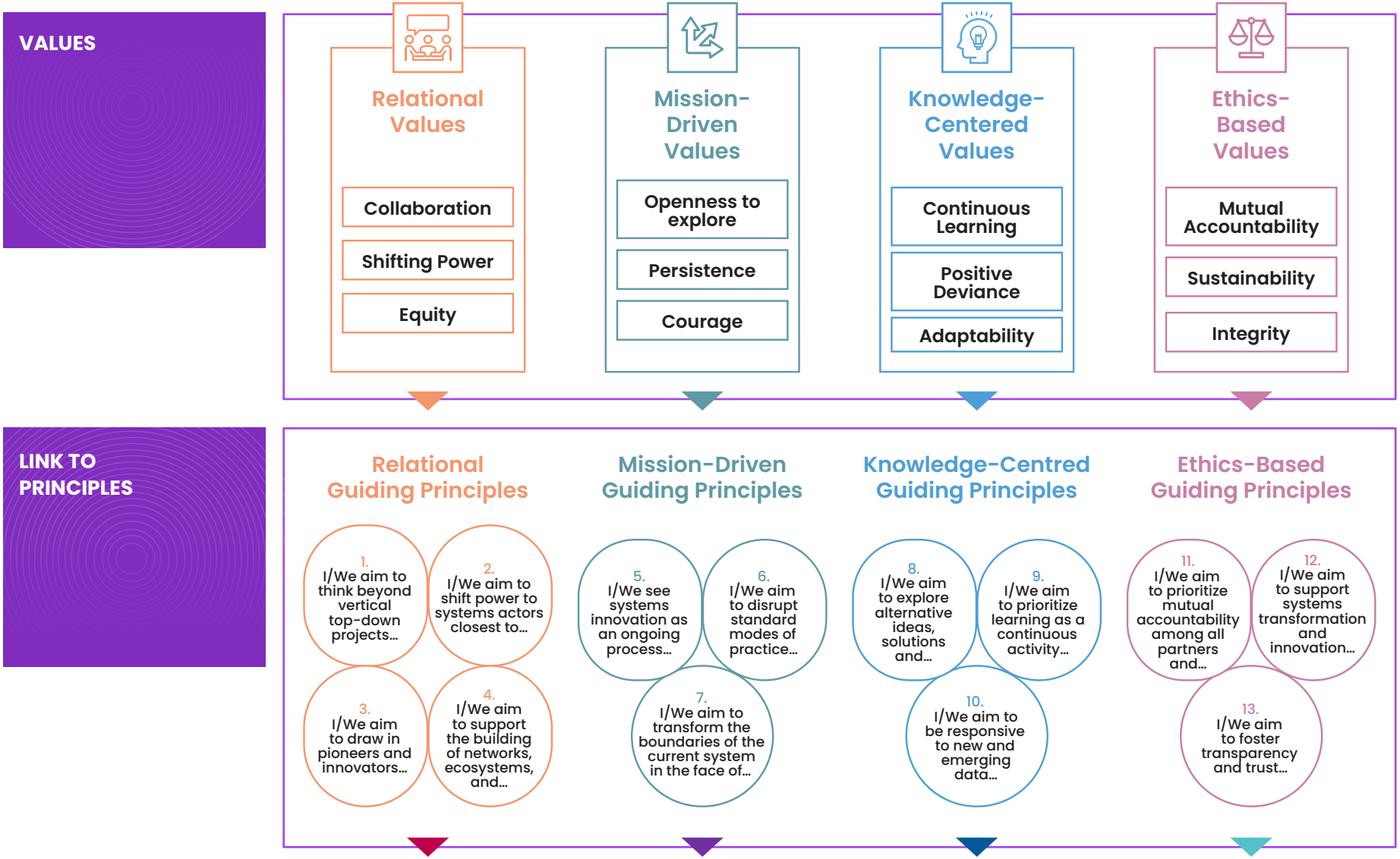
(See Part 1 under 'Relational Guiding' Principles)

The Guild: an Example illustrating ethical guiding principles in action, drawn from Rockwool's Learning Festival in January, 2023.

Executive Director of The Guild, Nikeshka Iyengar, explains how **The Guild** began working toward broader systems change:
"There were not existing co-op laws on the books in Atlanta. We developed a pilot program which took the traditional real estate problem and flipped the script, where people who live in the real estate get to own the housing. We developed affordable housing, on top of working spaces, and set up a community stewardship trust – any profit that the space makes, gets redistributed to the stewards."

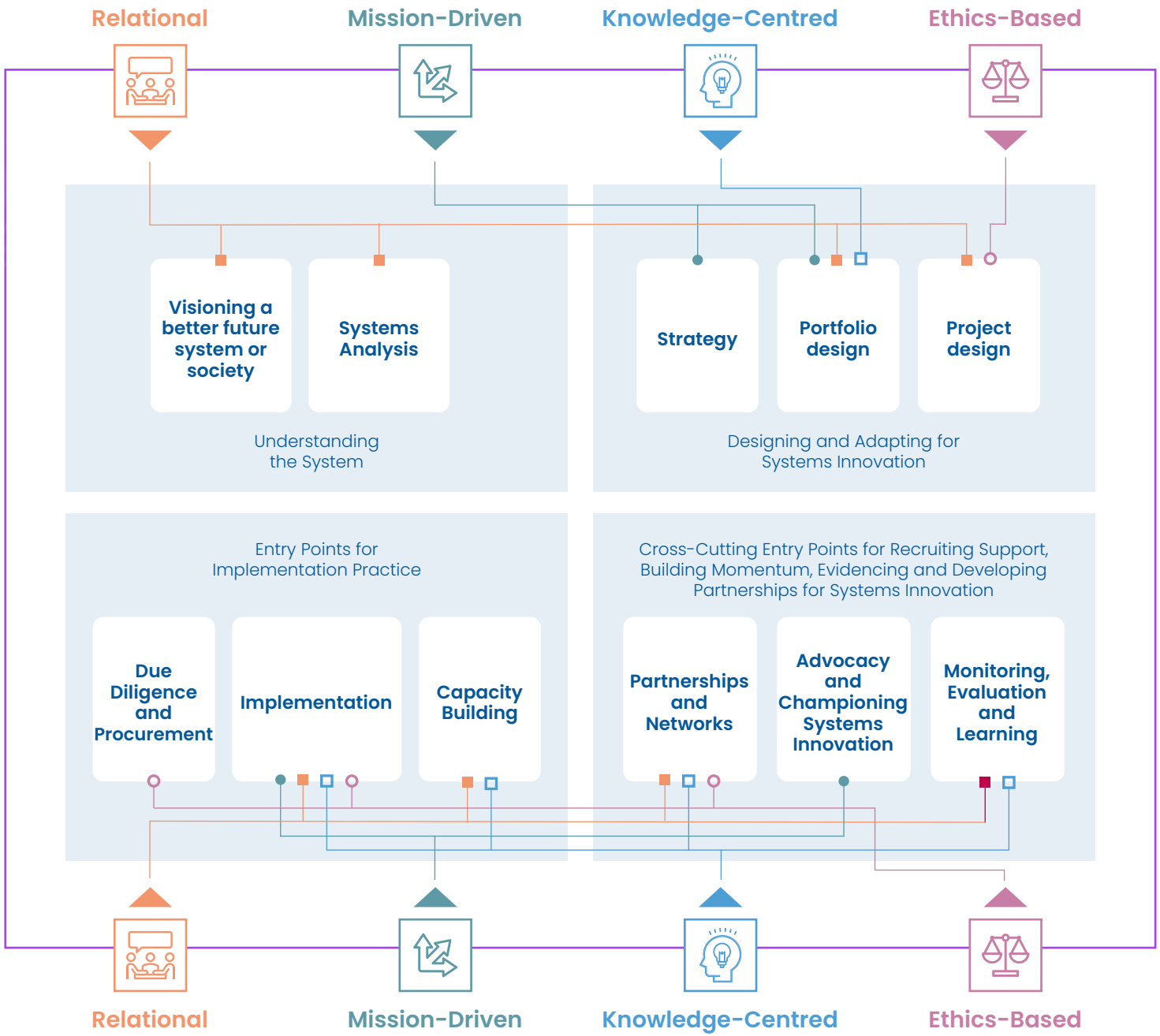
To learn more about the Guild's approach to systems innovation **here**.

SUMMARY OF LINKAGES BETWEEN VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND ENTRY POINTS



LINK TO ENTRY POINTS

You may return repeatedly to this process as needed at various stages in your project, program or portfolio based on learnings, and evolving needs of the system.



MOVING FROM MINDSET TO ENTRY POINTS

By now, following your reflections in this mindset section, you may already have clarity on which entry points are most relevant to your project/program/portfolio at this point of your workplan or timeline. For extra guidance please see the suggested linkages below for suggestions and examples of what values and guiding principles may most closely align with selected entry points.

Relational values/principles	Visioning, Systems Analysis, Portfolio Design, Project Design, Implementation, Capacity Building, Partnerships & Networks, Monitoring Evaluation & Learning
Mission-driven values/principles	Strategy, Portfolio Design, Implementation, Advocacy & Championing Systems Innovation
Knowledge-centred values/principles	Portfolio Design, Implementation, Capacity Building, Partnerships & Networks, Monitoring Evaluation & Learning
Ethical values/principles	Project Design, Due Diligence and Procurement, Implementation, Partnerships & Networks

Most of the values and principles identified in this section are cross-cutting and may apply to a variety of entry points. The guidance provided in this section is not intended to be prescriptive about which entry points you should select but rather to help you reflect on what values and principles you and your organisation bring to these entry points.

