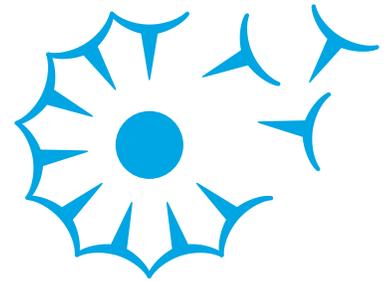


Working Paper:

Pathways to System Change



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Pathways to System Change

Frances Westley, PhD – J. W. McConnell Chair in Social Innovation, Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience, University of Waterloo, Canada

Nino Antadze – PhD Candidate in Planning, J. W. McConnell Research Fellow in Social Innovation, University of Waterloo, Canada

Darcy J. Riddell - PhD Candidate, Social and Ecological Sustainability, Department of Environment and Resource Studies, Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience, University of Waterloo, Canada

Kirsten Robinson - Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience, University of Waterloo, Canada

Sean Geobey – PhD Student in Management Science, J. W. McConnell Research Fellow in Social Innovation, University of Waterloo

Pathways to System Change

Abstract:

Social entrepreneurs and non-for-profit organizations often attempt not only to make a difference on the local level, but also to challenge and possibly alter the overall system that creates the social problems. The pathways for system change that social entrepreneurs adopt are different and depend on the initial conditions, opportunities and barriers, as well as the motivation behind the decision to scale up. The article explores different pathways that social entrepreneurs pursue by studying selected non-for-profit organizations. Using qualitative interview data, we construct five different configurations of key variables: the organization's theory of change, strength of the organization and the challenges that it faces, the pathway for scaling up that emerges from the identified strength and challenges, and the risks related to this pathway.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurs operate in complex environments characterised by a multiplicity of linkages and feedbacks and high degree of unpredictability (Goldstein, Hazy and Silberstang, 2008). In this setting, social entrepreneurs strive to create social value by employing innovative ways of addressing acute social problems. In order to survive and respond to the challenges presented by such complex environments, social entrepreneurs need to adapt, evolve and meet emerging needs and opportunities (Dorado, 2006).

Social entrepreneurs often strive not only to make a difference on the local level, but also to challenge and possibly alter the overall system that creates the social problems (Westley and Antadze, 2010). In order to do so, social entrepreneurs need to scale up their efforts so they can impact the broader system level and find openings for their innovations and novel ideas.

In our discussion “scaling up” implies directing efforts towards larger scale variables and thus impacting the system that created the social problem in the first place. Most of the relevant literature uses term “scaling up” to refer to the efforts of the organizations to replicate and disseminate their programs, products, ideas and innovative approaches (Dees, Anderson, and Wei-Skillern, 2004, Mulgan et al., 2007, Wei-Skillern and Anderson, 2003). We name this replication as “scaling out”, when the organization attempts to affect *more* people and cover larger geographic area. However, when the organization aims to affect *everybody* who is in need

of the social innovation they offer, or to address the larger institutional roots of a problem, we refer to their attempt as “scaling up”. The concept of scaling up is related to our definition of social innovation: “Social innovation is a complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs. Such successful social innovations have durability and broad impact” (Westley and Antadze, 2010, p.2). It is this process of scaling up that differentiates social enterprise activities from social innovation

The case studies profiled herein reveal that the notions of scaling out and scaling up are often linked (See Figure 1). Most of the organizations started their dispersed efforts on a local scale (*Initial Conditions*). Gradually they pursued scaling out strategies by replicating and disseminating their innovation (*Scaling Out*). At this stage the organizations expanded their activities by creating networks, and building up knowledge, experience, and reputation. If they are successful, however, organizations sometimes reach a “glass ceiling” of diminishing returns. As one social innovator put it “I realized no matter how many local organizations I began, the root problem remained the same”. To some extent this represented a threshold of decision. Those organizations that were content with their existing activities and results saw the threshold as a “ceiling”, however, for those interested in pursuing system change strategies, their existing organizational capacities, experience and activities served as a “platform” for a larger sphere of activity (*System Change*). The organizations interested in scaling up their efforts started to develop strategies towards impacting the systems or institutional practices which were generating problems in the first place, and began employing a scaling-up pathway to extend their

impact. At this stage the role of the institutional entrepreneurs, those who actively seek to change the broader social system to enable a social innovation to flourish (Dorado, 2005), gained momentum.

