

Spotlight on learning series

Humanitarian Strategic Learning Framework

A pilot process for use in humanitarian
change strategies

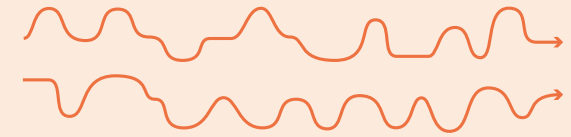
Ben Ramalingam

Overview

- The Humanitarian Strategic Learning Framework was developed by Ben Ramalingam for ALNAP, drawing on the multi-level perspective (MLP) of scholar Frank Geels.
- It can be used proactively or retrospectively for analysing change processes in the humanitarian sector.
- It specifically takes into account the impact of crises on the existing humanitarian sector.
- It explores how change plays out at the overall landscape, the sector itself and the niches of the sector.
- It enables analysis of how changes at these levels interact and reinforce or dampen change at other level.
- It can be used by leaders, policy makers and researchers seeking to better understand past change processes – successful or otherwise.
- It can also inform strategic analysis of ongoing or hoped-for changes.

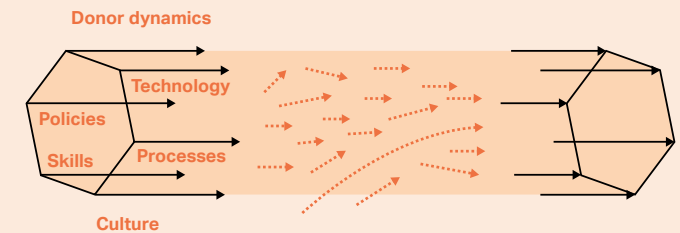
Landscape

Represents the wider environment – both humanitarian and wider socio-political and economic contextual trends, drivers and factors.



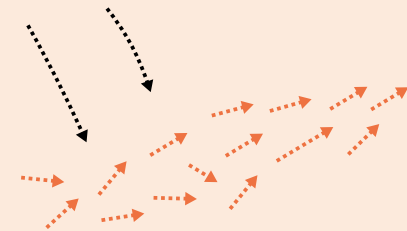
Socio-technical regimes

The specific configuration of funding, policies, technologies, processes, cultures and skills that underpin dominant patterns of behaviour and action.



Niches

The emerging efforts where new niche activities gives rise to novel innovations, operating models and communities.



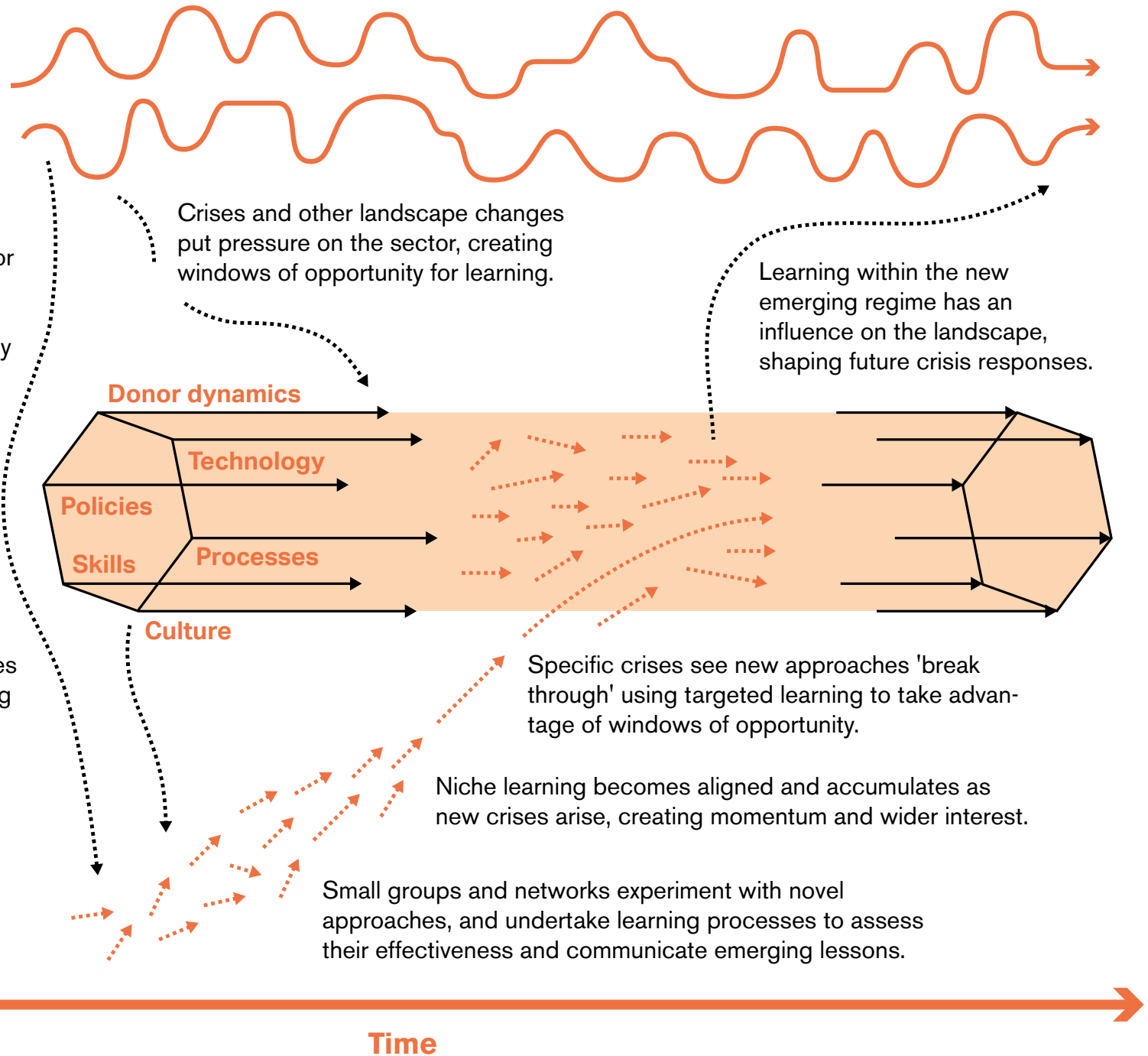
Socio-technical landscape
(exogenous context)

