

## **PATTERN LANGUAGE FOR EARLY STAGES OF SOCIAL INTREPRENEURS' DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study is to show why we built a pattern language for Japanese social entrepreneurs. 15 Japanese social entrepreneurs who have all experienced the 5 steps of the early stage business development process were interviewed based on their experience. While listening to their development process, we found 20 specific behavioral patterns amongst the interviewees. This resulted in creating a social entrepreneurs' pattern language. We hope this pattern language will support future social entrepreneurs and pursue their innovative visions.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a rapidly changing and extremely competitive business world, many corporations are working to create a new profitable business. However, particularly in Japan, corporations have been viewed to fail at utilizing their resources effectively, spot their innovators, and commit to a business idea (Murui, 2014). They prefer to take chances only on a no risk start-up (Fitzpatrick 2013).

A new approach to innovation maybe exactly what is needed amongst Japanese corporations. What may help corporate leaders, who tend to depend on scientific numbers and research, change their mindset is to seek out the common good and not just improving their business (Nonaka & Takeuchi 2011). We found a group of Japanese professionals who are called *social entrepreneurs*. They work inside major corporations or organizations to develop and promote practical solutions to social or environmental challenges where progress is currently stalled by market failures. They are also someone who applies the principles of social entrepreneurship inside a major organization, and characterized by an 'insider-outsider' mindset and approach (SustainAbility 2008).

We learned that there were Japanese Social Entrepreneurs who were working to better the society,

but had difficulty reaching their goals. We interviewed them to find out exactly what created this tough anti-innovative environment.

### **METHOD**

15 Social Entrepreneurs participated in this interview. We conducted an individual interview for 120 minutes each. Each participant had developed a new business within each of their respective corporations. The interview questions were based on an essence model created by Wilson Learning Worldwide, a company focused to improve human performance (Wilson Learning, 1990). The questions focused on 5 categories: 1. Events Leading Up to Begin, 2. Essence (Core, Intent), 3. Form (Process, Action), and Impact (Value), and Message.

In the early stages of business development process, many obstacles must be overcome to achieve any vision. Each question in the interview examined various actions taken in a business development process. *Events Leading Up to Begin* asked the participants background story. *Essence* discussed the intent and reason for their passion towards their social issue of choice, vision. *Form* questioned the process, obstacles experienced and how they resolve it, and knowledge gained. In *Impact*, participants discussed their results and its impact on society, corporation and self. And in *Message*, we asked participants their vision and concept for professionals working under what they have created, and the significance of actualizing their goal.

### **RESULTS**

As we reviewed our results, we found there were underlining common issues and problems between all participants, especially in the early stages of the entrepreneurs' business development process.

We broke down this early stage in 5 critical steps, and organized the common behaviors as 20 different actions. The 5 steps are: Discovery, Determination, Concept Sharing, Linkage, and Result. The 20

different patterns were identified as: 1. MoyaMoya Dialog 2. Ambitious Club 3. Creating Cross-border Connection 4. Doable First Step 5. Shared Value 6. Executive Supporter 7. Passionate Business Plan 8. Exit Plan 9. Connecting “No” to the Next Step 10. Cross-Border Innovation Team 11. Collaborative Ecosystem 12. Doing Before 13. Storytelling 14. Leverage Point of Decision-Making 15. Vision Actualization 16. Selecting Execution Team 17. Small Success 18. Filling From the Outer Moat 19. Best Alternative 20. Proposing Opportunity Loss. Each pattern was placed in 3 separate categories as Concept Actualization, Leading (progressive actions), or Against (overcome adversities).

Further, in recognizing that each action had a context, problem, and solution, we were able to create a pattern language. We developed this pattern language as a common language to help anyone who wants to become a social entrepreneur and succeed in his/her process (Iba, 2013).

After reorganizing the actions as 20 pattern languages, we asked the 15 previously interviewed participants to review their actions based on the 20 patterns we created. Results showed that they had experienced each pattern 50% to 92% of the time.

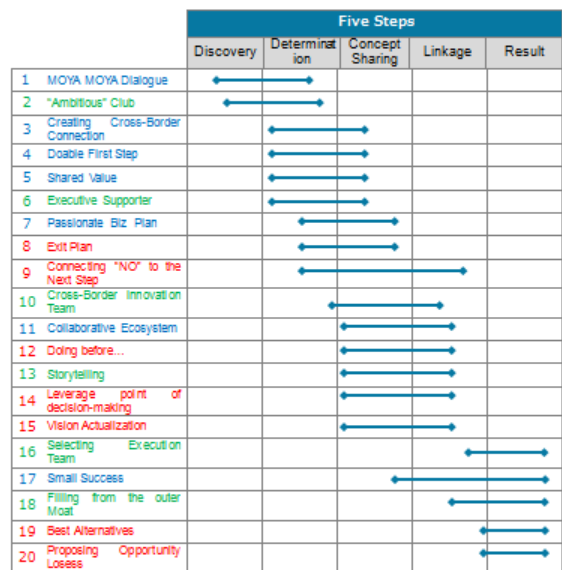


Fig 1: Type of steps involved per Action. Includes 5 steps and 20 patterns of Social Intrepreneurs' actions, color-coded in 3 categories of Concept Actualization (blue), Leading (green), and Against (red).

## CONCLUSION

In having the participants review their actions, we learned it helped them identified situation they could improve such as: Communicating implicit knowledge can help them move ahead to the next phase, discovering issues that were previously not explored, and figuring out how to resolve issues at hand. However, we did recognize that selected pattern per step may change depending on the circumstance.

We hope the pattern language can support social intreprenuers in their approach towards a new business with a specific mindset and behavior, share implicit knowledge, and gain insight to actualize their passion inside a corporate setting.

Furthermore, we hope the pattern language will act as a guideline for developing new business and creating a symbiotic relationship among individuals, corporation, and society to achieve their vision. These pattern languages give social intreprenuers

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