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Stage 3 - Growth

Community recruitment team

In stage 1 the community is built with founding members. In stage 2 it starts growing organically with people who have similar profiles than the founders in terms of goal, strategy and privileges. During phase 2 it also starts growing through a second channel, the non-profit, social impact team who helps similarly-minded, but less privileged people, to gain enough privileges to be able to join the community as equals.

Since the main goal of this strategy is to transition as many people as fast as possible from the transactional culture with market economies to a mutual support culture with communal economies, the organization should invest efforts as soon as possible towards maximizing the recruitment.

Like in phase 2, we need a more precise definition of “as soon as possible” to avoid spreading too thin the resources of the organization, and to avoid misunderstandings between members.

In this stage, following a similar reasoning than in stage 2, the proposed criteria is the following: The moment when the organization can invest in hiring a new team, of at least two people, without jeopardizing the already ongoing projects, nor exceeding the less than 10% of the profits not reinvested in economic growth.

The expectation is that at this point the non-profit social impact team will have found significant sources of funding besides the investment from the community, and also that the for-profit businesses that the organization operate will have grown their benefits to be able to hire more people for a new community recruiting team, and still have some to contribute to the social impact team, all together with the budget of below 10% of profits.

Relaxing community membership acceptance criteria

The target that the community recruitment team will aim for is quite similar to the founders of the community: people who are aligned with the goal and strategy, and who have privileges to contribute time and money to the project. However, at this point, the acceptance criteria for welcoming people into the community can be a bit looser.

For the first two stages the focus is on starting new things, therefore it is crucial that the community members have strong competencies related to leadership, entrepreneurship and social impact.

By the time the organization reaches stage 3 the leadership team in charge of the strategy for the community will be fully staffed and operational; it is not necessary that new joiners are that passionate about strategy or entrepreneurship. As long as they agree that they won't be invited to participate in the organization's leadership and strategy they should be able to join.

This point might be controversial. In many communities that aim for horizontal governance there is the expectation that everybody would have an equal voice and vote in the governance of the organization. Such controversy is illogical. Strategic decision making is a job that requires certain skills and a lot of effort. If everybody would participate in it there wouldn't have time for other contributions to the community. And the community growth would be limited to those who have those specific skills. As long as the strategy is transparent, well explained, and it stays focused, then people can ethically join the community with the understanding that their contributions will be in another area. Of course people would have the right to feel betrayed if the strategy would shift substantially, but the expectation is that it will only be refined along the same main lines of thought.

The acceptance criteria should include a minimum level of sympathy for the strategy though. If somebody would want to join just because the people in the community are cool and the location is pleasant, but they would think that the strategy is an abomination, for example because they believe that any participation in the market is reinforcing the capitalist exploitative system, even when the profits are directed towards the commons, then they shouldn't be accepted: their presence would create a friction too costly for the community to sustain.

Similarly, people who have strong beliefs in magical beings and feel compelled to campaign for illogical thinking or revealed truths would not be a good cultural fit and should not be accepted as community members. Examples of possible red flags could be insistence on making decisions "by intuition" instead of data-driven, or promoting the idea that sexuality is shameful or that gender roles are binary and rigid.

Such acceptance criteria might raise concerns about unintentionally promoting polarization and fanaticism as a consequence of segregating the population by

their beliefs. This should be avoided using other means that don't put at risk the cohesion of the community. For example people with incompatible beliefs could be targeted as employees or customers and in this way create an environment of diversity.

The community should have procedures in place to make sure that the people who join are a good cultural fit, and that they are able and committed to contribute to the greater good. For example there could be trial periods with peers assigned to follow-up on their integration. Besides donating a portion of their income, new members at this stage might choose to contribute in different ways that don't focus, or don't even involve, entrepreneurship. They might want to focus in helping the community teaching skills such as non-violent-communication, conflict resolution, different art forms, etc. or maybe helping with facilitating community dynamics or mediating conflict, etc. whatever forms of contribution they choose, there should be mechanisms in place to measure that what they are offering is found valuable by the rest of community members and is actually being used.

Recruitment symbiosis

The work of the community recruiting team should be symbiotic with recruitment for both the for-profit teams and the non-profit social impact team. It seems quite likely that some of the people screened would like to support the project, and have the time and money to do it, but might feel more comfortable with a reduced salary than donating a significant amount of their income. It seems to be quite common phenomena, people leaving well paid jobs for other jobs that have significantly lower pay but much higher intrinsic motivation because of their social impact. Such people should be redirected to the for-profit teams to find a job vacancy that matches them. On top of the salary and intrinsic values such jobs will offer many more benefits: reduced working hours, longer vacations, family-friendly schedules, extremely collaborative and supportive peers . . . on top of exceptional professional growth opportunities for being in a solid and fast growing conglomerate that offers free trainings, mentorship and career coaching, with total transparency on the salaries for each job type and seniority. Those benefits are very sought after and very rare, so it should be quite easy to recruit.