An example of an organization that managed to make the transition from scaling out to scaling up is Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN). PLAN was founded in Vancouver, Canada two decades ago by the parents of children with disabilities, inspired by the leadership of Al Etmanski and Vickie Cammack. PLAN worked to develop a different concept of disability, focusing on the gifts that people with disabilities have rather than on their deficits. The group began by searching for a secure future for their children that was both financially and socially secure. This was to be achieved by building a lifelong social network around the person with a disability. The results were very positive and the demand for PLAN grew, as Al and Vickie worked to disseminate their model to communities across Canada. But as their success grew, so did their dissatisfaction.

Even though PLAN's concept of creating network of friends around the person with the disability proved to be very popular, Al and Vickie decided to step back from what was considered an extremely successful replication model and focus on altering the larger system that contributed towards the exclusion of those with disability from the mainstream society. They recognized that being safe and secure was not enough. The disabled and their families wanted a good life, one that involved contribution and participation. This in turn meant that the disabled needed to break out of the straitjacket of broader conceptions of the disabled on the one hand, and the financially restrictive disability pensions, on the other. They started Philia, an organization devoted to creating a broad, national level dialogue between thought leaders and

the disabled. They also developed and later actively advocated for the nation-wide changes that would bring long-term financial security to the people with disability. This strategy resulted in a breakthrough: the establishment of the first Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), which made it possible for the disabled to amass savings without losing their disability payments.

Beyond serving individual families through networks of support, through the introduction of the RDSP, PLAN was able to change the life conditions for all people with disabilities in Canada.

This transition from scaling out to scaling up is not an easy one. It demands a reframing of the problem and calls for new skills. It is one of the things that separates successful social innovations from successful entrepreneurial firms in the private sector: at some point “more” changes to “different”. Many organizations willing to challenge the larger structures strive to find their own unique way to cross this line. In this article we explore the pathways that organizations take as they attempt to move from the scaling out to the scaling up. Distinctive pathways are shaped by, among other things, the initial conditions, opportunities and barriers, and the motivation behind the decision to scale up in the first place. We present a typology of five generic patterns of scaling up with the goal of stimulating the discussion around different configurations that social entrepreneurs and non-for-profits employ to scale up. We hope that the given study will contribute towards filling the knowledge gap that Bloom and Chatterji (2008, p. 25) define as the lack of the “conceptual clarity” on why some social enterprises are more successful in scaling than the others, by arguing that there are multiple promising approaches to scaling social innovations.

