Chapter 7

Initiating, Designing, and Diffusing Cocreated Innovation

Abstract

This chapter draws out lessons regarding how the diagnosis of urgent problems, the formation of ambitious and visionary goals, and the participation of stakeholders with critical innovation assets *stimulate* the cocreation of innovative solutions that promote the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), and how changemakers can lead and manage cocreated innovation processes. It considers the initiation of innovation processes and the design and testing of innovative solutions as well as the upscaling and diffusion of new successful products, processes and organizational forms. Finally, it identifies several common pitfalls that are important for changemakers to avoid, including an assumption of the necessity for heroic leadership, failure to include relevant actors, overly strict and detailed plans and procedures, and inability to integrate newcomers.

Keywords: Innovation; visionary goals; innovation assets; leadership; diffusion; problem diagnosis

Promoting the SDGs Through Cocreated Innovation

Sometimes the best way to enhance sustainability is to do more of a good thing that works but this is not a viable strategy when existing strategies and standard methods have proven insufficient or ineffective, or when we face unknown, uncertain, or unpredictable challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this situation, we need to look for new innovative solutions. However, it is far from easy to innovate because it entails looking beyond what is and imagining what could be and how to make it happen (Torfing, 2016). Going beyond present solutions calls for creative destruction of habitual practices, common wisdom, and taken-for-granted beliefs in order to look for alternatives and potentials and

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to openly explore next steps. A next step could be a search for things to eat when traditional foods are no longer sustainable, for ways that farmers can make a living when they face prolonged periods of drought, or for new employment opportunities when the coalmines shut down because fossil fuels are phased out. In such cases, cocreation offers itself as a viable strategy for venturing into the unknown. Bringing together relevant and affected actors can help to explore the implication of social, environmental, and economic change, to consider different ways to tackle problems and challenges, to identify and test pathways toward a better future, and to mobilize the collective courage, resources, and commitment to change existing structures and practices. Cocreation is also an important means to recruit ambassadors and entrepreneurs that can spread successful innovations to other localities and setting so that more people can benefit from them.

Cocreation does not necessarily produce innovative outcomes. Sometimes cocreation merely strengthens coordination, promotes agreement about the value of existing strategies, or fosters much needed adjustment to standing arrangements. While cocreation may succeed in doing these important things, such achievements are insufficient for successfully addressing the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). This formidable task calls for realizing the innovative potential of cocreation. Changemakers can do a lot to strengthen the innovative capacity of cocreation through strategic management and leadership that creates opportunities for actors to engage in joint efforts to explore, develop, and implement new solutions to persistent problems, unpredictable challenges, and sudden crises (Ansell & Gash, 2012). This chapter considers how changemakers can support cocreated efforts to find effective new ways of meeting the SDGs. Our focus is on the importance of initiating, designing and facilitating networks and partnerships in a way that stimulates cocreated innovation and promotes the diffusion of successful innovations to relevant audiences.

Initiating Cocreated Innovation

The innovative capacity of cocreation hinges on how the collaboration process is initiated (Eggers & Singh, 2009). Initiation refers to the agenda that brings people together and the skills they bring to the table. As indicated in Fig. 7.1, the innovative capacity of cocreation depends on the content of the problem diagnosis, the boldness of ambitions and visions, and the composition of the participants.

As described below, the strategic effort of changemakers to influence initiation processes can spur their capacity for producing innovative outcomes of great value to the public.

