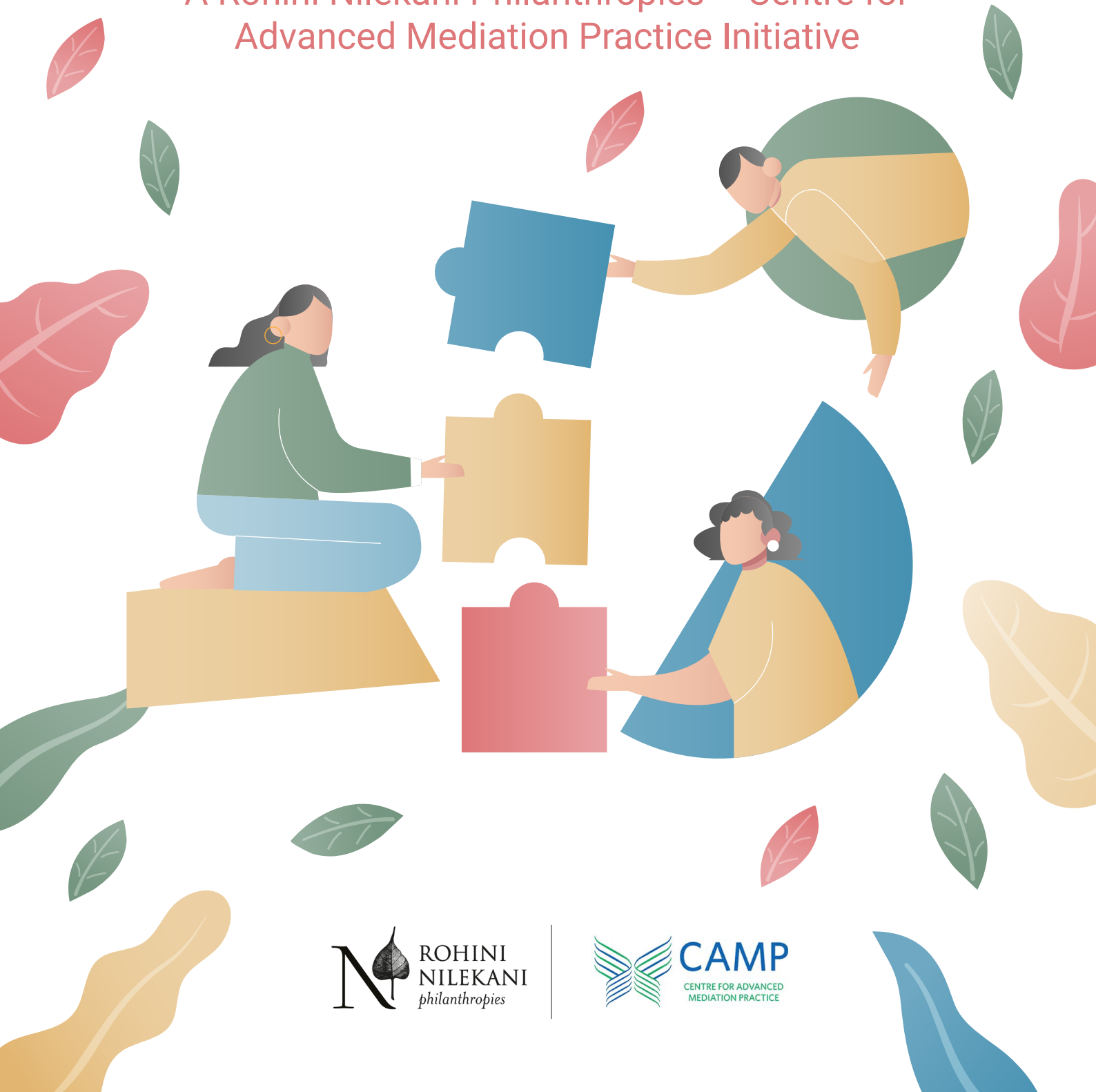


PLAYBOOK

Uncommon Ground

A Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies – Centre for Advanced Mediation Practice Initiative







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Table of Contents

01

Introductory Note

15

Content Design and Delivery

03

The Uncommon Ground Methodology

21

Practice Support and Community Building

06

The Uncommon Ground Framework

24

Conclusion

10

Partnerships and Co-creation

01

Introductory Note

About Uncommon Ground

Uncommon Ground is a movement co-created by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies and the CAMP Centre for Arbitration and Mediation practice, that is centered around the value that the balance between samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar (society, government and business) needs to be reestablished through processes of dialogue and exchange that are embedded as a way of working into the fabric of society itself.

Such systemic changes require not only a different way of doing things, but also of thinking; they require a shift in shared abilities and beliefs and approach, to view disagreements as opportunities for engagement, and in seeing conflict as having the power to reiterate similarities rather than differences.

Uncommon Ground aims to build a societal muscle for transforming problems and dissonance into creative impetus.

About this Playbook

This document is intended to introduce the Uncommon Ground initiative, as well as serve as a reference for the various approaches, frameworks and models used to guide strategy and activities.

