

Integrating Ethos into Resilient Change Facilitation in Ukrainian Realia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. This viewpoint paper explores the practice of change facilitation, aiming to unveil how societies can nurture resilience in the face of imminent challenges. It synthesizes Ukrainian real-life experiences, revealing the principles behind various facilitation approaches to fostering resilient change in demanding contexts. **Methodology.** The study's methodology entails the synthesis and conceptualization of diverse professional experiences in Ukrainian realia, unravelling the underlying ethos behind various change facilitation approaches. By integrating these insights into broader perspectives and communities of practice, the research aims to offer a holistic perspective on fostering resilient change. **Findings.** The results section succinctly presents the distilled findings, offering a thought-provoking array of ideas specifically tailored for facilitators operating within high-stakes and extreme-risk and existential environments. **Limitations/Implications.** Due to the research approach, findings may lack generalizability, necessitating further testing of the presented propositions. **Practical Implications.** The study concludes by highlighting the potential impact of its professional interpretations on the fields of facilitation and social cohesion. The paper's content encompasses an exploration of facilitation, encompassing Ethos, Logos, and Pathos elements. It highlights the multifaceted role of a facilitator and presents three distinct approaches to implementing change: the knowledge and experience-driven approach, the inspiration-based approach, and the strategy-oriented approach tailored to fragile crisis contexts. **Originality/Value.** The paper delves into the existential challenges and ethically justified opportunities inherent in adopting the combined approach of facilitation, underlining the nuanced dynamics inherent in resilient change facilitation.

1. Introduction

From a people management perspective and within the domains of work-applied management, as well as management and executive education, the integration of ethos into resilient change facilitation holds great potential for advancing management insights. In an era where

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transformative and change, social divide and existential war, work-based, work-applied, collaborative, and experiential approaches are of unprecedented need, therefore understanding the vital role of facilitation in extreme decision-making becomes paramount.

In the complex landscape of exploding postmodernity, facilitation takes on a more nuanced role that is difficult to delegate to any other managerial skill. It involves the creation of a fragile yet hopeful temporary image of the world with a focus on the future, however fleeting it may be. In its core managerial communication also comprises three bespoke key components: ethos, pathos, and logos. To achieve effective communication and guiding groups towards reaching consensus, facilitators ground the present reality, recognizing its dynamics and weaving it into the narrative of an envisioned future. This entails visualizing various scenarios for its realization, thereby shaping the collective route forward.

Facilitation in postmodernity is the creation of a fragile temporary picture of the world with hope for the future, which can live very briefly. For this purpose, it is important to manifest the reality of today (and the connection to playing with it) and visualise the desired future with the visualisation of the lines of scenarios for its realisation.

We take the logical part to agree on a common route. The very role of the facilitator is important when two different routes meet. To identify what everyone understands by their direction of travel and significant stops along the change management route. This helps to make decisions in a limited time and calmly. Sometimes it happens that two trains travelling in opposite directions on the same route stop at the same station. Sometimes it is enough to realise that you are getting on the wrong train to avoid losing or getting into trouble. This saves time and resources. The facilitator can give this opportunity to check the route with the reality here and now and show different maps of the same area. By providing this opportunity to align with the present reality, a facilitator assists the parties in understanding the route and determining a logical sequence of actions for different individuals.

In the beginning of 2000s, the concept of facilitation and the pivotal role that facilitators played in various contexts were subject to inconsistent conceptualizations and operationalizations (Harvey et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2006). The efficacy of facilitation processes has been explored by various scholars, exemplified by Kitson, Harvey, and McCormack's framework for enabling evidence-based practice implementation (Kitson et al., 1998), as well as Meyer and Goes' contextual analysis of organizational assimilation of innovations (Meyer & Goes, 1998). Facilitation purpose moves from "a discrete task-focused activity to a more holistic process of enabling individuals, teams and organisations to change" (Harvey et al., 2002).