A problem diagnosis that focuses on the failure of existing efforts to address problems such as life style-related illnesses, poverty, unemployment, recurring flooding or water shortage, and that simultaneously stresses that the maintenance of the status quo is no longer an option, will motivate a group of actors to pursue innovation. It will highlight the necessity of finding new and better ways of solving old and new problems and challenges. While recognizing the risks

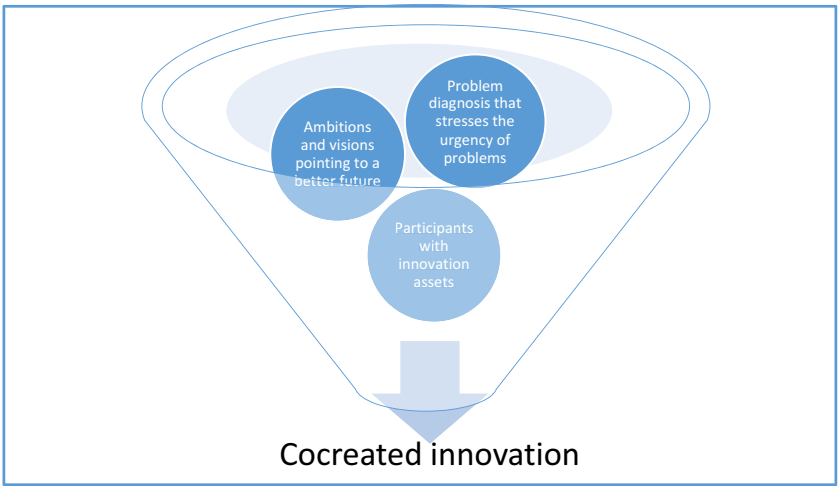

Fig. 7.1. Initiation of Cocreated Innovation.

involved in trying something new, the problem diagnosis visualizes the likely short- and long-term costs of remaining on the current course rather than trying something new.

Changemakers can *push* actors involved in a cocreation to innovate through a strategic framing of the problem diagnosis. This can be done by stressing the disadvantages and dangers of preserving the status quo and by highlighting the failure of existing efforts to do something about them. References to the SDGs and statistics that document this state of affairs in a given locality can help to bring local problems into the open and onto the policy agenda and can legitimize voices that call for change. In advanced industrial societies, many assume that the water is clean, but the SDGs have triggered discussions about the actual state of water quality, concern for the salience of existing strategies and methods for cleaning the water, and recognition of the need to innovate water management systems. This is evidenced by growing concern for the impact of mining on water quality in Europe (Endl, Tost, Hitch, Moser, & Feiel, 2019).

Changemakers can also *pull* actors toward innovation by daring them to venture into the unknown together (Clausen, Demircioglu, & Alsos, 2020). Doing so requires changemakers to infuse hope, vision, and courage into the cocreation process and promote opportunities for members of a network or partnership to think outside of the box. Willingness to innovate hinges on actors' belief in a better future and in visions of what that future might look like. It also depends on having confidence in the prospect of changing society in a desired direction as well as having courage to embark on a journey with an uncertain destination. Fig. 7.2 illustrates the effort of changemakers to push and pull cocreation in the direction of innovation.

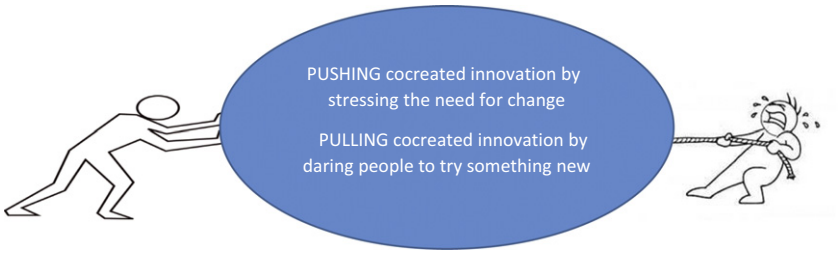

Fig. 7.2. Pushing and Pulling Cocreation toward Innovation.

