**Tactic: Future Wheel**

*Make a proposed change more concrete by mapping its ripple effects—surfacing intended and unintended consequences to inform smarter, more strategic action.*

**When to Use It:**

Use when a proposed change or strategy needs to be made more concrete, less hypothetical, and more deeply examined. This tactic helps visualize ripple effects—both positive and negative—and supports planning by mapping out first, second, and third order consequences.

**How it Works:**

**Step 1 (10 minutes) | Map the future consequences**The facilitator writes a specific proposed change in the center of a flipchart or whiteboard. Either individually, or in small groups, reflect using the worksheet on how the proposed change will have ripple effect consequences. This visual mapping helps clarify complex systems and assumptions. Participants then:

* Identify **first-order consequences** and draw lines from the central change to these items.
* Identify **second-order consequences** stemming from those, and connect with a different color.
* Identify **third-order consequences** from the second-order ones, using a third color.

**Step 2 (30 minutes) | Facilitate analysis and prioritization**

Guide the group in analyzing the full map of consequences. Encourage the group to name actions, tradeoffs, and needed resources. Use prompts like:

* *Which of these risks or opportunities feels most significant?*
* *Which unintended consequence could derail this effort?*
* *What can we do right now to mitigate that risk or accelerate that benefit?*

**Step 3 (Optional: 10 minutes) | Translate insights into next steps**As a final step, invite the group to reflect on questions like “*What decisions can we make now based on this map? What additional information or stakeholders do we need to move forward?”*

### **Helpful Tips:**

* **Color-code clearly.** Use different markers or post-it colors to differentiate between consequence levels—this makes patterns easier to see and analyze.
* **Push beyond the obvious.** Ask follow-up questions to draw out second and third-order effects participants might initially overlook.
* **Invite dissent.** Ask participants to offer risks, tensions, or unintended impacts they see—even if they feel uncomfortable naming them.
* **Return to the map.** This visual becomes a strategic reference point as planning progresses—photograph it or recreate it digitally for later use.

