FCDA SYSTEMS PRACTICE JOURNEY

Foundation for Community Development Association (FCDA)

Limbe, Cameroon

April 3, 2022

FCDA Team Story

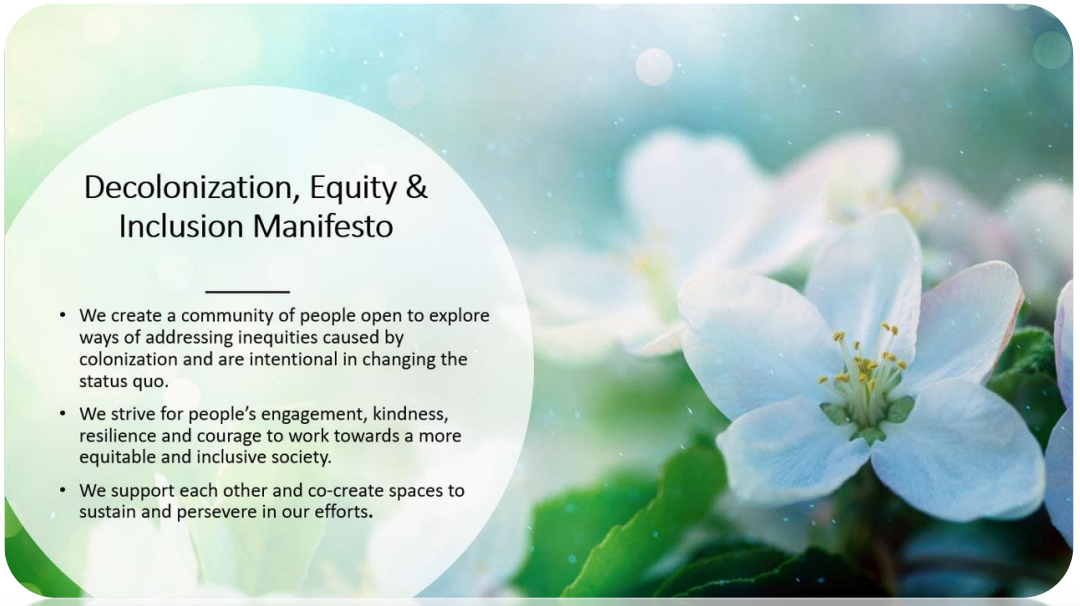
It all started when Ayuk, Mercedes and Rosa took the Path for Moral Leadership course.

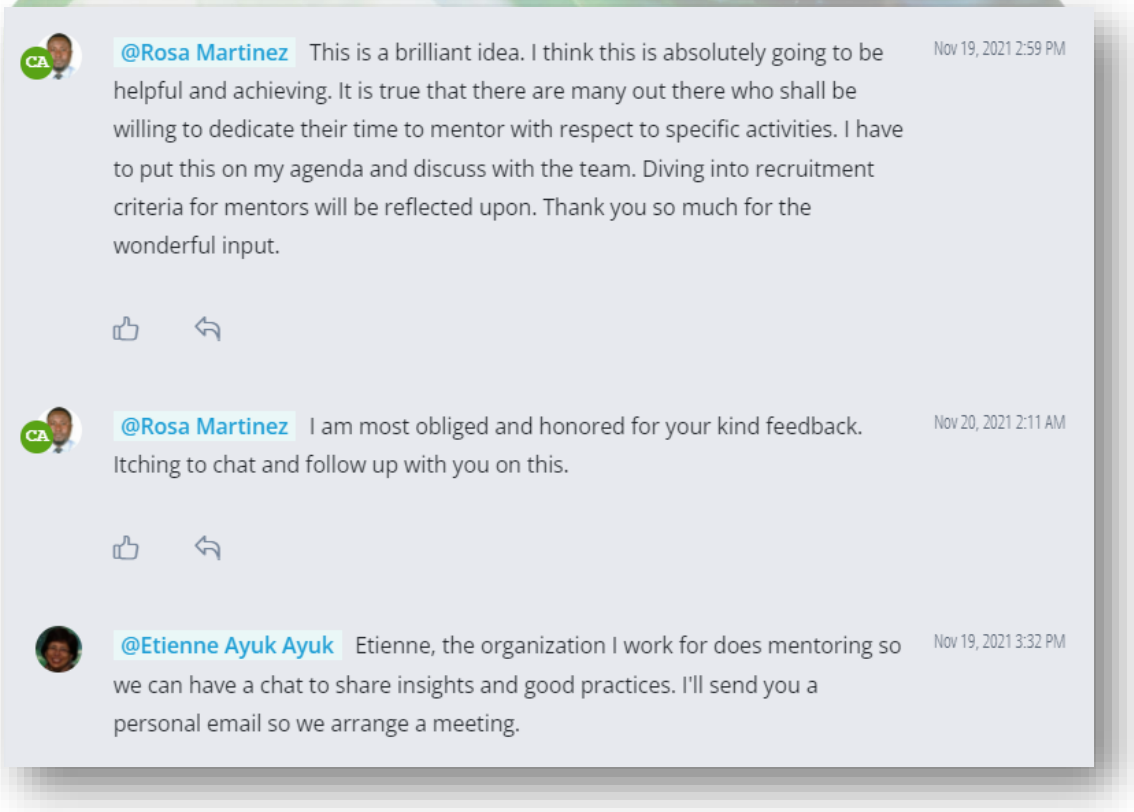
It was part of Mercedes & Rosa manifesto to work with liked-minded people in trying to address social complex issues.