For details on workshop curricula and content, the reader's attention is kindly directed to the Uncommon Ground Facilitators' Manuals.

02

The Uncommon Ground Methodology

Ground Methodology

Uncommon Ground is rooted in the belief that dialogue can be an effective and crucial tool in problem solving, and can lead to superior solutions rather than compromised outcomes.

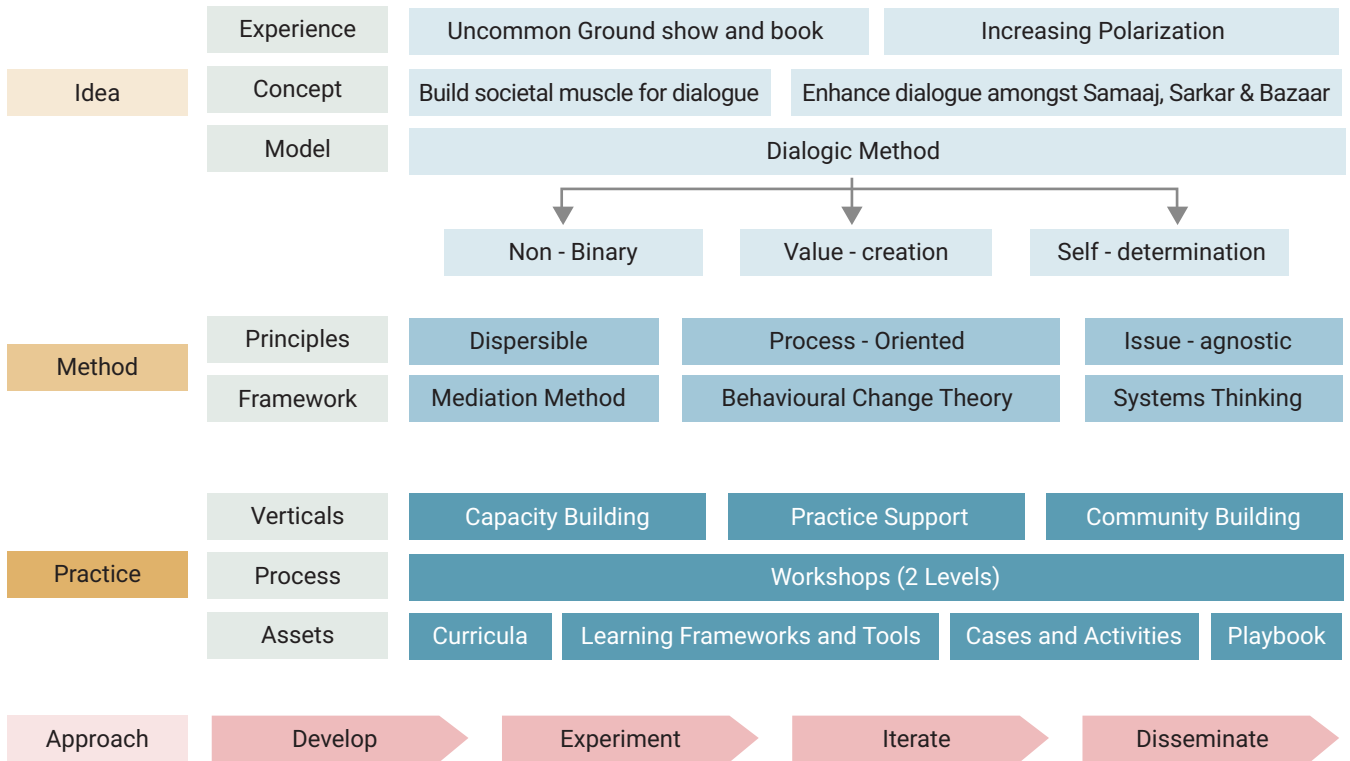
At an individual level, this allows for shifts in perspectives and building of skills that equips individuals to navigate various situations. At the community and societal levels, this idea holds the potential to mobilise and affect social change.

Uncommon Ground aims to build a societal muscle for transforming problems and dissonance into creative impetus for change, by serving as a conduit of shared know-how and competencies. Thus, the initiative intends to build a practice around the concept of using dialogue towards creating value and reducing polarization.

The original premise was for Uncommon Ground to transition from being one or many activities rooted in a larger idea to being a sustainable movement, anchored in a concept; something that translates the notion of using dialogue and exchange, not only to create shared spaces across various forums and different sections of society, but also to mobilise societal actors towards crafting change.

To this end, our approach to develop from purpose to clear practice is based on the Societal Platforms Methodology structure. The various components and stages have emerged over time, given our commitment to an approach that is evolutionary in nature.

Figure 1.1: The Uncommon Ground Methodology



Drawing on the initial idea of building a societal muscle and the enhancement of dialogue amongst various actors in the social sector, business sector and government (samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar), we have evolved models that then led to identification of the principles essential to the initiative.

