

Tool 24: Four Quadrants of Change Framework

Aim of the tool

To help participants consider what kind of change strategies are being used in the MSP, and which strategies might be missing.

When to use it?

This tool can be used in different stages of an MSP, but particularly at a moment when strategies for change are discussed. It helps to generate conversations which bring out essence of participants' notions of change.

What is the Four Quadrants of Change Framework?

People easily get into arguments about “correct strategies” to realize change. Often with a little bit of dialogue, they discover that they are actually talking about complementary strategies. Then they start to understand the limitation of their own advocated strategy, and that it cannot succeed on its own. These types of insights spurred Ken Wilber to popularize an *integral* approach to support a comprehensive and integrated view of the world.

A key product of this work is what is now referred to as the “four-quadrants of change” (4Q) diagram, which will help you identify and address the different aspects of change. The framework divides the change into four types: Quadrant 1 deals with intention, personal identity, and ways of perceiving; Quadrant 2 with behaviour and how it is developed; Quadrant 3 with culture, beliefs, and values; and Quadrant 4 with the structures and processes of social systems. The framework suggests that a successful strategy must address all four change challenges.

In order for an issue to change in the way MSPs aspire for, there must be action in all four Quadrants. That does not mean that the MSP itself has to lead the activity. However, to realize the change it is working for, its participants or others should undertake strategic interventions to ensure change is proceeding in all the Quadrants. Lack of change in one of the Quadrants will hold back development in the others.

There is a tendency for change networks to focus on the *exterior*, both at the individual but especially at the collective levels. There is usually resistance to incorporating spiritual- psychological strategies, because this can conflict with the external action-orientation of most networks to get *others* to change and to focus on, physical technology, structural and intellectual change. Also, inappropriate methods are often applied for a particular change challenge and goal. You might find this a good tool for analyzing your own change strategy.

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	<p>1. Spiritual-Psychological <i>Concerned with changing one's own sense of being</i></p> <p>Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of individual perceptions and capacity.</i></p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening self-awareness • Developing one's knowledge, skills, competencies • Describing one's assumptions, values, mind sets, beliefs <p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditation • Personal reflection and inquiry • Personal development of mastery through courses and apprenticeships 	<p>2. Inter-Personal <i>Concerned with changing one's own behaviours in interaction with others</i></p> <p>Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of how individuals interact.</i></p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing trust, respect, mutual understanding • Shifting behaviours to demonstrate interdependence • Reaching conciliation of inter-personal differences <p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity training • Learning journeys into other people's worlds • Group encounters/retreats for exploration • Mediation/negotiations training
Collective	<p>3. Social and Cultural <i>Concerned with collective values of fairness and justice</i></p> <p>Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of collective values and beliefs.</i></p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective goals and aspirations • Underlying values and beliefs • Implicit 'rules' and assumptions • Discourse, language <p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective goal-setting and strategy creation • Developing value statements and processes for actualisation • Ongoing media programmes 	<p>4. Structural and Systemic <i>Concerned with governance, decision-making processes, and institutions.</i></p> <p>Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of processes, institutions, and power.</i></p> <p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, legislation • Institutions, procedures • Allocation of resources <p>Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building political structures, agreements, frameworks, systems • New accounting/reporting/measurement systems

Source: Steve Waddell (2011, p 106) and Generative Change Community

Four Quadrants of Change - Step by step

This framework can be used both for individual reflection or stock-taking, and as a group analysis activity.

As a researcher involved in action learning on MSPs, you could use it once you are familiar with your MSP case to consider what kind of change strategies are being used, and which strategies might be missing.

As a group activity, use the Framework to help participants reflect on the question: 'Where would be your entry point for change?'.

- If you have a group of e.g. 15 people make sure you have a space of 5x5 meters in your meeting room without tables or chairs, or do the activity outside.
- Write four A4 sheets of paper with the following words (one word each):

‘Personal’, ‘Relationships’, ‘Cultural’ and ‘Structure/System’. Place these on the floor in a square.

- Ask participants the question: *Where would be your entry point for change?* And ask everybody to position themselves near the A4 with the word corresponding to their answer. People can stand in between different words if they feel that represents their view better.
- Ask various participants, while standing, to explain why they stand where they are standing. Make sure you take a couple of responses from different corners of the space, and encourage people to ask questions to one another. It is allowed to change position whilst somebody else is talking.
- End with explaining that in complex systems (such as most MSPs) change is needed at all different levels, and that there is not one right position. Your own preference might differ depending on your background or position in the system. However, emphasize the importance of working with change strategies at all quadrants.

Alternatively, if time and space are limited, you could consider presenting the framework on one slide and asking the same question to open up discussion with participants.

A second way of leading groups to analyse change strategies using Wilber’s framework is to ask small groups to apply it to their MSP case, by filling out the four quadrants on a flipchart and giving concrete examples of entry point for change within this MSP.

Learn more

Wilber, Ken (2000) A brief history of everything. Revised edition. Boulder, Colorado: Shambala Publishing

Waddell, Steve (2011) Global Action Networks: Creating Our Future Together. New York/London: Palgrave Macmillan/Bocconi University Press.

This description is based on a blog by Steve Waddell (2012)
<http://networkingaction.net/2010/11/four-network-change-strategies-for-c...>