

# Sailing the 7 C's of Social Change:

Evaluating Systems Change in an  
Early Intervention Project in the  
Russian Far East

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# Early Intervention in the Russian Far East:

**Changing a Complex System**

# Background

- Children born with disabilities in Russia have poor developmental outcomes and are often institutionalized, because families lack needed supports.
  - A lack of interdisciplinary, family-centered services for children with disabilities
  - Ineffective supports at all levels for such services (policy, social and institutional norms, medical expertise, family structure, etc.)
  - Insufficient understanding of and appropriate application of pediatric neurobiology in treatment of children with disabilities
  - Highly controlled systems in place

# Early Intervention (EI) in the Russian Far East (RFE)

- EI project for abandonment prevention
- Based out of a small US organization
- 1 year USAID funding
- Russian – US Partnership
- Focus on interdisciplinary teams, family-centered practice
- Assessment and team consultation

# Focus on Systems Change

Paradigm shift across the system of care for disabled children

- Medical
- Educational
- Family support

Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots . . .

(Peter Senge)

# Some Basic Assumptions of Human Systems:

- Complex human systems are self-organizing constantly to adapt to their environment
- We cannot predict specifically what will happen in the system, but we can identify patterns or trends
- We cannot control the forces at work in systems but we can influence the path, speed, or direction of movement

# In a complex human system, an innovation or initiative must be:

- **Sensitive** to its environment so that changing patterns are detected in time to adapt
- **Flexible** enough to respond to changing patterns and to continue meeting the original need
- **Robust** enough to withstand emergent challenges and changing patterns in the systems.

# Evaluation of the EI RFE Project

- Contextual data (e.g. needs assessment and literature review)
- Process data (e.g. observation, interviews and focus groups, service data)
- Outcome data (e.g. standardized child and family assessments)

## **Systems change analysis:**

Seven Cs Social Change Framework

# The 7 Cs Framework:

- Provides a **conceptual framework** for how systems change happens and how it is sustained.
- Is a structure that is both **uniform** and **adaptable**, providing a method across diverse fields and areas of change.
- Guides **iterative planning and action** at multiple levels
- Aligns **process measures** (“change agent”) with **outcome measures** (“systems change”).



## Change Agent

- Organization or Initiative focused on a specific change effort



## Systems Change

- Changes in:
  - Programs
  - Practices
  - Policies
  - Resources
  - Institutional Norms
  - Social Norms

