

How To Solve Tough Social Problems

Tough Problems are also called
“Wicked Problems.”

Characteristics

- ❖ Cause and effect are far apart in space and time
- ❖ Unfold in unfamiliar and unpredictable ways
- ❖ People involved see things very differently so problems become polarised and stuck
- ❖ They are emergent because their properties arise from interaction of many parts
- ❖ They have no definite formulation

Characteristics

- Actors in context of tough problems are constantly and autonomously adjusting their behaviours in response to new information.

Wicked problems can not be solved by traditional approach in which problems are well defined, analysed and solved in sequential steps.

Examples

- **Global Climate Change**
- **Natural Hazards**
- **AIDS Epidemic**
- **International Drug Trafficking**
- **Nuclear Weapons**
- **Israel – Palestine Conflict**
- **India – Pakistan Conflict**
- **Social Injustice and Inequality**

How to Solve

- **Process**
- **Skill Sets**
- **Structure**

Process and Behaviour

Process

- Cooling; Quieting
- Enriching through fruitful Opposition
- Magnetising Resources
- Precise Destroying
- Intelligently Acting

Behaviour

- Patience & Curiosity
- Respect & Clear Thinking
- Generosity
- Discipline & Discernment
- Commitment & Team-work

“Processes are Experiential, Action-oriented, and Involve Prototyping in Partnership and Collaborative Manner.”

Process and Behaviour

U Process: 1 Process, 5 Stages

1. Co-initiating:

uncover common intent
stop and listen to others and to
what life calls you to do

2. Co-sensing:

observe, observe, observe
connect with people and places
to sense the system from the whole

3. Presencing:

connect to the source of inspiration and will
go to the place of silence and allow the inner knowing to emerge

5. Co-evolving:

embody the new in ecosystems
that facilitate acting
from the whole

4. Co-creating:

prototype the new
in living examples to explore
the future by doing

Skill Sets

- **Humility**
- **Curiosity**
- **Willingness to Listen**

Structure

Creating a Social Lab

A New and effective prototyping – based approach for addressing complex social challenges

Social labs are platforms for addressing complex social challenges.

It brings together civil society, industry, government, and the people directly affected by the challenges seeking creative new solutions from a cooperative and interdisciplinary perspectives

Structure

Characteristics

- ❖ They Are Social
- ❖ They Are Experimental
- ❖ They Are Systemic

Social Labs That Don't Have Above Three Characteristics "Baked In" Will Be Ineffective or Fail

Structure

In Simple Terms SOCIAL LAB Means:

“Bringing together a diverse, committed team and take an experimental, prototyping – based approach to addressing challenges systemically and keep going”