You do not have to engage with any or all of the entry points that align most closely with your guiding principles but you may find it useful to reflect on the suggested entry points you

Part 3

ENTRY POINTS

Introduction to Entry Points

Understanding the System

INTRODUCTION TO ENTRY POINTS

This section aims to provide reflections and resources to support your work integrating systems innovation practices. The framework provides a non-exhaustive list of 11 entry points or strategic opportunities to begin to catalyze and drive systemic change. These entry points are not intended to represent the full range of entry points that could be relevant or actionable in your work. Rather this sample of some common entry points aims to provide users with some leverage to address the underlying structures, dynamics, and behaviors that perpetuate the existing system and hopefully enable them to unlock more systemic approaches in their work within their organisations and in the systems they work in.

We recommend visiting the Mindset section to reflect on what power, values, guiding principles you bring to your work within the entry points, and to guide your selection of appropriate entry points based on the values-based mission of your project/program/portfolio. However, if you are not able to do so, or if you are revisiting the framework, we encourage you to pause to reflect on what your selection of entry point(s) and what ambition of your project they contribute to, and to reflect on the values and mindset piece included within each entry point as you engage with the resources provided.

The entry points in this section are grouped by chronological programmatic stage and comprise of:

01 Understanding the System

02 Designing and Adapting for Systems Innovation

03 Entry Points for Implementation Practice

04 Cross-cutting Entry Points for Recruiting Support, Building Momentum, Evidencing, Developing Partnerships for Systems Innovation

Even though the entry points are grouped chronologically according to a traditional project/programme cycle, this framework is intended to be used at any stage in your project/program/portfolio journey and you can select any entry point(s) that align most closely with where you are programmatically and what your current ambition is in this stage. Furthermore, systems innovation is a long-term practice. The intention with this framework is that you revisit the reflections and resources within the entry points at various points in your project/program/portfolio cycle as needed to sustain your project/program/portfolio's commitment to integrating systems innovation practices.

Finally, we recommend that you consider working on your selected entry points in tandem with the Roles section of this framework. Consider what individual and organisational roles you and your institution might play within each entry point you engage with and more importantly, what systemic roles are required to engage with within that entry point.

If you haven't yet undertaken the Mindset section, you may want to pause to articulate the underlying guiding principle(s) that are underpinning your selection of (a) specific entry point(s) at this particular point.

Why are you selecting a particular (set of) entry point(s) today and what systemic imperative drives that decision? What values or principles have you considered bringing to the process.

We recommend documenting the rationale for your selection of (a) specific entry point(s) over others at a given time, and sense-checking your decision and rationale along the way with other systems actors you engage with in your work.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

ENTRY POINT 01

VISIONING A BETTER FUTURE SYSTEM OR SOCIETY

A vision of a better future or society that your organization / programme is using as a "North Star" to work towards, usually based on globally-aligned standards of development (e.g. the SDGs) .

This vision may be explicit or implicit within your work, and it is quite possible that there is no defined or agreed-upon long-term vision beyond the strategic period of engagement.

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- A vision may not exist or may be short term (3-5 years), whereas systems innovation may take decades
- Vision may not represent a synthesized version of the local stakeholder's varied visions

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- To develop a guiding star for the emergent system of which all systems innovation activities / stakeholders can work towards
- To have a vision for an emergent system that is representative of the vision of those living within the system.

VALUES

Collaboration
Shifting power
Exploration
Curiosity

MINDSET

The future system is best visioned by those who are impacted by the system.

Within your organisation, you can collaboratively vision how you operate in the system and what values and principles you bring to the system.

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS

Possible approaches:

- Engage in blue-sky thinking with local stakeholders to imagine "What if?"
- What if all the challenges and barriers that currently exist weren't present? What if there was unlimited buy-in and resources? What if you could make all of the changes you want?
- Ask a diverse group of local stakeholders what their vision of the system is
- Hire a local expert/facilitator/ecosystem member to conduct a visioning workshop with local stakeholders and share a synthesized version of a diverse group's vision.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

ENTRY POINT
01

VISIONING A BETTER FUTURE SYSTEM OR SOCIETY

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	1. What is your organization or programme's current vision for the system? Who defined this vision? What was the process for outlining the vision? 2. How does the vision guide your work? **Values**: • How might you ensure the collaboration and curiosity are central to the visioning process? **Mindset**: What would your team need --or who would you consult with--to center a locally-defined vision in your project or programme? **Activity**: How could you team support local stakeholders to articulate their vision for the system?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	• Check out the **NHS guide to creating a vision for change** for a step-by-step guide to facilitating a visioning exercise. • Explore an emergent vision for your organisation and its practices in the system with colleagues using the **3 horizons model.** You can learn more about the model and its application here. • Explore with your partners and collaborators using the 3 horizons model to envision a transformed system with **this step-by-step guide**. For more information about how the model applies to systems transformation, see this blog post about The Three Horizons of Innovation and Culture Change • Read Chapter 6 of The Systems Innovation Initiative's publication, **Systems Innovation on Purpose** for more examples of how visioning has been done in practice including using imagination, dreaming, simulations and scenarios planning etc.
EXAMPLES	**THE GHANA COMPACT** is an initiative by the **African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)** that aims to set a clear, collaboratively-developed shared vision for Ghana's long-term future through 2050. The Compact was developed collaboratively through consultation with more than 50 people representing different stakeholder groups as well as technical consultation with more than eight policy partners. The comprehensive multisectoral vision articulates how the Compact is **'setting a vision for (Ghana), outlining collectively agreed solutions for the country's biggest challenges, and identifying targets for tracking progress towards the agreed vision.'** Even though the Compact has launched, consultations continue on an ongoing basis with experts, policymakers and citizens to get the feedback and buy-in of a wide cross-section of Ghanaians. The Ghana Compact exemplifies creating a vision for systems transformation as a collaborative, iterative and ongoing process that belongs jointly to all systems stakeholders.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

ENTRY POINT 02 | SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

ENTRY POINT 02	SYSTEMS ANALYSIS	**A systems map and/or systems analysis of the current system. This map/analysis may have been created by consultants external to the context or created by local stakeholders. The systems map may include systems actors and their relationships, or may attempt to map causality of systemic challenges to better understand the problems.**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED	**Challenges with the current ways of working:** • Systems maps are sometimes done once at the beginning of the project/program/portfolio but never revisited. • Systems maps often fail to capture any linkage between the current dominant system and the envisioned emergent system. • System maps are frequently incomplete and can create the sense that what is not included is not relevant to the system. **Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?** • To highlight systems analysis as an iterative and ongoing process that should be repeated and updated periodically with an ever-widening pool of collaborators. • To demonstrate methods of mapping and analysing both current systems and envisioned emergent ones.•To have a vision for an emergent system that is representative of the vision of those living within the system.

VALUES	**Collaboration** **Continuous learning** **Positive deviance**

MINDSET	Those within the system understand the nuances of the system and are likely best placed to map the system and define its patterns, components, and potential. Think of what role you might play in supporting the ongoing process of scoping the ecosystem as a funder, convener, commissioner etc.

ACTIVITY – ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** • Consult with systems actors, partners and collaborators to learn where more clarity is needed on the system. • Collaborate with others within your organisation and within the system to identify desk research, maps or other existing materials on the system. • If you want to establish a joint understanding with partners and other systems actors, consider a systems mapping workshop involving diverse actors and roles in the context. • Your systems analysis may map connections between systems actors and their roles in the context, but could also map causality, policies, programs and/or other factors and how they contribute to, address or are linked to the systemic challenge. • – Explore mapping methods that allow you to capture both the current dominant system and the emergent envisioned system.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

ENTRY POINT
02

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	1. Does your organization or programme have a map of the system they utilise to understand the various stakeholders and their relationships? If yes, who was involved in the creation of this map? 2. The process of creating a systems map is often as useful as the map itself. What was the process for developing the systems map? Who was involved? How is it updated in an evolving system? **Values**: • How do you create an environment of openness to knowledge and ideas sharing in spite of power hierarchies and differentials that may be rife within the system? **Mindset**: How do you enable knowldedge/ network exchange within the system mapping process? **Activity**: How could your team support local actors to come together to map the system?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	• Check out **FSG's introduction to systems** mapping blog post which provides several options for systems mapping, and goes further to provide **multiple systems mapping "how-to" guides** you can share with your partners and team. • See the **Omidyar Systems Practice Workbook (especially pp. 20-49)** for clarity on the factors and elements that contribute to the current context of a dynamic system. • Use the **Birkana 2-loop model** if you're interested in mapping networks and systems actors within the framework of their transition from a current "declining" dominant system to an envisioned emergent system. • Explore the **CECAN Participatory Systems Mapping Workshopping Guide** to create a simple causal map analysing causal linkages between various systems variables.
EXAMPLES	**The Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP)'s Powering Productivity- Mapping Methods Report** outlines the process of integrating desk research and systems mapping workshops for systems analysis, that was used in the ESRC-funded Powering Productivity research project, also providing clear examples of how you could use this in your work. The report acknowledges the multidisciplinary nature of systems mapping processes where everyone brings something different to the process, and highlights how the maps rather than being used solely as representations of the system, were also an opportunity for critiquing and discussing current practices, gaps and silos, and for the emergence of new ideas and opportunities for connections and linkages that were previously not imagined. In this process, mapping is not an activity done once but something that might require multiple workshops and opportunities for reflection, sense-making, and synthesis with systems actors over time, at different phases of your work. This report also provides recommendations for commencing a systems analysis task as well as pitfalls and challenges to watch out for.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 03 | STRATEGY

ENTRY POINT 03	STRATEGY	The development of a theory of change based on an assessment of the context (e.g. through mapping and/or desk research), an analysis of the problem, and the identification of leverage points based on known stakeholders, organizational/contextual interests and imperatives and past experience.

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED	**Challenges with the current ways of working:** • There is sometimes a lack of clarity about the systemic objectives of the project/program/portfolio and what it aims to do within the system. • Strategies may not be built to be flexible enough to accommodate and adapt to feedback from the system with agility. • Strategic imperatives of international development organisations may tied to political or economic policy and not necessary driven by the system. **Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?** • To highlight the need to build clarity, flexibility, and adaptability into project/program/portfolio strategy for more resonance in the system and for mutual understanding.

