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Sourcing Wisdom for Just and Sustainable Results

by Monica Sharma

Thoughtful people worldwide from all walks of life—civil society, media, academia, governments and business—are asking fundamental questions: Why are so many people poor and hungry when we have the technology and resources to prevent this? Why is war profitable for some? What do we need to put in place to change our trajectory? Given that there are so many good people with good intentions, why can't we seem to make a dent in the world's problems?

In an earlier article, “World Wisdom in Action: Personal to Planetary Transformation” (*Kosmos Journal*, Fall/Winter 2007), I noted that we generally focus on economic, social, and political factors and forces when explaining the causes of our global crises. Governments, corporations, the United Nations (UN), civil society, and other institutions all focus on financial, technological (e.g., medical, educational, informational), political, administrative, military, diplomatic, legal and economic resources, measures and approaches. These approaches are necessary but incomplete. Consequently, our efforts to solve problems remain partial. Not until we see the global problematique as *symptoms* of a more fundamental, deeper-rooted crisis can we begin to mount a more integral and profound response that is more likely to move us forward in a more sustainable way. That crisis is in our individual and shared mindsets, where psychological and cultural factors and forces reign. That crisis challenges *all of us*.

We identify problems, harness available technologies, plan to achieve goals, and implement blueprints created by experts and policy makers. We often try to solve the problem with minimal participation from the individuals who are most directly affected by the problem. While we have had some success with this approach around narrowly focused interventions for specific problems—e.g., smallpox eradication, wealth creation (though unfortunately with huge disparity), and improvements in standards of living for some—this approach may be inappropriate for some situations. Considering the urgency, interdependence and global complexity of today's crises, we have no option but to learn to do things differently.

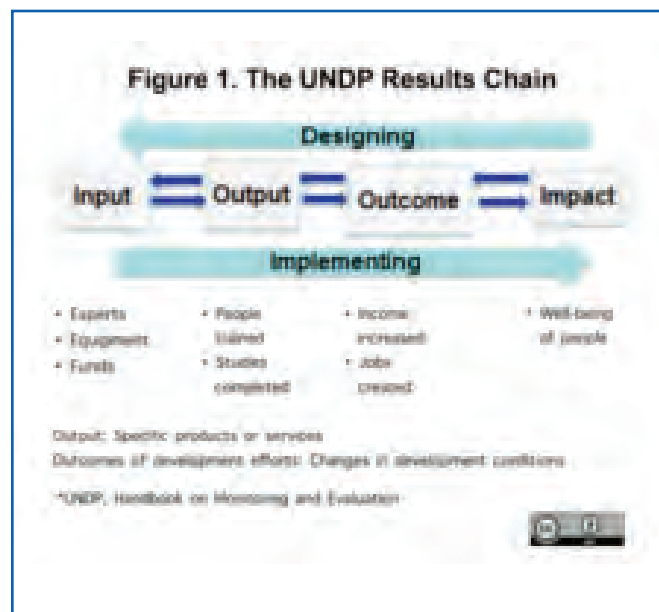
This article summarizes two of many alchemies (practices) I use to transform everyday work to generate results.

- The transformational results chain, which is different than the traditional results chain
- The conscious full-spectrum response frame, how ordinary citizens use it to produce extraordinary responses, and how this frame aligns with the transformational results chain.

The Blueprints for Change Need to Change!

Non-governmental organizations, aid agencies, governments, businesses and the United Nations spend enormous amounts of time developing plans to translate policies into programmes and projects to achieve their stated goals. Organizations use a plethora of tools and techniques for analysis, strategic planning, implementation, measurements and results-based management. For example, the goal-oriented Logical Framework Approach (sometimes referred to as the Logical Framework Analysis) is used mainly for design, monitoring and evaluation of development projects internationally. The ‘results chain’ used by UN agencies—with minor variations between agencies—is another example. Figure 1 illustrates the results chain of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, it is critical to understand that these logical frameworks and brilliant analyses are necessary but not sufficient conditions for sustainable change. Moreover, these techniques leave several questions unanswered:

- Are these tools and techniques adequate to deal with the urgency and complexity of problems?
- Do they create the templates and prototypes for sourcing the most important parameter for a paradigm shift—namely, the inner capacities of people?
- Do they include the critical elements for generating results?
- Our vision and mission statements are often grand and inspiring. Do we have ways to translate them into reality?