To quantify these principles into tangible practices, we have taken a multi-disciplinary approach that brings together the principles of Mediation with Behavioural Change Theory and Systems Thinking.

This framework has also led to the identification of three verticals or streams of work that are mutually complementary, namely: Capacity Building, Practice Support and Community Building.

Our engagements are based on co-creative partnerships, which we believe essential to creating a community that seeks to use the Dialogic Method to effect social change.

The following sections offer more detail into some of the above elements and also go into the approaches and processes that guide our activities.

03

The Uncommon Ground Framework

Of the various possible approaches to creating a movement that aims at increased dialogue and reduced polarization as a broad goal, mediation is a method that is already in play globally as a means of bringing together business, governments and social actors towards creating consensus for change.

Mediation emphasises self-determination in reaching outcomes. This aspect, in addition to empowering parties, results in conflict-resolution outcomes that tend to be more effective and long-lasting. Mediation can also be transformational or problem solving, depending on the conflict and the objective to be achieved. In addition, mediation allows for the preservation of relationships through collaborative outcomes – an essential factor in creating a culture of dialogue and cooperation between samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar and allows for creativity and shared competencies in developing solutions.

At the same time, it is clear that the core principles of mediation can be applied more broadly than what is currently being done. Uncommon Ground draws from mediation principles, extending them beyond traditional commercial/legal dispute resolution, to construct the Dialogic Method.

We aim to share the Dialogic Method with a broad audience, with a view to resolving or transforming societal conflicts and problem situations.

This requires a multi-disciplinary approach that allows for dissemination of broader perspectives and skills, and also takes on the form of a tool for community mobilisation and creating systemic change by addressing root causes.

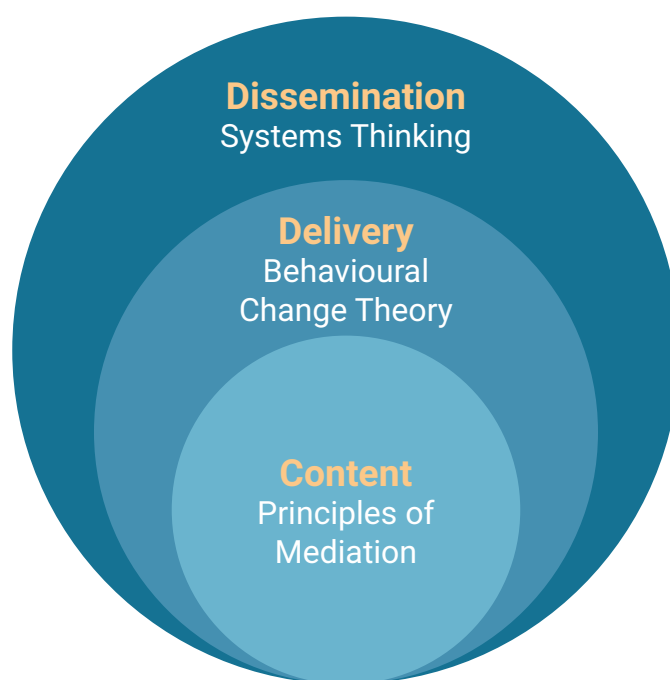
Multi-disciplinary Approach

To achieve our broad goals, we follow a framework that is informed by multiple disciplines, that then plays out in practice across all three verticals of the initiative, namely: Capacity Building, Practice Support and Community Building, through a process of partnership and co-creation with players across the social sector, as well as business and government sectors.

We use the principles of mediation as the foundational content for our work. In addition, we use the Behavioural Change Theory drawn from cognitive psychology to construct methods and models that allow us to deliver not just knowledge and information, but also shifts in attitudes and enhanced skills that support changed behaviours.

Further, in order to scale these individual level interventions towards community and social change, as well as to achieve widespread dissemination of the Dialogic Method and allied thinking, we draw on the Systems Thinking approach.

Figure 2.1. The Uncommon Ground Framework



Initiative Maturity Matrix

To build internal capacity and align strategies in furtherance of the above aims, we have developed an initiative maturity matrix that is used to set and assess our short and medium-term goals.