VALUES	**Openness to explore (innovation)** **Curiosity** **Experimentation** **Interconnection**	**MINDSET**	The theory of change can be viewed as adaptable based on ongoing learning and feedback and moving from a linear perspective of a theory of change cause-effect model, to an intertwined approach that recognizes the complexity of various actors and factors contributing to the envisioned system.

ACTIVITY – ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** Through a systems lens, strategy could be the collaborative development of an evolving theory of change on a feedback loop centred around continuous reflection, learning and engagement with a variety of local systems actors to inform ideas and unpack assumptions, and provide nuance to the assessment of the context and the problem. This could involve for example: • Clarify your what **social-technological system** you're targeting and your strategic objective in engaging with that system (systems strengthening, systems transformation, creating a new system etc) • Collaboratively mapping the system, to identify what's feasible from the visioning process; • Identifying needs and priorities of various stakeholders in order to set goals; • Stakeholder consultations for intelligence, ideas, and experience sharing for co-design for systems innovation. • Collaboratively developing strategy in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and testing theory of change with a variety of local systems actors across sectors (public and private sector, civil society, etc) for input and feedback.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
03

STRATEGY

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1.** What social-technological system are you working on what do you aim to accomplish within it (e.g. strengthen the system, transform it, work on creating a new one)? **2.** What (political, economic, social, ethical etc) imperatives influence your involvement in the current strategic agenda? **3.** Who is involved in co-designing and agenda-setting? **4.** How was your understanding of the barriers and drivers to systems transformation in the context obtained? **Values:** How does the strategic approach go beyond replicating the status quo to exploring innovative approaches to transforming the system? **Mindset:** How does the strategy embed feedback loops for continuous learning and adaptation within the theory of change? **Activity:** How is the need for continuous evolution of you strategy/theory of change articulated within the goals and objectives? What would your team need to do this?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	• Map the system and the various actors within it to better understand the social-technological system you're working within and your objective as you engage with it (see the **Systems Analysis Entry Point**). • See **this blog post** which outlines steps that could be followed to use a theory of change for systemic impact. • Challenge yourself to broaden your view of the theory of change as an opportunity for reflection through the **five rules of thumb for using theory of change for systems change** • Apply a Multi-Level Perspective approach to developing and working with a transformative theory of change and transformative outcomes? See: **Motion Handbook: Developing a Transformative Theory of Change.**
EXAMPLES	As part of a efforts to reframe the future of work in Ghana, **the UNDP Ghana Deep Demonstration team explored unemployment** after it surfaced as the biggest issue Ghanaians wanted to see resolved in the decade of action for SDGs in a UNDP Ghana survey in January 2022. Pre-determined solutions (and theories of change) proposing to solve the challenge of unemployment by creating more jobs, improving education and strengthening governance had been tried and tested for years in Ghana with little success, and often with unintended negative consequences. The UNDP Ghana Country office working with the Chora Foundation decided to deeply explore the issue of jobs, going back in history and examining the cultural context with Ghanaian stakeholders. They found that the main problem was not a lack of jobs, but rather the missing historical and cultural connections and perceptions about work in preceding strategies to address unemployment. They identified that solutions to unemployment would need to mobilise systemic approaches that collectively mobilised a wide range of local, national and international networks and expertise to tackle the future of work from multiple perspectives bearing in mind the cultural context. Therefore, theories of change must be contextually created with nuance and unerstanding of historical and cultural perspectives which involve deep engagement with diverse stakeholders. For more information about this approach and the need to challenge pre-determined strategies, see the UNDP Strategic Innovation blog post linked above.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 04	PORTFOLIO DESIGN	A group of projects or programs which are collectivised around theme, sector, audience, geographical region, or other similar characteristic, and thus, managed as a group to achieve strategic objectives. Portfolio design encompasses a variety of discrete activities, objectives, and operations that aim to ensure the full scope of the strategic plan is addressed, with minimal duplication, while maximising impact. The portfolio manager has oversight over the portfolio and is the main person that might understand the linkages between portfolio components.

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- There is often a lack of optimisation of potential systems-strengthening collaborations and linkages if portfolio elements and systems actors were substantively networked together.
- Systems actors may not be aware of other opportunities within the portfolio and may not be able to identify or leverage potential synergies for greater systemic impacts.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- To highlight the need to build clarity, flexibility, and adaptability into project/program/portfolio strategy for more resonance in the system and for mutual understanding.

VALUES

Interconnection
Networking
Collaboration
Learning
Experimentation

MINDSET

- Reflect on moving from the project management paradigm of portfolio design where a portfolio is simply a grouping of projects and programs managed as a group to achieve strategic objectives, to a systemic paradigm that focuses on the interconnectedness of all portfolio components and leverages opportunities for previously discrete projects and programs to work together, collaborate and feed into one another, responding to challenges and needs identified by the system.
- Also, consider viewing portfolio design as an opportunity for increased experimentation of various approaches (e.g. promising approaches with various levels of risk)..

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 04 | PORTFOLIO DESIGN

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** Through a systems lens, a portfolio is a group of projects and programs within the system that are designed and implemented to work synergistically and in collaboration with each other, prioritizing interconnectedness and joint efforts, sharing of knowledge and resources, and networking various systems actors across sectors, projects and programs into communities of practice, to engage in ongoing learning, sharing and collaboration for systems innovation. Under this paradigm, the components of portfolios are not discrete but involve systems actors that are aware of "the big picture" so that they are constantly seeking opportunities to collaborate and bolster one another's efforts in order to support the development of novel and innovative partnerships, ideas development and collaborations. **This could look like:** • Co-designing portfolio with a wider team and continuously adapting it with various systems actors to ensure that assumptions are challenged and gaps in the system are collaboratively identified and are filled with appropriate projects and programs based on learning and increased engagements with systems pioneers. • Including in your portfolio design, a plan to assess your portfolio regularly with others to determine what key systemic perceptions, challenges, and gaps are not being met and strategizing how to meet them. • Developing a strategy to network projects and programs within a portfolio together to share and exchange learnings and strategize for systems innovation. • Reviewing and reflecting upon your patience for the difficult long-term work of systems innovation and developing short, medium and long-term portfolio components. • Reviewing risk appetite and acquisition strategy to diversify systems actors' engaged with and balance risk appetite across the portfolio.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1.** What currently informs portfolio design or construction in your work? What informs prioritization of certain approaches or partners over others? **2.** What (if any) considerations such as timeline (e.g. short, medium or long term), funding strategy (grant, vs results-based vs prize etc), and risk appetite (e.g. type of organisation supported and terms of support) do you take when designing or managing a portfolio? **3.** What are the implications of the current mode of portfolio design? **4.** What opportunity do you have to innovate or adapt around timelines, investment strategies and portfolio construction? **Values:** How do/will other systems actors engage with the portfolio design and implementation? How open is the design and management of the portfolio to feedback on the big picture? **Mindset:** How are various projects and programs within the portfolio connected and how do they currently work together and feed into one another? **Activity:** What input do other systems actors contribute to portfolio design and adaptation? How do you create platforms for their participation and feedback in the portfolio design and review processes? What learnings or collaborations could they exchange or share due to the portfolio?

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
04

PORTFOLIO DESIGN

HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	
	• See the **UNDP Portfolio Approach Primer** for an overview of the basics of designing and fine-tuning portfolios that intentionally address systems and links to quick tools for a variety of portfolio design activities. • For a comprehensive methodological guide on designing portfolios to address complex systemic challenges, see **UNDP's Systems Change: A Guidebook for Adopting Portfolio Approaches.** • Apply a portfolio approach to incorporating systems transformation in your projects and projects? See **the MOTION Handbook: Developing a Transformative Theory of Change** with special focus on pages 14-19 if you're interested in activities for portfolio composition, portfolio mapping and co-creation. • Check out **this blog post from UNDP Strategic Innovation** to learn more about transitioning from funding projects to funding portfolios for more systemic investment planning and decision-making (includes examples).

EXAMPLES	
	The Agirre Lehendakaria Center for Social and Political Studies (ALC) and the UNDP Local Governance team in the Bangkok Regional Hub (BRH) have been working on conceptualising a Social Innovation Platform in Southern Thailand that involves local authorities, businesses, civil society and communities, in redesigning food systems as a driver of systems change. Through deep listening of Southern Thai communities and sense-making involving a variety of stakeholders and systems actors, the social innovation platform has co-created a draft portfolio of interconnected initiatives operating at various levels of scale that speak to **the needs and opportunities identified by communities**. The portfolio lowers investment risk by differentiating between projects, pilots and prototypes and investing in points of interconnection between the various types and scales of initiative. For a deeper dive into what a systemic approach to portfolio design can look like, please see the article linked above.

For case studies of how UNDP country offices across the world are approaching portfolio design for addressing complex systemic challenges, see the UNDP Portfolio Cards linked here.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 05 | PROJECT DESIGN

ENTRY POINT 05	PROJECT DESIGN	An output and/or outcomes-focused set of activities, processes or conditions aimed at achieving a strategic objective. The processes usually adhere to a fixed theory of change and project success is determined by the fulfilment of the conditions set out at the beginning and meeting the stated innovation objective.

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- There is often a strict focus on outcomes and an overemphasis of the impact of singular projects on entire complex systems.
- Project success is determined at the beginning and is often specific to the project itself rather than the complexity of ways it contributes to or detracts from other systems efforts.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- To support project/program/portfolio managers to better contextualise projects within the broader context of the system and embed equity, flexibility, and responsiveness in project strategies.

VALUES

Futures-thinking
Big picture focus
Collaboration
Learning
Sustainability

MINDSET

- It may be important to reflect on the implications of activities, processes and conditions on the broader system and whether they support innovation and transformation of the system. The quest to demonstrate success through monothematic interventions and "golden ticket" solutions that appear to show value for money in the short term, needs to be reflected upon and carefully considered to ensure it is not compromising broader progress within the system.