The Transformational Results Chain

Truly transformational results can only be achieved by connecting to how people work and the processes organisations already use, then implementing transformational practices and co-creating responses that work for all. Einstein said, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Transformational change is not about tinkering in the margins or introducing some new tools. The only way to create transformational results is to create a *culture of transformation* where people embrace changes that lead to results, rather than fearing change. Organisations have their battery of procedures, processes, tools and techniques, and are often unwilling to embark on vital, radical transformation. How do we move beyond this organizational inertia and resistance?

The transformational results chain allows us to approach problems differently—from design and planning to implementation. These fundamental differences are, in fact, foundational changes: Every step sources our inner capacities and wisdom and is based on embodying universal values such as dignity, compassion, fairness and courage to create for strategic action.

First, we need to use practices, techniques and methods that source our inner capacity in every step of planning and implementation. Personal transformation is the powerful unleashing of our human potential to commit, care and change for a better life. As leaders, our ability to create spaces for the same potential to manifest in others is critical—this means effective, results-oriented engagement with citizens, government, civil society, academia, media and the private sector—providing platforms for how my *being*, my *essence* and my *stand* is the source of my *action*. Evidence indicates that sourcing action from inner capacity is effective for systems transformation.

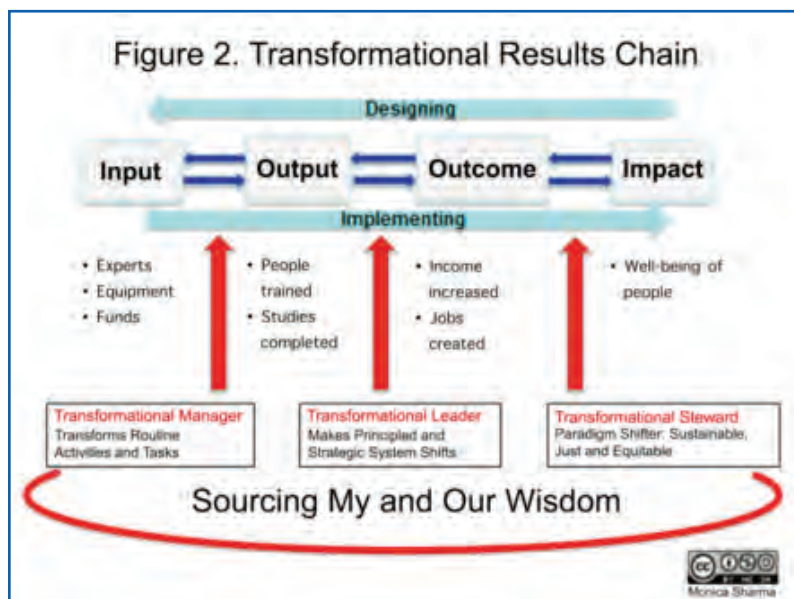
Second, we must embody the values that underpin the vision and mission we articulate in our initiatives. The values underpinning a system guide strategic action. We formulate ethical norms, enact laws to promote democracy, and fight for social justice. We establish rules and systems for financing, intellectual property rights, trade, health care, education, etc. Much of what we have done in these areas so far has benefited a few while also depriving many. Some of us can see the unworkable systems and connect them to how the rules of the game were established. For example, we have laws to essentially promote human well-being, yet well-being and justice are often not attained. We talk about values rather than embodying values. The transformational results chain is a template to move from value-based rhetoric to reality.

Third, we have to co-create new patterns, develop new rules of the game, and devise new systems for just and sustainable change. In the context of today’s interdependent yet fragmented world, intrinsic human capabilities need to be sourced for sustainable change. A system delivers what it is designed

to deliver. The rules of the game—the formal rules that determine who gets to play, where and how—and informal cultural norms determine what happens to people and the planet. In every part of the world, the thinking on policies, rules and regulations is done by a few for the many, with the assumption and justification that citizens do not have the expertise to influence policy or think critically. Here again, the transformational results chain is a template that enables us to co-create.

I have used the transformational results chain extensively world-wide, and some examples from every continent are cited in “Contemporary Leaders of Courage and Compassion” (*Kosmos Journal*, Spring/Summer 2012). My colleagues and I have learned and use a large number of aligned, coherent, results-producing practices. Some of the features of these practices are:

- Definitions related to the traditional results chain
 - Output: specific products or service
 - Outcomes of efforts: changes in development condition
 - Impacts: changes in human well-being and/or environment
- Definitions related to the transformational results chain
 - Output: specific products, technological solutions or services delivered based on values and aligned to the impact and outcomes
 - Outcomes of efforts: changes in development conditions based on equity and dignity for all
 - Impacts: sustainable and equitable changes for human well-being and for all species, as well as the environment and planet
- The flow
 - In both the traditional and transformational results chain, while designing, we begin with the impact, then move to the outcomes, outputs and inputs we need.
 - While implementing, we have to organize the inputs in order to produce outputs leading to outcomes and impacts.



