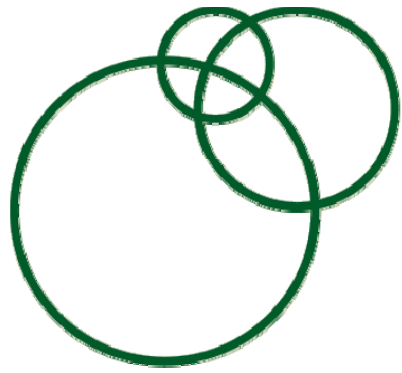


# Bridging Leadership & Inclusive Partnerships

- Bridging Leadership
- Mini-Case Study: Partnership for Child Nutrition
- Theory U
- Relationship Capital Exercise

Canadian School of Public Service  
Advanced Leadership Course  
April 7, 2008  
John Heller, The Synergos Institute





Synergos



# Bridging Leadership

Bridging Leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on stimulating and sustaining effective working relationships among stakeholders whose collective input is needed to make progress on a given systemic challenge. Bridging Leadership offers an alternative paradigm in leadership:

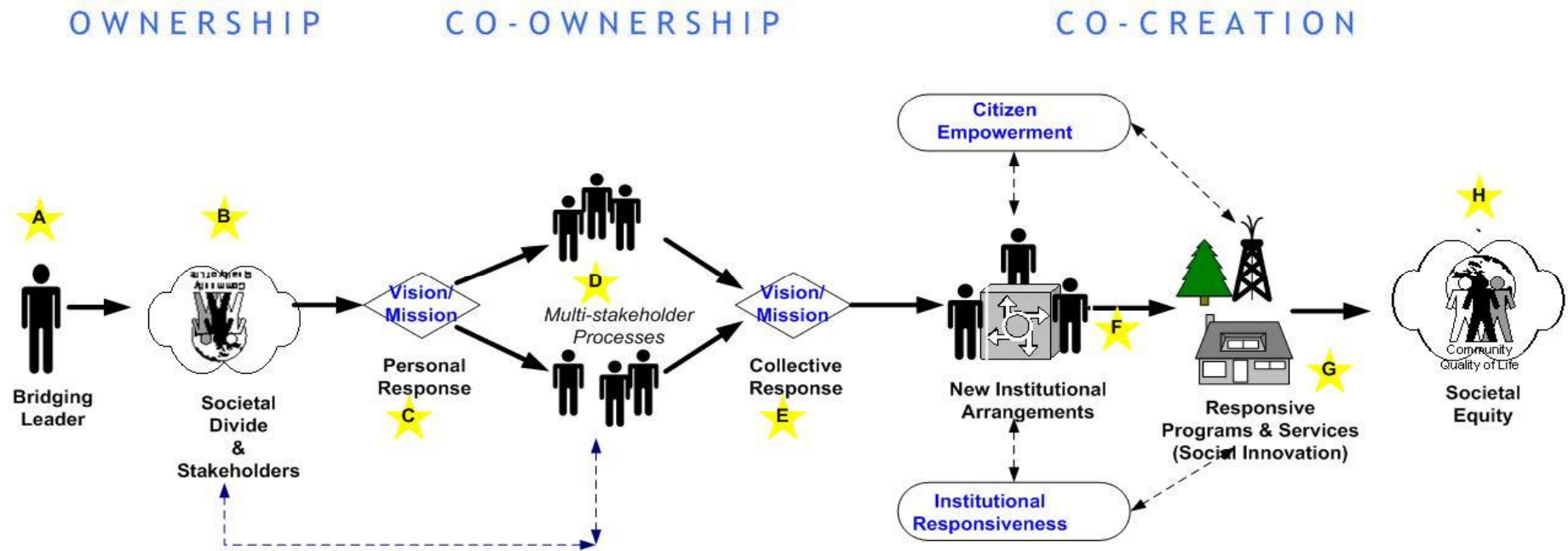
FROM Leaders as	TO Leaders as
Commander and controller	Facilitator and convener
Sole owner of the problem and solution	Prime mover, but a co-owner of the problem and solution
Having all the answers	Creator of the conditions where answers emerge
A single intelligence	Focuser of collective attention and the distiller of collective intelligence
Head of one organization	Ligament between organizations and institutions across a system
Holder of power	Distributor of power, letting go to enable new things to emerge
Omnipotent and strong	Emotionally vulnerable and open to influence
Expert	Non-expert, mobilizing the expertise of others