In more recent publications, there is an increasing emphasis on the utilisation of facilitation to foster collaboration and decision-making not only within corporate contexts but also extending into collaborations between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governmental institutions. The potential of facilitation to foster advanced learning within organisations is grounded in its ability to facilitate experimentation, generate insights, and maintain incremental modifications to organizational processes and work routines. This potential centres on stimulating higher-order learning experiences (Berta et al., 2015).

This trend is notable in the exploration of new avenues for public authorities to engage with both public and private actors (Grotenbreg, 2019). Governments are opting for facilitation strategies to encourage the generation of public goods and services, particularly in the context of sustainable energy innovations (Grotenbreg & Van Buuren, 2017). The creation of supportive environments has been recognized as conducive to promoting open inquiry and structured dialogues among peers, experienced colleagues, and facilitators. This approach

contributes to the enhancement of knowledge, perspectives, insights, and relationships (Marshall et al., 2022).

Another significant aspect of facilitation is ethos, which encompasses the rules, habits, and values that govern our interactions. As self-centred beings, our natural inclination is to prioritise personal comfort, even when we possess service-oriented qualities. Consequently, self-interest may manifest in unexpected and peculiar ways, influencing our experiences, beliefs, and the significance we attach to objects. When individuals from diverse organisations, sectors, and backgrounds come together, their respective comfort zones intertwine, potentially leading to conflicts within the familiar spaces to which they are accustomed.

According to Boon, embracing the ethos of facilitation offers both a critical vantage point and a structured approach to reassessing and reshaping interactions across all levels of engagement (Boon, 2011). This ethos grants us a fresh lens through which to perceive our roles and relationships, thereby unveiling novel strategies for fostering and enriching engagement. A comprehensive ethos of facilitation entails a redefinition and expansion of facilitation's scope, encompassing various dimensions that inform interaction and engagement across a wide spectrum. In essence, according to Boon, it involves the continual activation and integration of facilitation as an intrinsic operational framework.

2. A Facilitator's Task

From decades of experience, we see facilitator's task as weaving these different threads, namely Ethos, Logos and Pathos, into a unified fabric of agreed-upon ethos, creating a shared field where specific rules guide our interactions. Hence, it is essential to establish two forms of interaction. The first is interaction with space and time in the plane of connection between individuals, the present and the future. The second form is a logical interaction aimed at comprehending the route and its sequence. The third form entails defining the rules of engagement. Once these two components are identified, the facilitator's primary task is accomplished. While additional elements may be incorporated, this three-layered foundation remains indispensable. Each facilitator contributes their own specialisation, talents, and strengths, which serve as the framework for this foundation.

As a facilitator, the author's professional focus centres around collaborating with various entities such as businesses, public organisations, and government bodies when there is a demand for transformative changes, yet differing levels of comprehension and readiness exist regarding the desired direction and approach for such changes. Since 2014, author has been predominantly engaged with reform teams, including the Reforms Delivery Office at Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine that has been receiving strategic facilitation and organisation coaching support for delivering sustainable strategic plans and team development. Recently, the author also collaborated with the National Information Bureau of Ukraine, which is dedicated to the critical matter of liberating and repatriating deported Ukrainians.

3. Three Approaches to Implement Change

There are typically three approaches to implementing change (Beer & Nohria, 2000). The first approach entails managers asserting their authority, stating their vision on how to implement the necessary changes. Leaders devise a sophisticated scheme and algorithm of actions, adopting new laws, developing an advanced sales system, or devising an innovative advocacy method. With the leadership expertise, confidence, strength, authority, and experience, the leaders expect that everything should seamlessly fall into place. This approach prioritises changing the system and model, excluding people and culture from the change process.

Devoted specialists in this approach are inclined to emphasise their capacity to manage effectively. This article aims to centre its focus on the role of the Ethos within each approach to change facilitation.