Similarly, it seems quite possible that some of the people screened might sympathise with the project's goals and strategy, but might not yet have spare time and income, nor be skilled enough for a job that would provide such income. In such cases, they should be redirected to the non-profit social impact team so that they can receive support to grow to that level of income potential.

Colonizing capitalism

Once the community grows too large it should spawn a second community, and once the second community also grows too large, a third community should be created, and so on.

The definition of “too large” will be something that will depend on a lot of the circumstances. On one hand, the organization in charge of promoting a paradigm change towards a community-based society will want the communities to be as large as possible, to offer the most possible value to their members with respect to maximizing the potential of establishing meaningful relationships with other community members. The higher the number of members the more possibilities to find people that match with each other.

The community settlements will be competing with cities and the main intrinsic attractions of cities is the potential for meeting interesting people who live nearby and the abundance and diversity of cultural events. Cities also have extrinsic motivations, namely access to good jobs, but that is something that will be of diminishing concern, as the organization of communities grows and has more power to satisfy the needs of their members, and offer meaningful work to them, either in the communities themselves or remote work.

On the other hand many people prefer the suburbs over the cities. Usually the main reason is the external motivation that bigger housing is more affordable and is safer for kids to play outdoors. Among the intrinsic motivations being part of a community, closer to nature and free from crowds usually rank on top.

Finding a sweet spot between being too large to become too crowded and being too small to limit the potential for relationships and entertainment should help attracting and retaining from both kinds of people, those more attracted to the cities and those more attracted to the suburbia.

One extrinsic factor that might limit the upper bound might be the zoning rules. It could be that the community has purchased a large extension of land, like an abandoned village, and the zoning rules limit the maximum number of housing units that can be built. This is more likely at the beginning, where the community has more limited resources for their first settlements. In such cases the community might want to buy a completely new settlement land, move there to continue expanding, and devote the previous settlement exclusively to hospitality.

Eventually though the community will reach an intrinsic upper bound. When the community grows too large it will be too difficult for community members to keep track of who everybody else is, and how they are related to them. For the community to feel safe everybody should be aware of the chain of trust that connects them to each community member. They should know somebody who they trust who in turns trust another community member, if they don't have a direct relationship. This upper bound might be a few hundred people, or a few thousand people, depending on the level of personal growth of the members of the community, and the time that they have available for community-building activities.

Different communities should make arrangements to enable people to freely move between them for visiting the people that they know there, and also, if they decide to switch communities, they should make the process as simple as possible,

while at the same time keeping in place mechanisms that guarantee that the applicants meet the cultural fit criteria for each particular community.

As soon as there is a network of communities that facilitate mobility between them people might start to organically sort out according to their tastes in several dimensions. This phenomenon has already been observed in the current society. In the USA for example, conservatives and liberals tend to cluster together. Without the friction caused by the cost of buying and selling houses, clustering might manifest even faster in commons-based communities.

On the cultural dimension some people might want to get together to promote a local culture and language that is endangered by colonization from a stronger external one. Alternatively people might naturally cluster due to their interests in topics such education, health, technology or art. This kind of clustering might at the same time reflect the kind of entrepreneurship that the community will work on. A community interested in education might found a University whereas, one interested in health might go for pharmaceutical and biotech, one interested in performing arts might work on movie production, CGI studios, and so forth.

Geographically the communities still should look for settlements that are near the western “democratic” centers of power so that they can easily recruit more privileged people with easy access to spare wealth and time, but also likely to be connected with the political elites of the area, which will be handy later on to influence them. Historically colonization efforts have been about building settlements where the resources are, to extract them and distribute it throughout a civilization. Nowadays the most important resources are human capital. The strategy presented here proposes to “colonize” rich “democracies” by building settlements where their most precious resources are, their top talent, and remove that talent from the for-profit market system.

Market expansion

There is no independent objective criteria for when the for-profit branch of the organization will reach stage 3. However the growth of this area is correlated with the threshold defined earlier for kicking off stage 3 of community growth, and the expectation is that the three divisions of the organization, community, financing and social impact, will evolve in parallel.

