



Quản lý công

Session 16: Solving 'Wicked' Problems

Session Overview 📷

- Increasingly, authority and decision-making discretion will not lie with just one person, one office, or one sector.
- Collaboration, network, public-private partnerships are required.
- Rise of ‘wicked’ problems
- Solutions?

Rise of Complex Problems

- **Wicked Problem** – defining the term is very difficult, but in general, those are complex, unpredictable, open-ended, or intractable issues (Head and Alford, 2015).
- Not same, but similar concept, **cross-cutting issues** – issues that is of relevance to all areas of concern (those which related to and must be considered within other categories to be appropriately addressed). ***See how many fields are linked together below.

Food for Thought: As women suffer disproportionately from poverty, they are more likely to be affected by natural disasters as well as climate change and its impacts. We should think of women not only as victims but rather as powerful agents of change, who possess specific knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation and to the prevention of and education for natural disasters [United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'Gender and Science']

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- Most of pressing policy challenges for each government across the globe involve dealing with very complex problems – go beyond the capacity of one department in the government.

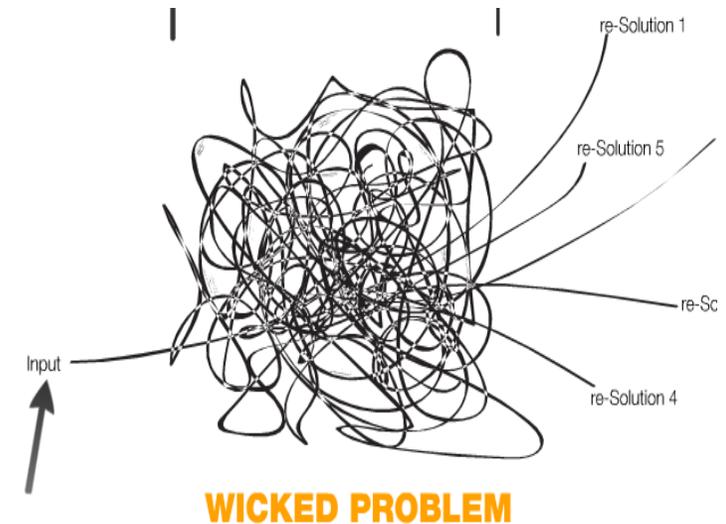
(e.g.)

From big policy agendas such as climate change to small policy agendas such as community redevelopment.

Poverty – poor healthcare – poor education, urban degradation, rise of crime rate are all related issue.

Characteristics of Wicked Problems

- Disagreement over the causes and solutions: There is often disagreement about the causes of the problems and the best way to tackle them.
- Difficult to clearly define: (e.g.) Climate change (Trump vs. scientific community 😊). COVID-19 (Trump vs. doctors)
- Mutually dependent and multi-causal, conflicting goals
- Problem itself is not stable, often evolving.
- No clear solution to the problem, multiple stakeholders, beyond single government agency's capacity, etc.



Possible Strategies

- **Authoritative strategy** – a group, an agency, or an individual take on the problem-solving process (upon others' agreement) → Pros: Efficient, timeliness / Cons: potential disregard for important issues, missing learning opportunity, lack of civic engagement.
- **Competitive strategy** – Competition among relevant agencies and actors → can lead to innovative ideas and solution / Possibly cause conflicts.
- **Collaborative strategy** – Regarded as the most effective in dealing with wicked problems.

Collaborative Strategy

- Why is it necessary?

1. Lack of government budget, manpower, specialty, knowledge, etc.
2. Authority and decision-making discretion will not lie with just one agency (person).
3. Allow to pool resources, provide wider possible range of resources and options.

Communication	The most basic partnership – share information, meetings, conferences, etc.
Coordination	When individuals within two or more agencies communicate to share resources, information, and coordinate to work. Commitments still remain short term.
Cooperation	When individuals from multiple agencies communicate to support a common goal and use this goal to coordinate and focus their work, coordination become cooperation.
Collaboration	Interactions deepen and become more complex when individuals within two or more agencies communicate to achieve common goals that are interdependent, long term, and complex

Pre-Condition for Collaboration

- **Question:** Have you tried to work together with other agencies (individuals)? What make effective collaboration among different stakeholders? Discuss with the following criteria: (Atkinson, 2001)

Willingness to collaborate	Priority. Commitment from all levels (simply being involved is not acceptable).
Clear position and responsibilities	Every member mutually understand functions to make clear plan.
Common aims and objectives	Same mind and operational credibility
Communication and information sharing	Establishing communication channels and system is important to overcome a lot of challenges.
Leadership	Leadership skills maintaining the focus on the vision, lead collaboration, recognize the contribution of all members.
Involving relevant personnel	Necessary to have the participation of individuals in the agencies.
Sharing to access to funding and resources	Most important in overcoming financial and resource-related challenges.

Multisectoral Collaboration

- Beyond inter-departmental relationship, wicked problems often need multi-sectoral collaboration (collaboration with nonprofit and private sectors).
- Private sectors' ability to scale up, finance, innovate and efficient capacity to tackle super wicked problems. Non-profit sector's highly passionate, well-connected networks.
- Modes: Co-design, co-creation, and co-production.
- Risk: Nonprofit sector (mission-oriented, opportunistic to funding) / Private sector (benefits and reputation)

In-Class Discussion



- 120,000 tests, 260 infected with no death – better score than Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea.
- In your view, what have been the success factors in Vietnam? List 2-3 factors.
- In your view, what would be the challenges after COVID-19? **What area** needs collaboration **among whom?**

[Link](#)