Changemakers can build the innovative capacity of actors involved in cocreation by bolstering their self-esteem and trust in their own knowledge and resources. Changemakers may also spur innovation by spotting emerging trends and possible future pathways that offer windows of opportunity for trying something new. Moreover, they can seek to grant actors in cocreation a license to innovate by securing political, moral, and fiscal support from powerful actors. Hence, changemakers may act as gatekeepers who collect information about what external actors think, want and do, and use this information to build alliances, trust, and relationships that expand the scope for and bolster the legitimacy of innovation. As shown in a recent study of technological development in Taiwan, outward-oriented gatekeeping has a profound impact on a network's ability to develop new and innovative technologies (Hung, 2017).

Linking local ambitions, visions and goals to the SDGs can galvanize local efforts to produce innovate solutions (Bhalerao, Louwerse, Quarmyne, & Ritchie, 2019). The UN's role in championing the SDGs helps to make problems haunting local communities more visible. Moreover, national endorsement of the SDGs signals that it is possible, necessary and timely to break with the status quo and viable to change and innovate. Public and private changemakers may exploit the momentum created by the SDGs to create a collective feeling among local stakeholders that change is inevitable, thus helping to break the standard resistance to change. Through the hosting of conferences that put urgent problems on the table, governments, businesses, and NGOs all over the world have pushed and pulled actors to relate to the SDGs in order to build momentum for stakeholders to join forces and look for new and innovative solutions. For example, in collaboration with relevant Norwegian ministries, the University of Bergen organizes an annual SDG conference that is attended by more than 2,500 participants from different countries. The conference explores what kind of dialogues we need to work collaboratively and across disciplines to develop sustainable modes of inhabiting the world.

In addition to pushing and pulling, changemakers can *round up the right actors* in support of innovation. When the goal is effectiveness, it is important to involve actors with the capacity to act and get things done, i.e., actors must have decision-making power and operational skills and resources. When the goal is to secure legitimacy and ownership of governance solutions that curb resistance, the

task is to invite particularly interested actors, those that serve key functions and those in a position to influence others. However, when the main purpose is to innovate, changemakers must bring to the table a diverse group of actors with different backgrounds, knowledge, ideas, and perspectives who possess innovation assets such as open minds, creativity, and an urge to make a difference (Sørensen & Torfing, 2017). In the initiation phase, the key objective is to convince such actors that there is something to gain by working with others in pursuit of innovation and to help them to muster the patience to do so. For this purpose, it is important to enable all of them to understand the problem at hand in order to collectively design and implement new and bold solutions.

To create an initial momentum in processes of collaborative innovation, changemakers may want to pick low hanging fruit in order to demonstrate what can be achieved by innovative problem-solving. Hence, changemakers may ask the following types of questions: Why do villagers continue to fetch dirty water from the river when there is a new well with clean water a few miles away? Why do homeless people in a big city sleep in the street even when there are shelters with available beds? Why are local businesses and homeowners reluctant to shift to renewable energy sources even when it would be profitable for them to do so? Answering these questions may lead to simple and easy innovations that may stimulate efforts to pick the higher-hanging fruit.

Summing up, changemakers can initiate cocreated innovation through a strategic visualization of the urgent need for innovation, through rounding up actors with relevant innovation assets and through encouraging them to look for new approaches and effective solutions to a given problem. The SDGs can benefit from cocreated innovation but can also serve as rallying points for bring together key actors and building momentum for change. Such an SDG-inspired strategy for mobilizing actors has been pursued by many governments, businesses and NGOs. In the Czech Republic, for example, the government invited private enterprises and civil society organizations to discuss problematic workplace conditions and prospects for promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In Denmark, the doctors' association, a patient association and a health care network brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to consider the implications of SDG 3 for formulating and executing a national action health plan. In Pakistan, a series of regional consultations served as a first step in getting local actors to discuss the connection between the SDGs and local problems and the prospects for doing something about both. In Laos, a series of consultations in the provinces invited volunteers and young people into the debate about how to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the related SDGs in order to bring new ideas and perspectives into play. The purpose of these meetings and consultations was to stimulate policy and program innovation.