The growth of the for-profit division of the organization should follow the same patterns as any for-profit organization, with just more probabilities to grow faster due to the advantages already discussed: growing funding from altruistic community members, the symbiosis with the non-profit branch which opens access to more funding sources plus the participation of volunteers, the symbiosis between the different production units of the conglomerate, etc.

At this point there should already be several production units that have gone through the typical first stages of modern agile entrepreneurship: prototyping, prototyping, fail-fast MVPs, pivoting, customer research, etc. and have reached

a point of maturity where they have viable products and services with paying customers in their first operating market. Moreover, they will be generating enough profit to have financed the non-profit social impact program through stage 2 and entered stage 3 of the community growth strategy.

Therefore this will probably be the stage where the first production units start expanding to newer markets. How to fund that market expansion, either using internal funding exclusively, combining profits plus donations from the community members, or reaching out to external investors through the sale of shares is a tactical consideration that will have to be examined case by case.

A third scenario is to reach out for external funding through credit instead of investment, and in this way preserve the 100% of the ownership for the community. Often governments offer highly subsidized credits for young companies that want to expand. Incidentally, before registering the companies in the first place, a thorough research should be done on where it is more favorable to register them taking into account this kind of potential future benefits. Then obviously there is the option to get regular credit from banks. Here again, due to the combination of for-profit and non-profit operations, it might be possible to obtain funding at advantageous rates from ethical banks.

Another way to obtain credit is to reach out to the organization's sympathisers. By this stage the community should have a substantial list of people who have affinity with the goals and strategy but don't want the commitment required for being part of the community or employed by the organization. Contacts might have been gathered through conversations with customers, suppliers, co-workers, family and friends of community members and workers, etc. For funding the expansion of one of the conglomerate's firms the organization could produce bonds and offer them at a lower interest than a bank would charge for that level of credit, and still at a higher rate than people would earn from a typical savings account. Therefore, those sympathisers that would be willing to support the organization, potentially make some money and at the same time assume the risk of investing in a young expanding venture would be able to do so purchasing bonds.

Also at this stage it should be possible to start funding new enterprises that require a bit more of initial capital, and that should include retail venues of some kind. I.e to open restaurants or clothing stores owned by the firms as opposed to using external retail channels.

Opening retail stores will mean having presence where there are large densities of people and therefore, having presence in the biggest cities. This will open up new synergistic opportunities for advertisement recruiting for the umbrella organization. Each retail store can be filled with ads that explain to patrons that they are not contributing to a capitalist endeavor to make rich people richer but instead the profits are going to build an alternative world. And that they have a choice to consume using money or to join the new world and live in abundance without using money.

When operating commercial venues in the cities, the organization should also buy housing for building urban communities. This will increase the diversity of people who join the communities to include people who might want to spend some of their time in the city, to progressively move to the countryside, or maybe even to always stay in the city. A community doesn't have to be nomadic in a single place, their members could be alternating between a countryside settlement and a city one.

Urban settlements should provide synergies that combine supporting students from the communities that are attending university courses, hospitality, reforms and construction firms. The community should already manage for-profit construction and reforms teams at this stage. They could be expanded to buy deteriorated apartments, renew them, and distribute them between money-making short rents managed by the hospitality team, student residencies, housing for community members that go to the city occasionally for work, and more permanent housing for city dwellers. The assignment should be flexible in a way that vacant units outside of the academic year or peak work season can be reused as touristic apartments.

In general life in the city is much more expensive than life in the countryside. Usually social transformation projects see that as a challenge to operating in the city. However with this strategy, at this stage where still at least 90% of the organization's profits are reinvested in for-profit teams, that should be seen as an opportunity: in the city there are a lot of people who are used and willing to pay a lot for products and services, therefore it's a great place for making profits, which will eventually be invested for the greater good.

At this stage also community members are still required to be economically privileged with respect to the area where they live. Therefore those who choose to settle in the city will have a job, either in the labor market or in one of the organization's enterprises, which provides the means for living in the city, and more to contribute to the commons. Therefore establishing urban settlements shouldn't put an economic strain on the organization at all. On the contrary, it should multiply the funding, recruiting and propaganda opportunities.

Social impact self-service platform

At stage 2 a non-profit social impact program was started to support people at risk to advance in their lives until becoming autonomous and privileged. By stage 3 the program should have reached a dimension that can benefit from some automation. The program should be now relatively known, and some people should be applying organically already. News about an organization giving away food, money and helping landing good jobs will most likely travel fast. There should be quite a backlog of people waiting for their turn to enter the program, some of them further away from the entrance criteria than others.