# Characteristics of Bridging Leaders

1. **Participatory Consciousness**– belief that complex social issues cannot be addressed by one best solution but by collaboration, participation and ownership of community & other stakeholders
2. **Passion & Influence** – can sustain efforts and inspire others through personal energy and can influence the system and implement the desired interventions with or without formal authority
3. **Emotional Intelligence** –
  - deal with “stuff” below the surface and “what’s in the room”
  - build relationships of trust
  - manage conflict
  - live through ambiguity and confusion
  - create safe “containers” where everyone is valued and heard
  - listen to others from the others’ highest future potential
  - can co-own with others, knowing when to step in front and when to step down
4. **Networked** – able to call on a wide range of trusting relationships across different places in society...able to embrace diversity and difference..can achieve high social return on relationship capital,
5. **Experimentation & Action Oriented** - able to help others suspend the voice of judgment, voice of cynicism and voice of fear...can create cultures of experimentation...able to move beyond talk to try new things, to tolerate and learn from failure, to take action even if the first steps are small



# Bridging Leadership Framework



## Ownership

- The Bridging Leader makes a personal response to the issue
- Understands its systemic analysis and recognizes the interests of its many stakeholders

## Co-Ownership

- The Bridging Leader convenes stakeholders to co-own the issue
- Through a process of dialogue and engagement, the stakeholders arrive at a shared vision and shared response.
- The vision becomes the societal outcome aspired for by everyone.

## Co-Creation

- A social innovation/intervention is adopted and carried out through new institutional arrangements/partnerships.
- Over time, the arrangements are institutionalized into formal structures and processes together with a policy environment supportive to stakeholders' participation and responsive institutions.
- The Bridging Leader sustains his work by cultivating sources of renewal.

# Mini-Case Study: Partnership for Child Nutrition

## Issue:

- Some 16,000 children die of nutrition-related causes a day.
- Children who survive often suffer from a range of disabilities including stunting and weak immune defense.
- India has the largest number of under-nourished children; 47% of Indian children – 200 million - are under-nourished
- Wide range of definitions of the problem and the solution

## Partnership of Partnerships

- Global Partnership: Synergos, UNICEF-India, Unilever
- Indian Partnership: Companies (i.e. Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank), NGOs (CHETNA, SEWA), Government (Maharashtra State Mission for Child Nutrition)

## Key Challenge

- Extensive activity on the ground, but chronic under-nutrition problem persists; key focus of Indian partnership to overcome fragmented response, to realize new action at scale.

## Process / Design

- Focus in state of Maharashtra, population of 100 million
- “Theory-U” process (12 week learning, reflecting, action design process) followed by fieldwork and creation of Indian Trust

## Status

- Field projects now unfolding on multiple fronts, including girls empowerment, nutrition rehabilitation centers, improving efficiency of government supply chain management, etc.
- Strengthening, staffing and sustainability planning for Indian trust



# Theory U

Convene stakeholder team from across the problem / opportunity system

*Engage team in immersive learning experiences, field visits, interviews, creative exercises, transforming perspectives & building relationships*