Ayuk posted a challenge he had at FCDA and a comment on that post sparked other meetings and the desire to work together as a team.

We decided to take Systems Practice as a team of three and in the journey, we were accompanied by Edson, Mumbi and Marvis.

Working together has been such an insightful journey of learning, collaboration and personal and professional development!





FCDA SYSTEMS PRACTICE TEAM

FCDA Team Members

- Ayuk - Cameroon
- Melvis - Cameroon
- Edson - Uganda
- Mumbi - Kenya
- Mercedes - USA
- Rosa - Canada

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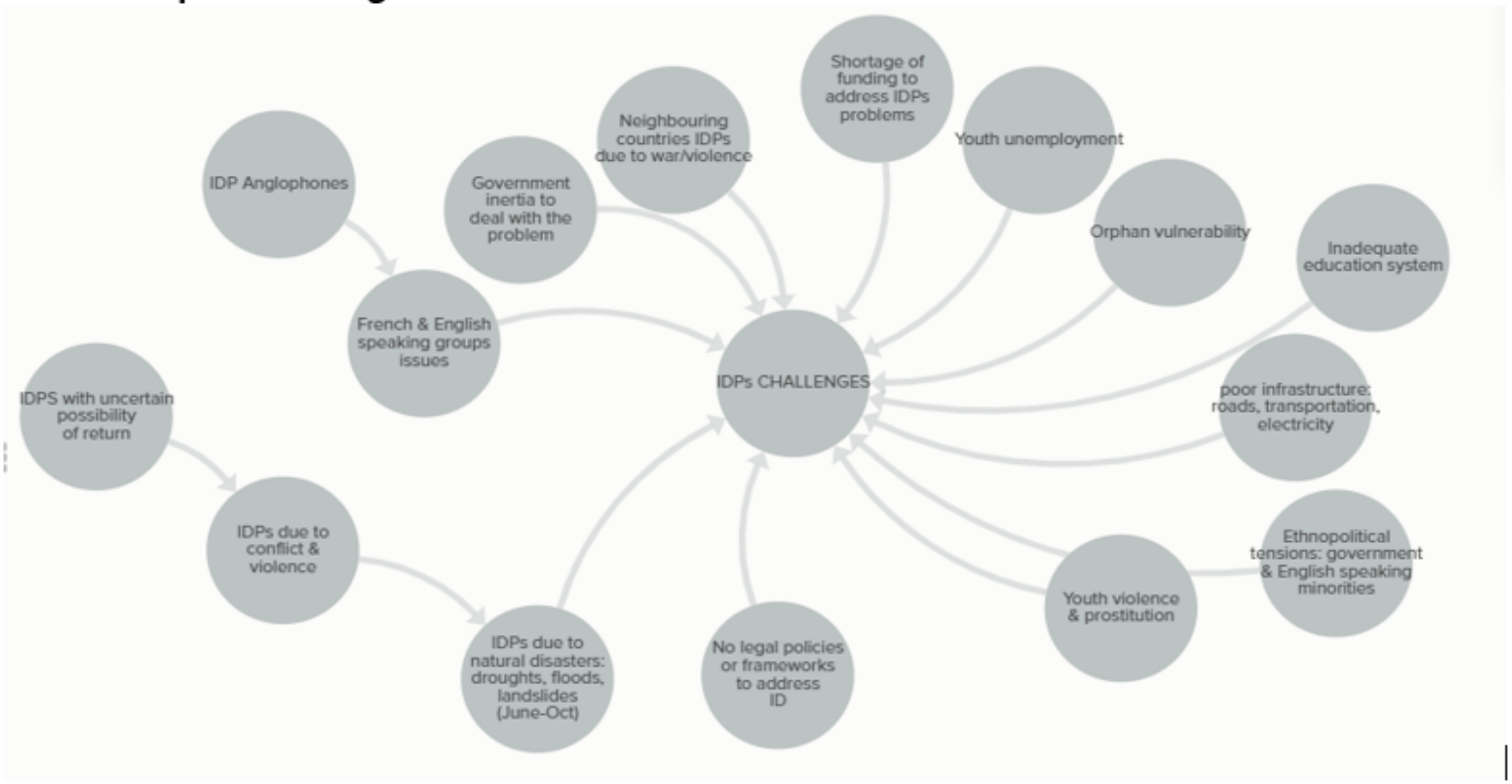
FCDA SYSTEMS CHALLENGE

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Cameroon

Because: they are a minority they suffer| lack of IT tools, food insecurity, drugs, prostitution, violence, employment | no access to services | living in inadequate human conditions | not integrated into the society | they need to be resettled| IDPs suffer from & trigger many social problems

Visual complex challenge:



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IDPs NEAR STAR and GUIDING STAR

GUIDING STAR

Coordinated community response towards IDPs issues centered around diversity, equality, and equity

NEAR STARS

IDPs issues are addressed when

- Civil society organizations such as professional organizations, indigenous groups, community groups, faith-based organizations, foundations, diaspora, labour unions, advocate and/or advance for awareness and solutions to IDPs issues
- Non-governmental organizations working in the issue work collaboratively and coordinately to address IDPs issues to maximize their impact, dilute their efforts and generate traction for funding.
- Government and civil society work towards policies to address IDPs issues

FRAMING QUESTION

What accounts for the current state of IDPs in Cameroun?