In order to boost the program an online platform can be created where applicants can register into a waiting list. Registered users should be able to see how they

score in the acceptance criteria and how they rank in the waiting list. Also an estimate should be provided of how long it would take for them to enter the program. Likely the program would be much smaller than the waiting list and for most people the expected wait would be close to infinite.

This program is not organized as a first-come first-served basis, nor on a most needed basis. On the contrary, it is organized on a cost-benefit analysis basis. Applicants will be rated by the expected cost of helping them out, the expected probability that they will give back to the community afterwards, and the potential for surplus of earnings and time. The ones that are on top of the ranking will be chosen to get into the program even if there are the most recent ones to join. Also the team will keep actively looking and recruiting candidates if they believe that they can find better potential than the one that is applying organically. Therefore if people stay passive they will be moving down in the list, farther away from being admitted, rather than advancing.

Just having this kind of transparency in a social program should be quite a radically refreshing innovation: often in such programs the applicants are not given any information of what their chances are for being admitted or what the waiting time would be.

Courses and practice

The most valuable aspect of the online self-service platform however will be to help people move up in the waiting list and eventually qualify them for entering into the program. To such end it will offer self-paced, interactive courses, about topics like:

- Landing a better paying job: how to find jobs that are worth > applying for, how to write a good resumé, how to prepare for and > perform well at an interview, etc.
- Career building and how to be promoted: a lot of people see their > role at work as fulfilling their role description. Successful > employees instead put effort into understanding how the company > works and how they can provide most value to their customers. They > use that knowledge to tweak the way they work to move from average > contributors to overachievers. Analytical, business skills and > networking will help in this endeavor. Also how to ask for, and > receive, feedback from colleagues at work, and how to leverage > good feedback to get more compensation and more responsibilities.
- Leadership and management skills: vision and mission, people's > management, project management,... those are often the most > scarce in the workplace which results in bottlenecks in leaders > and managers. Showing leadership and helping coworkers > self-organize is very valuable in a team, and contributing to that > is a good bet for career advancement.
- Job skills that are explicitly valued and tested when interviewing > for jobs.

Often courses offered to help people be more employable > are very narrow in scope, like teaching Excel or Power Point. But > those are just tools that are assumed as a given in the job > market, what employers actually are looking for are skills like > accounting, finance or communicating for impact. The courses > offered should instead be focused on skills that give value to > firms and teach how to use standard tools to achieve those. > Focusing on contributing value rather than on the tools used has > also the advantage that the knowledge becomes more transferable to > using other tools from different vendors.

- Logical thinking and data analysis: successful enterprises are > becoming more data-oriented and the education systems usually fail > at training for that. Learning how to analyze data, think > logically about possible interpretations and exercise individual > judgement are very valuable skills.

One of the most valued skills in the job market is experience in similar positions at similar firms. It's so valuable that people sometimes pay for the privilege to have a job as an apprentice after having studied! The platform could also provide the benefit of practicing solving real business tasks in real business. That should be offered only to the participants that have successfully completed tests to assess their skills.

The real-world assignments could come from the many firms that the organization operates or even from firms in their network, such as suppliers or providers that would like to volunteer in the program. Such training exercises should be provided for free, or even better, paid. Even if the pay is symbolic, because the first assignments will probably be of low value and have high supervision overhead, being able to state in a resumé that one has been paid for a job is much more powerful than having done free practice.

Therapy, trauma and self-boycotting beliefs

Another valuable part of the platform will be tools for therapeutic healing. Even though those work better when administered by professionals, if the people queuing for the program don't have access to them, or have limited access, having self-help tools will be very valuable. Such tools should be delivered in a personalized way and targeted to help them overcome particular struggles that are difficulting progressing in the courses listed above.

For example, a study has shown that people that come from poor families have a penalty of 15% in performance when solving math exercises that mention money. Apparently mentions of money trigger scarcity-related traumas that negatively impacts thinking. Similarly, especially in Western countries, math often carries a cultural stigma. In many families math is considered very scary and math proficiency is some sort of dark magic. People who have grown up in that kind of environment will likely have trouble learning accounting, finance, logical thinking and data proficiency, which are fundamental in the job market. The platform

should offer self-help tools to deal with the likely psychological blockers.

The best way to make decisions in life is to use a cost-benefit analysis taking into account the probabilities related to uncertainty. The idea that it is possible and desirable to analyze the world rationally and to make decisions logically is a fundamental pillar of the strategy presented here and keeps appearing in these pages.