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS

Possible approaches:

Through a systems lens, a project is set of 'multi-level and interrelated' activities, processes or conditions that interact across time and at multiple levels such as agenda setting and design, implementation and evaluation, to achieve an overarching goal. These activities would be contextualised within the broader system, continuously in dialogue with other projects and programs within the portfolio and the broader system, exchanging learning and adapting in response to emerging issues.

This could look like:

- Co-creation and collaborative design embedded throughout all phases of project design and development from mapping, visioning, context analysis, problem analysis, theory of change development, risk assessment, implementation planning etc.
- Building in engagement with systems actors beyond project partners within communities of practice to sustain the work and pull it together with other interventions in the system to prevent fragmentation.
- Flexibility in funding and project financing leaving room for adaptive learnings, and responsive project strategies.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
05

PROJECT DESIGN

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	1. What criteria do you use to select partners and project ideas? How do we define innovation? What are the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach to project design? 2. Where do innovation principles of trusting processes, openness to experimentation, and learning from failures fit into your project design and project funding strategy? **Values:** Who is included and excluded in project design? Who are the pioneers/ norm-challengers/innovators and how are they engaged? **Mindset:** How do you articulate the goals of the project and what it can feasibly achieve in the context of the system? How does this reflect in your theory of change? If your project is to contribute to systems transformation, what needs to happen? What other projects does it need to collaborate with? **Activity:** What/who defines progress and how will it be tracked? How are you setting up the project for success, scaling, mainstreaming, or learning beyond your funding cycle? How are partners and actors engaging in your project networked and supported to sustain the work after the funding cycle?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	• Incorporate systems transformation in projects, programmes and other types of interventions? See the **MOTION Handbook: Developing a Transformative Theory of Change** with special focus on pages 9-13, pages 17-19, pages 23-25, and pages 40-43. • Develop a strategy for collaborative project design using **Nesta's Collective Intelligence Design Playbook** which offers a variety a tools and examples to collectively design strategies for defining problems, mobilising people and developing a theory of change. • Develop a plan for stakeholder management, developing a multi-level perspective theory of change, visioning, and positioning your project within a social context. See: **Climate KIC's Visual Toolbox for Systems Innovation**
EXAMPLES	**The FCDO's MUVA programme in Mozambique** is a social incubator that aims to challenge social norms, foster gender equality and make systems work better for women's economic empowerment. Its 17 projects utilised an adaptive management methodology in implementation that built in learning and adaptation from the collaborative project development phase through implementation. The adaptive management approach used in the programme revealed that progress towards systems innovation did not come from singular activities, projects or programs but rather by complex interconnected approaches in the system undertaken by a variety of actors. They realised that traditional approaches of program management such as log frames were riddled with blind spots. Therefore, having flexible programs that were collaboratively designed, that jointly made sense of learnings and articulated what success looked like, and that were responsive to learning and to the system, built trust and agency, and were more supportive to the realities of working within complexity. For more information on the MUVA programme and lessons learned from the FCDO's Adaptive Management Practice, please see the case study linked above, and also check out **the IDIA Systems Innovation Blog Series- Part 3**, which references this and other lessons learned in implementing systems approaches.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 06	DUE DILIGENCE & PROCUREMENT	**This entry point usually involves the assessment of implementers' capacity to carry out the program, and onboarding them as contractors/formal partners, including, but not limited to, procurement processes, government forms, due diligence, funding and compliance etc. It represents the set of activities based on regulations and policies that determine who you can work with, how you can expend resources, and under what terms.**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- Many procurement procedures further marginalise innovators and systems actors within the system who already have limited access to networks. The requirements for due diligence and procurement can also be a hardship for local systems actors who have to commit already limited resources to prove their worthiness to funders and global partners, which can be a problematic and hierarchical dynamic. The system of accountability tends to favour the funders who can opt out of the system at any time as opposed to local systems actors who are committed to the work of transforming the system.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- While project/program/portfolio managers might not have much influence on organisational procurement and compliance policies, it is essential that they are exposed to transformative alternatives so that they can start discussions and advocacy for systems innovation even within their organisations and in the system at large.

VALUES

Mutual accountability
Equity
Trust
Honesty
Reciprocal respect

MINDSET

- There's a need to reflect on implicit and explicit bias in identifying and selecting implementing partners and setting procurement and due diligence standards that center trust rather than the assumption of wrong-doing especially when working with partners from LMICs.
- It is important that due diligence and procurement processes are carried out in a manner that does not put unnecessary burden on local partners and that does not systemically reinforce exclusion of certain systems actors. Conversations on risk and capabilities need to be open and reciprocal between funders and implementers.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 06 | **DUE DILIGENCE & PROCUREMENT**

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** • Assess potential partners and implementers capacity to carry out systems work • Have open and reciprocal conversations on due diligence processes and risk assessments. • Eliminate or advocate for the revision of unnecessary due diligence requirements that may place burden on the implementer • Transparency and self-accountability on procurement requirements and criteria **This could look like:** • Co-creation and collaborative design embedded throughout all phases of project design and development from mapping, visioning, context analysis, problem analysis, theory of change development, risk assessment, implementation planning etc. • Building in engagement with systems actors beyond project partners within communities of practice to sustain the work and pull it together with other interventions in the system to prevent fragmentation. • Flexibility in funding and project financing leaving room for adaptive learnings, and responsive project strategies.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1.** How do the current due diligence processes assess the implementing partners capacity to carry out systems work? **2.** How do we assess potential partners/implementers' capacity for systems work (skills, governance forms, relationships, etc)? **3.** What informs your selection of partners? What can you uncover about your selection? **Values:** What does your team need to embed trust, honestly, reciprocal respect and mutual accountability into your procurement and contracting processes? **Mindset:** How might you better understand and uncover blindspots or biases in your identification and selection of partners? **Activity:** If you publish criteria / procurement requirements for your own processes, how can you keep your organization accountable to these criteria?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	• Explore the resources linked in **this article about the role of risk in funding systems change and how to manage it** for resources on developing systems and plans to deal with risk, frameworks and methodologies for mitigating risk, and case studies detailing stories of funders who have taken risks to achieve greater impact. • Browse **this Risk Management for Philanthropy toolkit** for ideas to incorporate in your practice. • See the **Contracting for Transformation** toolkit for a more equitable approach to procurement for systems transformation. • Check out **Ashoka's Seven Steps for Funding Systems Change** for guidance on more systemic approaches to resourcing systems innovation in your work. • Discuss the need to innovate in due diligence and procurement within your organsation for greater systemic impact in the world using reflections from **this report.** • See **this working paper on investing in systems innovation** from the Systems Innovation Initiative.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
06

DUE DILIGENCE & PROCUREMENT

EXAMPLES	
	The Levi Stauss Foundation's made a shift from funding traditional project-based social justice interventions that delivered only incremental change, to funding more systemic impacts in social justice. Operationally to support this more systemic approach, 'one of the biggest shifts necessary was to move focus to the impact of grants in the system rather than the administration of grants,' and this came from shifting their orientation from thinking of their work as grant-making to thinking of it as change-making. To accomplish this shift over time, the foundation embraced flexible, longer-term funding, and provided technical resources to pioneers and innovators. In practice, they designated 15-20% of their total funds to an experimental, innovation portfolio with flexible, unrestricted funding; this allowed them to still balance risk across the entire range of work they funded. Furthermore in their other core funding areas, project/program/ portfolio managers were encouraged to commit 15-20% of their budgets to experimental, innovative approaches with flexible funding. These sorts of dedicated allocations for higher-risk projects gave managers freedom to work closely with pioneers and innovators to trial novel solutions and explore systemic strategies for exploring social justice. To find out more about the process and learnings of taking this leap of faith and contexualise it within your organisation using the provided guiding discussion questions provided after the case study, see pages 1-11 of the resource linked above.

Check out the resources on The Share Trust's Passing the Buck study for evidence of how shifting funding to local intermediaries and those closest to systemic challenges is 32% more cost effective and could save $4.3 billion annually in ODA.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 07	IMPLEMENTATION	**The set of tasks, processes, facilitators and structures that are enacted in line with the plan of action(s) to operationalize the strategic objectives. The implementation strategy usually adheres to a strict project planning regime outlining a logical link between objectives, timeline, inputs (resources required), outputs and outcomes, along with a plan for tracking progress and outcomes.**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED	**Challenges with the current ways of working:** • Current implementation practices often lack flexibility to pivot in response to emerging learnings. They also frequently take top-down approaches where local systems actors are limited in creativity and held strictly to the implementation plan and theory of change.. **Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?** • This entry point explores ways of embedding flexibility within implementation and offers reflections for transforming ways of working and collaborating within the system.