3.1. The Approach to Change Facilitation Through Knowledge of Systems and Experience of the Leader

In organizational contexts, it is essential to recognize that organizational change does not occur spontaneously; rather, it is driven by individuals. A notable illustration of this principle emerged during an invitation to conduct a training for civil servants on strategy writing at the NATO office in Ukraine. Prior to the training, the author conducted interviews with stakeholders from various ministries to discern ways to enhance the capabilities of civil servants. Surprisingly, the feedback from the interviewees revealed that Ukrainians had acquired exceptional skills in crafting strategies. This revelation prompted the author to structure the training as a research-based workshop, aiming to identify the primary obstacles hindering the successful implementation of well-conceived strategies in state units and institutions.

The workshop's outcomes underscored a discernible culture associated with strategy work, shaped by both the state apparatus and international donor-supported initiatives. Within the integral dynamics framework, this culture can be classified as 'Blue/Red,' as proposed by Wilber's (2005) 'Integral Theory.' This theory not only investigates organizational culture and industry but also delves into individual motives, intentions, and the structure of the surrounding environment (Donkers, 2016, p. 6). The qualitative outcome of this culture centres around producing meticulously crafted documents, financed by donors as part of grants, with limited focus on their subsequent implementation, often not foreseen within the grant's timeframe. Moreover, potential executors may harbour hidden intentions to evade the responsibility of implementing the strategy as a change endeavour with uncertain outcomes. Consequently, instances arose where multiple strategies existed on paper, yet lacked individuals who passionately embraced the role of change agents and carried out the strategies effectively.

The participants identified four principal reasons that hinder the implementation of strategies, even when such strategies are impeccably written:

- **Lack of Risk Consideration and Policy in Ministries:** Inadequate attention to risks and the absence of well-defined policies within the Ministries impede effective strategy execution.
- **Ambiguously Formulated Goals and Lack of Coordination between Tactical and Strategic Tasks:** Strategies suffer from poorly articulated goals, and the absence of alignment between tactical and strategic tasks and objectives complicates the execution process.
- **Absence of Program Document Assessment and Coherence:** A lack of evaluation for program documents and their incoherence undermine the clarity and effectiveness of the strategies.
- **Inertia in the Management System and Formal Approach to Implementation:** The management system's inertia, coupled with a formalistic approach to implementing measures by individual leaders and responsible executors, hinders proactive and result-oriented execution.

These identified reasons underscore the critical importance of addressing the structural, communicative, and evaluative aspects within organisations to enhance the implementation success of well-crafted strategies.

ETHOS: Within this change facilitation approach, the efficacy of ethos seems to be often compromised in situations characterised by rigid organisational structures and/or totalitarianism, where an all-encompassing control supersedes the ethos-driven approach.

The utilitarian path of change restricts the sphere of development to the abilities of a singular individual or a small group situated at the apex of the hierarchical structure within the system. As a result, it engenders controlled changes in accordance with a preconceived plan. However, these changes primarily manifest at the tactical level, disregarding the ethical dimension of change. This tactical approach implements tasks through individuals in functional roles without fostering a cohesive community of changemakers committed to the underlying ethics of transformation.

3.2. The Approach to Change Facilitation Through Inspiring Leaders and Motivating the Team

In certain instances, managers adopt the perspective of finding an inspiring narrative that unites team members to drive successful transformation, attributing the power of change. This version of change implementation is often prevalent in mission-driven initiatives within the public sector, where leaders firmly believe that their commitment to making the world a better place should be sufficient to move mountains, even in the absence of a comprehensive strategy. Main fuel of this change will be the culture of the team, common values and energy of the leader.

To illustrate this approach, it can be said that this phenomenon was frequently observed in volunteer initiatives, particularly those encountered during the author's tenure as a lecturer in NGO Management at the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv). The leaders of these initiatives were adept at mobilising volunteers around issues that personally resonated with them. In Ukraine, such individuals exhibit remarkable energy and inspiration, often assuming roles that complement or supplement the state's social programs, aiding vulnerable groups and addressing societal challenges. However, these teams are susceptible to setbacks if they fail to establish a systematic sequence of actions and build a foundation for the organisation anchored in specific rules of team interaction. Experience has shown that the initial inspiration of even highly resolute and impassioned change agents tend to wane without a solid framework to sustain their efforts.