Generating Ideas for Innovative Solutions

After having brought people together around a pressing governance problem, the next task for changemakers is to assist the participants in innovating, i.e., to

develop new ideas, select the most promising ones and turn them into new innovative policies, programs, products and services. Assisting cocreators in producing innovation involves more than getting them to collaborate. Sometimes collaborations confirm the status quo and produce alliances aiming to keep things as they are or merely making very moderate changes that do little to solve pressing local problems. To go beyond the status quo requires changemakers to *catalyze* innovation, a process that refers to deliberate, strategic attempts to disrupt inert assumptions and to then to stimulate the *participants'* ability to reframe issues and explore emerging pathways (Ansell & Gash, 2012).

Catalyzing innovation through disruption and stimulation confronts participants with new insights and experiences that question existing perceptions and spur open-minded and imaginative dialogue about future options. Presenting data and facts about the everyday challenges experienced by unemployed single mothers and the barriers they face in making a living for themselves and their kids can trigger exploratory discussions about how to get them into jobs that make it possible for them to continue to take care of their family. In the same way, knowledge about the extent of and causes of loneliness among elderly people can inspire the search for strategies and methods regarding how to strengthen their social relationships. Receiving loads of information can be boring and block creative thinking, but sessions with a theater group and quizzes can communicate facts in a way that stimulates exploratory debate (Sørensen & Waldorff, 2014). If there is shortage of data, it can be productive to send one or more participants on a fact-finding mission, which could include interviews with relevant and affected actors.

Having catalyzed collective reflection around a given problem, the next task for changemakers is to stimulate local networks and partnerships to search for new ways to overcome the problem at hand and inspire their efforts to develop viable new strategies, tools, and practices for making things better. One way to do this is to invite guests with inspiring propositions. Another way is to get networks and partnerships to perform focus group interviews with or solicit information from hard-to-reach stakeholders. A third method is to crowdsource proposals from experts as well as from the broader public. Social media makes it easy to ask a large group of actors for their views and ideas on a given topic. Collecting ideas from many sources has proven a valuable means to prompt the cocreation of ideas for new innovative solutions that can enhance sustainability in transport, housing, energy, education, farming, health care, and planning (Brabham, Ribisl, Kirchner, & Bernhardt, 2014; Cai, Ma, & Chen, 2020; Poetz & Schreier, 2012).

Another way to catalyze cocreated idea development is to make participants look beyond the local context to explore what has been done elsewhere (Albury, 2005). Excursions can be very valuable for getting a closer look at the nuances around an innovation in terms of diverse benefits and costs. There is also a lot to learn from looking at best practices developed in other locations regarding how to overcome barriers and challenges to innovation. Moreover, excursions bring the participants on a shared journey with plenty of opportunity to talk informally and at length about what they see and what they think about it. When organizing a visit, it is important to create opportunities for informal exchanges in smaller

groups. If inspirational excursions are not an option, old and new media provide access to insightful knowledge about what others have done, but keep in mind that face-to-face interaction are superior to electronically mediated exchange (Rashman & Hartley, 2002).

It is important to keep in mind that innovating by learning from others is not merely a question of copying and pasting what they do. In fact, it is rarely possible to duplicate things developed in one location or situation and import them to another (Hartley & Rashman, 2018). Local conditions vary and learning from others always involves the translation and adaptation of their ideas when importing them to a new context. Cocreation serves as a melting pot for reshaping and filtering imported ideas from different contexts and sources to fit local purposes and to mix the imported ideas with homegrown solutions. To illustrate, health personnel took inspiration from the fast and efficient pit stops in Formula One racing to innovate the critical interface of patient handover from ICUs to regular hospital units. The adoption and adaptation of new work modes reduced the number of casualties occurring when patients were moved (Catchpole, Sellers, Goldman, McCulloch, & Hignett, 2010).