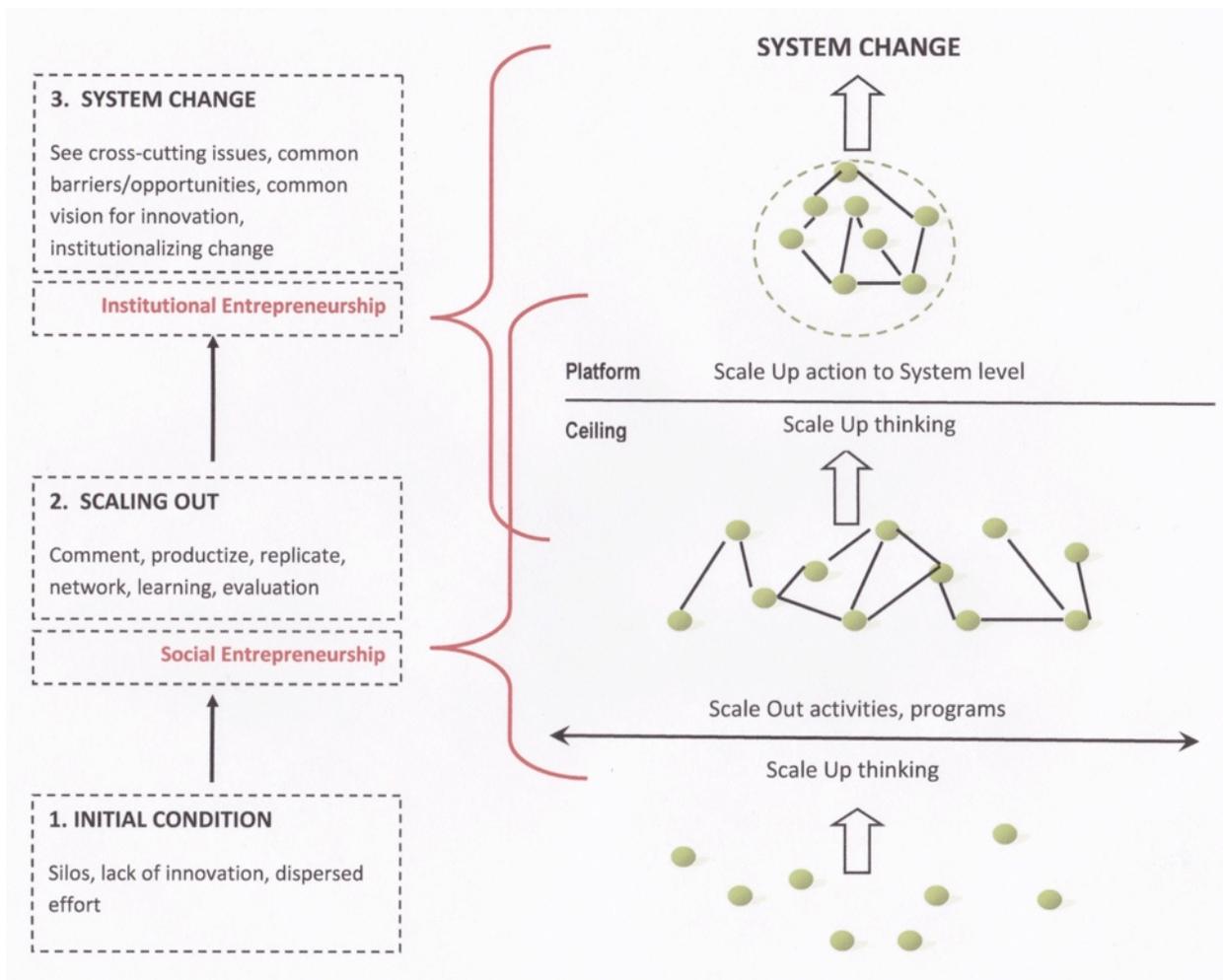


Figure 1 Levels of Initial Condition, Scaling Out, and System Change

Methodology

Since 2002, a group of Canadian non-for-profit organizations, led by social entrepreneurs and funded in their efforts at creating social change have been brought together by their common funding agency, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, to share experiences and learn from each other and invited experts. While many of these organizations initially were interested in local impact, or in expanding the market for their invention in such areas as education,

community development, and poverty alleviation, they have all, moved to a recognition over time that if they were to accomplish their goals, certain barriers at the system level needed to be addressed. How they came to this decision varied considerably, however.

For our case studies, we chose organizations that were participants of the Applied Dissemination practitioners group. The choice was not random. The initial selection of these organizations was based on our previous knowledge of their overall strategy and direction of work. We used the classification of strategy-making modes offered by Mintzberg (1973) (the entrepreneurial, planning, and adaptive modes)¹ to distinguish organizations and ensure that our sample included organizations with a variety of strategy modes.

To study these organizations we employed the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) approach. We should specify that the QCA was used as a research strategy rather than a research technique. The QCA was introduced by Charles Ragin in his book “The comparative method. Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies” (1987) and was largely regarded as comparative and mainly case-oriented approach.

The QCA aims to gain the insight in the cases and capture their complexity while providing a certain level of generalization (Rihoux and Lobe, 2009). QCA enables the researcher to study each case, examine complex causal relationships, and therefore, consider cases as configurations (Young et al., 2006). As Ragin (1990, p. 68) explains “the logic of the case study is fundamentally configurational”. The “configurational” view of cases implies that we study

¹ Entrepreneurial mode – one strong leader takes bold, risky actions on behalf of his organization, Adaptive mode – the organization adapts in small, disjointed steps to a difficult environment, Planning mode – formal analysis is used to plan explicit, integrated strategies for the future (Mintzberg, 1973).

interconnections of different parts that form a coherent whole in a given context (Ragin, 1990). Transforming cases into configurations implies viewing them as “a set of conditions leading to a given outcome”² (Rihoux and Lobe, 2009, p. 228). As Byrne (2009, p. 109) explains, “multi-case comparative qualitative work is always configurational when it engages with causes.”

Configurational comparisons helped us to identify distinct patterns for scaling-up and the elements shaping these patterns (Young et al., 2006). The explanations for the pathways that organizations take to scale-up were “derived from empirical evidence based on distinct but comparable case studies using rigorous analytic procedures” (Young et al., 2006, p. 4). As a result, the QCA was used as a meta-analysis tool to examine the selected case studies (Fiss, 2009).