Figure 2.2. Initiative Maturity Matrix

	Initial	Experimental	Reactive	Defined	Optimized	Innovative
Approach	Unpredicted and exploratory	Potential partners approached with a premise but no clear plan of execution	Offerings are tailored around partner needs Incorporate elements of UG principles but limited sense of UG methodology	Clearer idea of UG methodology Projects (and processes) tailored from UG methodology	Clear understanding of outcomes and how to achieve them Focus on improvement and optimization.	Innovations within and beyond current vertical
Vision	Clear intent but no clear vision for what the organization aims to achieve	Focus on creating varied engagement to assess potential for value-add	Engagements are defined by opportunities	Clear vision that can be externally communicated and drives engagements	Vision backed up by understanding of how to achieve it	Expansion and transition plans
Strategy	Focus on intent No defined objectives or strategy.	Wide range of objectives Different verticals – means to achieve broad ends – in play	Objectives defined but not clear Strategy for the achieving the objectives is poorly articulated	Strategy clearly defined	Differentiating factors – the UG USP/value proposition - identified	Distinctive positioning
Measurement	No meaningful measurements established	Broad accountability for performance Focus on engagement rather than effectiveness No measurement or tracking	Broad accountability for performance Inadequate tracking and measurement	Exploratory use of tracking and measurement	Clear tracking and measurement metrics in place	Metrics tracked and acted on consistently with a view towards improvement
Process	Poorly defined or no processes		Processes implicitly understood but poorly documented	Procedures to document key processes established	Key processes documented and evaluated	Processes well defined and continuously improved
Portfolio	No defined portfolio	Created on the basis of theoretical premises.	Some assessment of needs Portfolio developed but not defined Focus on determining effective concepts	Good awareness of learner needs and learning theory Focus on determining effective means of delivery	Effective alignment of offerings with both audience needs and UG objectives	Clear tracking of impact and change as a result of learning.
Audience	Limited understanding of market, similar, or audience	Anecdotal view of market and audience. Focus on multiple sectors	Efforts to establish/define audience by sector	Sector focus clear but engagements limited to immediate (RNP) eco-system Nascent brand.	Efforts to extend audience beyond immediate (RNP) eco-system Clear brand message	Clear brand message that can carry across verticals and supports expansions

Based on these broad guidelines for action, we engage with a variety of partners as described in the following section.

04

Partnerships and Co-creation

A key principle of the Uncommon Ground initiative is a horizontal co-creation approach with partners, rather than a top-down delivery. To this end, we envisage the partnership process as a journey.

In keeping with our commitment to dispersing and disseminating skills related to dialogue, as well as the creation of a dialogic culture that has the potential to grow into a movement for social transformation, our focus remains on ensuring that partners grow to be independent practitioners and custodians of a community committed to dialogic practice.

Partnership Journey

Uncommon Ground's model of engagement with partners and co-creators is based on a customized version of Societal Platform's Journey Matrix.

The matrix takes a 4-stage approach to ensure partners derive value from the engagement, even as the Uncommon Ground initiative meets its broader aims and goals.

Figure 3.1. Uncommon Ground Partner Journey Matrix

Introduce

- Introduce UG concept and broad idea of the Dialogic Method
- Share introductory documents – background note
- Maintain engagement/conversations with interested actors

Induct

- Engage in co-creative discussions on direction and possible value-add
- Share model and verticals
- Identify directions for collaboration

Invest

- Create/Co-create contextualized materials and content
- Undertake Dialogic Method based capacity-building activities at various levels – end user, enabler etc.
- Ensure transfer of core competencies to partner organization throughout delivery process

Independent

- Achieve awareness of the methods and means of the Dialogic Method, and its potential
- Support practice and dissemination capacities on request
- Introduce organizations to others in network who can support their transformation journey
- Create feedback loops/sharing platforms to encourage partner organizations to engage in constant innovation (methods and models) – knowledge sharing through ecosystem

Partnership Evaluation

Potential partners and co-creators are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria, to ensure alignment of intentions, as well as optimization of resource use.

Figure 3.2. Partner Evaluation Criteria

Brief Description of Engagement			
Proposed Partner Organisation(s)			
Proposed audience			
Assessment by			
Date			
Score 1 to 10 (10 being most positive)			
Criterion	Criterion Score	Weighted Section Score	
<u>A. Alignment with UG Mission/Values</u>			
1	Can the nature of the engagement be clearly identified? Do the proposed activities fall clearly under one of the three UG verticals? (Capacity Building, Practice Support, Community Building)	10	30
<i>(EXPLANATORY NOTE: Typically, an engagement would begin with the capacity building vertical and progress along the other verticals.)</i>			
2	Can the proposed partner disperse the dialogic method to further end-users within their organisation/ecosystem? How?	10	
3	Does the proposed partner intend to inculcate a dialogic culture within their organisation/ecosystem? How?	10	
<u>B. Potential value of engagement to UG</u>			
1	Does the engagement allow UG to reach new audiences?	10	10
2	Does the engagement allow UG to access context-specific information that can enhance our thought/ curriculum? Are there other potential learnings from this engagement?	10	
<u>C. UG Resource requirements</u>			
1	Does the engagement require UG to develop or deliver new or different fundamental concepts/frameworks from what are currently in place?	10	30
<i>(EXPLANATORY NOTE: While UG is committed to a process of constant learning, it is important to ensure consistency of our messaging and clarity of our frameworks. Changes, where made, should be post-hoc, organic and based on review and learning, and not in order to engage with a particular partner/audience. Developing new fundamentals merits a lower score)</i>			
2	Does the engagement require UG to significantly develop new materials/curricula beyond reasonable modifications to extant content to ensure better delivery. If so, can the new materials curricula be used beyond the current proposed engagement?		
<i>(EXPLANATORY NOTE: Some customisation and modification of materials and curriculum is expected, in order to best address audience needs. Most reasonable modifications can be accommodated given the modular curriculum structure. While we are not closed to new methods of delivery/ significant modifications (e.g a curriculum for children), these should be assessed on the basis of potential for economies of scale. Curricula that require new materials without scope for reuse invite a lower score)</i>		10	
3	Can the engagement be taken up with current available resources or will require development of/investment in new resources?	10	
<u>D. Proposed partner's resource commitment to engagement</u>			
1	What internal resources will the partner commit to this engagement?	10	20
<i>(EXPLANATORY NOTE: How will this engagement be a co-created one, rather than delivery-centred?)</i>			
2	How does the organisation intend to support participants in their practice of the dialogic method?	10	
3	How does the organisation intend to build/ free up internal resources for further capacity building within their ecosystem (e.g., facilitators)	10	
<u>E. Impact of the engagement</u>			
1	What is the expected individual (user) impact ?	10	10
2	What is the expected community/ eco-system impact?	10	
3	What is the expected societal impact (in the longer term)?	10	
TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE (MAX: 100)			100
Recommendation and Next Steps			