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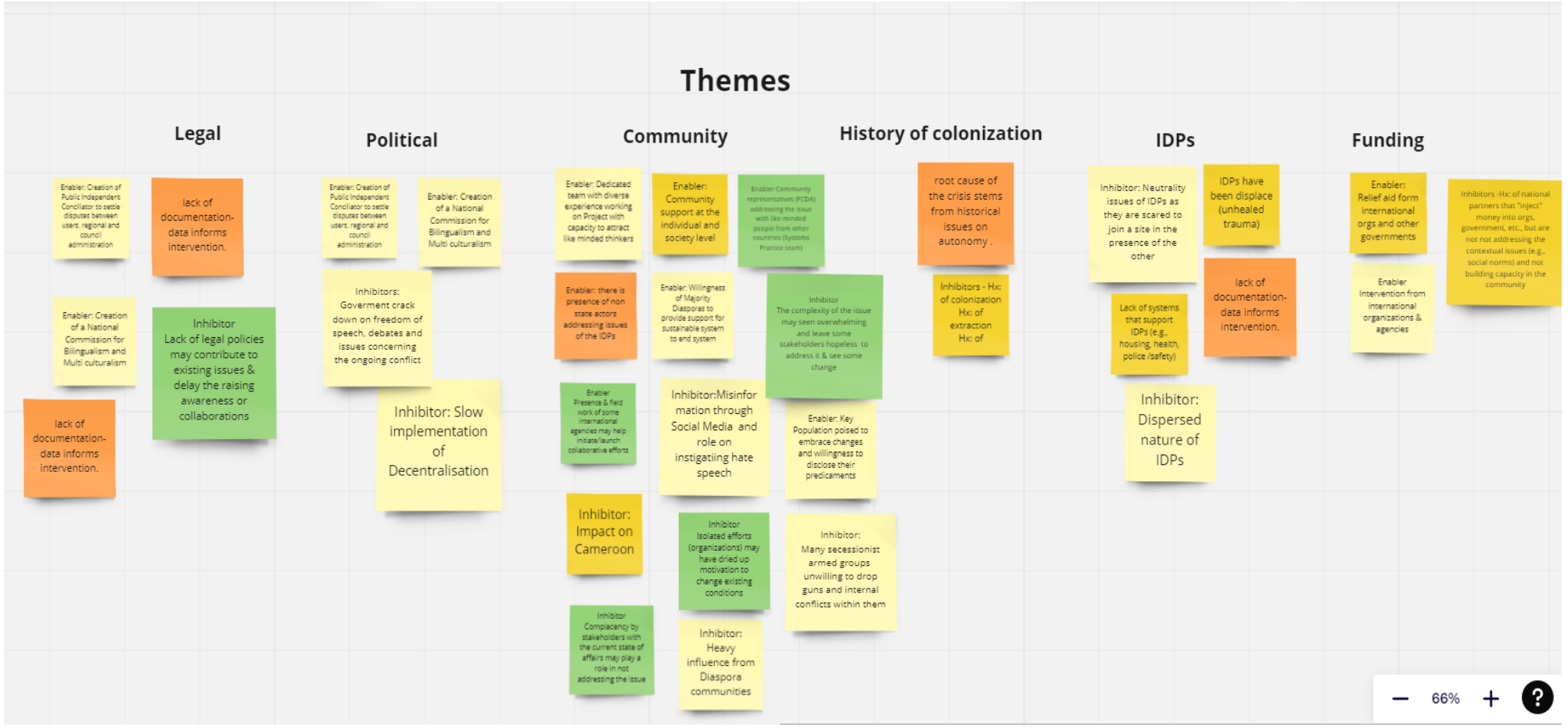
IDPs IDENTIFIED THEMES



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SAT ANALYIS THEME: HISTORY OF COLONIZATION

Upstream Causes

- STRUCTURAL: Fractured political, legal, socio-economic systems in Cameroon (German, British and French colonizers)
- ATTITUDINAL: A long history of having colonizers running the country may have contributed to people's views that social issues are solved by rulers or depend on international support rather than on building community capacity to address and have a more participatory role
- TRANSACTIONAL: Existing policies, laws and regulations are not inclusive

Downstream Effects

- STRUCTURAL:
  - Weak legal, political, socio-economic institutions to face complex issues.
  - Power struggles between French and English-speaking groups trickle down to all levels of society
  - Top-down solutions more focused on short-lived programs to gain political support not to make impact at a system level
- ATTITUDINAL:
  - Conformism and/or despair to find solutions for IDPs issues
  - Reliance on someone else out there will solve 'my problem, or that problem' rather than I can be part of the solution
  - Laissez-faire attitude; focus more on blaming than looking for system-wide solutions
  - Lack of trust in institutions and/or in imposed solutions
- TRANSACTIONAL
  - Policies, regulations and laws are more geared to favor groups in power
  - Corruption and greed are the norm within institutions
  - IDPs issues are downplayed as a social challenge and only addressed for political reasons