The main method for data collection was personal, non-structured interviews with the leader and, in most cases, founder of the organizations. The interviews were mainly conducted in the offices of the organizations in order to witness the atmosphere and the environment in which our interviewees worked.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Initially, each interviewer open coded the interview that he/she conducted and the group met to work out general coding categories. Then the more refined coding system was used to recode all interviews, and each researcher coded an interview he or she did not conduct, as well as their own. The “line by line” coding enabled us to detect the nuances and “open up the text and expose the thoughts, ideas, and meanings containing therein” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.102). The detailed study of the data helped us to

² While using the complexity theory terminology, Byrne (2009, p.102) calls outcome an “attractor state”.

understand the views of our interviewees and the way they comprehended their reality, and thus, to minimize our personal biases or the possible influence from our pre-determined perceptions (Charmaz, 2000). Through open coding we broke down the data in order to generate the categories and sub-categories.

After completing the open coding, we reassembled data in order to make more accurate connections between categories and sub-categories. As Strauss (1987, p.64) explains, at this stage of data analysis “the analyst begins to build up a dense texture of relationships around the ‘axis’ of the category being focused upon.” In accordance with the grounded theory approach, the analysis of the primary data enabled us to see the emergent patterns in terms of the different pathways for scaling up. At this point we revisited the interview transcripts and excerpted the quotations that best described the revealed patterns and their particular elements. Throughout the research, the data collection and data analysis were not strictly separated phases, but rather they informed each other.

After completion of the preliminary analysis, we were able to share our findings with the representatives of the organizations that we studied. They easily identified themselves with the presented pathways and provided their comments and feedback. This meeting served to confirm the accuracy of our analysis and to refine our findings. This stage of grounded theory research is referred to as Theoretical Sampling and is explained by Charmaz (2000, p.519) as “a pivotal part of the development of formal theory.”

Elements shaping configurations

Based on our coding of the interview data, five main elements shaping different configurations emerged as a result of studying relevant theoretical concepts and employing complexity perspectives, as well as through investigating case studies. More detailed description of the defined five elements is presented below:

- a) **Theory of change** reveals how an organization perceives its own change of goals, and their vision of how existing institutions and structures could be altered in order to respond to existing social needs.
- b) **Strength** implies the advantages of the given strategies employed by the organization.
- c) **Challenge** refers to the difficulties that may arise while pursuing the chosen pathway that may hinder the attainment of system level goals.
- d) **Pathway for scaling up** describes perceived openings for moving from scaling out to scaling up, conditioned by the earlier strategies and choices of the organization.
- e) **Risk** is associated with the proposed pathway for scaling up. Every response to the existing or arising difficulty has the downside that should be acknowledge and taken into consideration.

The following section presents five generic types of configurations – pathways to scaling up – that were revealed through conducting case studies. The configurations are presented according

to the five elements introduced above. In the interests of presenting each configuration as efficiently as possible we have saved the quotes that illustrate each element for the integrating table (Table 1).

Pathways to scaling up

The Volcano

Constant internal learning was the key imperative for the Engineers Without Borders (EWB), founded in 2000 by engineering graduates George Roter and Parker Mitchell from the University of Waterloo. They felt that the engineering profession could do much more to tackle one of the largest problems of today's world – the extreme poverty in developing countries. With the energy and enthusiasm of idealistic youth, George and Parker started to build their organization by recruiting volunteers. They were ambitious about the size and scope of their organization – they wanted to send more volunteers to more villages in order to help more and more people. The basic idea was that “more people in Canada equals more people helped overseas”. By 2010 EWB had grown to 25 full time staff members, 35,000 members, over 2,500 volunteers in Canada, more than 300 volunteers who have worked overseas (Engineers Without Borders, 2010). Currently, EWB has 37 individual chapters across the country (G. Roter, personal communication, February 17, 2010).

The major strength of the organization was the ability to build on the excitement of its young volunteers. From the start, Mitchell and Roter encouraged EWB members to solve problems and to bring those solutions back to the organization. The inclusive and participatory organizational culture made for constant internal learning. Everybody had a voice and was able to bring in their questions and suggestions to the table. The strength of such an organization is the ability to build on emergence: to generate energy and excitement through inclusive and participatory organizational culture, and to be reactive to internal and external factors. Constant internal learning is the result of such an organizational culture.

This theory of change bore fruit, in the intense engagement of young, busy engineering students. The chance EWB offered was not only to travel overseas, but to have some influence in a rapidly growing movement. With already an impressive number of volunteers and chapters, EWB was present in many countries and sectors.

The sheer diversity of views and information led to a concern with system change. EWB members started to realize that the project-by-project approach would not tackle much larger problems, such as poverty, which they started to identify during their work. Projects appeared to be meaningless without understanding their contexts, or the broader system that would allow project benefits to be maintained over time. The EWB team realized that in order to succeed they needed to tackle problems on much higher levels – within organizations, governments, and international aid agencies. Gradually, they started to adopt a systems lens and were able to detect issues and problems that were not visible to them before.