Using the Transformational Results Chain

The key to using the transformational results chain is practice. We must practice to embody our values in action, to have the courage to create, to speak truth to power, to be in strategic action, and to produce results. Our actions and breakthrough initiatives occur in the spaces between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is our choice whether we simply do a job because we have to, or whether we make a significant impact. Today, we have the techniques to simultaneously source our wisdom, shift systems, and solve problems for sustainable and equitable impacts.

Transforming routine activities and spaces: When managers know and use transformational processes, the way business is transacted and routine activities are performed becomes a continuous opportunity for extraordinary change. We have many opportunities to influence change through policies, day-to-day activities, routine meetings, reports, planning sessions, monitoring or organizing events. Do we know how to turn these everyday activities into spaces where transformation can naturally emerge? The opportunities present themselves regularly and frequently in every organization, in all human endeavors, yet remain largely unutilized. The pace of transformational results would accelerate exponentially if we could harness the transformative potential of these numerous routine activities.

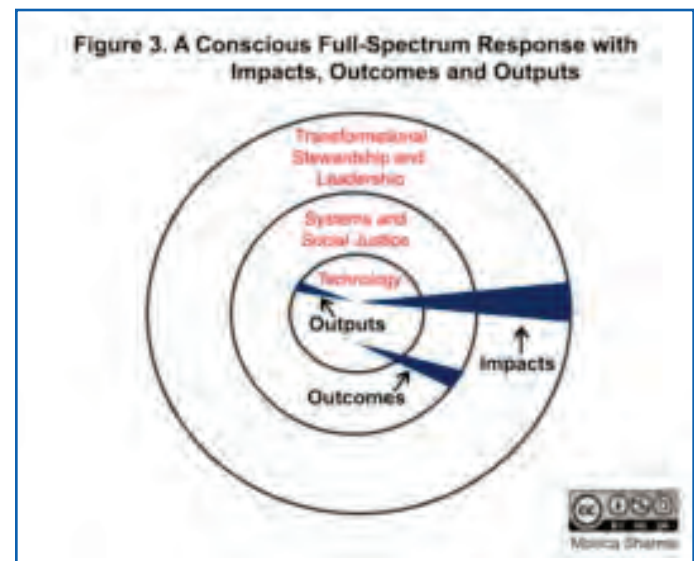
Transforming systems: Emerging new leaders are pattern-makers, not just problem-solvers. They deal with what is not working by creating alternatives. They identify, distinguish, design and generate responses that integrate the different domains related to the entangled hierarchies of any given situation. They understand both the visible and hidden sources of action and inaction, as well as the attitudes that determine them. They understand and address factors and forces that create and legitimize structures and the systems and cultural norms that inhibit or enhance progress. They do not only solve complex societal problems at a surface level; they actively address the deeper dimensions of the problematique. New leaders demonstrate that it is possible to design, plan and implement programmes differently.

Transforming paradigms: Pioneers manifest courage, creativity and passion, sourcing action from their true deeper Self, rather than from their culturally and psychologically conditioned self (ego). They commit to creating a profound change in the world by shifting policies, strategies and methods. They empower people and build on their inner wisdom for strategic action. They seek liberation from limiting beliefs, habits and structures. They forge connections, while understanding and deeply respecting people and cultures. They contribute to peace and development—now and in the future. All too often, we push aside the greatest resource we have in every person for shifting the paradigm—our inner capacities and power. Paradigm pioneers see how limited our current responses are for the enormity and complexity of global problems that ultimately affect human

well-being. They stretch beyond their comfort zone to transform the paradigm from strategies based on scarcity (no matter how much we have) to abundance; from never enough to contentment; and from rhetoric of partnership in the midst of systems set up for competition that preclude creative responses to synergistic cooperation.

