Ten Things SF Workers Should Know to Do to Help Organisations Shift Gear

by Susanne Burgstaller

www.usolvit.com

What might I see you doing every day during your work in organisations?

A generative question!

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

SF work in various (overlapping) contexts:

1. Working in the moment with persons or groups (e.g. individual, business, team/ group coaching)

2. Working on meeting & event design and facilitation (e.g. workshops, large group events, …)

3. Working on process design and facilitation: series of meetings and what happens outside them (e.g. change journeys,…)

a. Working within organisations

b. Working in-between organisations (e.g. cluster formation, cooperation, alliances,…)

c. Working in large-scale processes (e.g. in socio-political or macroeconomic contexts)

External – Internal Consulting

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

A Change Marathon in a VUCA Environment

VUCA

Complexity	Volatility
Multiple key decision factors	Rate of change

Ambiguity	Uncertainty
Lack of clarity about meaning of an event	Unclear about the present

How well can you predict the outcome of your actions?

How much do you know about the situation?

usolvit
supporting resourceful development
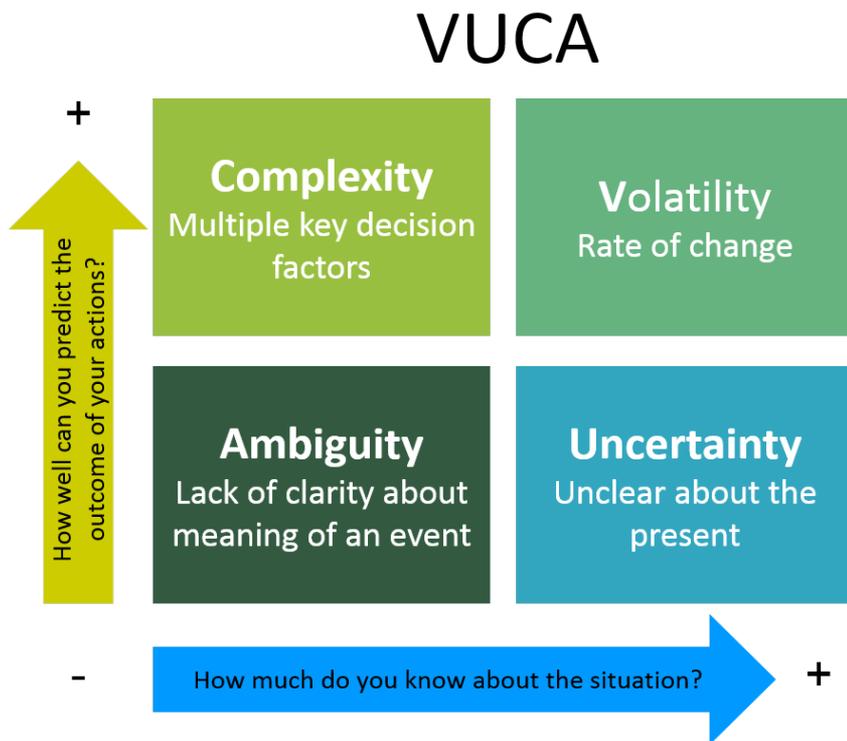
What might you see SF practitioners do in response to these challenges and questions?