ETHOS: In this context, ethos assumes a prominent role, emphasising the significance of ethics and values in shaping the culture of the people involved. However, this path of change lacks the necessary systematicity and structure to render the changes strategic and the outcomes enduring. While ethos-driven initiatives may invoke powerful sentiments and motivate initial action, they risk losing momentum and impact without the underpinning of a well-defined and strategic approach.

3.3. The Approach to Change Facilitation with Building Resilient and Adaptive Strategy to Fragile Circumstances of Crises

From the practical experience, the third combined way appears to be the most effective from the facilitator's experience. It is a complex model that resembles the interaction of the skeleton and muscles for human movement, where the skeleton is the organizational structure and power of the business model, and the muscles are the culture and power of people in change. What do changes on two levels at once mean? We prescribe a change plan as a sequence of actions and expected business or development results. How will the system change, what documents and rules should we change to strengthen its implementation, how and when should we record changes and successes or failures of new mechanisms or models.

Moreover, adding communication proficiency, effective change models incorporate communication strategies that render the changes comprehensible and inspiring to the actors tasked with their implementation. When formulating such models, a crucial consideration is people's understanding of the changes, as it significantly influences the pace of change adoption and the degree of resistance encountered. People are more likely to engage with and embrace change when they perceive it as clear, non-threatening, and offering tangible benefits. Emotional and value-driven involvement of the team is vital in this process. And combined with a flexible plan and clear goals with a road map, this makes this planning approach much more resilient to external changes and challenges.

Providing actors with a clear understanding of their specific roles and how their actions or inactions impact the overall success of the team is paramount. Change leaders must possess the ability to share power and responsibility during the implementation phase, appropriately delegating aspects of the plan to relevant stakeholders. Among those to whom authority is delegated, some will be keenly aware of the personal benefits derived from the project's success. Others will be motivated by the prospect of influencing a broader scope, spanning the team, organisation, city, community, or even the entire society or country. For these leaders, the narrative takes on particular significance as it expands the project's potential horizon, imbuing daily actions with vision and mission, reinforcing their sense of personal belonging to a larger-scale social change endeavour. This sense of belonging is especially pivotal for young individuals, for whom the value of being part of something greater assumes heightened importance.

ETHOS: Change facilitation approach here entails establishing a dynamic ecosystem that converges individuals possessing knowledge and those driven by inspiration, collectively transforming organic change into tangible action. This path is characterised by a well-structured system, carefully delineating the sequence of changes, final and intermediate objectives, allocated resources, tools, and distinct roles, all set in motion by the “muscles” of the system - a team of change makers. These individuals are not only motivated by the underlying idea and process of change but also possess a comprehensive understanding of the strategic outcomes. They actively engage in testing the implementation of changes within the distributed system of responsibilities, crucially contributing to the overall team result.

4. Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the Third Approach to Facilitation

It is the third way of change that is valuable for those communities and organisations that are entering or are in a crisis and need to make collective decisions. After all, in a crisis situation, we tend to rely more on the experience we know and old practices that are more likely to lead us to the same results, but not to help us transform. People from other fields can become a support in an existential challenge. At the same time, the different language and style of change means that cooperation between knowledge leaders and inspiration leaders is possible only through facilitated meetings. This is often the only space where they can stand up to their different or conflicting approaches and solutions.

The key challenge of the third approach to the change facilitation is in the need to develop new facilitators' and leaders' mindset requiring skills to construct a new culture of group communication and cooperation. That will require practice of empathic and generative listening (Scharmer, 2008) and to conduct a dialog between people who initially have different values and focus on change.

It also requires three changes: more planning to get started (which is unusual for volunteer initiatives and NGO start-up leaders), more communication with the team along the way (which might be quite unusual for hierarchical leaders), facilitator has to gain new roles and skills.