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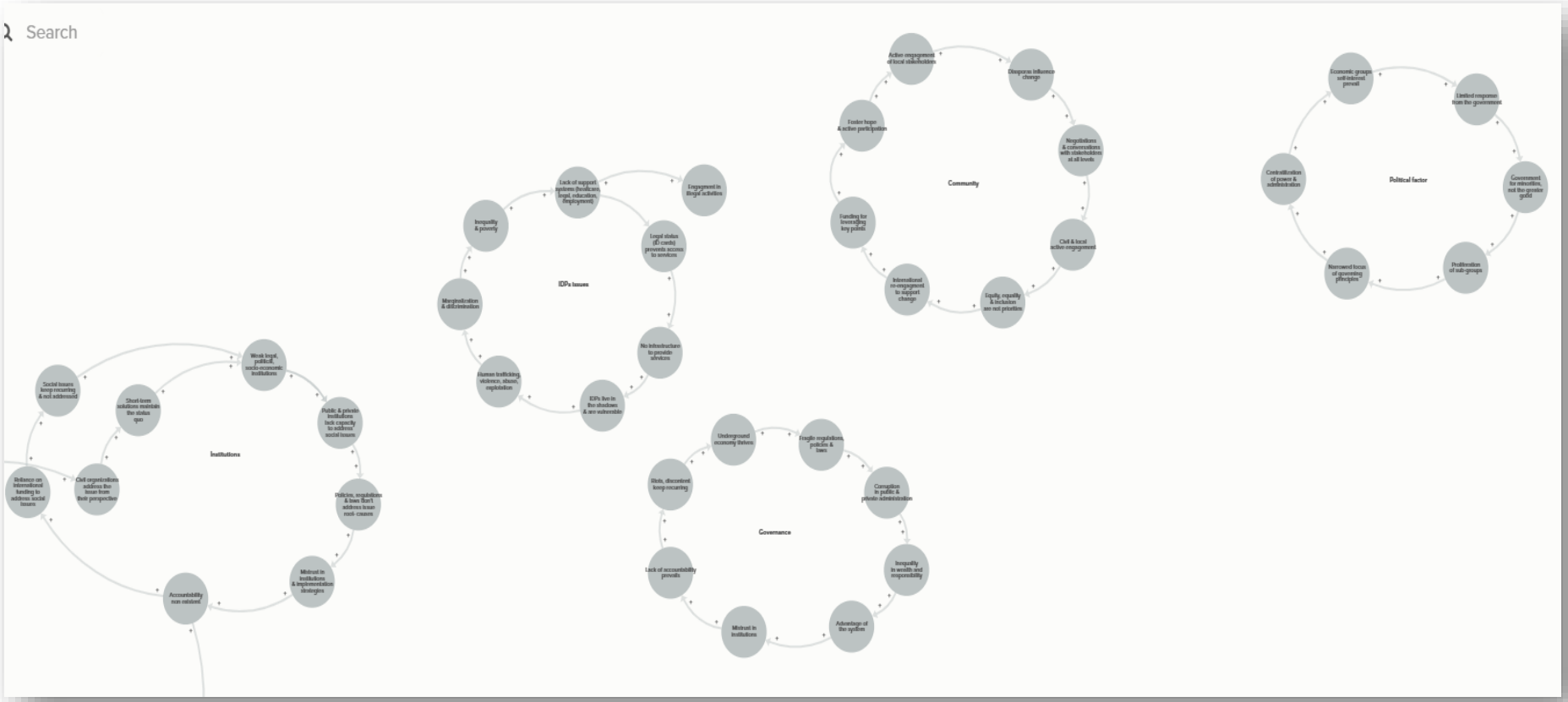
IDPs LOOPS & STRUCTURES



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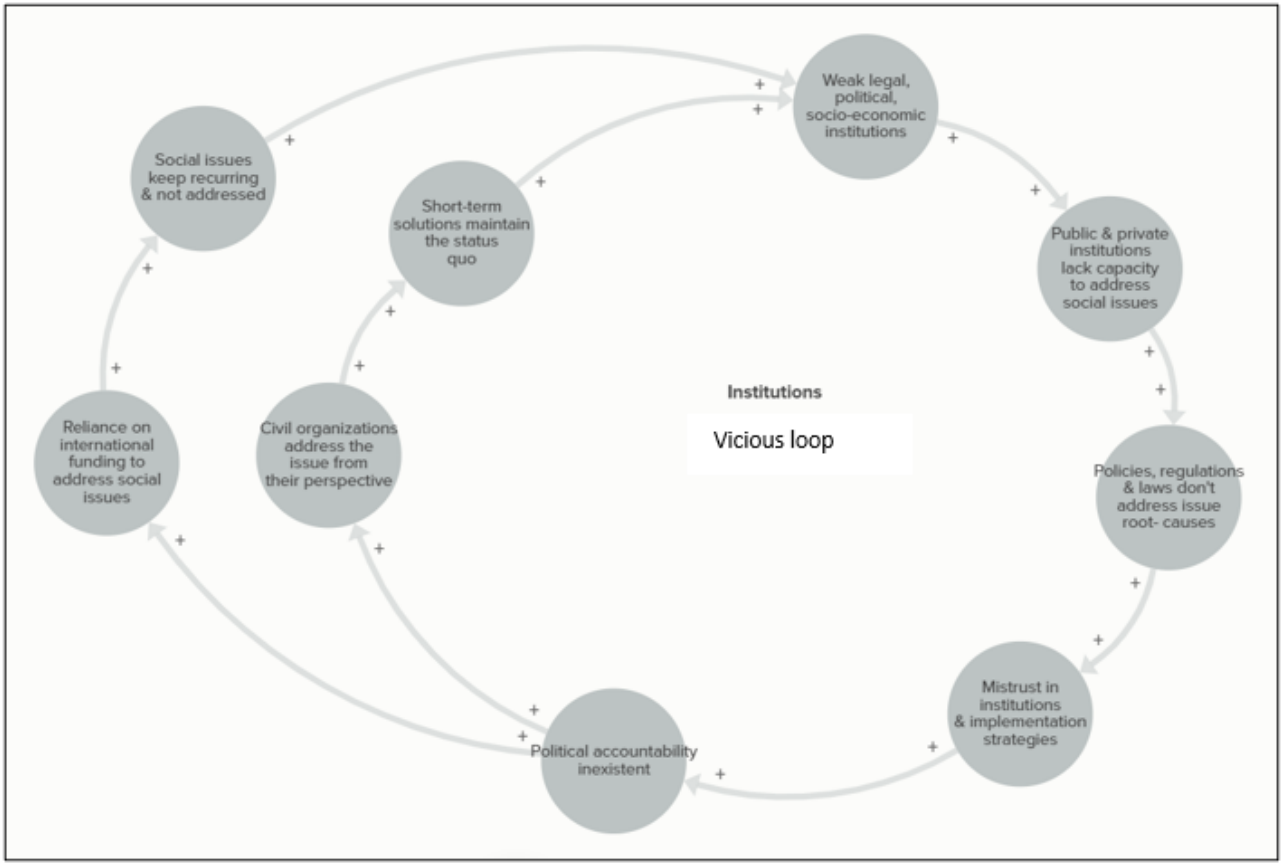
IDPs DEEP STRUCTURE