Finally, looking at other innovations not only triggers new ideas about how to move forward but also helps actors to identify the most promising ideas and discard those that prove to be dysfunctional or come at too high a prize. Introducing open-plan office spaces may sound like a good idea as a means to strengthen the coordination and dialogue between office workers, but visiting and interviewing occupants of such spaces can uncover negative side effects. As such, learning from first movers who have achieved something new and innovative can save a cocreation from making costly mistakes and makes it possible to start the innovation process on an informed and inspired basis. Learning from first movers is particularly important under time pressure or in response to a sudden crisis such as the Corona pandemic. Most national strategies to contain the pandemic reflected hard learned experiences from other countries.

Fig. 7.3 summarizes different types of inputs and formats that can contribute to the development of ideas in cocreation.

Turning New Ideas Into Promising Solutions

Formulating and selecting innovative ideas regarding how to solve local problems and meet the SDGs is just the beginning of an innovation process. The next step is to turn the ideas into something that actually works for the intended purpose, thus resulting in new policies, programs, products, or services.

- *Innovative policies* redefine goals, strategies, and legal mechanisms that shape how money is allocated, what types of programs are supported, and ultimately how social, economic, and environmental issues are regulated. Examples of innovative policies might include: a provincial climate law that sets an ambitious new agenda for CO_2 reduction; a citywide strategy for enhancing public transport, walkability, and cycling; a new county strategy for improving water

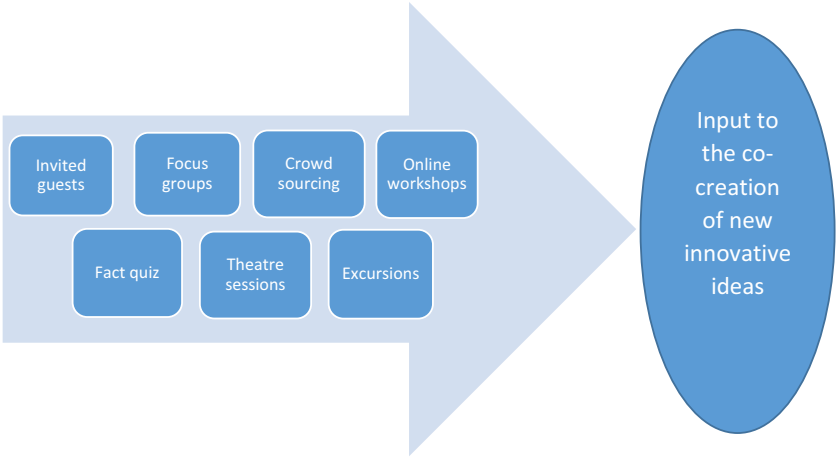

Fig. 7.3. Contributions to Idea Generation in Cocreated Innovation Processes.

sanitation; and a new NGO strategy for making microfinance loans available for female heads-of-family.

- *Innovative programs* create new administrative tools and organizational platforms for delivering benefits to the general public or specific target groups. Examples of innovative programs might include: a water agency's path-breaking program to increase water conservation; a new use of women's self-help groups to distribute information about how to curb sexually-transmitted diseases; a local collaborative program between fishers, biologists, and public authorities to improve fish stock sustainability; and novel agricultural programs for increasing crop resistance to drought.
- *Innovative products* create new material goods or technologies that are produced by the public, private or third sectors and distributed freely or through the market. Examples of innovative products might include: a health-improving device like the *LifeStraw* that purifies dirty water to make it drinkable; a small cooking stove that allows villagers to use scarce wood resources more efficiently; more efficient solar panels that are easier to install and use in remote communities; and a new app that allows citizens to use their telephones to avoid traffic jams, thus reducing CO_2 emissions.
- *Innovative services* create new ways of producing and delivering services in response to local needs. Examples of innovative services might include: the use of pop-up vaccination stations to increase vaccination rates; agricultural extension services that help local farmers conserve topsoil; mobilization of volunteers to provide environmental-friendly transportation for the elderly; and matchmaking of homeless persons to facilitate their collective ability to succeed in rehousing efforts.