Engagement Pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, we rely on a multi-disciplinary approach. The content of the Dialogic Method workshops and the associated curricula for practice support are derived from the principles of Mediation. Behavioural Change theory is used to guide the delivery of concepts, through the following engagement pedagogy.

Figure 3.3. Engagement Pedagogy: Theory of Behavioural Change

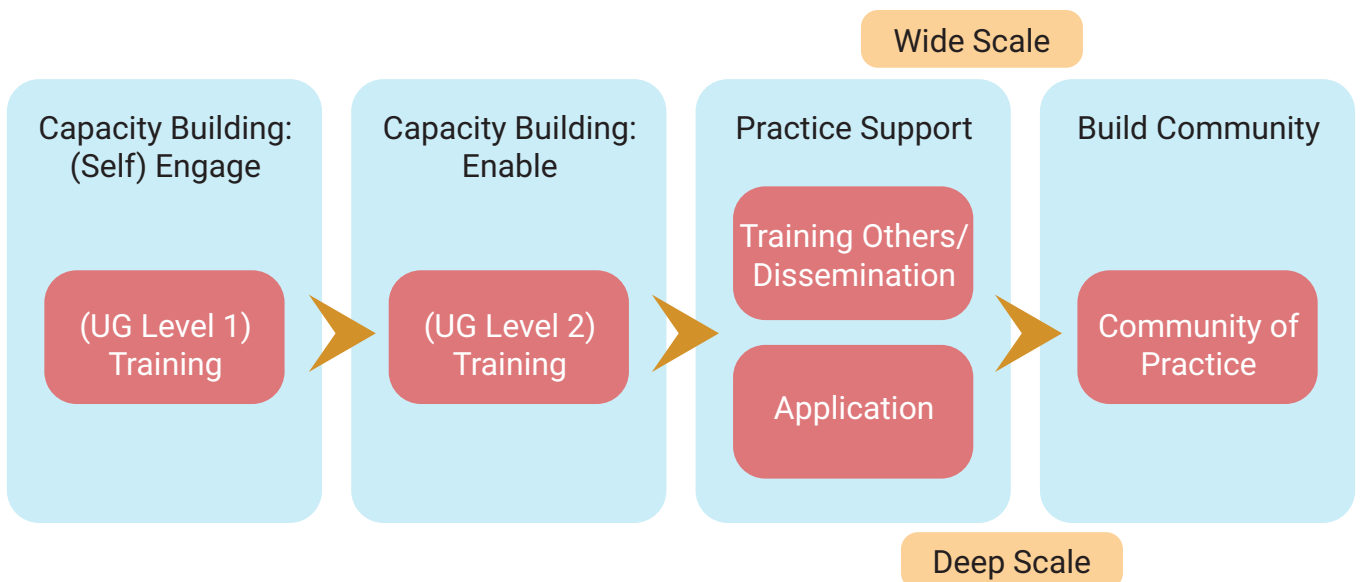


Engagement Pathway

In keeping with the broader goals and design, as well as the need to ensure dissemination at depth and scale, we follow an engagement process as presented below.

We look to Systems Thinking to be able chart a pathway for broader social change through a combination of deep-scaling and wide-scaling that allows for reach as well as depth of engagement.

Figure 3.4. Engagement Pathway



Emphasis is placed on dissemination, as well on ensuring that partners move to become independent practitioners and active members of the community of practice that we seek to build, through the creation of effective networks.

05

Content Design and Delivery

Uncommon Ground aims to build capacity in participants through a mix of perspective shifting and skill delivery at two levels.

The Engage (Level 1) Dialogic Method Workshop is aimed at enhancing individual and social capacity for engaging in dialogic solution finding and co-creation.

Participants are introduced to understanding the various aspects of a problematic situation particularly as something that holds opportunity for value creation. The workshop also demonstrates how dialogic processes can help uncover underlying interests and arrive at collaborative approaches. Concepts and tools that are aimed to enhance skills for engaging in meaningful dialogue are also included.