However, a key challenge remained: even with so many volunteers, there were not enough resources to act on all the ideas in the system. By 2010 it was obvious that there was a need to build strategic focus by picking up one priority direction to focus resources in an effort to address the whole system. During the last year, EWB decided to concentrate on five core areas (Water sector in Malawi, Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana, Rural Planning Offices in Ghana, Farmers Unions in Burkina Faso, Agricultural sector between Malawi and Zambia) in order to channel their existing resources, and actually be able to influence system change.

The risk remains, however, that in picking this pathway, EWB leaders may compromise the key competence and resource of the organization: its excited and engaged volunteers. Care will need to be taken to find ways to allow significant input as more centralized frameworks emerge.

We have termed this pathway “Volcano”. When an organization is full of internal energy – internal interactions are dynamic and intense, the learning process is ongoing. The organization needs to reach “the tipping point” in order to “erupt” and make a profound and system-level change. Learning through the experience that is fed back into the organization is the main driving force for pursuing scaling up efforts. However, these learnings need to converge in order to maintain their force and momentum.

The Beanstalk

A mathematician, author, and playwright, John Mighton founded Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies (JUMP), a charitable organization that aimed to help children excel in math. John always struggled with math at school that made him wonder if there were limits to his abilities.

The same continued at the university before he came across the story of Sylvia Plath who taught

herself to write. The example of Sylvia Plath served as an inspiration for John. He believed that anybody can learn math, and realized this belief by earning a Doctorate degree in mathematics. Over the years, John volunteered in math programs to help students. The results were very positive. Soon he realized that kids had much larger potential than what they were given credit for. These experiences resulted in the development of the theory of change for JUMP that was initiated by a strong visionary, John Mighton, and implied the implementation of a strong vision. The major strength of the organization was consistency and drive towards attaining its goals and vision. With the strong belief in the importance and need to help students to excel in math, John decided to train some of his friends to be tutors. However, soon JUMP moved from offering a tutoring program to being invited to the classrooms. The new revelation that this novelty brought was the evidence that children learned better when they were together in a non-competitive and supportive environment. JUMP started to drive its energy towards teaching teachers and providing resources for them. Gradually a network of teachers who could support, inform, and mentor other teachers was created. Teachers represented the primary base for the dissemination of JUMP's ideas. They actively volunteered to make a contribution. The teachers' network served as a forum for discussions and exchange of information and experience. Teachers were being seen as major agents for change, who were able to reach out to the students and to other teachers. Currently at least 50,000 schoolchildren are served by the JUMP program , with about 50% growth per year (J. Mighton, personal communication, January 13, 2010).

The outcomes of JUMP program are also very positive. For example the results from Lambeth School in the UK show that for the group of students who used the JUMP Math approach for two

years, 60% performed at or above their grade level, whereas before JUMP instruction began only 12% of the group performed at or above their grade level (JUMP Math, 2009).

Initially, the idea was to help those children who were marginalized and often struggled at school. Over time, John and his colleagues realized that by reaching out to more and more schoolchildren, they could raise the average standard in math. However, it was not only about math. John believed that the academic success of the kids and their future contribution to the society were linked. By being better educated and aware of their own potential, they could become active citizens who would be able to make informed decisions. John believed that the academic success in math could “spill over everywhere in their lives.”

However, in order to realize this intention, JUMP had to tackle significant challenges. The organization experienced the lack of resources as it was largely depended on the support of funders. The lack of sufficient financial and human resources prevents JUMP from responding to existing opportunities, and is often named as the source of frustration in the organization.

Finding a patron or venture social capital may be a response to this challenge, however such a solution may result in leaving behind the original design and some of the energy around the movement.

We have labelled this pathway as “Beanstalk” as it is about “climbing” up to the system level without compromising the initially chosen vision and priorities. This pathway is adopted by organizations which continue their efforts despite all the difficulties and obstacles they may face on their way. Consistency and drive are strengths of this pathway. The priorities and the direction

are chosen by a strong visionary, who continues to lead the organization throughout its journey. Therefore, a leader is a central figure in this configuration.

Umbrella

ArtsSmarts was founded by the McConnell Foundation in 1998 with the initial idea of “arts becom[ing] part of the curriculum and the system” and with the goal to initiate system change in education. The theory of change for Artsmasrts was that the initiating organization would stimulate emergence through funding. Over the last 10 years, through its local projects, ArtsSmarts reached more than 350 000 young people in 2500 schools, involving 5000 artists, 14 000 educators, and thousands of community volunteers (ArtsSmarts, 2010).

