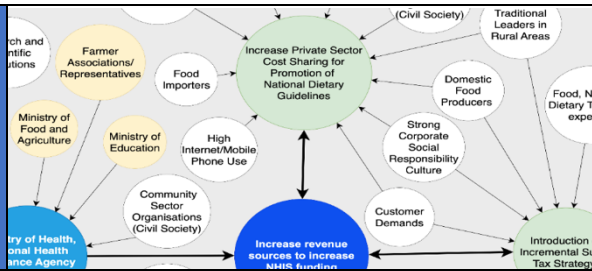


Cambridge Policy Boot Camp

Theory Overview

February 2023



What is the Cambridge Policy Boot Camp (CPBC)?

The Cambridge Policy Boot Camp (CPBC) is a transdisciplinary 'action research' method developed by Dr Nazia M Habib, Founder and Director of the Centre for Resilience and Sustainable Development (CRSD) at the University of Cambridge, UK.

The CPBC is an agile approach designed to quickly identify and document potential solutions for a complex policy problem. The aim is to integrate multiple perspectives, from multiple stakeholders that can provide practical direction for complex decisions and promote resilient solutions within the given context and resources.

Repeating testing and use of the methods with decision makers in over 31 countries demonstrate that the CPBC method delivers more relevant, effective and sharper quality solutions to complex problems, improves the capacity of participant to use 'systems thinking' in developing solutions, and fosters collaboration across stakeholders and buy-in to solutions. Policy topics addressed in CPBC exercises have spanned safe repatriation of refugees, food security, public health insurance schemes, resilience policy, upskilling policy for industry 4.0.

CPBC uses a combination of dynamic systems thinking, political economic theories, engineering and medical education techniques and creative design approaches to address three challenges commonly faced in policy making:

- 1. Unlocking the strategic challenge** - complex systems make it difficult to identify strategic leverage points that will transform systems. The CPBC facilitates a rapid, but deep, appreciation of the complexity of the system within

which policy makers operate, and to identify the mandate, resources and opportunities available for transformation.

- 2. Unlocking knowledge through collaboration** - the CPBC facilitates creative and critical thinking and collaboration between system stakeholders to unlock powerful insights and identify common ground. This can improve trust between stakeholders and reduce the cost of transformation.

- 3. Unlocking buy-in and commitment** - this acts to engage with external agencies (including media) to secure (implicit) buy-in in the new policy systems, This is an important part of the CPBC design to create potential institutions that can facilitate, promote and secure long term long term solutions for addressing textile fibre to fibre recycling in the EU markets.

Why do we need the Cambridge Policy Boot Camp?

Conventional policy thinking about how to promote the circular economy focuses on how a policy will incentivise industry and/or consumers to 'close the loop' either through instruments that increase the supply of recycled materials, the use of recycled materials or to reduce material flow through such as design standards (e.g. Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021). In the systems based approach used in this Workshop, evaluating policies against this criteria is only part of the picture.

The key problem is that conventional policy/strategy thinking assumes a (linear) 'cause and effect' between implementing the policy and experiencing the desired outcomes. In real world systems, the existence of dynamic and ever changing relationships between multi-entities, feed backs, time delays, stocks and flows etc... means that this simple 'cause and effect' relationship breaks down.

This requires a shift from thinking of policy as generating a specific intended behavioural change (while the policy is in place), to thinking about policy as a tool for creating a new system of institutions (rules, supportive stakeholders and cultural norms) that incentivise the kind of behaviour we want. This produces a policy that is resilient, regardless of changes in social, political or economic conditions.

In CPBC workshops we will start thinking about this problem through two types of activities:

1. Creatively and expansively thinking about the types of institutions (formal, informal, creative, political, economic) that could be developed across the textile sector. We will also identify resources that can support these new types of institutions;
2. To identify the potential unintended consequences and assumptions that could work to undermine the success of the institutions that are generated by task 1. In systems theory we call these 'negative feedback loops'.

At a different stage of research we consider 'positive feedback loops' - that is, those parts of a system that will strengthen the impact of an institution over time - and therefore reinforce the momentum of the transition (Table 1).

Overall, the idea is to identify institutions that can support the textile sector's sustainable transitions and which are:

1. Stable, because they have the resource and mandate to implement change
2. Adaptable and durable to changes in technology, economic, political and social conditions; and
3. Have a constituency of supporters whose interests align with the institution; and
4. The negative trade offs and unintended consequences of implementing change are recognised upfront and appropriate

actions identified to mitigate them, as required.

To support this way of thinking, a systems based evaluation of policy developed by the CRSD is set out in Table 1 and Figure 1 - which we use to evaluate the policy concepts developed throughout this CPBC Workshop.

Table 1: Policy Criteria Using Systems Thinking

Policy Outputs	Guiding Questions
Stability	Is it institutionalised (does it have the mandate and resources to be implemented)?
Durability i.e. robustness during disruption	How effective is the output creation over 5 years?
Negative Feedback Loop	Guiding Questions
Dealbreakers	What events or barriers could make this idea impossible to achieve?
Bottlenecks	What resources do you need more of to make this idea succeed? Conversely, what resources or things are in oversupply that could slow down the process of achieving this idea?
Surprises	What broad contextual assumptions are you making that, if they are not true, could undermine the success of this idea?
Positive Feedback Loop	Guiding Questions
Visibility	How visible is it to people who benefit from the policy?
Intention	Has it been put forward actively and deliberately to address the specific problem?
Facilitate	Does it facilitate coordination and the required institutional change amongst stakeholders? Does it create a constituency of supports for the policy over time?

Key outcomes from a CPBC workshop include identification of specific strategy and policy ideas, the discovery of trade offs, complexities and inefficiencies and the recognition of the resources available to transform systems.

To find out more about the other work of the CRSD see <https://www.crsd.landecon.cam.ac.uk/>

About CRSD

The Centre for Resilience and Sustainable Development (CRSD) is part of the University of Cambridge. It is led by its founder Dr Nazia Mintz-Habib. CRSD has a partnership with the Department of Engineering as it conducts transdisciplinary research.

CRSD is a unique institution. Its core areas of interest are three of the most important issues facing our planet: sustainable investment, good governance, and responsible innovation.

Its mission is:

To offer valuable and actionable insights that will help ethical leaders to cope and thrive, and to drive policy innovations and institutional development in a changing world.

As well as providing political economic analysis and laboratory resources for policy system and decision making, the Centre provides opportunities for scientists, policy makers, business, and public leaders, to share their research interest and activities, and to learn new methods and approaches.

CRSD uses techniques developed at the Institute for Manufacturing, University of Cambridge, including Policy Simulation Labs and Innovation Readiness Surveys, to explore the current state of critical thinking, disruptive forces, and the overall ability of the organisation to innovate.

In its first few years, CRSD has already helped over 1,000 leaders from the public and private sector, scientists, policy makers and researchers to share research and learn new analytical methods

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