The Enable (Level 2) Dialogic Method Workshop is aimed at complementing the skills delivered during the Engage Workshop, and allows participants to draw on their skills to enable dialogue amongst individuals and groups as a means facilitating those groups' solution finding and co-creation.

That is, participants build upon their earlier understanding of the Dialogic Method from the Engage curriculum, specifically playing the role of a third party in the room, who can enable dialogue.

Participants are also introduced to the importance of building cultures of dialogue in community and society, and the seeding of a dialogic culture in their communities.

Engagement Objectives

The content delivered at each of the stages above has been/will be designed in line with focus on 5 broad objectives:

1. Change attitudes and approach towards conflict (Perspective)
2. Build skills essential to engaging in constructive dialogue (Skill)
3. Build actionable know-how towards creating solutions (Action/Behaviours)
4. Develop effective and experiential intervention skills (Enable)
5. Develop experiential knowledge-sharing skills (FunctionalDissemination)

Learning Rubrics

These objectives were then used to construct learning rubrics, which informed the content design for the Dialogic Method Workshops, as well as for designing facilitator training modules.

Figure 4.1. Learning Rubrics

	Objective	Learning outcomes	Concepts/Tools
Engage (Level 1)	Perspective: Change attitudes and approach towards conflict	View conflict as opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectrum of outcomes
		Understand the difference between positions and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue Tree
		Build/recognize connections/relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self and Other interests • Strategic trust
	Skill: Build skills essential to engaging in constructive dialogue	(3-step) Systematic approach dealing with a conflict/problem situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define • Understand • Solve
		Dialogic toolkit that empowers and guides practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See to show • Empathize to Engage • Listen to Communicate
	Behaviour/Action: Build actionable know-how towards creating solutions	Ability to generate sustainable solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate Options • Negotiate Options • Evaluate Solutions • Gain Commitment/ consensus
Enable (Level 2)	Develop effective and experiential skills to enable dialogue amongst others	Familiarity/Expertise with the role (and expectations of) enabler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of a third party • Key principles e.g., neutrality, self-determination etc.
		Familiarity/Expertise with the enabling process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages of enabling (Enter-Hold-Transform space)
		Enabling experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role plays
ToT	Functional Dissemination: Develop experiential knowledge-sharing skills	Familiarity with objectives and concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual
		Able to demonstrate/explain relevant skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases and role plays (with debriefing instructions)

References:

Bloom's Taxonomy of education
Berkley Centre for Teaching and Learning

Language and Constructs

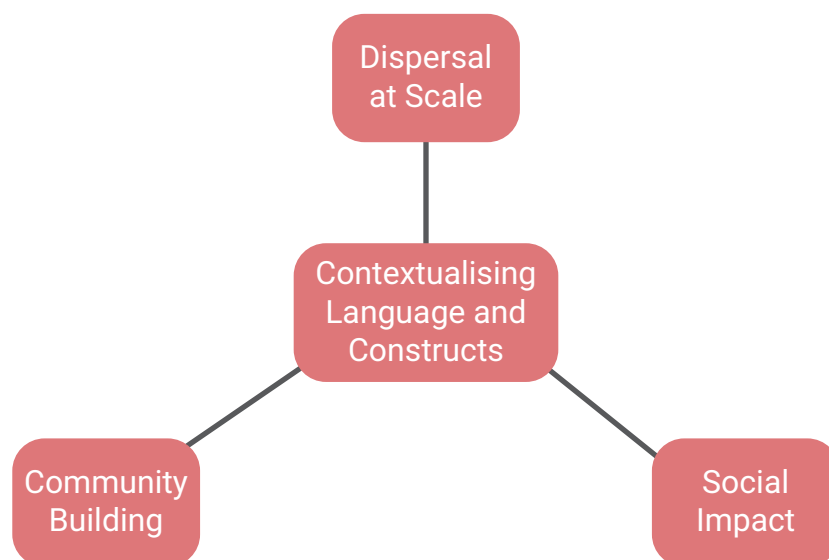
A key learning that has emerged through the exploratory and iterative process of developing this content is that language has been an important element, for multiple reasons.

First, given the intent to disseminate widely and broadly, it has been important to arrive at terms that are translatable across disciplines, demographics and languages. Without attention to this element, it is possible that the Dialogic Method would be understood and practiced by fewer groups of people, without moving beyond innovators and early adopters.

Language has also been essential to the long-term intent of creating a community around this initiative, by allowing for the development of common cultures based around our shared understanding of the terms – and concepts – developed. In the longer-term, we see the potential for an easily-shared method to emerge as a tool that supports social change by addressing the challenge of societal polarization.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the need for simple, shared language has also led to the evolution of constructs and models that are more contextually-relevant to the Uncommon Ground participant audience. To this end, we have redeveloped and represented various well-established ideas, particularly from the field of mediation, into models we believe are more accessible to the varied audience groups.