The major strength of the organization was that it introduced system-level goals for change at a very early stage. Equipped with these system level goals, Artsmarts draw insights about its work from numerous local partner organizations, most of whom engaged students in arts-based work inside and outside of the classroom. ArtsSmarts’ decentralized program delivery model meant that they did not have direct control over the work of partners, but also that they could learn from many experiments in different contexts. Over time what they learned pointed to “certain key aspects that should be implemented for all programs across the country.” As they developed a clearer concept about what is successful, they developed metrics for evaluation.

However, as ArtsSMarts - the founding organization - began to withdraw from its coordinating role to let the initiative stand on its own, significant challenges emerged. The major challenge that ArtsSmarts faced was the lack of ownership over the initiatives, poor integration, and the absence of a visionary to synthesize and drive the overall strategy. The founding organization

expected “someone else [to] absorb the initiative”, but “it wasn’t really anybody’s. Nobody really owned it.”

The pathway to scaling up that would build upon the strength of the organization and the challenges that it faces could be to challenge the concept of partnership and start “thinking like a movement”. However, the organization may run into the risk of “pushing partners to go beyond their comfort level” as some partners do not have the capacity to become a program developer rather than a funder.

We named this pathway as “Umbrella”. In organizations that follow the Umbrella pathway, the “initiating” organization stimulates emergence of an innovation by providing overarching funding. The strength of the Umbrella pathway is that a system level goal is introduced at an early stage and coordinated local work emerges from that (the initiative operates as an experiment in system change). The early funding creates a protected space in which the initiative/organization can grow and develop, allowing for the initiation of novel approaches and the development of significant challenges to existing systems. However, as the “umbrella” is pulled away and the relationships with local partners come to dominate, the organization may have to reinvent itself (perhaps even shrinking and reformulating its purpose), to ensure that system-change goals can be maintained and advanced.

LEGO

Communities are the major focus for Tamarack - an Institute for Community Engagement.

Tamarack works towards building vibrant and engaged communities in order to solve major

community challenges, such as poverty. The theory of change for Tamarack is that broader system change starts with community change.

The major strength of the organization is that it facilitates the emergence of new local networks and partnerships and builds on existing community assets. Currently Tamarack engages 15 cities in pan-Canadian learning communities. Compared to Tamarack's initial goal of moving 5000 people out of poverty, the current number of people whose lives have been improved has reached 147 000 (P. Born, personal communication, January 7, 2010). In this process, the president of Tamarack, Paul Born, plays a central role by being an inspiring speaker, visionary and leader.

While being successful on the community level, Tamarack experiences the challenge of connecting place-based strategies to broader policy/economic change. The organization admits that it was not able to succeed in making changes at the national policy level. Some areas of the country were more affected by Tamarack's ideas and benefited from it, compared with others.

In order to overcome this challenge and pursue the pathway to scaling up, Tamarack may consider creating strategic conversations in order to consolidate and bring the elements together at a higher level. However, while applying the latter approach, Tamarack may run into the risk of hindering active dissemination of its core principles and ideas.

We named this pathway "LEGO" as it focuses on the bottom-up emergence of local networks, partnerships, and collaborations in order to build on the existing assets. LEGO pathway is associated with the belief that the system change starts with the community change, therefore connecting different "pieces" is crucial for creating the momentum for system change.

Polishing Gemstones

The organization Centre for Children Committing Offences (CCCO) was founded in 2001 in order to replicate and disseminate a program called Stop Now and Think (SNAP). SNAP was designed to help child offenders under 12 stay in school, and to change the way communities engage with high risk and behaviourally disruptive children. The program was developed and refined over a decade, and their evidence-based approach and positive impact gained international attention. The theory of change for the CCCO was about spreading impact by refining and selling more of a good product (controlled replication).

CCCO collaborated with communities, schools, and mental health administration, and focused on teaching self-control and problem solving to young offenders. CCCO was established to extend the program impact, and build a successful enterprise model. For years the organization was oriented towards the dual task of finding new markets and building business systems on the one hand, and refining their model for successful replication in different contexts and communities, on the other. The development of strong business model enabled the product to reach more communities, and the program impact was ensured through attention to fidelity and quality control. SNAP's effectiveness has been widely recognised, and to date, SNAP® licenses have been issued to children's mental health agencies, educational facilities, and other community and social service organizations across Canada, United States and Europe (CDI, 2010). Consequently, the major strength of the organization is that the demonstrated success and adoption of its product gives CCCO credibility, legitimacy, reliability, and reputation.