## Change Agent

- Organization or Initiative focused on a specific change effort

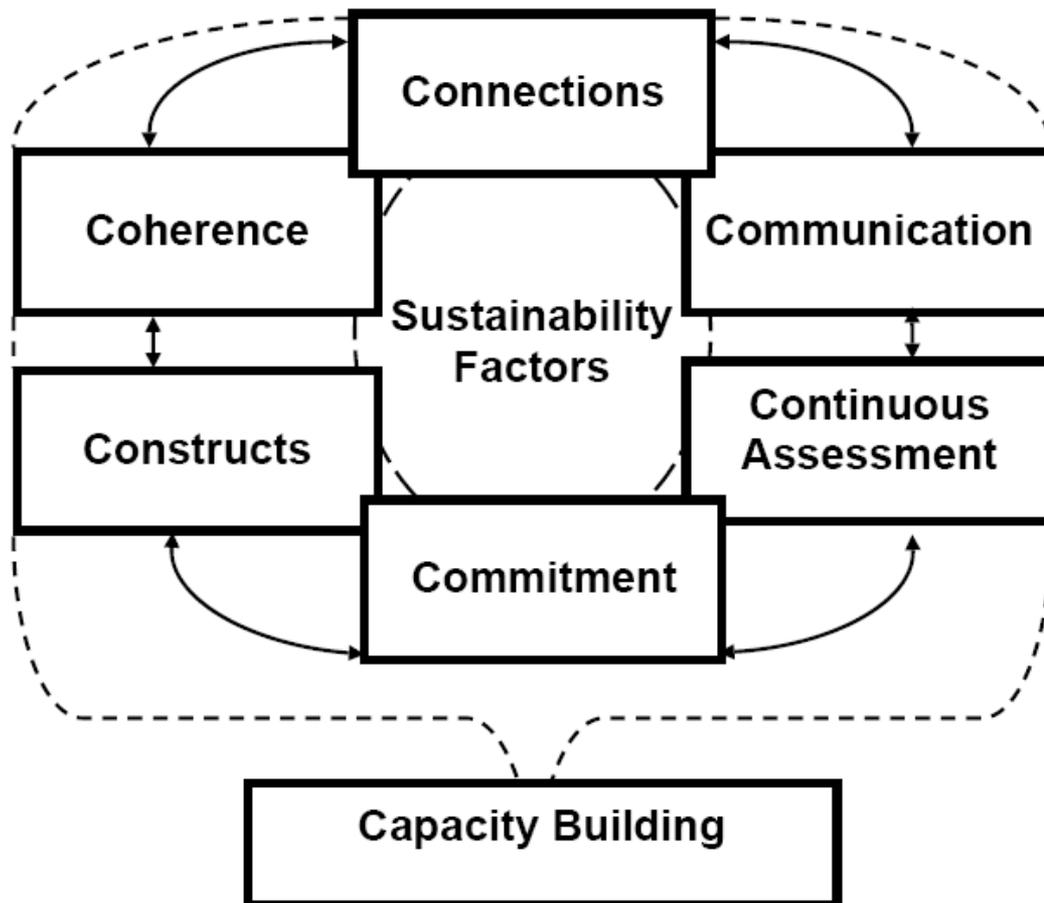
## Social Change Movement

- Loosely organized, collective systems change effort by people or organizations with a common purpose and solidarity in sustained interactions with the systems they are focused on changing

## Systems Change

- Changes in:
  - Programs
  - Practices
  - Policies
  - Resources
  - Institutional Norms
  - Social Norms

# The 7 C's Framework



Whenever we try to pick out  
anything by itself, we find it  
hitched to everything else in  
the universe. — John Muir

# Seven Cs levels:

- **Change agent(s)**

US-based Organization

Russia—American Team

Polyclinic

RFE EI Team

- **Social Movement**

Organizations where team members worked

Other organizations

- **Systems Change**

Polyclinic systems

EI systems across Vladivostok

# 7 Cs Analysis of the EI RFE Project

Systems Change Level

# Communications

## Indictors of success:

- Family is the hub of communication
- Cross-agency/discipline systems in place

*I never believed that I would feel this way about families—that they can participate in the treatment for their children. Now I know that is the best way.*

Cross-agency team meetings

# Continuous Assessment

Indicators of success:

- Reflective supervision and peer consultation models
- Developmental assessment of children

Peer consultation model in place

Developmental Assessment beginning

# Coherence

## Indicators of Success:

- Institutionalized EI model across systems
- Systems include families

Team members practicing broadly

Families integrated at Polyclinic

Commitment to model at multiple levels

# Constructs

## Indicators of Success:

- EI team in place
- Parent group and resource center

Functioning Early Intervention Team

Parent group

Children's group

Resource center

# Connections

**Indicators of success:**

- **Interdisciplinary team**
- **Referrals**
- **Expansion to other institutions**

Integration of “teamwork” at all levels—with families, with colleagues, and across systems

# Commitment

## Indicators of Success:

- Allocation of Resources
- Expansion by RFE Team members

Polyclinic continued salaries and sought additional resources  
Discussions with city and regional officials

# Capacity Building

Indicators of Success:

- On-going training and supervision

Some continuation, but at risk

# RFE Systems Change Reflection: Successes

- Sensitive:  
Family centered practice; developmental assessments; relationship between team partners
- Flexible:  
Family-centered practice; interdisciplinary team; support from polyclinic administration
- Robustness:  
Basic values of family-centered practice and interdisciplinary team

# RFE Systems Change Reflection: Challenges

- Sensitive:

Communication within broad systems; stigma; fear/protection of territory

- Flexible:

Constraints of surrounding systems (e.g. maternity hospital); resources; multiple “bosses”

- Robustness:

Competing models of care

# Change Agent and Social Movement

Reflections and Key Indicators: Examples

# Communications

## Change Agent:

- Russian—American Team
- Specialists
- Electronic systems in place between visits
- Breakdown internally

## Social Movement:

- Families spreading word
- Team members sharing at primary place of employment
- Respect of specialist—cross borders

# Commitment

## Change Agent:

- Demonstration of commitment by trainers critical
- Deteriorated over time at lead organization
- Limited commitment of funder
- Team commitment grew—time was “donated”

## Social Movement:

- Expanded through team
- Maternity hospital and children’s hospital
- Library for the Visually Impaired
- University

# Capacity Building

## Change Agent:

- Strong iterative learning component (evaluation)

## Social Movement:

- Resource center at clinic and Library for Visually Impaired
- University

**QUESTIONS?**

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