Figure 4.2. Contextualising Language and Constructs



We adopt a bottom-up, multilingual approach to designing such language and constructs, working with partners to express concepts and constructs in regional languages, and then working to convey the same idea in other languages, including English. This allows us to move away from non-specialist expressions towards user-friendly expressions that set the foundation for practical and usable frameworks.

Impact Assessment and Feedback

The efficacy and impact of the engagement and its delivery are then assessed through a feedback survey that takes into account the aforementioned learning rubrics.

The survey is administered prior to and following (pre-workshop and post-workshop) the engagement/ workshop, so as to measure potential change in attitudes and behaviours as a result of the engagement.

The post-workshop survey also comprises questions that assess participant satisfaction, including a **Net Promoter Score** component.

Figure 4.3. Feedback Survey Questions

Theme (per Learning Rubric)	Question	Type of assessment
Approach towards collaboration	I prefer to solve problems on my own rather than with others	Behavioral
Approach towards collaboration	When trying to resolve a disagreement, I openly share my thoughts and ideas	Behavioral
Approach towards conflict	In a disagreement situation with another person, I am usually the first to reach out to find a solution	Behavioral
Attitude towards conflict	It is unlikely that we can find a solution that meets the needs of ALL parties to a problem	Attitudinal / Learning
Value-creation Potential	When people disagree, finding a compromise is more efficient than trying to find new solutions	Attitudinal/ Learning
Solve: Generate options	Reaching a quick solution is better than exploring various options.	Attitudinal
Solve: Evaluate solutions	I tend not to accept outcomes that are less than the best-case alternative	Behavioral
Solve: Analyze Options	I set clear criteria for what makes a good solution to a problem situation before taking decisions	Behavioral/ Learning
Understand: See to Show	When people do not understand what I am trying to say, I try to say the same thing in a different way	Behavioral/ Learning
Understand: Empathize to Engage	When someone disagrees with me, I try to win the other person over by sharing my point of view	Behavioral
Understand: Listen to Communicate	When I listen to someone speak, I am thinking about how to reply to what they say:	Behavioral/ Learning
Define: Why/Interests	I tend to focus on what people say they want rather than why they are saying they want it	Behavioral/ Learning
Attitude towards conflict	Most of the time, disagreements are unproductive	Attitudinal
Understand: Empathize to Engage	When dealing with someone who has an opposing point of view, it is important to keep emotions out of the interaction.	Attitudinal / Learning

Value of dialogic process	When finding solutions to a problem, the process is as important as the outcome.	Attitudinal
Solve: Analyze Options	The key feature of a good solution is that it meets the demands of all parties involved in the situation	Attitudinal / Learning
Non-binary approach	When I know I am right, I try very hard to convince the other person of my point of view.	Behavioral
Understand: Listen to Communicate	I find it difficult to listen to people I do not agree with	Behavioral
Solve: Generate options	It is more efficient to choose from existing solutions to a problem than to try and create new solutions	Attitudinal / Learning
Solve: Evaluate solutions	When taking decisions, I tend to compare the situation with the best-case alternative rather than the worst-case alternative	Behavioral
Understand: See to Show	I tend to accept another person's point of view only if I see the logic behind it.	Behavioral
Define: Why/Interests	Getting what I really want out of a situation is more important to me than being proven right (or the other side wrong)	Attitudinal
Relevance	The skills and tools presented in the workshop were relevant to me/my work	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Impact	I feel more confident about dealing with problem situations after having attended this workshop.	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Applicability	I can see how the concepts shared during the workshop can be applied in real life	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Changed Perspective	The workshop has made me rethink my understanding of conflict and how to deal with it	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Facilitator efficacy	The facilitator was effective in delivering the workshop	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Net Promoter Score	I would recommend this workshop to my friends/colleagues	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness
Value to Participant	I did not learn anything new from this workshop	Satisfaction/ Effectiveness

The post-workshop survey contains two additional, open-ended questions that allows participants to share general feedback and thoughts.

Both pre-workshop and post-workshop surveys are conducted anonymously.

Responses from the survey were used to refine the content and delivery of the workshops in early stages, that is, during development and experimentation

Currently, these feedback collection and survey processes are being used to ensure quality and performance as part of optimization of our strategy.