As their enterprise approach met with success, CCCO began to reflect on how to extend their innovation beyond just controlled dissemination of a positive product. At this point the organization faced the challenge of having emphasized short-term managerial thinking in a complex problem domain. Emphasis on the product and on its replicability and scalability, to some extent, served as a distraction from broader scaling up possibilities. The focus on a successful product made it difficult for the organization to adapt to change or impact the broader system.

In order to overcome this challenge and pursue this pathway for scaling up, CCCO may now need to partner with more system-focused movements or organizations. Navigating the divide between the enterprise and a system innovation requires different skills (political, mobilization of different partnerships and resources). A related risk to this approach for the organization may be the possibility of losing the quality control over its product.

We labeled this pathway as “Polishing Gemstones” as it emphasizes the creation and refinement of a program or product, with emphasis on scaling out – replicating the innovative program into different contexts. In order to do this well, great care is taken to ensure that the program is systematized and can be replicated successfully. Quality is a primary focus for this pathway. Sustained effort is directed to turn the program into a product that can be sold, and to develop efficient business systems.

Table 1 Quotes illustrating each element of the pathways

	Theory of Change	Strength	Challenge	Pathway for Scaling Up	Risk
Volcano	Occurs from learning and experimentation. <i>"There was a massive evolution. We incorporated this new understanding on every stage and changed the organization, rather than saying that we have this thing that works well, so let's keep it."</i>	Inclusive and participatory organizational culture. <i>"Everybody is an owner, everybody is a decision-maker, everybody has a stake. Every piece of information that you bring to the table is seen very valuable. Everybody feels that."</i>	Defining strategic focus. <i>"Our ambitions are much larger than our resources... We came to the hypothesis that other organizations have defined the problem too narrowly for having not seen the broader picture. We think all these pieces are important, why we would ignore them? Well, we would ignore them because it distracts resources."</i>	Centralization of the strategy. <i>"We need to narrow down to 5 projects, where we need to reach the tipping point in terms of the people and resources that we put against it.... It's very complex."</i>	Lose ability to generate the energy and excitement within the organization. <i>"So there will be the change in culture of the organization that will come with these changes. If we want to have an impact, this is probably what we need to do, but that undermines some of the traditional values of the organisation where everything was created at the bottom and came up to the top and got then sent back again."</i>