Deep Structure Narrative

A loop for IDP issues is Institutions in Cameroon. Weak legal, political and socio-economic institutions lead to their lack of capacity to address social issues which in turn result in ill-conceived policies, regulations and laws. That leads to public mistrust in institutions and their implementation strategies and programs to solve them. This, in turn, contributes to the lack of political accountability of organizations to solve social issues and reliance on international funding and civil organizations to tackle these problems. Country institutions depend on fluctuating international funding to do their job and on civil organizations which do their best with low impact at system level and indirectly contribute to maintain the status quo: Weak institutions.

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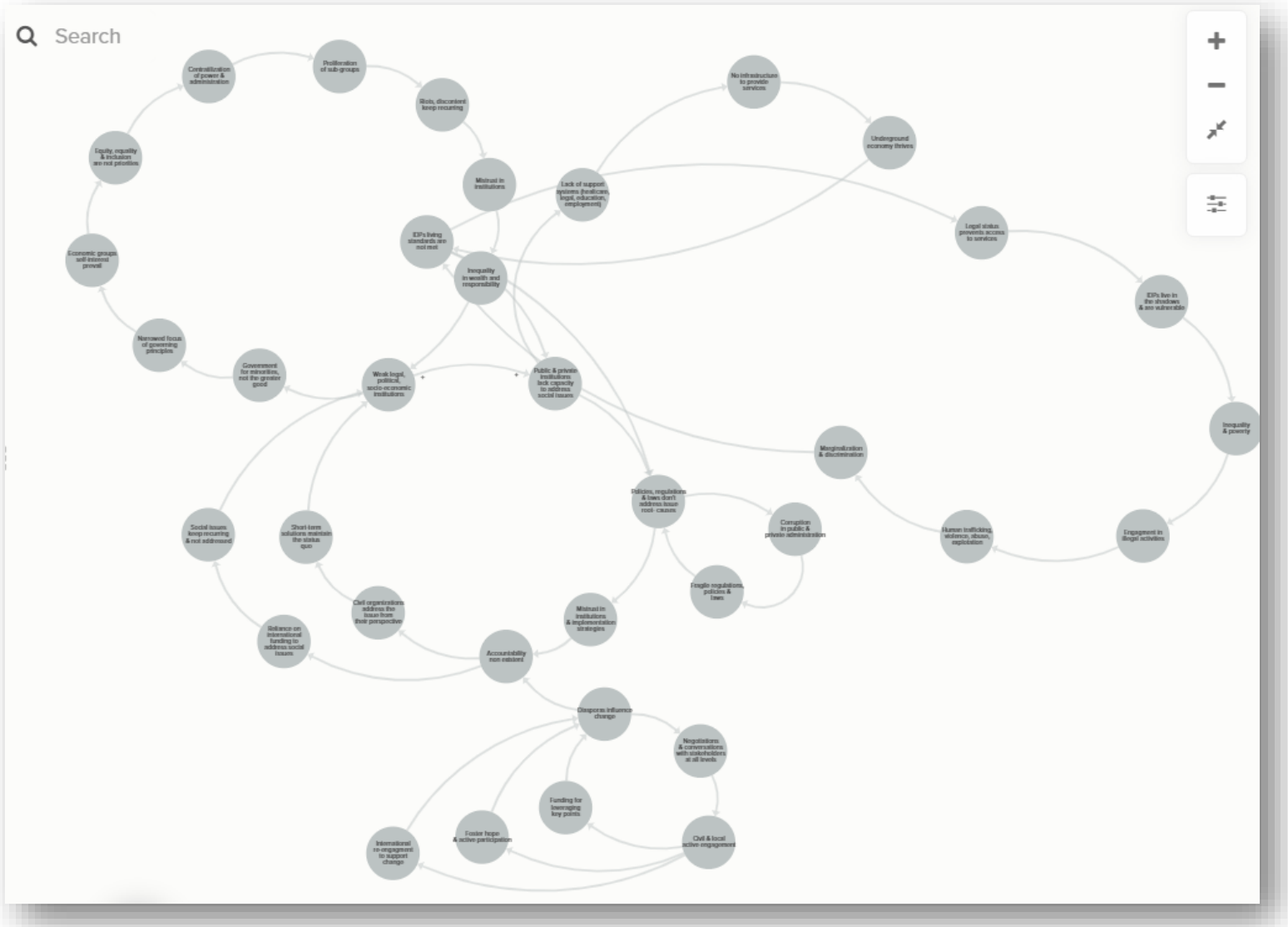
IDPs SYSTEM MAP



