we were working with was quite tangential to the core issues at hand, and had little influence. As a result, the scope of the project gradually collapsed to a tampering at the edges, rather than creating the bold new approach that the problem situation really required. While the project results were quite limited and were not advanced much further, some of the reframing ideas did shift the thinking of key stakeholders quite a bit—enough for them to pick up the project later and redo it based on these lessons learned. But overall, the project was very disappointing. We should have known better, but we got trapped in the perspective of our partner organization and reverted to early solution-focused thinking, and we never really escaped from its confines.

Examples like these do raise many pertinent questions. The first one, of course, is *when* to enter into a frame creation project: should we have accepted this one at all? In which situations does the frame creation approach work well, when is it problematic, and when is it almost impossible?

"RIPENESS"

When to do frame creation and when not? Designers tend to talk about this question in terms of the "ripeness" of a problem situation. From our experience, we have found that a situation is not ripe when the issue at hand is not really felt to be a problem by key people in the organization. Launching into frame creation becomes an uphill struggle when you first have to convince people that there *is* a problem—they have to at least intuitively feel that there is, even if that feeling is barely perceptible or not articulated. We have seen before that launching into frame creation is relatively easy when an organization is already confronted by the limitations of its own approach (even if this is just a feeling of unease or frustration). The city of Eindhoven is a nice example of that: they had already exhausted their own problem-solving capacity, yet the problem had not been resolved and pressure from the local media made the situation one that could not be ignored—so obviously a new approach was needed. And then we need to get the right people involved: we aim for the very top of the organization, not just because of their overview and span of control but also because it is much easier for them to think freely. Working with frame creation on the middle management level is always challenging, as the roles and tasks of middle management are defined within the conventional way of problem-solving in an organization. They cannot allow themselves to be pushed into a different way of thinking that goes beyond their current responsibilities. The good news is that in experimenting with frame creation over the last ten years,