Beanstalk	<p>Initiated by a visionary and implies implementation of the strong vision.</p> <p><i>"I actually believe that the root cause of many of our problems is in education... I believe that if we fixed that, it would change many of our problems with the environment, with the poverty and so on."</i></p>	<p>The consistency and drive.</p> <p><i>"The general principles have remained relatively consistent."</i></p>	<p>The scarcity of resources to respond to opportunities.</p> <p><i>"...the main barrier is money, because we are always struggling to get resources."</i></p> <p><i>"The sad thing is that we are so run off our feet that we don't have the resources and time to look into these opportunities. "</i></p>	<p>Finding a patron or venture social capital.</p>	<p>Leave behind the original design and some of the energy around movement.</p> <p><i>"They [teachers] don't feel it is the same old business as usual. I would hate to lose that. Also we gain a lot by being a movement and not just a business."</i></p>
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Umbrella	<p>The initiating organization stimulates emergence through funding.</p> <p><i>"I think it is driven by high-level goals that are implemented differently in different places and by different partners."</i></p>	<p>Introduces system level goal on a early stage.</p> <p><i>"if the arts became part of the curriculum and the system, the education system, took it on and it was absorbed, if it became absorbed in their budgets, in their systems, and so on".</i></p>	<p>The lack of ownership, poor integration, the absence of a visionary.</p> <p><i>"so somebody else took ownership of this because it wasn't really anyone's. Nobody owned it. The partners owned their own thing, but they certainly didn't feel any ownership to the national piece"</i></p>	<p>Challenge the concept of partnership and "think like a movement".</p> <p><i>"...Local organizations, involved from the beginning (needed) to change their concept of their role from funding recipient to "community... developer". My role needed to change from (intermediary) funder to being a catalyst for change.</i></p> <p><i>Those are pretty key, those are key relationship changing concepts that had to be put into place"</i></p>	<p>"Push partners go beyond their comfort level".</p> <p><i>"...from being a recipient to being a program developer, a lot of them are not developing their own programs, they're actually just taken our role over as a funder. And they're still just a funder as opposed to like a program development, they don't do the detail work, they just fund it. "</i></p>
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<p>LEGO</p>	<p>System change starts with community change.</p> <p><i>"We started at the community level, addressing issues/problems."</i></p>	<p>The emergence of new local networks and partnerships, building on existing assets.</p> <p><i>"...we had an effect at a place-based level to affirm those who were already doing it and encourage those who weren't to do a comprehensive approach."</i></p>	<p>Connecting place-based strategy to broader policy/economic change.</p> <p><i>"It kept in our minds that to be successful we wanted to change the world – and this went beyond our contribution locally to how can what we do work elsewhere and what could have bigger impact."</i></p>	<p>The creation of strategic conversation to consolidate elements at a higher level.</p> <p><i>"There would be an effect on provincial level strategy work, place-based approach in at least 4-5 provinces. Almost no effect at the Federal level ...".</i></p>	<p>May hinder active dissemination of principles and ideas.</p> <p><i>"We decided that our model was to disseminate ideas, concepts and core principles rather than programs. There are organizations that replicated by packaging and disseminating their programs, but we did not do this. I call it 'maple syroping' work – finding the essence, the sweetness of this, and that is what you disseminate."</i></p>
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Polishing Gemstones	<p>Refining and selling more of a good product (controlled replication).</p> <p><i>"So in ten years it went from development, to licensing and then creating training modules...We started to look at what was our product. It was about getting the language; talking about products, talking about dollars."</i></p>	<p>Gives credibility, legitimacy, reliability, and reputation to the organization.</p> <p><i>"Product development is a huge challenge. I think how we were able to scale up though, in having a product that was scalable, had to do with the fact that we were heavily engaged in research."</i></p>	<p>Short term managerial thinking in a complex problem domain.</p> <p><i>"We were so busy just making sure that this program was right, and working and not causing more harm then good. We wanted to ensure we were developing it in the right way. So we focused our attention on seeing if it is replicable, scaleable, however there is this whole other world from that other level."</i></p>	<p>The potential partnership with the system focused movement or organization.</p> <p><i>"I know that if I am going to impact this higher world here, I have to pull away...I would love to do that, but I don't know if I have the expertise to do that. I have the passion for it. I think I could help. But that is not my area of expertise, my language, my world. For me, to be able to do that, I would almost need someone to help me."</i></p>	<p>May cause the loss of quality control.</p> <p><i>"I have to be careful that if I am going to influence change at that social innovation level, you can't be seen as a conflict of interest."</i></p>
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Conclusions

In our analysis, we attempted to view the pathways to system change from the complexity perspective. It is argued that the complexity-based perspective may largely contribute towards more thorough understanding of social entrepreneurship. Such a perspective contrasts with broader accepted linear and equilibrium-based models of social entrepreneurship (Goldstein and Hazy, 2008). In case of the social entrepreneurship that addresses overarching social problems, the patterns that emerge at the higher levels of scale are particularly important. At the same time, one of the main characteristics of complex systems is that the emergence of such patterns is difficult, if not impossible to predict. Therefore, for the social entrepreneurs who aim to challenge and possibly, change the overall structures, the larger scale variables are the main focus (Goldstein et al., 2008).

In order to achieve larger impact in the complex environment, social entrepreneurs and non-for-profits create new pathways through combining different elements that are influenced by the initial conditions. In doing so, they shift the boundaries of what Stuart Kauffman (2008) refers to as “the Adjacent Possible”. In other words, it can be argued that social entrepreneurs and non-for-profit organizations employ different pathways in order to diversify future possibilities, by undertaking particular actions and making certain choices. Therefore, the pathways they choose to reach system change vary, as a particular pathway or combination of elements may be more effective to shift the boundaries of the Adjacent Possible for a given organization and their context.

The cases studies presented in this article revealed that prior to moving into the System Change domain, organizations need to build a certain “platform” through successful dissemination of their ideas or products. Without this hypothetical platform of experience, reputation, and in-depth knowledge of the field, it would be practically impossible to make larger-scale difference. In addition, being successful on scaling out enables an organization to view problems and issues that were not visible before and therefore, to identify new ways and approaches to change the system.

Each organizations tried to find its own pathway for moving into the scaling out level. The choice of the pathway is determined by a number of factors, such as initial starting conditions, existing competencies and resources, obstacles and opportunities that the organization faces.

While we do not give recommendations on which pathway to choose, we try to distinguish the main elements that build up the configuration of the chosen pathway. One element may be more important than the other in different configurations (we could refer to them as core and peripheral elements, Fiss, 2009), but the awareness about their existence and their possible influence may help organizations to find their own, unique way.

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