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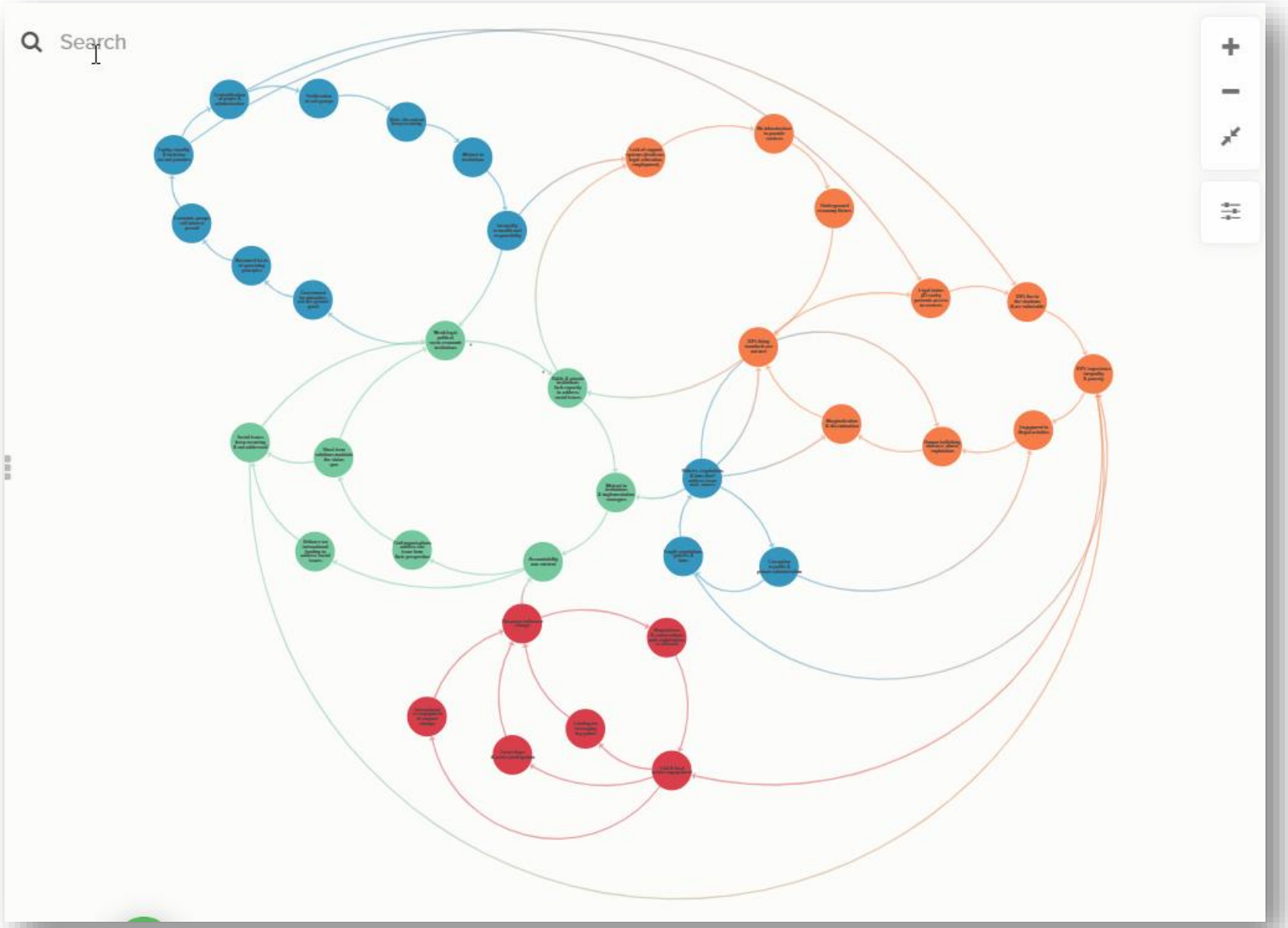
SOCIALIZING IDPs MAP



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Map Narrative

The Foundation of Community Development Association (FCDA) team chose as a systems challenge: Internally Displace Persons (IDPs) in Cameroon. Many reasons for the existing current state of IDPs led us to conceptualize the guiding star as 'Coordinated community response towards IDPs issues centered around diversity, equality and equity".

As a team, we also produced three near stars. We will know IDPs issues were addressed when:

- Civil society organizations such as professional organizations, indigenous groups, community groups, faith-based organizations, foundations, diaspora, labour unions, advocate and/or advance for awareness and solutions to IDPs issues
- Non-governmental organizations working in the issue work collaboratively and coordinately to address IDPs issues to maximize their impact, leverage their efforts and generate traction for funding.
- Government and civil society work towards policies to address IDPs issues

To gain a deeper understanding of the context, we set our system journey asking ourselves "What accounts for the current state of IDPs in Cameroon? We began by brainstorming enablers and inhibitors for the current state of things; grouped them into themes and ended up building loops and identifying deep structures.