It is when a network or partnership has cocreated and selected a new promising innovative idea that the design process starts. Designing innovative policies, programs, products, and services involves giving a promising new idea a tangible and concrete form. Sometimes it is valuable to invite new actors with relevant practical skills and hands-on expertise into the design phase. The design process starts with experimentation. The participants develop different representations or models of the idea, and test first versions through prototyping. A prototype is a preproduction representation of some aspect of a concept or final design (Camburn et al., 2017), and prototyping is an iterative process that aims to improve the functionality of a policy, program, product, or service through iterative experimental testing. Early experimentation often begins in protected laboratory-like environments and later proceeds to testing in real life settings. Prototyping an innovative design facilitates the incorporation of knowledge achieved through the feedback obtained through iterative testing of gradually improved prototypes. If or when an innovation reaches an acceptable degree of functionality, the next step is a cautious effort to upscale and customize it to a format that works in many settings.

Fig. 7.4 illustrates the overall design process that turns promising ideas into workable solutions.

The value of prototyping is likely to enhance if it involves stakeholders with different perspectives and insights needed to evaluate the functionality of an innovation solution and to anticipate the challenges that might arise when the innovation is applied on larger scale and under realistic conditions. A new sustainable material for wrapping postal packages may function well when those who test and develop the prototype have the time, resources, skills, and commitment to use it. It is far from certain that it will work as well under intense time pressure or if the postal employees or customers either do not trust the material or do not know how to use it. The involvement of both the employees and the customers in prototype testing will help to identify such challenges related to bringing the innovation into use in relevant settings. The importance of engaging stakeholders in prototyping is widely documented in research and has become a standard procedure of software developers. Broad involvement in prototyping has also found its way into public and private service delivery (Jefferies, Bishop, & Hibbert, 2019; Paskaleva & Cooper, 2019).

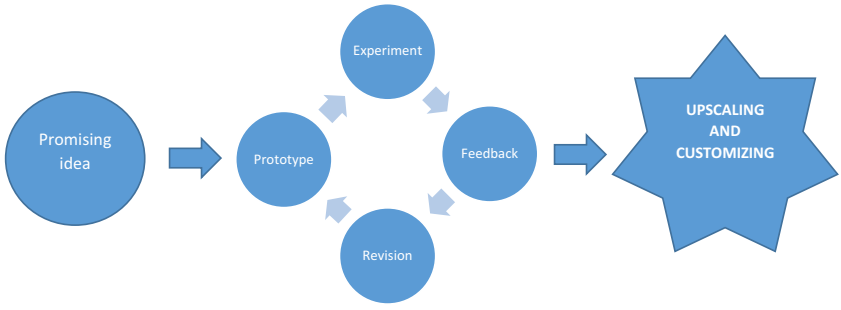

Fig. 7.4. The Design Process.

The value of broad inclusion of stakeholders can continue into the implementation phase. Dialogue up and down the implementation chain can yield important information about the functional qualities of the innovation and facilitate adaptation in the face of emerging challenges. Such a dialogue may also allow cocreating actors to detect whether specific achievements come at an unintended cost, for example, by negatively impacting other SDGs.

Diffusing Successful Innovations Through Cocreation

Innovations that demonstrably work well for achieving one or more SDGs in a particular setting may also contribute to goal attainment in other settings. A new way of promoting intergenerational dialogue in local communities developed in the Global South may have something to offer in the Global North, and innovations in food preservation may be relevant for space science, which in turn may help us understand the dynamics of climate change (Rahman, 2007; Zanello, Fu, Mohnen, & Ventresca, 2016). Innovations do not always spread to all those who could benefit from them, however. One barrier is a certain reluctance to learn from others and a related barrier is that those who innovate may not be inclined to share their innovations with others.