Facilitators will need to become partly placeholders to settle agreements to balance sometimes opposite approaches and harvesters to visualise emerging future possibilities of the cooperation of polarity approaches of participants with common beneficial outcomes. Holding space is one of the Leadership Capacities according to Scharmer's U-Theory (2009). According to him, the key to holding a space is listening: "to yourself (to what life calls you to do), to others (particularly others who may be related to that call), and to that which emerges from the collective that you convene" (Scharmer, 2009). Harvesting is an "openness to complexity and change through an inner posture of presence" (Mahy, 2010; Mahy, 2012) - and thus focuses on emerging phenomena. For this the facilitator is to translate the needs of each group into the language of the other and give a vision of the value of including this approach. This will add to the acceptance of diversity as a team advantage. For example, for people of knowledge and achievement, it is important to see that people with similar values build more trust and this speeds up the implementation of changes. At the same time, people of culture may value a system of change implementation with defined sequences and stages. Each stage can be an opportunity to celebrate the team's success or to jointly see the necessary adjustments in the next steps.

During the facilitated meetings the author had in some communities, a strategy was devised to reestablish equilibrium without engaging in conflicts with the authorities. This involved a transformation in functional roles or the infusion of fresh resources. For instance, serving as intermediaries between donors and the city community, launching projects directly for the benefit of the recipients. Effective intellectuals played a pivotal role in this process by establishing an independent Blue Ocean strategy that operated outside the sphere of authority (Mauborgne & Gardner, 2007). Identifying areas of mutual interest and points of convergence, they initiated systematic changes at the micro level. For example, private school owners collaborated with intellectuals on grant projects focused on adult education, inviting parents and teachers to participate in lectures and discussions. Similarly, coffee shop owners joined forces with local creatives to host a series of creative coffee evenings. Although these endeavours might appear modest with limited resources, the collective pooling of existing assets led to an amplified influence and effect within the community. These initiatives fostered micro-communities and shaped a distinct culture, offering diverse opportunities for communal interactions. Consequently, individuals found inspiration from these engagements, motivating them to contribute their own skills and resources to similar projects.

In the current full-scale stage of the war in Ukraine, a multitude of instances highlights the interplay between cooperation and competition, showcasing the potential of small groups composed of previously unacquainted individuals. These groups have demonstrated an inherent capability to create a conducive environment for comprehending intricate societal matters, offering diverse analytical viewpoints, and swiftly implementing solutions through collaborative efforts. Otto Scharmer conceptualises this phenomenon as Collective Action from Shared Awareness (CASA), where a collective of leaders operates not solely based on individualised national agendas, but rather from a unified understanding and heightened awareness of the overarching situation (Scharmer, 2022). This concept underscores the potency of shared perspectives in propelling collective endeavours towards facilitated resilient change outcomes.

The country, to a great extent, relies on the efforts of millions of citizens, which has resulted in an unprecedented intensity of changes within a year, concurrently with the imperative of

persevering in the face of the ongoing war with the aggressor. Spontaneous initiatives aimed at addressing immediate and pressing issues have gradually evolved into more enduring movements, albeit not always characterised by systematic approaches. Many of these initiatives are financially supported by private donations from compassionate citizens, and as the groups achieve a certain level of sustainability, they receive donor support to strengthen institutionalisation. However, this impressive public response might be less a survival tactic and a manifestation of Ukrainians' resilience, and more a new approach needs to be taken to develop volunteerism into more sustainable projects, receiving sustainable development resources from the government and donors. It is not enough to ignite the flame of change - it needs to be kept alive and supported. Without this, the country will face massive burnout of public leaders and a decline in volunteerism, which we are now witnessing on a massive scale in Ukraine. But you can observe the same results in any other country on a smaller scale without needing to zoom-in/zoom-out routinely.