The systems map we are presenting here is a minimum viable map which represents 4 important loops that account for the current state of IDPs in Cameroon: Governance in light blue; Institutions in emerald; Community in cherry; and IDPs in bronze. Let's start with glance of the system to see how they interconnect and influence each other.

A closer look at the Governance Region shows how a series of factors influence others and is closely related to the Institutions Region, which at the same time are closely related to the IDPs Region. The Community Region loop is also interconnected and its influence interdependent on the other loops.

Please, have a look at each loop and share with us:

- What resonates with you?
- What surprises you?
- What do you think is missing?

On behalf of the whole FCDA team, thanks for your time and feedback!

INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS (1)

Who did you share your map with?

- Community organization members: A Logistics & Procurement Officer & Social activists
- Educational organization: A Program Director at an organization that offers educational grants for young IDPs
- International organizations: a Legal Officer & a Health Specialist.

What parts of the map strongly resonated with the people you spoke to?

- Institutions & governance regions take over the other loops.
- Community, local & international, is overpowered by the other loops.
- Colonization legacy on institutions & governance are still felt and lived in the system
- Good overview of regions and loops as the starting point to leverage a strategy
- Strength in showing diaspora and the role it plays in the system
- Definition of key terms such as IDPs & social issues may clarify understand the loops
- Thorough document which can be used by other NGOs as well.
- Guiding star & near stars speak to the approach used for this map

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INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS (2)

What parts of the map did your stakeholders challenge or think still needed work?

- Government institutions are lacking cohesion and integration mechanisms for national unity of the people.
- Legal framework is weak as marginalization among the citizen is evident. One should be entitled to accessibility of government services with no discrimination.
- The state might have gaged the media and thereby preventing creation awareness of the situation in the country.
- The map doesn't account for IDPs from natural disasters, war zones, those who migrated from other countries nor IDPs who are not vulnerable anymore.
- Identifying international community organizations would help what work has been done/taking place for FCDA to develop a strategy that aligns with its near stars
- Dig more on government involvement or strategies in place to solve IDPs issues
- Financial institutions are missing in the institution region. These organizations don't promote financial equity and the services they offer are tainted by prejudices to certain groups.
- Solutions to the problems raised in the loops

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INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS (3)

What were the major insights you gained from their feedback? What will you change about your map as a result?

- Sharing the map narrative is a must when collecting data. This way feedback is on the team perspective and enriched by other perspectives. Otherwise, feedback is in terms of stakeholders' existing knowledge (problem-tree analysis); solution-based views or their own perspective.
- Fieldwork is necessary to engage key stakeholders from each region is FCDA is to validate the team's map. This time, IDPs were not heard at all due to lack of access and time. In a real life scenario, they would be key stakeholders.
- Revisit the IDPs region in terms of the IDPs group suggested: Migrated IDPs; Natural Disaster IDPs; Not vulnerable IDPs; Other
- Good opportunity to go over the feedback and see what role FCDA can play in leveraging a strategy towards the guiding star

Note: Feedback sources here

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FCDA TEAM INITIAL SYSTEM STRATEGY

As a team we would initially engage at the level of community, specifically local community. The presence of FCDA Cameroon in the Systems Journey is evidence that this community organization is up to the challenge and a great opportunity for leverage.

FCDA would play an important role in engaging other local NGOs , international organizations based in the country and key government institutions. By spreading out a systems approach to address IDPs challenges, FCDA would complement what other NGOs and/or international organizations are doing already. It also could foster collaboration among other actors in the community which in turn impact stakeholders in the governance, institutions and IDPs loops.

The challenge for FCDA now lies in revisiting its approach when dealing with IDPs social issues and moving away from band-aid solutions that are short-lived, funding-dependent and have little impact in the long-term. FCDA also needs to strengthen its leadership capacity so that it becomes the catalyst of fostering change from within the system in collaboration with other civil society and government organizations (near stars).

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FCDA Perspective

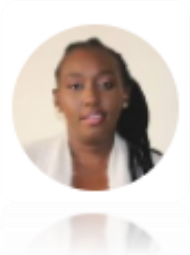
Dynamics hoping to engage are **Lack of support systems**(education, health and employment). Most IDPs have been out of school for almost 5 years amid the ban by separatist groups and this has led to poverty, unemployment and exposure to health ills. If these IDPs are empowered economically and socially through income generating activities and skills development, they will be able to stand out from society with finance independence and will prevent them not to join Arm groups.

Also**, Funding leveraging** key points by including Diaspora for supports through Mentor/ Mentee network on specific skills such as electrical engineering, agriculture, ICT (Web site designs, photography, and video editing) and tailoring. Exposure to jobs, develop entrepreneurial spirit, transfer of knowledge through Diaspora on mentorship programs and time management. We have to strengthen the force that will make the system healthier

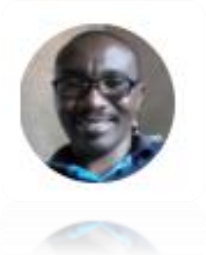
Also, **engaging other NGOs in the capacity building** process will be helpful as different perspectives will be shared. We have to identify at least 10 IDPs, 10 Diasporas, 5 NGOs, 3 FCDA team and 5 key stakeholders to get the program tested. Define the various modules, Key performance indicators and means to adapt changes to the system. This can be done within 6 months to enable the execution to capacitate by 2023.