VALUES	**Collaboration** **Mutual Accountability** **Learning** **Adaptability** **Courage**

MINDSET	• Implementation within a systems innovation regime means prioritizing flexibility within the implementation strategy and leaving room for adaptation rather than focusing on the pre-determined plan or planned processes. • Implementation through a systems lens may be more systems-focused than task-oriented, focusing on interconnectedness with other systems actors and how they build networks and collaborations within the system to mutually support their work in driving systems innovation as an outcome rather than focusing on the minutiae of how they work (their processes) according to their initial proposal.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
07

IMPLEMENTATION

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** The flexible and adaptive processes that contribute to the strengthening of the system through evolving strategic objectives. The implementation strategy is focused on the impact on the system and may include: • Ideation and feedback loops on how to continuously engage stakeholders to build coalitions and communities of practice, • Processes of experimentation and learning with allowance for learning from unintended results and unexpected events, and a flexible approach to resourcing to reflect this, • A process for assessing the ongoing impact of activities on the broader system outcomes, • A plan for mutual learning and capacity strengthening, along with an adaptive learning-based plan for M&E..
REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1.** How much flexibility is built into your implementation plan/strategy? How does resourcing (funding/ personnel/ etc) reflect this flexibility? What resourcing and capabilities are required? **2.** What is the risk appetite for the unintended results that are part of innovation processes? How can those risks be managed within the project, but also across programmes and portfolios? **Values:** How do we engage stakeholders and ensure that the implementation plan is adaptive and responsive to their changing needs in an evolving system? **Mindset:** How do the project activities and style of implementation (top-down, horizontal, bottom-up) impact the system and what unintended consequences might arise from the strategy? **Activity:** What mechanisms are needed in the implementation plan to embed continuously learning and adaptability?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	Develop a plan for stakeholder management, developing a multi-level perspective theory of change, visioning, and positioning your project within a social context. See: **Climate KIC's Visual Toolbox for Systems Innovation.**

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
07

IMPLEMENTATION

EXAMPLES	
	The FCDO's Adaptive Management Practice uses an adaptive learning-centred implementation strategy that builds trust and agency, by prioritising learning for greater responsiveness to the complexities of systemic challenges. The success of this practice is founded around protecting spaces for learning and adapting which means reframing traditional understandings of accountability (to a log frame), as accountability for learning. The shift to this perspective of implementation required rethinking all aspects of implementation to prioritise learning, and this involves de-risking experimentation and enabling failure as a part of learning. In this light, to implement 'management practice that supports and encourages the delivery of positive outcomes in complex settings', FCDO has used approaches such as: **1.** Enabling decision-making within contexts closest to to information. **2.** Empowering staff to recognise and respond to complexity and emerging information. **3.** Structuring funding, contracts and results framework around learning and allowing flexibility for the unexpected and for adaptation **4.** Resourcing project/program/portfolio managers to build trust-based relationships with systems actors and stakeholders within contexts and to engage in collective learning. Please see the linked case study for more information about implementing this approach.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 08	CAPACITY BUILDING	
		An activity based on identifying where there may be gaps in knowledge, skills or attitudes within the system, that usually focuses on perceptions of deficits in capability in the system. It may take the form of: • **Providing capacity building or technical assistance and learning opportunities for partners/ actors with an 'over-reliance on best practices' that may not be tailored to the context of the system and may not account for cultural barriers..** • **Prioritizing your own organization's culture and ways of working/practices and definitions of efficiency and effectiveness and expecting local systems actors to align.**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED	
	Challenges with the current ways of working: • System capacity is determined frequently without nuance and by prioritising the funder's skills, knowledge and ways of working rather than by considering that there is much to mutually learn from the system... **Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?** • It is essential for trust-building, improved collaboration, mutual learning and accountability to transform systems of building capacity to exchanging learning and knowledge and to build cultures of openness to explore, seeking positive deviance, continuous learning and knowledge sharing in your work.

VALUES	
	Positive Deviance **Equity** **Shifting power** **Respect** **Humility** **Flexibility**

MINDSET	
	• There is a need to move from capacity building and a premise of deficit, to a capabilities-based approach that is more in line with capacity development that supports all systems actors (including officers at international development agencies) to unlock, obtain, strengthen, utilise, adapt, and maintain capacity over time. • To move to this capabilities-focused mindset, there needs to be an acknowledgement of mutuality in exchanging knowledge and learning to develop capacity, and a focus on the implicit and explicit capacity assets in the system. • For this to happen, it is important to be open to understanding other ways of knowing and working and to relinquish assumptions about the capacities that exist within the system. This entry point should be approached with a recognition of the expertise and capacity that exists within the system, a willingness to learn from those in the system and to seek guidance on what they want to learn from you.

DESIGNING AND ADAPTING FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
08

CAPACITY BUILDING

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** • Organise forums for mutual exchange of knowledge and information, • Consider what knowledge and capacities exist within the system, and who might best contribute to (vertical horizontal) capacity building or technical assistance, for sustainability • Shift from respecting primarily Western-dominant knowledge to equally respecting indigenous and local knowledge • Consider capacity in terms of collective activities. Eg. Community capacity and resilience can be updated, reimagined, and redefined to go beyond siloed and fragmented approaches, to consider collective capacities at different levels. • Support networking and collaboration of systems actors and innovators with various skills and capabilities to develop the collective capacity that builds solidarity and has the power to change systems. • Platform alternative approaches and expertise from the ecosystems where you work locally and globally, and commit to amplifying local thought leadership within and beyond the ecosystem where you work. Advocate for positive deviance in your organisation using evidence from your work in the ecosystem. • Provide flexible funding to local systems actors for capacity development (as a component of your project/program/portfolio strategy) that gives them to freedom to select what capacities they want to develop and how they want to develop it based on their roles and contributions to the system.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS	1. **How do I learn from the system what capacity they want to build and for whom? How can I ensure my decisions do not homogenise local systems actors?** 2. **What can I learn from systems actors and what lessons can I take from the local systems' ways of working?** **Values:** What assumptions do I have about capacity within the system? What informs my approach to capacity- building? **Mindset:** What existing capabilities exist within the system? What am I basing my response on? Who might offer training? **Activity:** How might actors contribute to collective capacity strengthening within the system? How do I support collective learning and mutual knowledge exchange on a systemic level in my work?

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS
FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 09

PARTNERSHIPS & NETWORKS

A usually formalised, contractual agreement of collaboration between 2 or more organisations that is crucial in moving forward programmatic work.

A relationship that is usually marked by a prescribed hierarchical order of engagement- usually with the international development agency or funder at the top, followed by a lead partner, then other implementing partners, and their consultants, contractors, or sub-grantees.

Partnerships and networks are usually set up mainly for the purposes of project/programme implementation as an output or outcome and may not be structured to remain active and sustainable after the project/programme life. Even when engagements are set up with existing networks, relationships can be extractive and might not support long-term institutional support of the network.

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- Relationships between international development agencies and local ecosystems continue to be hierarchical despite commitments to greater equity. This is not only unjust, but it also weakens local ecosystems and affects the future sustainability of systems innovation efforts.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- Sustaining partnerships and building networks is an essential part of systems innovation because of the collaborative and interconnected nature of systems work. Thus, partnerships and networks must be intentionally cultivated within projects/programs/portfolios.

VALUES

Equity
Mutual Accountability
Shifting Power
Positive Deviance
Integrity

MINDSET

- It is important to acknowledge the power inherent in funding or strengthening innovation ecosystems and to ensure that partnerships are equitable and also set up to strengthen ecosystems and networks that can continue the work on systems long-term.

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS

Possible approaches:

- Co-designing what equitable partnerships and successful networks might look like with a variety of systems actors in your project.
- Consulting with local ecosystem actors on what support is needed for stronger networks in the ecosystem.
- Hosting convenings that bring various ecosystem members together for learning, knowledge exchange, ideas generation, sense-making and troubleshooting for the system. These convenings may include systems actors not already partnering on the project and those who are traditionally excluded.
- Developing and utilising equity metrics for accountability in your engagement and resourcing of partnerships and networks.

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
09

PARTNERSHIPS & NETWORKS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1. What opportunities are there in our work for greater collaboration?** **2. How does our work currently promote collaboration among ecosystem actors?** **3. How do we collect feedback on our partnership from implementing partners and diverse systems actors?** **Values:** How can we embed the values of equity, equality, support and reciprocal learning into our partnerships and networks? **Mindset:** What does our commitment to shifting power and increasing localization look like in practice? **Activity:** How can our organization engender the building of communities of practice and networks across the various projects, programs and portfolios I manage?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	Consider stakeholder mapping and management to ensure affected people and organizations are part of decision-making and have ownership. See: **Visual toolbox for Systems Innovation** Unpack the roles, relationships and value connections between the various actors and networks in the system. See: **Value Network Mapping: A Method for Unravelling Systems Relations** Consider ways of supporting the development of coalitions and ecosystems in your project, program and portfolio design. See: **UNDP's Platform Ways of Working Toolkit** Explore **this guidebook of sixty tools to facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships** and share with colleagues and partners from the system.
EXAMPLES	**The Local Coalition Accelerator (LCA) is an initiative of the Share Trust and the Warande Advisory Centre in Kenya**, that amplifies localisation efforts by supporting coalitions of local, community and national organisations and groups that co-design and implement holistic, evidence-based programming at scale to address complex, multi-sectoral systems challenges. The LCA model is founded on the idea that program design and implementation need to be community-centred, yet many localisation efforts still limit direct financing and support to local systems actors. The LCA platform prioritises the development of local networks and partnerships to co-design processes for working together more systemically in coalitions and to access direct funding from international development agencies that they may not have qualified for as single entities. This methodology is an example of collaborative, interconnected systems approaches rooted in equitable partnerships and network-building for sustainable systems impact. To find our more about the LCA model, check out the **website and the slide deck linked**.

- Check out **this blog post** about the pivots 8 funders have made in listening and collaborating for systemic impact with their funding.
- Also see Laneklly Chase's approach to partnerships with reflections on the tensions in switching to a more systemic approach in **this case study.**

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 10	ADVOCACY AND CHAMPIONING SYSTEMS INNOVATION	**An apolitical approach to understanding and attempting to shift attitudes, norms, and/or practices for systems innovation to happen. Usually externally-focused and aimed at creating an enabling environment for local systems actors to influence policy and practice in the wider system.**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- The commitments in place that support greater equity and systems innovation are not always effective in implementation because of enduring hierarchies, biases, and entrenched ways of working that are not aligned with the claims for equity and more systemic approaches.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- Advocacy is essential to begin to shift norms, shift power and gain greater buy-in within organisations and systems for greater collaboration and buy for systems innovation.

VALUES

Positive Deviance
Courage
Continuous Learning
Persistence
Equity (Empathy)

MINDSET

It is important to acknowledge that there is power inherent in the resilience of the dominant system despite efforts of projects to change things over the years. Systems transformation may require interrogating those power hierarchies and welcoming challenges to shift power to a broader base of systems actors.