1. Stimulating existing self-organising and adaptive capacities.
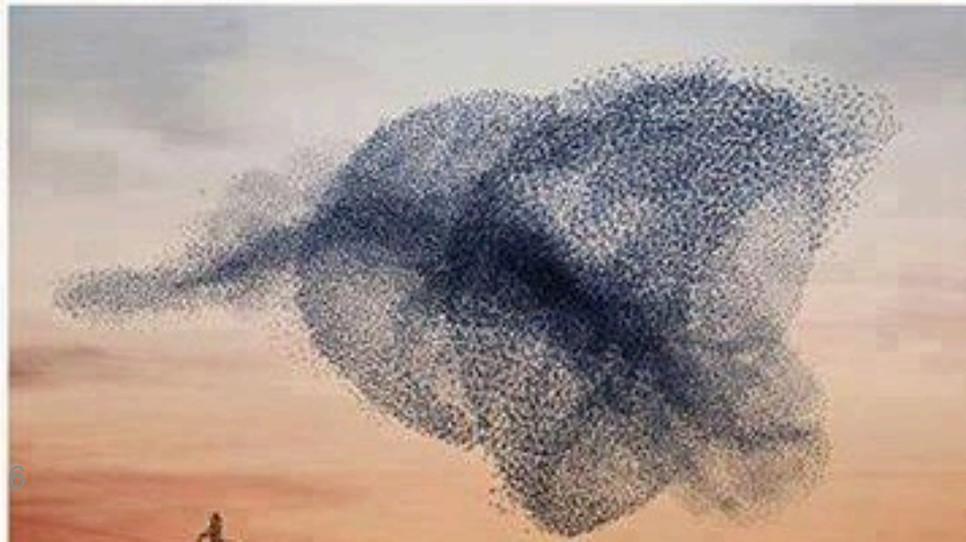
2. Encouraging a fluid and empowering view of change

"Change happens all the time. It is our task to identify positive change and amplify it."

Gregory Bateson

"The world is made, not found."

Goppelt, Joan, and Ray, Keith W.: Dialogic Process Consultation, Working Live, In: DOD p. 380

3. Offering more useful metaphors for organisational change – inviting them to the change dance!

Offering more useful metaphors for organisational change:

Orchestra model of leadership　　　**Jazz thinking about leadership**

4. Offering a simple, adaptive sketch of a possible roadmap for change as orientation

Process of planting a garden: What can we do to prepare a fertile ground? Where to find seeds for new ideas?

How can we add water and nutrients so the most promising initiatives can take root and flourish?

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

How can we ensure good conditions for growth?
What do we need to "weed out" early?

![usolvit supporting resourceful development]

How can we create a new order?
What shall we integrate into the existing structures?

5. Position change as learning.

"We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn."

Mary Catherine Bateson, 2004, Willing to Learn, p. 8

➢ Develop a **curious mind** and an **eye for possibilities**

➢ Treating people as a community of practice that **learns as a group** – inclusion, creating a shared purpose

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

6. Enjoying "Bricolage" (Claude Levi-Strauss, 1966)

Organisational life requires "fumbling around, **experimenting, and patching together an understanding** of problems from bits and pieces of experience, **improvising with materials at hand**."

Frank Barrett, Yes to the Mess, 2012, p. 27

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

We only learn what we tinker with ourselves.

Heinz von Förster

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

7. Positioning learning as play

moving out of comfort zones enough **to create a tension in the mind about possibilities**

allow an **embodied experience** that goes with trying something different and succeeding

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

8. Making the invisible visible

"The miles sailed are not visible to the naked eye."

- Tracking progress to acknowledge achievements

- Exploring the details of success and positive deviances

⇒ reinforces change actions

⇒ *fuels the next stage of the change journey!*

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

9. Attending to processes of relating and power dynamics

10. Facilitating from the In-Between

- Not a "neutral process facilitator" in the traditional sense!

- Being in the flow of organisational conversations, interacting in varied and "natural" ways and settings, being part of the ongoing processes of relating

- Asking questions WITH our customers, not about them

- Take an attitude of joint curiosity and exploration, acknowledging the reciprocal change

usolvit
supporting resourceful development

PLUS: Any number of micropractices
Every consultation is different!

Observe, observe, observe…
our own practice.

And let´s share!

Susanne Burgstaller

www.usolvit.com

Effective communication requires staying in the conversation and organizations are fundamentally ongoing patterns of conversation. Organizational change is the same as shifts in organizational conversation.

Stacey, Ralph (2015): Understanding Organizations as Complex Responsive Processes of Relating, In: Bushe, Gervase R. & Marshak, Robert J., Eds.: Dialogic Organisation Development, Oakland (Berret-Koehler).

usolvit
supporting resourceful development