The state received evident benefits from the contributions of free, often high-professional volunteering, particularly during the full-scale war, which has displaced numerous pro-bono social services without seeking financial or public compensation. It is worth emphasising that the country's resilience is significantly contingent upon individual and private initiatives, which rely on being acknowledged, appreciated, and recognized for their actions and achievements.

5. Discussion

This article aims to share the experience of a society that is at the centre of a tornado and, in the face of the enduring existential challenges, is shifting the crisis towards post-traumatic development. Since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, the profession of facilitator has become a highly sought-after profession in Ukraine and has become a key recognized tool in transformational processes in government, civil society and business. This massive spread of facilitation made it possible to test and adapt new approaches in a very short time. In particular, to implement changes in a space that is constantly changing and transforming due to external changes and crises that we have no direct influence on.

Presently, a fresh challenge emerges — the transformation of Ukraine from a nation of volunteers into a realm of conscious, responsible citizens with a distinct agency acknowledged within the broader spectrum of national reconstruction, encompassing government, donors, business, and civil society. This transition is aligned with the aspiration to forge a new societal contract, fortifying the nation's foundations through the collective efforts of its populace. This metamorphosis, however, echoes a resounding global imperative. Across international communities, the recognition of agency among civic activists reverberates, shedding light on the prevailing societal disparities underpin a crisis of democratic values and structures.

Nassim Taleb's "Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder" (2014) has inaugurated a paradigm shift in addressing challenges and solutions for humanity. While past strategic concerns centred on diversity and polarity, the present emphasis lies in harmonising fractured diversities resulting from global and local disruptions. This entails transforming traumatic experiences into catalysts for growth through multifaceted scenarios. Change-making facilitation must adapt to this dynamic landscape by fostering resilience in future planning, requiring a revised approach to envisioning, consensus-building, and stakeholder engagement. Facilitators must acquire new skills, such as empathic listening and trauma-awareness leadership, to navigate these complexities successfully. Thus, Taleb's work prompts a reevaluation of facilitation methodologies in the context of perpetual change.

In the context of business school curricula, it is imperative to prepare future managers with facilitation skills. Graduates must embody a philanthropic, postmodern, and humanistic

approach, demonstrating empathy in their interactions with colleagues. After all, the true worth of knowledge lies not only in its content but also in the moral disposition and people-centric mindset of the individuals who possess it.

To instill these qualities in future managers, universities and educators must adapt their roles significantly. Beyond merely imparting subject knowledge within their areas of expertise, encompassing disciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, epistemic, and procedural knowledge, educators shoulder a broader set of responsibilities. (Jakubik, Beke & Shtaltovna, 2023). They must actively contribute to the development of the emerging generation of intellectuals by assuming roles as facilitators, mentors, influencers, and role models. Effective communication skills are also an essential attribute that educators are expected to possess. In this way, business school curricula should equip students not only with technical knowledge but also with the interpersonal and ethical skills necessary for success in the dynamic and evolving business landscape.

6. Conclusions

The vital competencies that a global citizen and a global manager needs to survive and thrive in this dramatic evolving landscape demand a fresh set of facilitation skills, including empathic and generative listening, the art of holding space, and fostering dialogue, drawing on insights from trauma-awareness leadership. This skill set becomes pivotal as we downscale back from a global perspective to a micro-level context. The central axiom becomes reframing action from heroic feats attempting the implausible to a pragmatic ethos of effecting change within one's immediate sphere.

The directive is to undertake what's achievable, aligning with like-minded individuals and tapping into readily accessible resources. Embracing this approach, incremental advancements enact a harmonious synergy between systemic thinking and ethical considerations. Celebrating modest victories that converge on overarching values, yet remain attuned to the specific needs of the change-making collective, steers the course toward a resilient strategic vision and resilient change making through facilitating competencies and practice. This approach brings managerial insights where change, discovery and innovation are driven by collaborative, and experiential approaches and foster enhanced adaptability, reduced resistance, and a decreased immediate dependency on resources. The bedrock for this transition lies in the realm of facilitation, a medley of resilience and flexibility navigating through unforeseen shifts and challenges.

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