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS

Possible approaches:

Advocacy with a systems lens could be seen as an approach to understanding and attempting to shift attitudes, norms and/or practices that acknowledges power hierarchies and seeks leverage points to engender systems transformation. It is a process that is internal to self, institutions and systems at large. This could look like:

- Listening to and collaboratively deciding with other systems actors what advocacy might be needed to shift attitudes, norms, or practices to enable the vision to succeed ;
- Jointly analysing who in the system are allies, the opposition or are fence-sitters in terms of systems transformation ;
- Considering how one might amplify the impact of allies, win over “fence-sitters,” and gradually draw in the opposition in the system, to support systems innovation.
- Working iteratively with systems allies and constantly strategising on how to change “the mothership” and positioning that work within activities and strategy.

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
10

ADVOCACY AND CHAMPIONING SYSTEMS INNOVATION

REFLECTION QUESTIONS	**1. What needs to change in your organisation to enable systems innovation practices?** **Values:** What values, vision or mission exist internally within your organization and externally within the system that align with the systems transformation being sought in the operational context? **Mindset:** What is within your power to do as a project/program/portfolio manager, to begin to shift the needle for greater systemic approaches in your organization and in your work? Who are the fellow advocates and pioneers within your organization and within the system that you can lean on for support **Activity:** How do we articulate systems innovation "asks" to others and align with their interests and imperatives in order to increase buy in?
HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	Browse through the **Greenpeace Systems Change Campaigning Toolkit** for exercises to use to get colleagues and others engaging with the complexity needed for systems innovation.
EXAMPLES	**The UK foundation, Lankelly Chase**, which has been involved in grantmaking for over sixty years recently made the move from funding on a project-bases to funding systems. **Making this change involved taking on systems behaviours around perspective, participation**, and power that transformed their relationship with the systems they work with and those they support. By changing the foundations for how they approach their work to align with these systems behaviours, and creating an enabling environment for these behaviours to be embedded and adapted, their ways of working challenge existing systems, shift power to those closest to complex situations and support the emergence of a healthier more equitable system. You can read more about Lankelly Chase's story of change in **this case study**, and learn more about "changing the mothership" in **Part 5 of IDIA's Systems Innovation Blog Series.**

Check out **this video** exemplifying the possibility of leading change and building movements through advocacy. Change often starts with just one supporter or colleague buying into the idea of systems innovation and momentum can be built from there. Changing mindsets and entrenched systems is not easy, but can be done one supporter at a time.

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT 11

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

A set of accountability and compliance-focused activities aiming to track progress and accomplishment of planned activities, outputs and outcomes. This may look like:

- **Data and info funneled upward;**
- **Identify indicators - quantitative focus**
- **Project-level evaluation**
- **Mindset: Fear-driven (hierarchical decision-making)**

WHY A SYSTEMIC LENS MAY BE NEEDED

Challenges with the current ways of working:

- It can be overly focused on accountability and compliance and less responsive to learning and the complexities of an evolving system.
- Also may overly focus on attributing systemic effects to singular interventions thus deprioritising systemic collaborations that are essential for true systems innovation.

Why is it imperative to have this entry point with a systemic lens?

- Because systems are complex, systems innovation is a complex process and it systems M&E requires a different set of reflections to help project/program/portfolio managers sense where and how to start tracking and evaluating what they're doing in the context of such complex, evolving circumstances.

VALUES

Collaboratively determining what success looks like, Openness to the exploration and the unintended and unexpected, Adaptability and responsiveness to continuous learning

MINDSET

Key mindset considerations for this entry point include:

- Trusting systems actors' definitions of success and respecting local ways of knowing.
- Recognizing mutual accountability in ways of working, collecting and sharing knowledge, and sense-making.
- Embedding curiosity in MEL plans and expecting to adapt multiple times based on feedback.
- Openness to challenge and experimentation and different approaches to collecting and making sense of data and feedback.

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

FOR RECRUITING SUPPORT, BUILDING MOMENTUM, EVIDENCING AND DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

ENTRY POINT
11

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

ACTIVITY - ENTRY POINT WITH SYSTEMIC LENS	**Possible approaches:** An approach to putting in place strategies for learning, collecting data and feedback and feeding it back into your work that takes place on a project, portfolio-level & systems-level with the intention to learn from ways of working so as to reinforce effective action, pivot away from ineffective or harmful action, and to fill in gaps in implementation. This may look like: • Shifting to measuring contribution rather than focusing solely on attribution. • Accountability to learn, adapt among actors in system including involving various systems actors in articulating learning objectives, metrics of success, and MEL processes and responsibilities. • Ongoing data and information sharing that enables system actors to learn, adapt, innovate based on emerging information. • Mix of holistic measures for broad 'sense-making' that considers implicit and semi-explicit metrics for success rather than just explicit measures. • Responding to feedback and data on an ongoing basis throughout implementation.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS	1. **Is M&E based on planned activities or adaptive learning focused -- where it is accountable to systems actors learning and improving the system?** 2. **How do we measure, report and articulate change? Who determines this? How do we evaluate progress towards systems transformation in complex real-world scenarios?** **Values:** How adaptive, socialized and specific to the context are standard MEAL metrics and how will this be addressed in the project/program/portfolio? **Mindset:** How do we process "failure" or "the unexpected" and how do we use it as an opportunity for learning? How do we reconcile unexpected events (or "fails") with risk appetites and investment decision-making? **Activity:** How do we include values and functions-based metrics in defining success? How can you approach measuring the complexities of a constantly evolving system? Do you disaggregate data? Do you include categorisations that are specific to the society you are operating in, ethnic and tribal identities, specific gender orientation, so you could see change at the levels in which it takes place within a complexity?

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

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HAVE YOU TRIED TO...	
	• Explore **UNDP's Strategic Innovation Team's Systems M&E Sandbox series** for a variety of reflections and resources about getting started with systems M&E. • See **The Build Initiative's Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives** for an evaluation design menu of evaluation questions and methodologies for systemic practice. • Reflect on **Donna Loveridge's article that summarises four kinds of systems change frameworks** and lists various systems elements you and your systems collaborators might consider tracking.. • Shift to an adaptive learning approach, and use data to inform decision-making, see: **Rethinking M&E in Complex Systems - with learning as a result (UNDP)**. • Move from traditional evaluation to measure social change in systems and instead move to methods that prioritize progress and mission over unequivocal success, See: **Developmental Evaluation** to measure social change in systems (M. Patton, 2010), • Utilise values and functions-based metrics to track your work in the system See: **Evaluating Systems Change Results** and its 3 loops of learning. • Measure complexity in systems -See: **How Evaluators Can Use a Complex Systems Lens to Get "Untrapped" From Limiting Beliefs and Assumptions** • Explore whether **Ripple Effect Mapping might capture the wider impacts of your systemic efforts** and support collaborative sense-making of the ourcomes of your work.See a guide to implementing Ripple Effect Mapping **here.**

EXAMPLES	
	The Rippel Foundation's ReThink Health Initiative aims at surfacing sustainable, transformative approaches to securing better health and well-being for all. Its work seeks to support a diverse array of systems actors from individual change-makers, to organisations, communities and other systems stakeholders rethink a new healthier system. Their approach to tracking and evaluating systems transformation, **is presented as a case study and described and analysed extensively in this 2021 article.** The article outlines their process of designing their evaluation strategy in concert with their theory of change and starting the process with critically examining and reframing what desirable changes or solutions they were seeking within the system, then moving from marginal outcomes to seeking connectedness of outputs to the system.

CROSS-CUTTING ENTRY POINTS

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11

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

EXAMPLES	
	One key learning from their approach is that 'evaluating systems change beyond discrete projects requires shifting from attribution to contribution' and thus, underpinning evaluation strategies in theoretical bases of systems innovation 'such as diffusion of innovation and network science' may 'provide potential ways to access changes in systems conditions.' Rather than focusing on constantly-changing metrics in a constantly evolving system, the initiative tracks semi-explicit and implicit changing systems conditions, such as how their work is influencing change (e.g. who is influenced, what networks built, what policies emerge, what attitudees change) rather than trying to attribute their contributions to direct impacts on the system (e.g. reducing mortality). The main takeaway of their approach to systems M&E is a need to shift to continuous learning and adaptation within systems evaluation in order to accommodate ever-evolving contexts. For a deeper dive into what systems M&E looked like for this initiative as well as processes, tools and recommendations from the process, see the article linked above.

For other examples of Systems M&E in practice:

- See **Lessons in MEL for transformative change projects** which speaks to lessons learned from TIPC and EIT-Climate-KIC's MOTION project.
- See **Sweden's Vinnväxt programme's participatory approach to tracking system transformation in clusters and innovation ecosystems** which provides information about the move from tradition MEL practices to methods that track systems innovation

Part 4

ROLES

Roles

Organizational Roles

Individual Roles

INTRODUCTION TO ROLES

Systems innovation cannot be achieved by one person or one organization alone. It takes an entire system with a multitude of players working towards a transformed system, playing different roles across different sectors and disciplines. This section will discuss organizational and individual roles and help users surface these roles within their organisations and in their practice .

Organization roles encompasses the role the organization plays in the systems innovation efforts. These roles are not sector specific, but rather speak to how the organization contributes to transforming the system. Individual roles refer to roles within your team at your agency. These roles follow the same theme as the organizational role, but speak to how your team dynamics contribute to your ability to implement systems innovation approaches in your project or programme. Both individuals and organizations can (and likely do) fulfill multiple roles and these roles will shift over time as the system changes.

In this section we have not attempted to tie roles to entry points. All roles are valuable in some way to every entry point. Rather, we hope you use this roles section as a way to reflect on how you and your organization fulfill your roles and how you can best support others occupying other roles.

We encourage you to revisit this roles exercise as time passes, as roles are likely to change. If you would like to work through this section before the entry points, you are more than welcome to. They are not dependent upon one another.