The humanitarian sector 'regime' is dynamically stable, with changes happening continuously and incrementally.

Socio-technical regime

Existing regimes influence niche activities through shared learning networks, events and dialogue.

Niche-innovations



Step 1:

Landscape

The landscape level represents the overall environment within which the system exists.

What are the key macro-level trends, drivers and factors changes in the system's environment, and what are the 'big picture' assumptions that inform given humanitarian endeavours?

How do strategies and learning processes take account of these contextual factors?

Step 2: Dominant regimes

What are the persistent configurations of funding, infrastructures, technology, policy and knowledge that underpin existing humanitarian behaviours practices?

What role do do strategies and learning processes play in *reinforcing* these regimes?

Step 3:

Niches

What are the new niche innovations, operating models and networks, and how do they arise?

What is the role of strategies and learning processes in enabling these?

Step 4:

Process of change

What is the process of change?

How might changes in the landscape put pressure on existing regimes and create new windows of opportunity?

How might niche innovations build up momentum and learning to break through to the mainstream?

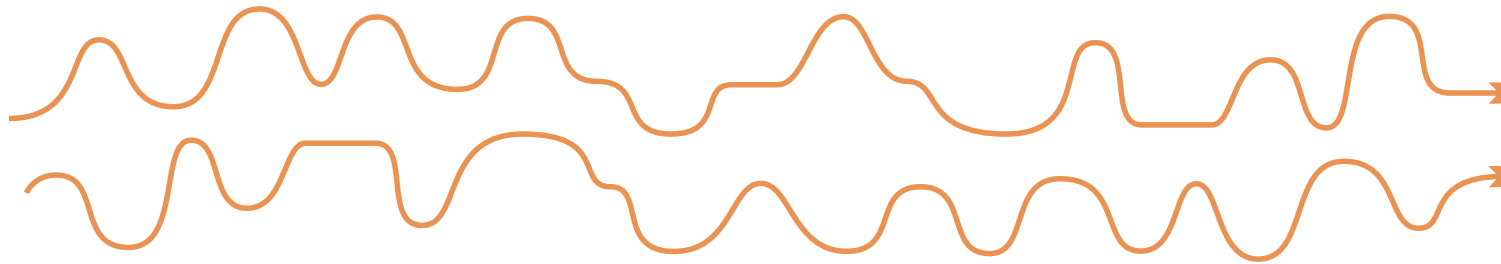
How might dominant regimes respond to pressures and changes?

What is the role of strategies and learning processes in supporting *breakthroughs*?