In competitive markets, innovators may be eager to commercialize their innovations and this incentivizes them to discourage others from imitating what they have done. Patent laws serve as a means of protecting innovators against imitation enabled by industrial espionage or reverse engineering. This protective shield may be necessary to secure investment in innovation, but it also acts as a main barrier to the diffusion of innovations.

A key advantage of cocreated innovation based on collaboration in networks and partnerships is that it does not create the same commercial and legal barriers to the diffusion of innovations. The many actors who have been involved in the cocreation process share the ownership of the innovation and will often serve as ambassadors for diffusing it to actors in other contexts who are free to adopt and adapt the innovative solution.

Despite these comparative advantages, those who have taken part in cocreating an innovation do not always spend much time spreading the innovation to others. Changemakers can do a lot to inspire, motivate, and help partners to do so. Strategies for spurring innovation diffusion may include:

- Encouraging partners to pay *attention* to their role as ambassadors for successful innovations, by getting them to mobilize their contact networks and to identify and target relevant audiences;
- Making it *attractive* for partners to invest time and energy in spreading the word by emphasizing the reputational and societal benefits of diffusion and highlighting the prospect of winning recognition and using that recognition to obtain future funding;
- Creating *arenas* such as open seminars, workshops, conferences, digital forums, and websites that make it easy for partners to broadcast information about successful innovations.

These mechanisms for promoting cocreated innovation diffusion are illustrated in Fig. 7.5.

The efforts of changemakers can be supplemented by activities in the wider local, national, and international environment for local SDG projects. Innovation award programs that give a prize to both first- and second movers can stimulate innovation diffusion. Another strategy is to appoint particular projects or localities as "beacons" of successful SDG innovation so that other changemakers can take inspiration from them and possibly emulate their innovative practices. Digital innovation hubs can also be created to display multiple SDG innovations from different localities, sectors, and countries. A case in point is the digital innovation hub *Public Service Innovations Network* in East Java, which has played a key role in spurring further innovation that fosters good local governance (Setiadi, Rapp, & Ferrazzi, 2019).

Avoiding Pitfalls

It is far from easy to lead and manage cocreation of SDG innovation since experience shows that there are several common pitfalls that must be avoided. One such pitfall is when changemakers think that they must themselves come up with all the innovative ideas. Changemakers tend to be highly committed and eager individuals with an urge to move forward, and they might be tempted to speed things up and take over when things are going a bit slow. Taking over may have negative implications for the cocreation process because it can lower the commitment and sense of ownership of the partners and reduce their willingness to invest time and energy in working together (Bason, 2018). A way to move the process forward without stealing the show is for changemakers to accept that they must present their own innovative ideas and solutions on the same terms as the other participants. Employing this strategy will require a significant degree of *patience and calmness* for changemakers who may be bursting with new ideas and enthusiasm to quickly move the agenda forward.

Another potential pitfall is a fully understandable urge to round up the usual suspects instead of inviting unknown people with relevant innovation assets. The temptation to choose the former option is overwhelming because fewer surprises are likely to occur. It may appear safe to bring people together who are used to working with one another and act in predictable ways. They will not offend each

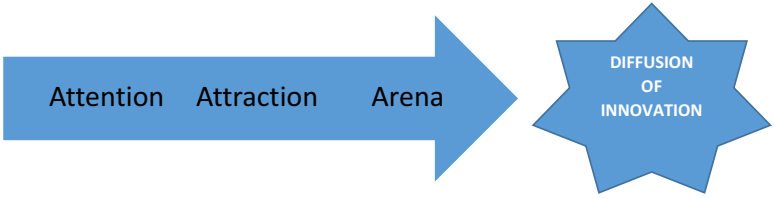

Fig. 7.5. Factors Affecting the Diffusion of Innovations.

other because they know how to behave and what to say to promote collaboration and avoid conflict. This safety may come at a high price if the eagerness to collaborate and blend in and follow well-established patterns of action might hamper the ability to innovate (Skilton & Dooley, 2010). Innovation grows out of an effort to bring people with different worldviews, experiences and ideas together and to let the participants disrupt one another's tacit assumptions to stimulate the emergence of new ideas and approaches. Changemakers may combine a certain degree of safety with the risks associated with convening new players by bringing in facilitators skilled in conflict mediation or using techniques such as appreciative inquiry to manage differences (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). Ultimately, appreciation of differences still calls for *courage and acceptance of tensions* by changemakers.