You may choose to embark on the Roles section at any point in using the framework (e.g. before entry points)

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

Often we tend to believe that systems change as challengers displace and replace the incumbents. Many technology companies in the private sector continue to push forward innovation through continuous disruption of the incumbent industry. For example, Spotify disrupted the music industry by providing a streaming service for music, eliminating the need for listeners to purchase individual songs or albums. In reality, change in public systems more often occurs when the old and new combine and clash, collaborate and compete. The new does represent a challenge to the old but can often combine with it to create new hybrids that are a combination of old and new. Systems innovation can occur when people inside the current system, often struggling with deep seated challenges meet and combine with people from outside the system pursuing ambitious new possibilities.

Understanding what roles organizations fulfill, including those you may not have partnerships with, can help you understand how systems innovation may be facilitated and how you can best meet and support the needs of these organizations. Organizations can, and often do, fulfill multiple roles at one time, and these roles will likely shift over time. As a donor, you ARE a part of the system and it is important for you to reflect on whether or not you have (or should have in the future) a role outside of funding. Your funding organization may currently fulfill many roles in the system and it is important to reflect on whether or not you feel you should be fulfilling these roles. For organizations within the local context, it can be quite rewarding for these organizations to be recognized for how they are supporting systems innovation. As a donor, acknowledging what role these organizations play can help you identify how you can best support them in their role.

1. Read the description and examples of all 12 roles included below.

2. With your team, identify what role(s) you believe your orgvanization is currently fulfilling and reflect as a team upon the following questions.

   (a) What values does your organization bring to its role(s)?
   (b) Is your organization's roles supportive of the values identified in the mindset section?
   (c) If your organization fulfills multiple roles, do you think your organization should be playing that many roles?
   (d) What would be better to prioritize?
   (e) What would be better to shift power and promote greater agency to organizations within the system?

3. Now that you have identified and reflected upon which roles you believe your organization fulfills, reflect on the organizations you partner with in your project or programme.

   (a) Who fulfills the other roles that your organization doesn't fulfill?
   (b) Are there other organizations within the system who we don't partner with, but we feel fulfill one of the roles?

4. Discuss with your team how you can best support the other roles. How can you collaborate with them? How can you bring them together?

5. To connect the roles to the entry points, reflect upon: How can we use these roles to support our chosen entry points? What skills can we draw upon?

These roles were developed by the System Innovation Initiative. Charlie Leadbeater, of the Initative, is one of our Learning Partners who supported the development of this framework. Some of the roles have been modified slightly for clarity for our audience.

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FOUR LEADING ROLES IN THE SYSTEMS INNOVATION PROCESS

ENTREPRENEURS **who create transformative ventures which challenge the existing system and open the way to a new different system. They are the pioneers marking out the territory of the new system**

ENTREPRENEUR EXAMPLE - MANA MOBILITY (PART 1)	**Mana Mobility**, a German-Ghanaian venture, provides an example where **entrepreneurs** are challenging the current systems of transport using custom-designed e-bike that made moving goods and people in Africa easier than ever before. They are tackling issues of congestion, pollution and unemployment by introducing the first e-vehicle designed, engineered and manufactured in Africa. Africa accounts for 4% of GHG emission, where developing economies have accounted for 95% of the increase of GHG emissions, and while there are not yet strict emission standards, there is a great need to limit carbon emissions, pollution and to introduce options that are affordable and green. Mana Mobility is a hub for connecting African EVs, with an open platform that connects drivers, passengers and goods.

INSIDE-OUTSIDERS **who recognise the challenge to the existing system they are part of and so open it up to new ideas, from outsiders, to help a new, different system emerge from within the shell of the old. These people who span the boundaries of the current system play a critical role.**

INSIDER AND OUTSIDER EXAMPLE - MANA MOBILITY (PART 2)	**Mana Mobility** also plays an **insider and outsider role** by working within the current transportation system toward a new system by introducing environmental and economic freedom by connecting gig workers to the EV movement. Mana Mobility has had to jump through a number of hoops to develop a new system: from manufacturing the first chassis in Ghana, to addressing regulations, and developing a low-cost subscription model to enable access and repairs. Mana Mobility's an open e-mobility platform provides an easily accessible, inclusive, transparent, country-wide way to connect and move drivers, passengers and goods.

CONVENORS **who bring together insiders, outsiders and other collaborators to create a shared agenda for change. Organisations that seek to play this role must be committed to changing a system and also command the credibility to bring together actors from every level of the system, from the grassroots to senior politicians. Universities, foundations, public agencies such as the Danish Design Centre and intermediary bodies might play this role.**

CONVENER EXAMPLE - EAT	**EAT** is a science-based global platform for food system transformation. Transforming food systems, requires a range of partnerships, programs and projects. One initiative, the EU initiative **FEAST**, **is a good example of a convenor, where donors support and convene a range of programs**. Feast reimagines European foodscapes transitioning to food systems which are good for people, the planet and public and private sectors. It brings together 15 European countries and 35 partners from the fields of food systems, agriculture, environment, medicine and public policy to design and deliver novel solutions that deliver the **EU Farm to Fork Strategy's** key objectives. Launched in May 2020, the Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the **European Green Deal** and aims to innovate in food systems to make them fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly. This includes no greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and nobody left behind and hungry.

COMMISSIONERS **who commission the system of the future, to bring it into being. People playing this role are where power and resources come together. The decisions they take can redirect resources to create a new system and create the authorising environment in which it can grow to become legitimate. That power can be conventional and derived from traditional hierarchies yet directed to a new purpose or can come from outside these traditional hierarchies, from the new power of social movements which put governments and companies under pressure to respond to new demands.**

COMMISSIONER (AND VISIONARY) EXAMPLE - ACET	**African Center for Economic Transformation** provided a vision for how Ghana might economically transform itself within a generation, with a mission is to help the government and private sector deliver economic transformation that improves lives. ACET serves as a **visionary** and has developed a **Ghana Compact,** by working with a range of partners and stakeholders to outline a path forward for political and economic transformation, addressing Ghana's biggest challenges, tracking its progress, that will go beyond specific political administrations. A **range of funding partners** have served as **commissioners** for the Ghana Compact, enabling and supporting research for technical papers and the consultation process activities which enable and support a new system and vision for Ghana, that will go beyond the shorter term visions of each political administration.

ADDITIONAL ROLES IN THE SYSTEMS INNOVATION PROCESS

HISTORIANS open up the history of why the system takes the form it does. They show the system is not a fact of nature but the accumulation of a long chain of collective, creative, political and design decisions, taken in context, which shaped its formation and evolution. Opening up the history of the system allows people to see how it could have developed in different ways and so also helps to open up its future possibilities. Seeing oneself as part of this long lineage of people making change can both increase our sense of agency and our commitment to longer term outcomes. These historians might be academic researchers but they could also be people who have worked in the system for a long time who carry its institutional memory or people with long lived experience of being served by the system. There are many different ways to know the history of a system and so to see that it can be reconfigured.

VISIONARIES are the counterparts to historians. They articulate a picture of future possibility, one which could be radically different. They make it possible to imagine stepping into a quite different world, in which systems work in quite different ways. A system does not just need visionaries, it needs ways for a new vision to emerge which many people can contribute to. Between them historians and visionaries help to open up the identity of the system, both where it has come from and what it could become. They open up the possibility space into which innovators and entrepreneurs can move.

CONSUMER Consumer innovators play a vital role in making a vision a lived reality. They are the early adopters and adapters who show how an innovation can be made to work in practice and become an aspirational part of daily life.

FRAMEWORK SETTERS While consumer innovators may show the potential for change at the grassroots level, system-wide change depends on the creation of new frameworks for policy and regulations. The people and organisations who do this are Framework Setters. They might be civil servants and policy makers, but also think tanks and advocacy groups. They create the general frameworks that allow an innovation to spread and become widely adopted. All system transition involves innovation in regulations, protocols and standards to allow new products and services to create a new market. All system transition involves innovation in regulations, protocols and standards to allow new products and services to create a new market.

ADDITIONAL ROLES IN THE SYSTEMS INNOVATION PROCESS

SCALERS The possibility space created by these new frameworks is only turned into widespread access to the products, services and general benefits of a new system through the work of Scalers who excel at simplifying and standardising a solution so it can reach a mass market. Scalers engage in the second and third waves of innovation needed to create a new system. They are the structural engineers of the new system.

EXITERS complement the scalers. They wind down outmoded systems to clear the way for a new system to emerge. Decommissioning existing systems is essential to free up resources and space in which new systems can grow. Just as natural systems go through cycles of creation and destruction, where resources are released again, well managed creative destruction is part and parcel of systems change.

Investment in system innovation poses special challenges: the timescale is often protracted, involving collaboration among many different players. Investors in systems change will rarely be part of the whole story all of the time. Different kinds of investors, philanthropic, public, venture capital and corporate, may play different roles at different times.

AUDITORS AND EVALUATORS play two roles. Because they help to hold the current system to account for its performance, the case for change often comes through the data that evaluators provide. They also create the new metrics needed to measure the impact of the new system. It is hard to create entirely new systems, aligned to a new purpose without creating new measures of value and impact. It is hard for those involved in systems change to know whether they are having an impact unless they have tools to help measure that impact. Evaluators are all those who help provide the data the system needs to adapt and reorient itself.

