

# The Changemaker Goldilocks Zone: A Cogent Illustration

---

In [my introduction letter of the October 2023 issue of our Aerozone newsletter](#), I shared that we have been spending some considerable time thinking about how we embrace our role as a changemaker. How can we play a meaningful role in solving wicked problems without becoming overwhelmed by daunting issues we see in the news or even locally in our own communities? And where is the sweet spot that allows us to address such substantial challenges while yielding impactful opportunities on a large scale, yet at a magnitude that does not debilitate our spirits? Below, I take a moment to provide a more cogent illustration, if you want to put your economist hat on and delve into the details with me.

We believe that there are 5 variables that we need to consider in sizing a challenge. These are as follows:

Variable 1: Scale of the problem

Variable 2: Impact of the change

Variable 3: Effort required to affect change

Variable 4: Empowerment to enable change

Variable 5: Feedback loops

## Variable 1: The Scale of the problem

We believe that we can classify challenges in 3 categories. Macro, Micro, and Pico.

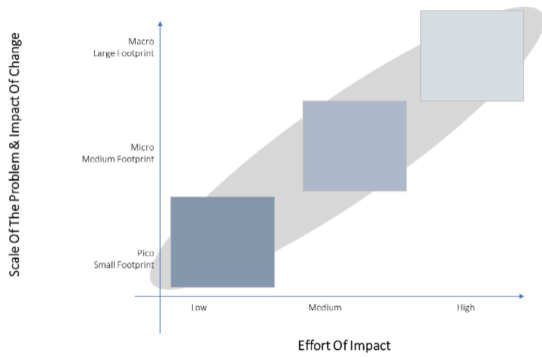
**(1) Macro challenges** have a large footprint (global, national, or even statewide). Existential challenges like planetary sustainability, international conflicts, economic policies, and political rife are some examples of the types of issues that could fall into this category.

**(2) Micro challenges** are issues that exist at a community or a multi-community level. These are problems and opportunities that directly affect us on a weekly basis during our daily routines. Examples encompass local homelessness, deteriorating infrastructure, or vacant land that could be converted into parks or new business sites.

**(3) Pico challenges** are issues that I have a direct control over. My personal behaviors such as tackling my health issues through nutrition and exercise, keeping my skill sharp through ongoing learning, managing my own personal carbon footprint, etc.

## Variable 2: Impact of change

If we are to evaluate the impact of the tackling the challenge, then perhaps the Macro challenges tend to have the biggest footprint that affects the greatest number of beings. Whereas the Pico effort has perhaps a smaller footprint, but a deeper and a more personal impact.

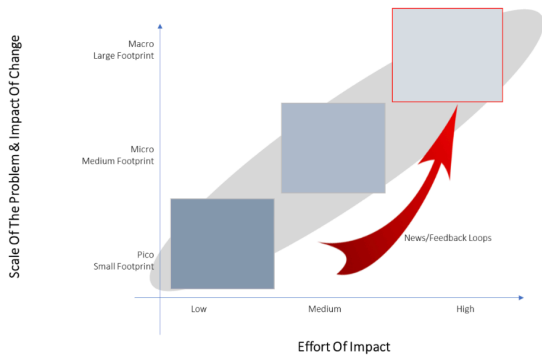
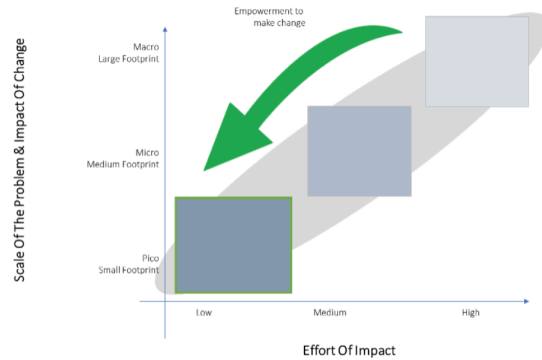


### Variable 3: Effort required to affect change

On this variable, as it may seem obvious, the equation is corollary to the scale of problem. To drive impact at a macro level, the effort required is also greater. Greater amount of funding, greater number of collaborations, greater alignment across geographies and communities, political will, etc. all add to the overall effort required to make the change.

### Variable 4: Empowerment to enable change

Here we look at a slight variation of the previous variable. A sub-variable of the 'effort required to make the change,' is the 'how empowered an individual feels in being able affect the change.' Again, the closer the problem is to the individual, the more manageable the effort may seem. And the further away and the larger the footprint of the challenge, the more helpless an individual may feel.



### Variable 5: Feedback Loops

This is perhaps the most interesting of the variables. While the empowerment to make change resides closest to where a person resides, the unfortunate reality is that the most feedback and news loops that we consume are largely sharing a Macro perspective. This can be thought of in terms of national media, e.g., viral videos that capture a non-local sentiment, or the like. Perhaps it is also worth noting that inherently, being 'newsworthy' means that which is out of the ordinary. Which unfortunately, more often than not, is biased with more negative sentiments.

## Applying this framework to the Aerozone:

Here at the Aerozone, we believe we reside in that sweet spot – a ‘Changemaker Goldilocks Zone’ – where we can tackle issues at scale and at the same time empower local partners. Given our local and multi-jurisdictional/municipal structure, our network of eight thriving municipalities (Berea, Brook Park, Cleveland, Fairview Park, Middleburg Heights, North Olmsted, Rocky River, and Strongsville), our 1,100-acre District, 11k local businesses, 100k jobs, and world class federal installations such as the NASA Glenn Research Center, we are in an incredibly powerful position to make meaningful change.

And, indeed, through our partners, we will catalyze positive change.

Continue reading my full introduction letter [here](#) to learn more about how the Aerozone Alliance is applying the “Changemaker Goldilocks Zone” principle to solve challenges in the District.



Hrishue Mahalaha  
Executive Director  
Aerozone Alliance

