Bridging Leadership
An overview
Bridging leadership is a leadership style that focuses on promoting multi-stakeholder processes to address complex social, institutional, and environmental challenges.
Bridging leadership is about leading collaborative action to bring about change by convening stakeholders to the problem (ownership).

It is a tool which helps stakeholders to adopt a social innovation that leads to a social outcome, and carries it out through new institutional arrangements (co-creation).

It is a process of dialogue and engagement that enables stakeholders to arrive at a common vision and collective response to the challenge (co-ownership).
The concept of bridging leadership was developed by an international group of researchers and development practitioners convened by Synergos.

Today, the concept incorporates our experiences of more than 30 years promoting cross-sector collaboration, as well as experience and research of colleagues in places including the Philippines, Latin America, and Africa.
Bridging leadership represents a paradigm shift in thinking about leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From leader as</th>
<th>To leader as</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commander and controller</td>
<td>Facilitator and convener</td>
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<td>Sole owner of the problem and the solution</td>
<td>Prime mover, but a co-owner of the problem and solution</td>
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<td>Having all the answers</td>
<td>Creator of the conditions where answers emerge</td>
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<td>A single intelligence</td>
<td>Focuser of collective attention and the distiller of collective intelligence</td>
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<td>Head of one organization</td>
<td>Ligament between organizations and institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Non-expert, mobilizing the expertise and inner-knowing of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holder of power</td>
<td>Distributor of power, enabler of new things to emerge</td>
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Bridging leadership builds trust and is based on trust.

No bridging leader or process will be successful without trust in both the leader and the process.
Bridging leadership skills include:

- Listening, empathy and self-awareness
- Ability to connect with diverse audiences/stakeholders
- Being secure, with low ego needs
- Systems thinking
- Ability to design, convene and manage a process of partnership.
The Synergos Approach: Bridging Leadership

Solutions to social problems are too often built in silos. Our approach—centered on bridging leadership—helps diverse stakeholders build trust and collaborate across divides to co-create more tailored, durable interventions.

**BRIDGING LEADERSHIP**

**PERSONAL REFLECTION AND INNER WORK**
- Increasing awareness of the self, others, and the larger system
- Aligning individual intentions for authentic action
- Removing personal obstacles to effectiveness as a leader

**SYSTEMS THINKING**
- Using proven tools to look at social problems from diverse perspectives, analyzing them systemically
- Selecting leverage points for action

**BRIDGING AND INCLUSIVE COLLABORATION**
- Working with key stakeholders to leverage collective resources and action
- Building sustainable relationships that can carry the partnership forward
Help us create a world built on trust.

Synergos offers advisory services, learning journeys, retreats and other special events, custom training, and knowledge resources to individuals, families, and organizations.

To learn more, contact us at collaborate@synergos.org.