VISIONARIES AND CONSUMERS EXAMPLE - MANA MOBILITY (PART 3)	**Mana Mobility**, developed the first e-bikes in Ghana, and in the process of developing the first e-vehicles in Ghana. They are acting as **visionaries** -- interested in developing the automotive industry in Africa, and doing it sustainably. With the demand for delivery services skyrocketing in 2020 in Ghana, and 2-3-wheelers everywhere, **Consumers** have already found great value in ebikes and the app.
SCALERS & FRAMEWORK SETTERS EXAMPLE - CHILDLINE	**Childline**, an NGO in India, provides emergency services for children throughout the country. The traces its roots back to the very children it is dedicated to serving. In the initial design phase, street children were interviewed and brought into the process of change as they knew their own needs better than anyone. For example, they stated the need for a uniform phone number across the whole of India with 24-hour availability as many of the crises that compelled a child to seek help emerged at night. During the initial implementation, phones were being manned by street children, monthly quality surveys were conducted and heavy outreach was being done to inform street children of the availability of this line. The model was able to **scale** very quickly thanks to this shared ownership of a network of 30 organizations, including universities, night shelters and issue specific organizations, where the strength of each partner was leveraged. When it reached critical mass the Government of India scaled the model nationwide, providing 90% of funding with the additional 10% for advocacy being contributed through donations. Currently more than 900 organisations are directly involved in Childline and more than 5000 indirectly.
SCALERS & FRAMEWORK SETTERS EXAMPLE - CHILDLINE	Childline, also serves an advocacy organization and along with the Government of India acts as a **framework setter driving policy and enacting laws for child protection in the country**. Rather than creating a global organization, Childline worked with UNICEF and many partners around the world to replicate the model, with leadership at Childline moving to the background often brokering crucial relationships and allowing other key people to lead the global movement. **Contextualisation and localisation allowed the concept to adapt and further reinforced shared ownership, now at a global scale**.

INVESTORS AND SCALERS WITH GOVERNMENT - SANIVATION	**Sanivation** is a non-profit that supports local governments to tackle city's waste management problems. Sanivation is working to shift how sanitation systems operate from traditional sewer-based systems to those that don't rely on water, and offer safe, clean, and efficient options – including one that develops fuel briquettes from human waste. In the process of **scaling**, Sanivation was supported by a range of **investors** – from governments, to foundations, to innovation challenge platforms such as Grand Challenges Canada. This **blog** outlines the role of government scaling to enable Sanivation to scale serve low-income markets first in one county of Naivasha, to Kenya to East Africa and beyond.

REFLECTION & IDENTIFICATION OF ROLES

Now that you've identified what role(s) your organization currently fulfills, please reflect on the following questions.

1. What values does your organization bring to its role(s)?
2. Is your organization's roles supportive of the values identified in the mindset section?
3. If your organization fulfills multiple roles, do you think your organization should be playing that many roles? What would be better to prioritize? What would be better to shift power and promote greater agency to organizations within the system?
4. Forward thinking—do you think your organization should fulfill a different role in a transformed system? What would need to happen for your organization to fulfill this role? What power would your organization have to shift to vacate its current roles?

INDIVIDUAL ROLES

Many of the conversation around roles in Systems Innovation are in regards to organizational roles, as you were introduced to in the above section. As you are working to integrate Systems Innovation approaches into your work at a donor agency, it's important to acknowledge that there are internal roles on your team that contribute to the Systems Innovation processes. Naming and discussing roles can help normalise, build empathy, and reassure that everyone is contributing to the larger goal. Exploring roles can help you and your team members be intentional on how you are supporting one another and having your needs met. You can occupy a multiple roles, and these roles will shift over time.

Roles in the dominant system

Hold steady: Help people feel stable in the time of transition. Keep doing the day-to-day work

Hold on: Identify what to compost (brought into the new system)

Hold fast: Vested interest in things remaining the same

Highlight: Notice what's holding the existing system in place, and what to let go of

Hospice: Offer care and compassion to those struggling with the dominant system's decline

Harbour doubts: About the idea of change or the ideas within it, about whether change is possible

Please work through the following exercise to map and discuss your team's roles.

1. On your team, everyone will individually map their own roles at the current moment. This can be done on a Miro board, Google Jamboard, an in-person white board, or a regular sheet of paper.
2. Once you have mapped what roles you believe you are currently operating, you will map the roles you believe that your team members are currently operating. Try to be as honest as possible on everyone's roles. This may be uncomfortable but will make the discussion more fruitful.
3. Once everyone has done their individual and team mapping, you all will come together to discuss who you believe occupies what role, and what others believe you fulfill.
4. In your team, discuss the needs of everyone's roles & discuss how to address those needs. There is no right answer here as every team is different. This activity intends to spark insightful reflections on your team dynamics and how you all can best support one another. For those on your team who are harbouring doubts, discuss how to meet their needs to help them begin to associate their values with systems innovation. For those who are already inspired by systemic approaches, discuss how as a team you can keep this energy alive.

Please note that there may be subconscious, albeit useful, projection that happens in this exercise. It's easier to attribute some roles to others rather than yourself.

Try to acknowledge when this happens, but nonetheless important conversations still happen.

This exercise and its accompanying roles were developed by **Emma Proud**, an Independent Consultant supporting development agencies become more systems-oriented, human, and adaptive. Emma is also an IDIA Systems Innovation Learning Partner and has contributing significantly to the development of this framework. To read her original post on individual Systems Change roles, please see her blog post titled "**Exploring Roles in Systems Change**".

Roles in the emergent system

Innovator: Disrupt the current system. Challenge assumptions and patterns

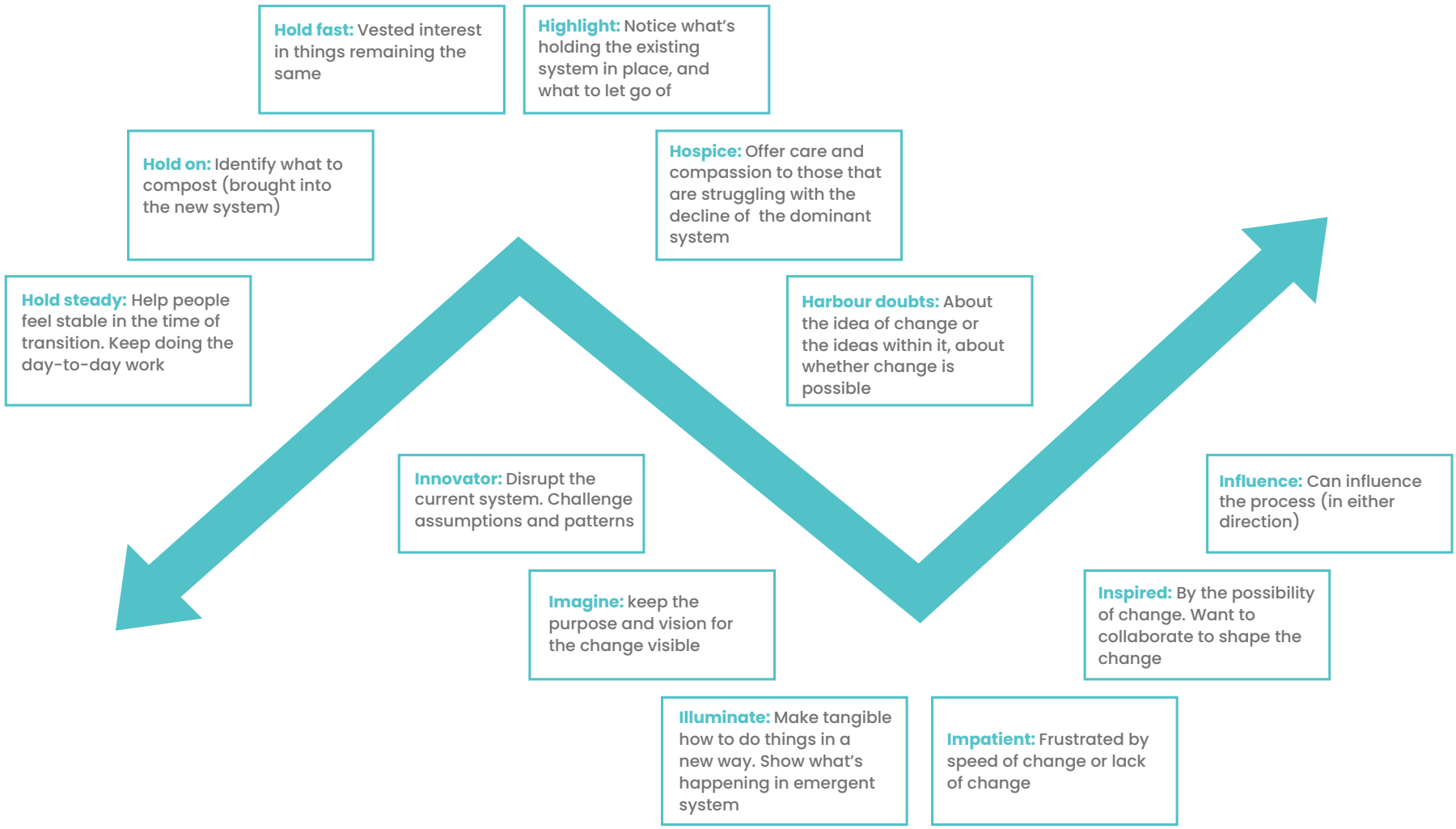
Imagine: keep the purpose and vision for the change visible

Illuminate: Make tangible how to do things in a new way. Show what's happening in emergent system

Impatient: Frustrated by speed of change or lack of change

Inspired: By the possibility of change. Want to collaborate to shape the change

Influence: Can influence the process (in either direction)


Hold fast: Vested interest in things remaining the same
Highlight: Notice what's holding the existing system in place, and what to let go of
Hold on: Identify what to compost (brought into the new system)
Hospice: Offer care and compassion to those that are struggling with the decline of the dominant system
Hold steady: Help people feel stable in the time of transition. Keep doing the day-to-day work
Harbour doubts: About the idea of change or the ideas within it, about whether change is possible
Innovator: Disrupt the current system. Challenge assumptions and patterns
Influence: Can influence the process (in either direction)
Imagine: keep the purpose and vision for the change visible
Inspired: By the possibility of change. Want to collaborate to shape the change
Illuminate: Make tangible how to do things in a new way. Show what's happening in emergent system
Impatient: Frustrated by speed of change or lack of change

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