On the assumption that the above assertion holds true, let's classify as "self-boycotting beliefs" the ones that are contrary to it. A possible self-boycotting belief is that logical thinking cannot be used for bettering society, that it can only be used egotistically. Such belief probably comes from a fallacy of association. Most people only hear about cost-benefit analysis decision making in the context of for-profit organizations and they might associate one with the other.

A similar and popular self-boycotting belief is that all the rich people are evil, and all the companies owned by rich people are evil as well. This belief has been passed on for millenia through the major Moses-derived religions. Their holy books contain main verses like "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:25). It has also permeated the secular population.

As a result many people shy away from well-paid jobs at big companies and in general have an uncomfortable relationship with having money. They prefer to be in debt as that puts them in the role of good victims rather than having money which puts them in the role of evil exploiters. Since all companies make money through plusvalue it is obvious that participating in that scheme, and receiving part of the profits, makes oneself part of the lot of evil exploiters of the proletariat.

Such self-boycotting beliefs might lead to actions that are rather risky. People might decide that the best way to contribute to society is to be as unproductive as possible at work, so that the firms are forced to hire more people and better distribute their wealth. Or maybe even stealing from work as a way to take wealth redistribution in one's hands. Such actions will of course make it more difficult for people to advance professionally and might even help in the company deciding to close, and thus contribute to the destruction of jobs rather than creating more.

Of course being in debt and working in a low-paid job makes one's life rather harsh. Which is also a good thing from the perspective of popular ethics, like the ones from Protestantism, that assert that hard work and staying strong against adversity are highly valuable virtues.

On the other hand, looking at the situation from a cost-benefit analysis perspective would lead us to the opposite conclusion, that one can make much more good in the world by making as much money in as little time as possible and investing thoughtfully the surplus of time and money to help others.

Getting out of such self-boycotting beliefs might be quite tricky. Probably therapy

would help to identify underlying causes that make such beliefs attractive. Maybe there are issues with confidence that drive people to seek approval from others, maybe there are traumas related to scarcity (emotional or material), etc. Therapy and meditation can also help get people out of this egocentric mindset (I am the one exploiting people, I am the one benefitting from the exploitation, my participation in the system makes a difference,...). Instead people can adopt a more holistic view, see the situation from a bit of a distance, and attribute to the system's dynamics their disastrous effects.

Other things that could help is expose people to stories of people helping a lot of lives using rational thinking, for example successes from the Effective Altruism literature. Also stories about how hard entrepreneurship is for entrepreneurs, about business people caught in spirals of debt from their investments and being forced to pay to their employees as little as possible to have a chance to save their business (and the jobs of the employees). Most business people genuinely see themselves as a force of good, they believe that they are making society better off by providing better services at better prices and more jobs, and most of them, except the ones that make it really big, work really hard, long hours, with a lot of pressure from creditors. Sharing this kind of story could help building empathy and moving towards working together towards a solution rather than fighting with each other.

Mutual support and helping the ones lagging behind

A third element on the platform could be helping people get organized for mutual support. People living near each other could get organized to take turns caring for each other's children or cooking for the group for example. The platform could help finding who lives nearby and organizing schedules.

It could also help people participating in the platform to move in together by grouping them according to the area where they want to live. Often an impediment to get housing is working in the informal economy and not being able to prove employment status to the landlords. To overcome this difficulty those who can prove employment could offer themselves as guarantors for rental contracts to those who can't, but to whom they trust will be able to have sustained income.

Those more advanced in the journey could also help the ones that are lagging behind. The ones more advanced will already have some disposable time and some valuable skills. They could help out others supporting them go through the self-paced courses, doing repairs at their homes, etc. Such contributions should be registered in the platform and award the donors with points to move up the waiting list since they would be proving that they are both able and willing to help others in exchange for nothing.

Life Skills

Finally the platform could help users in everyday life skills such as;

- **Managing money:** saving money, knowing oneself better to avoid > using money to compensate for unfulfilled emotional needs and how > to fulfill those needs directly instead, protecting savings from > inflation by investing them in safe and liquid assets, > consolidating debts to reduce the interest paid on them, getting > access to cheaper money than the easy but expensive credit cards > or payday lending, etc.
- **Health:** Staying healthy is key to having sustained earnings and > not falling into debt, specially for those in the informal or gig > economies. Topics covered should include eating well and cheaply, > staying healthy and recovering quickly with traditional home > remedies, sleeping and resting better, etc.