Demystifying Traditional Planning: Voice and Co-Creation

Ordinary citizens are using the conscious full-spectrum response frame to produce extraordinary responses. Recently in India, Hemlata Kansotia, an activist with a background in construction labor, embarked on designing projects and planning with her colleagues using the conscious full-spectrum approach. In this group of 35 people, few had completed high school and even fewer had college education. They worked skillfully and discussed the outputs they would produce; they described how problems show up and what visible changes will result because of their actions. They planned what they would do, individually and collectively. They could see what systems needed to be changed in society, governance and business for their project to be sustainable and how they would connect their project to leverage the needed systems shift. They articulated the values and principles that underpin their projects—dignity, integrity, social inclusion—and their personal pathway to embody the values they embraced. Hemlata said it was the first time she and her colleagues could formulate their own projects and put forth a coherent perspective to argue with the municipal authorities. She said that this was a unique opportunity for each one to design, plan and implement their ideas—without being dismissed by experts and authorities!



The conscious full-spectrum response frame is aligned with the transformational results chain—impacts, outcomes, outputs, as shown in Figure 3—and is simpler to use. The transformational results chain requires more experience with linear, logical flows and seems complicated for citizens. Hitherto, policy formulation and project design, planning and implementation have been the prerogative of a few. New research indicates that all humans, regardless of education, have the innate ability to see patterns and



Jerry White tells his amazing story called "Explosive Wisdom" in Kosmos Journal (SS2012). A survivor of a landmine explosion that resulted in loss of limb, he successfully built a Mine-Free Israel Campaign and won. He tells his inspiring story with intimate and personal detail working with Princess Diana (above) and other well-known persons, but credits his success to the training in Transformational Leadership with Monica Sharma.

to create new systems and forms. Because critical strategic thinking is possible for all, not just the experts, we need to create ways to stimulate critical thinking along with authentic processes and platforms (not token participation) for everyone's voice to be heard and heeded.

Just and Sustainable Results: Rhetoric or Reality?

If we cannot or do not transform the way we plan and implement large-scale and small initiatives, we will not produce the results needed for the future we want to create.

Results are key, we all agree. Every programme, project and institution makes vision statements, articulating the impact and outcomes they wish to produce. They state their core values that form the basis of strategy and action. Yet most conventional initiatives ultimately center on outputs—e.g., production of goods and services, investments in infrastructure and selected social and economic aspects such as income, health, education, food, nutrition. Transformational leaders know that although outputs and outcomes are important, they do not provide a true measure of human potential and well-being. These leaders also hold with ease the seeming paradox of accountability and results along with the unpredictability of emergence.

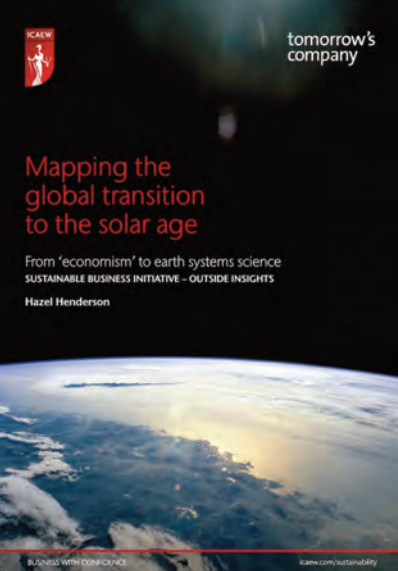
How do we design our programmes to move human rights from rhetoric to reality? How do we generate a world with dignity and

freedom for all? What platforms do we create and what methods and techniques do we use to embody the values and principles that underpin human rights and ecological integrity while formulating and enforcing social instruments to uphold rights and realize the full potential of our abundant earth? And most importantly, how do we begin our work by looking within—to our attitudes, our worldviews, and the spirit that informs our decisions even in the face of opposition. We ask ourselves, who am I, and do I embody the values that underpin a just and sustainable world?

Some think that working with inner capacities to solve problems is simple or that all we need are technological solutions. Transformational power is created when we synergistically weave technological results, systems shifts and the embodiment of our deepest self. Transformational techniques and methods are sophisticated, yet simple and accessible. While we practice and grow, we walk more joyfully and buoyantly in life! The inevitable obstacles and obstructions become opportunities for our own growth and serve as prompts for revising strategies and tactics without compromising our values and principles. These transformational approaches have generated just and sustainable results.

Monica Sharma, M.D., former Director of Leadership and Capacity Development at the United Nations, was responsible for whole systems transformation and leadership development worldwide; she served in UNICEF meeting the needs of children; served as director of HIV/AIDS for UNDP generating over 720 initiatives in 40 countries, reaching 4.5 million people directly and influencing another 130 million. A member of the Kosmos Advisory Board, Monica is actively involved in teaching Transformational Leadership to groups around the world.