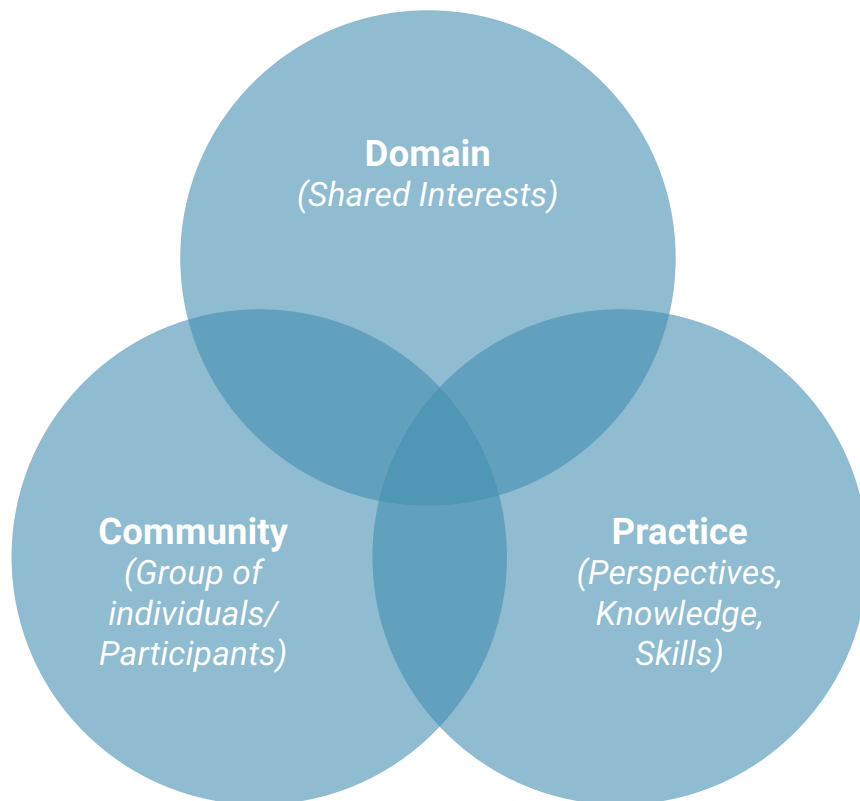
06

Practice Support and Community Building

The Uncommon Ground initiative is in the early (Develop) stages of solidifying its approach to delivering Practice Support and holding space for Community Building.

The Capacity Building vertical provides central language, domain knowledge and skills, allowing us to draw on the well-established Domain-Practice-Community model to fostering a Community of Practice (CoP) in the longer term.

Figure 5.1. Community of Practice



Sources: (Wenger, 1998; ScaleAgile Consulting)

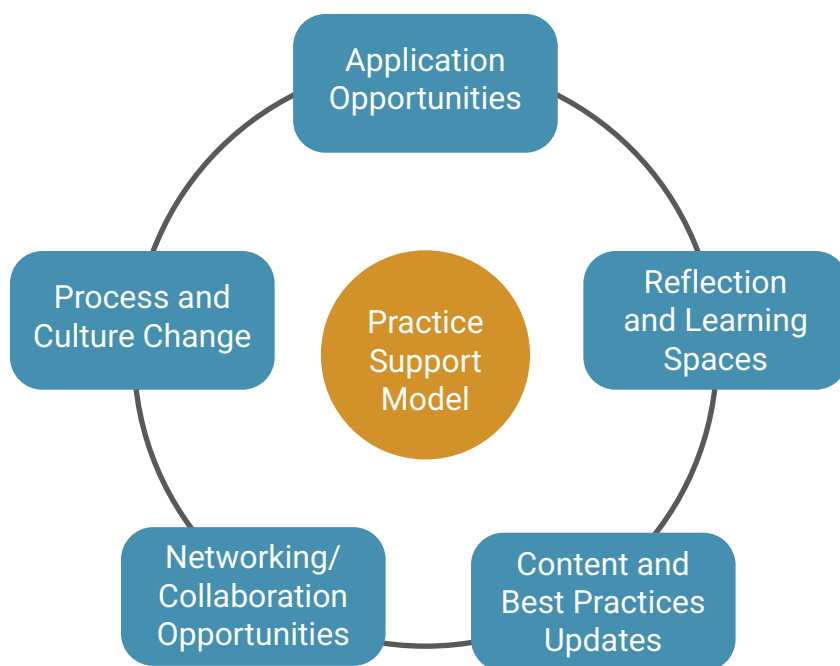
Practice Support

While further dimensions remain to be fully explored, we believe the following design elements to be important in determining the structure of potential Practice Support engagements:

- Opportunities / Spaces to apply capabilities
- Spaces to reflect on real-life applications (particularly in organic situations, e.g. in the workplace)
- Opportunities/Spaces to interact and connect with other practitioners
- Research/ content / Best practices updates

However, given the diversity of co-creator and partner organisations, it is anticipated that different participant groups may require a varying mix of the above elements in our mode of practice engagement. That is, as with the Capacity Building vertical, delivery would have to be customized at scale to suit different audiences.

Figure 5.2. Practice Support Model



Community Building

We have also observed early network effects, with partner organisations serving as hubs for the Dialogic Method within their networks and eco-systems.

We look forward to take into account the potential use of these networks to build the Uncommon Ground Community.

07

Conclusion

Conclusion

This document is intended to serve as an introduction and guide to the nature of processes involved in the Uncommon Ground initiative.

At the same time, it is to be emphasized that Uncommon Ground is a recent and very dynamic initiative, by virtue of which we remain committed to a process of learning and refinement.

Consequently, this playbook is expected to go through modifications and change.

For further details on our work, and for the latest version of the playbook, please do contact us at:

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