A third pitfall is to develop and commit to an overly strict and detailed plan for the innovation process. Such a plan can easily become a strait jacket that will seriously hamper the cocreation of innovative solutions. In most cases, problem diagnosis, goals and visions, and project activities will change during the innovation process and will call for a revision of plans and timeframes. Leading and managing cocreated innovation involves moving forward and guiding the process without knowing where it ends. A way to diminish this dilemma is to remain flexible and be prepared to allow for adjustment and thus engage in emergent planning (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Engaging in emergent planning and flexible action takes plenty of *guts and an adventurous spirit.*

A final pitfall is the temptation to focus efforts on supporting collaboration between the original group of partners while ignoring newcomers who may also have something relevant to offer. Inviting new people to join the cocreation process at later points when new ideas and aspirations have emerged can spur innovation, but inclusion of new actors may also destabilize productive dynamics within the group. These new actors may challenge the earlier agreements and problem diagnosis. One strategy for dealing with this tension is to form sub-groups or hosting events around specific topics that manage the social tensions between old and new members. In any case, bringing on board new partners later in the innovation process requires changemakers to balance *loyalty* to the original partners with wholehearted embrace of the newcomers.

Conclusion

This chapter has insisted that achieving the SDGs requires innovation, which can in turn be stimulated by bringing together actors with different ideas and experiences. In addition to participants with diverse innovation assets, initiation of innovation processes requires a problem diagnosis that pinpoints the insufficiency and failure of present solutions as well as the formation of ambitions and visions for a better future. The next step in the innovation process is to catalyze new and promising ideas using different tools and techniques that provide fresh input into collaborative processes. Once promising ideas have been identified, they must be turned into concrete and feasible solutions. In this process, cocreation partnerships may benefit from formulation and testing of prototypes that iteratively

improve preliminary versions of the new solution. While innovative solutions may do a great job in enhancing the local achievement of SDGs, the impact of innovation may be greatly improved through diffusion of successful innovations to other localities, sectors, and countries.

The analysis presented in this chapter can be summarized in a list of recommendations for local changemakers. The recommendations specify how to create the momentum to embark on a joint innovation journey. They also point to ways to get the participants into an innovative state of mind, and how they can find inspiration to develop new bold ideas regarding how to solve local problems and subsequently to meet the SDGs. Finally, the recommendations stress the need to spend time turning new innovative ideas into things that work for the intended purpose and to recruit ambassadors who assume responsibility for diffusing successful innovations. Table 7.1 provides a list of recommendations.

Table 7.1. List of Recommendations for How to Spur Cocreated Innovation.

- Propose a problem diagnosis that stresses the failure of existing ways of addressing local problems and stimulates the formulation of a vision for a better future
- Bring together a diverse group of actors with different backgrounds, knowledge, ideas and perspectives, and different innovation assets such as an open mind, creativity, and an urge to act upon problems and try something new
- Use a variety of measures to catalyze idea development within the network
- Engage the participants in experimentation and testing of innovative designs, and involve additional stakeholders and experts if this is relevant
- Involve end-users in upscaling and customizing the innovation
- Encourage the network actors to diffuse successful innovations and use existing infrastructures or build new ones
- Use the SDGs as a point of reference for engaging actors in all the different stages of the search for innovative solutions to local problems
- Avoid trying to be the only source of innovative ideas; mobilizing the usual suspects; specifying all activities in advance; and opening up for newcomers later in the innovation process