Reconstitution of FCDA team and define clear board to set management and support

YOUR SYSTEMS PRACTICE MOVING FORWARD



Mumbi



Edson

Marvis

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YOUR SYSTEMS PRACTICE MOVING FORWARD

Mercedes

1) What systems in your life or work do you now think about differently? Has your new perspective changed the way you interact with those systems in your life or work?

Going through this process has allowed me to see how complex systems are. For example, I'm currently working with a local chapter at the Alzheimer's Association, and the United States is not ready to absorb the aging population that may develop Alzheimer's and dementia. Based on 2021 data, 50% of primary care providers say that they are not equipped to diagnose or treat Alzheimer. I would love to engage in this process with my team to identify the levers that we can pull to change the system to be more responsive to the needs of the senior community where I live.

2) How will you take your systems practice forward?

I love that I will still have access to the systems practice information, and I will encourage my co-workers to engage in this process with me. But unfortunately, as I mentioned above, we are working with various systems that don't coordinate or communicate with each other to support our aging community.
I will commit to practicing using Kumu. From my limited exposure to Kumu, I can tell that it's a beautiful and powerful tool; however, it's super complex.

3) What is the biggest practical thing you will do differently as a result of this course?

I will sit with the questions longer instead of going into "fix-it" mode. I will also ask different stakeholders for their feedback to make sure that I have a deeper understanding of the issue.

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YOUR SYSTEMS PRACTICE MOVING FORWARD

Ayuk

This course has fundamentally impacted my path on Social Work. I have been able to gain clarity through visualisation, importance of feedback, working with a diverse and multicultural team, time management, critical thinking, and also communicating and giving the sense of gaining new perspectives and further learning. Conversely to the Top Down approach and doing things alone which limits quality.

I am ready to work with the team to identify leverage points and develop a coherent strategy and also to relaunching the organisation with key performance indicators to identify our baseline and provide evidence to learn and adapt effectively where we are getting the traction.

I look forward to engage stakeholders for feedback, improve quality service delivery and always refer to the systems map. Getting the necessary support from coach/ mentor with evidence of impact through timely feedback.

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YOUR SYSTEMS PRACTICE MOVING FORWARD

Rosa

What systems in your life or work do you now think about differently? Has your new perspective changed the way you interact with those systems in your life or work?

Systems Practice is clearer for me when it comes to deal with complex systems. My new understanding has broadened to see beyond the obvious band-aid solutions to see the issue in a context. Looking at the issue and its interdependence and interconnectivity to other factors -inhibitors or enablers- which may have been overlooked or not considered at all using a linear approach.

Getting the hands-on on this approach has also increased my confidence to advocate for its use when dealing with complex issues in the social world.

How will you take your systems practice forward?

I need work on how to be a better field catalyst and focus on getting some hands-on on evaluating these types of systems. A work in-progress for the next coming months.

What is the biggest practical thing you will do differently as a result of this course?

Making haste slowly to figure out the system for a social challenge as it pays off not only on the journey but on the impact as well.

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Systems Practice References

Systems & Complexity

- Articles on systemsthinker
- A systems approach to increasing the impact of Grantmaking by David Peter Stroh and Kathleen Zurcher
- Toward Principles for Enhancing the Resilience of Ecosystem Services by Kimberly Bowman et. Al
- Systems Archetypes at a Glance by Daniel Kim and Colleen Lannon
- The art and science of systems change by Joe Hsueh
- The art of systems thinking in driving sustainable transformation by Jo Confino
- Complexity 101: Behind the hype, what do we actually know? By Harry Jones
- The 10 skills you need to survive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution by World Economic Forum (Complex problem solving is number 1)
- Systems Grantmaking Resource Guide – Causal Loop Mapping
- Three Keys to Unlocking Systems-Level Change by Susan Misra and Jamaica Maxwel
- Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results by David Peter Stroh [Book]
- Thinking in Systems: A Primer by Donella Meadows and Diana Wright [Book]
- Aid on the Edge of Chaos by Ben Ramalingam [Book]
- Making Peace Last: A Toolbox for Sustainable Peacebuilding by Rob Ricigliano [Book]

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Leverage

- Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System by Donella Meadows
- Acupuncture approaches to conflict transformation by Orit Gal

Strategy

- Strategy as a Wicked Problem by John Camillus
- collective impact Kumu post by Jeff Mohr, referencing Richard Rumelt's book "Good Strategy/Bad Strategy"
- General readings on collective impact posted on SSIR.

Learning

- Emergent Learning: A Framework for Whole- System Strategy, Learning, and Adaptation by Marilyn Darling et. Al
- Teaching Smart People how to Learn

Networks

- Networks: The New Organizational Strategy by Charlie Brown
- Networks of Effective Action: Implementing an Integrated Approach to Peacebuilding by Rob Ricigliano
- Transformer: How to build a network to change a system. A case study of the Re-Amp Energy Network by Heather McLeod Grant

Being & Leading in Complexity

- The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World by Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow [Book]
- Strategies for Learning from Failure by Amy Edmondson
- All Changes Great and Small: Exploring Approaches to Change and its Leadership by Higgs and Rowland
- The Dawn of System Leadership by Senge et. Al
- A Leaders Framework for Decision Making by David Snowden and Mary Boone

Field Catalysts

Field Catalysts | A Missing Contribution for High-Impact Community Change? [Video] by the Tamarack Institute, Mar 2022.