What are the landscape changes?

What are the windows of opportunity?

Step 5: **The systemic picture**



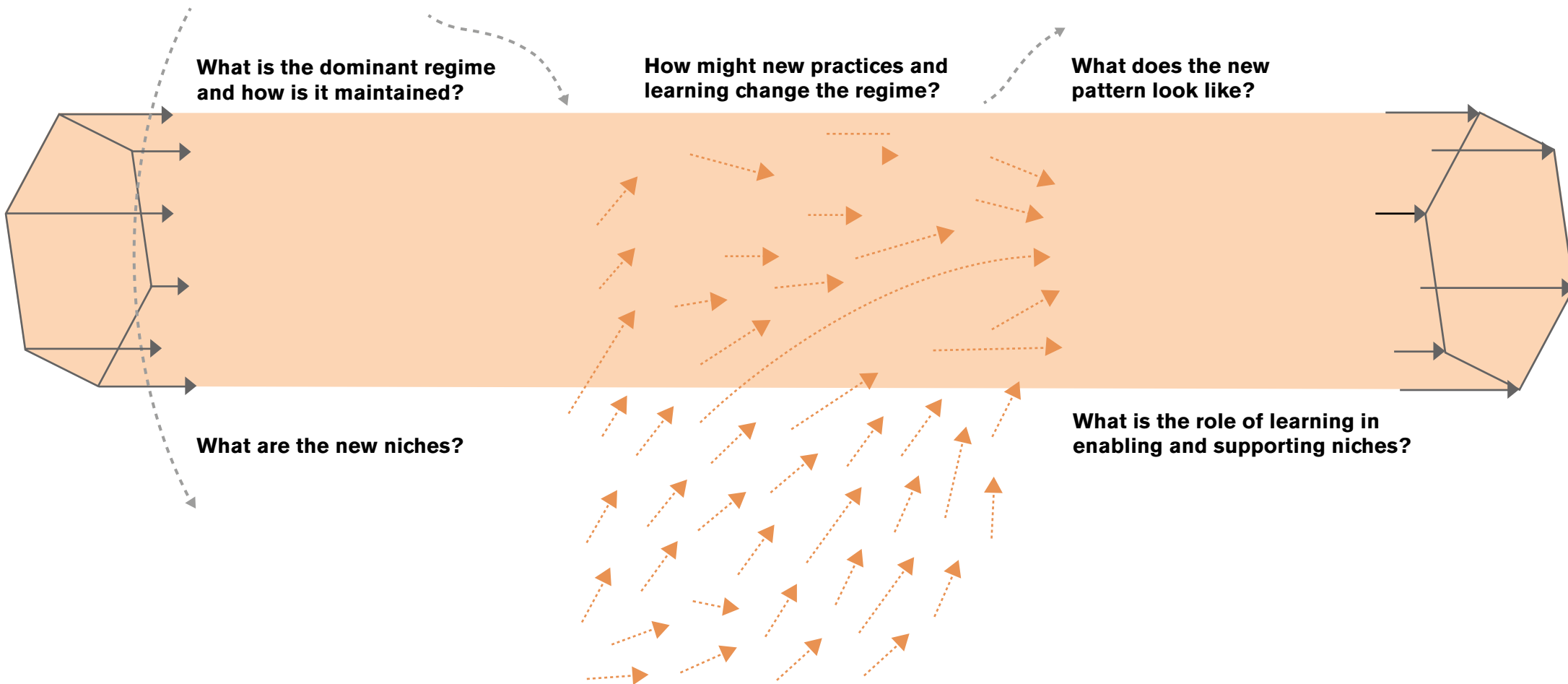
What is the dominant regime and how is it maintained?

How might new practices and learning change the regime?

What does the new pattern look like?

What are the new niches?

What is the role of learning in enabling and supporting niches?



Step 6:

Insights about strategies and learning processes

What might the contribution of strategies and learning processes of different kinds be?

How might the contribution of strategies and learning processes be enhanced?

What key issues and messages might strategies and learning processes focus on?

What specific things might the change process focus on?

Practical considerations

- It doesn't matter where you start – start wherever the user feels most comfortable – the key is covering the whole systemic picture.
- Getting timelines clear is important if doing retrospective analysis.
- Getting assumptions and actors clear is essential for proactive analysis.
- The larger the group using the tool, the more the need for an facilitator.



ALNAP

Strengthening humanitarian action
through evaluation and learning

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