

Systemology tips

Four practices to build system thinking into even the smallest change project.

1) Convene a diverse mix of actors

'Surround the problem' with a diverse mix of actors who can make a difference to the outcome. Bring together those who can act, those who suffer, those who will face costs down the track, and gatekeepers. Who is missing?

Together, review the data, explore the problem from multiple perspectives, be inspired by success stories, and strategise positive solutions.

2) Be infinitely curious about what could make a difference

Don't leap to familiar tactics. **FIRST** spend time exploring every possible influence and structure that might be maintaining the problem.

THEN QUICKLY move to strategising the 'system of improvement', listing and prioritising all the forces that could improve the outcome, including behaviours of system actors, physical structures, financial incentives, policies, social norms, technologies etc.

3) Focus on the flow of signals

Avoid blaming individuals, instead focus on the **flows of signals** between people and their surroundings.

If your project is problem-focused, ask: What signals maintain the problem or block solutions? What healthy signals are missing?

If your project is action-focused, ask: What signals could disable or enable action? How will you ensure successful results are converted into signals for others?

4) Then...intervene upstream

Look for interventions that modify the signals actors receive.

9. Get organised

Start a group to lobby for change.

8. Create an alliance Connect a diverse partnership, network or community of practice.

7. Give voice to the powerless Enable less powerful actors to be heard and influence decisions.

6. Add data flows Collect data on consequences and feed it back to actors and decision-makers.

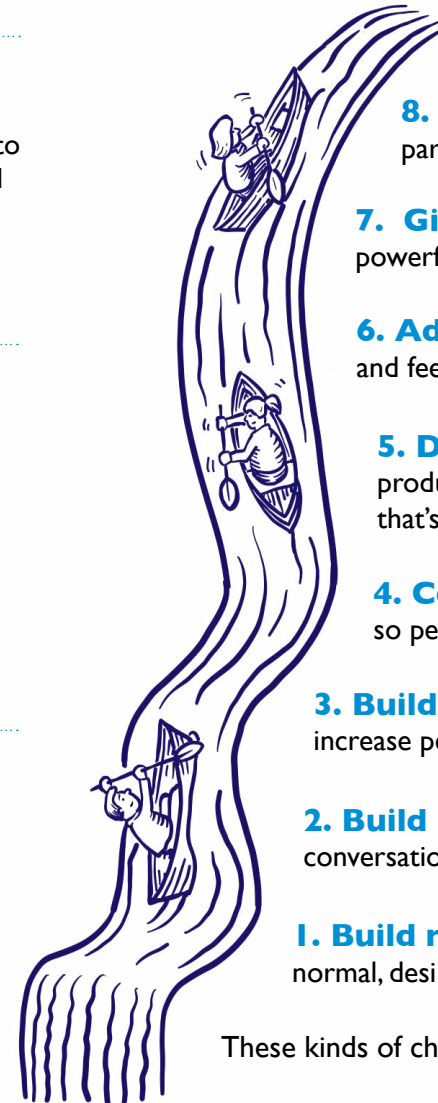
5. Deliver ease Provide physical systems, services or products that lower the costs of acting. Remove anything that's a barrier, including processes, costs and paperwork.

4. Connect buddies Create buddies or teams so people are not working alone.

3. Build skills Use modelling, experiences or training to increase peoples' confidence and capacity to act.

2. Build relationships Convene gatherings and conversations across sectors, interests and perspectives.

1. Build norms Highlight signals that a desired action is normal, desired, and approved by similar actors.



These kinds of changes are the long term legacy of your project!