Mapping the Global Transition to the Solar Age: From 'Economism' to Earth Systems Science

by Hazel Henderson

Cosimo Publications, 2014

Review by Monica Sharma

Hazel Henderson takes us on a journey through time—future, present and past—and weaves new pathways to one of our next milestones in human civilization: the Solar Age. Based on current scientific knowledge and irrefutable facts from the domains of finance and economics, these innovative, transdisciplinary pathways connect strategic action to the conscious human and our quest for happiness. While being firmly grounded in what is possible, these new pathways were synthesized by Hazel from a vast array of initiatives around the world. Reading this practical and thought-provoking book inspired and informed me. It offers both hope and direction for an emerging future with a different global context.

As a thought leader exploring alternatives in action, Hazel shares both the positive changes she has generated as well as the ridicule and opposition she has sometimes faced. However, she has remained unshakable in her pursuit of economic and social justice. Indeed, her professional journey and steadfast commitment can inspire each one of us to be bold and courageous! For example, Hazel describes her experience of challenging the assumptions of conventional economics and formulating new metrics to correct GDPs—after all, what we measure is what we move! Recognizing that most individuals do not fathom the intricacies of the world of money and finance, Hazel demystifies key policies and factors while building links for us to be able to demand or design the reforms needed in global finance and renewable energy. She tells the story of power dynamics and vested interests that keep the fossil-fuel industrial era going—a story we must know in order to ‘connect the dots’ as global citizens endeavoring to change the paradigm.

The book focuses on current challenges related to human and planetary well-being and our grossly inadequate global response. It maps powerful initiatives that signal a change in the trajectory set by past policies and action. Hazel cites research that shows that the assumptions of human nature (individual competition and maximizing self-interest) in conventional economics are inaccurate. There is hope to be found in knowing and sharing examples of people making change around the world. Her evidence-based assertion that global systems are shifting is most exciting! She stimulates a new way of thinking—an invitation to join and co-create a new set of policies and theoretical underpinnings for impact. For instance, she suggests internalizing the

externalized costs; changing the metrics of social well-being; valuing intergenerational equity in natural resource use; and leveling the playing field by changing subsidies.

With a gold mine of references, the book reviews the world’s current challenges and how we arrived here, as well as how shifts are occurring now based on the universal values of equity, justice and inclusion. I did not know that “if the US government had subsidized solar, renewables, and energy efficiency by equivalent subsidies as those to oil, coal, and nuclear power, that the US could have been 100% powered by renewables by 1975!” Hazel’s anecdotes from over four decades of grappling with naysayers and those with ‘theory-induced blindness’ of the much needed reforms ground us in stark realities of power and politics, even while optimistically pointing to significant possibilities for sustainable change and happiness.

Focusing on the Global South, Hazel notes that the special agencies of the United Nations were drivers of a new planetary awareness, new memes and new norms. The UN promoted, and continues to promote, human rights, well-being and a thriving environment. The UN is often perceived as an unnecessary entity and an ineffective bureaucracy by some in the US and other countries. Perhaps they are unaware. Having worked with the UN for over two decades and seeing both its successful contributions and its limitations that are in need of reform, I am delighted to know and share the perspective of an eminent scholar and human development practitioner!

Hazel notes that innovations for earth systems, as we transition from the industrial era to the solar age, must be values-based, drawing from the principles of equity, social inclusion and ecological sustainability. These values lay the foundation for designing new systems and determining the new rules of the game. Data and numerous global examples (north and south countries) will make the lessons of this succinct book valuable throughout the world. Her arguments direct us toward concrete action. Hazel sees a tipping point in the great transition to a cleaner, greener, healthier Solar Age.

Skillfully written for a wide range of readers—scientists, global citizens from every country, policy makers and economists, among others—the book simplifies (without being simplistic!) the complex arenas of money, finance, economics and environment. It is sophisticated simplicity. A must read!

Hazel Henderson is the founder of Ethical Markets Media, LLC and the creator and co-executive producer of its TV series. She is a world renowned futurist, evolutionary economist, worldwide syndicated columnist, consultant on sustainable development, and author of *The Axiom* and Nautilus award-winning book *Ethical Markets: Growing the Green Economy* (2006) and eight other books. She co-edited, with Harlan Cleveland and Inge Kaul, *The UN: Policy and Financing Alternatives*, Elsevier Scientific, UK 1995 (US edition, 1996).



Monica Sharma is the former Director of Leadership and Capacity Development at the United Nations. She teaches pioneering methods of social change around the world based on strengthening the inner self, living values and integrity.