*Sensing:*  
to transform perception

Open Mind

Open Heart

Open Will

*Presencing:*  
to retreat, reflect & allow inner knowing to emerge

*Realizing:*  
to transform action

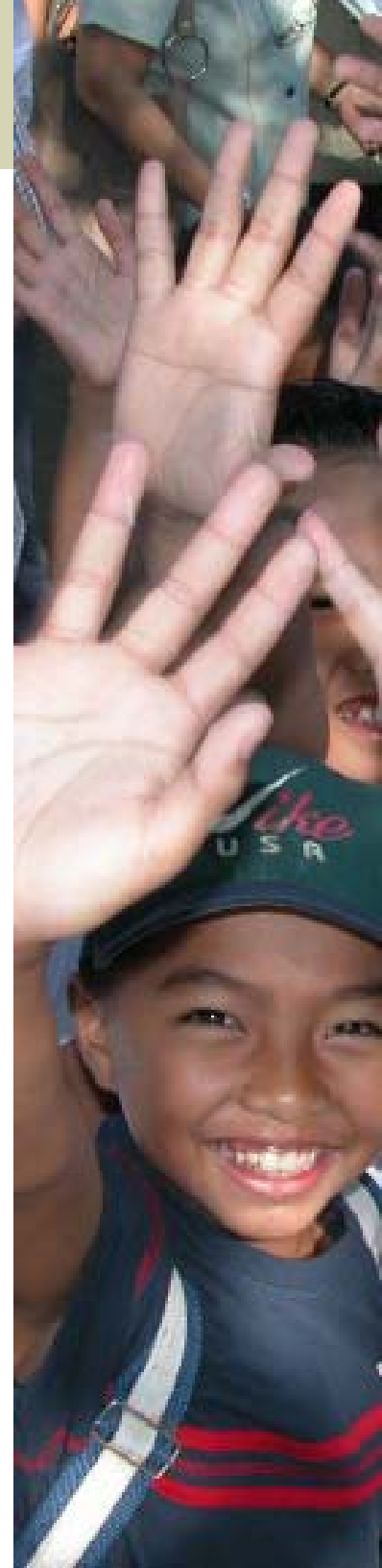
*Work with team and others to mainstream, institutionalize, and scale successful pilots.*

*Work with team to develop prototypes, experiments and pilot projects to field tested.*

*Enable team members to "let go", to reflect on personal mission and to become present to future possibilities*

*"The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener."*

William O'Brien, former CEO Hanover Insurance





# Social return on relationship capital

1. Identify an important challenge / opportunity that you are currently working on. Write it down.
2. In column headings across the top of the page, list the categories of people you think would be critical in helping you make progress on the issue. Think about:
  - The categories of people whose agreement would be necessary for achieving a stable or long-term resolution. (Note that these could be people you perceive as being in opposition to your point of view.)
  - The categories of people whose perspective is important, but who are often overlooked. These may be people without formal power, but who may be impacted by the decisions you take.
  - The categories of people who could add creativity, a different and useful perspective and talent to a process of identifying new solutions.
3. Below each column heading, list a few people you personally know, who you think are most needed to address the issue you are dealing with.
4. Below each column heading, also list a few people you don't personally know but who you think are needed to address the issue you are dealing with. Next to each put one idea about how or through whom you could access that person.
5. Reflect on how well you currently are, or are not, mobilizing the people on your sheet in addressing your issue.
6. Turn to a neighbor and discuss your reflections. Ask your neighbor who from their networks could be helpful in addressing your issue.





# Things to think about on site visits

1. Who is framing the issue and the experience for you? Are there alternative framings?
2. What are you not seeing? Who and what is being left out? Who is not represented?
3. Are you able to see and learn about the hard truth of things from people on the ground?
4. Are you able to build in time to process what you are seeing, to reflect alone and with others?

# Things that get in leaders way

1. Ignoring sub-surface issues, not being able to tune into “stuff” that gets in the way. Being uncomfortable to deal with emotion. Not able to balance emotion, intellect and meaning at the same time.
2. Thinking they have to own the whole problem and own the whole solution, that they alone can make things happen.
3. Intimidating others, not letting the whole of the other emerge to harness the true passion, talent, energy of others.
4. Under-utilizing social networks and relationships
5. Being afraid to fail.

# Alternative exercise

1. Identify an important issue / challenge / opportunity that you are currently working on. Pick something of high priority, something that may be particularly difficult or complex. Write it down.
2. Rise up above the issue or situation, looking down on it with perspective, and ask yourself four questions:
  1. What is the spark or essence of something good in the situation?
  2. What is the hard truth about the situation?
  3. What wants to be born?
  4. What needs to die in order for something new to be born?