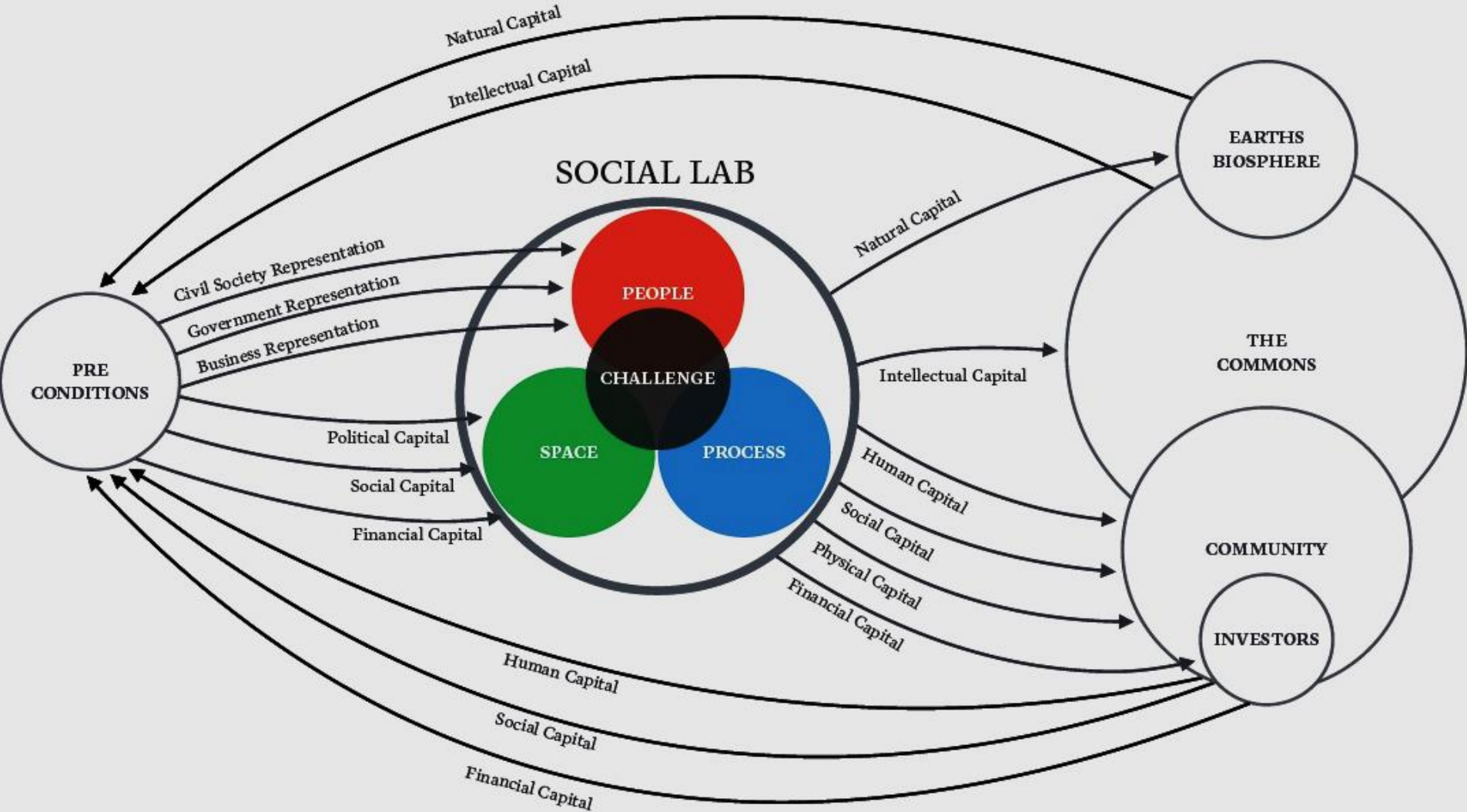
How to Create a Social Lab

- **Clarify Intention**
- **Broadcast An Invitation**
- **Work Your Networks**
- **Recruit willing People**
- **Set Direction**
- **Design in Stacks**
- **Find Cadence**

What Social Labs are Not

- ❖ Programmes
- ❖ Projects
- ❖ Networks
- ❖ Co-working Spaces
- ❖ Incubators
- ❖ Accelerators

Result



Example

The Sustainable Food Lab

(A) Nature of Crisis

- World's population projected to grow from current 7 billion to 9.2 billion by 2050.
- World Food Production needs to double
- Expansion of agricultural activity would severely impact already stressed natural resources. Agriculture production use about half of the habitable land on earth.
- Factoring all environmental costs Big MaC of McDonald instead of costing a few dollars would cost a few hundred dollars.
- Actors – Small and Big Farmers, Retailors, Food Processors, Scientists Etc..

Example

(B) Evolution

- Started with a breakfast conversation among a food activist, one system thinker and a few others in 2002
- The goal was to figure out food system that is sustainable from multiple angles i.e from production to environment to financial.
- Focus of food lab was on practical initiatives, pilot projects and viable full-scale food system interventions.
- Its membership includes, Union Lever, Kellogg, Cargill, SYSCO, Oxfam GB, Carrefour etc.

Example

(C) Goal

“To bring corporations, NGOs, and governments together to accelerate the incorporation of environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability into DNA of mainstream food and agriculture system.”

Example

(C) Mission

“Sustainable food system as one in which fertility of soil is maintained and improved; availability and quality of water are protected; bio- diversity is protected; farmers and farm workers, and all actors in value chains have livable incomes; the food we eat is affordable and promote our health; businesses can thrive and greenhouse emissions are within capacity of earth to absorb.”

Example

(D) Major Achievements

- Major stakeholders joined the lab
- Launched a Brazilian Initiative for Sustainable Food with 11 business and non business members
- Formal partnership with leading players
- Changing the certification standards
- Improving market access to improve livelihood of small producers
- Changing the mindset of big corporates like UL, Target etc.

Thank you !

For any clarification, please contact:

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