Catalyst 2030

Theory of Change

Contents

Social entrepreneurs: Practitioners with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges. They are ambitious and persistent — tackling major issues and offering new ideas for systems-level change. They are driven not by profit but by making a positive impact on the world.
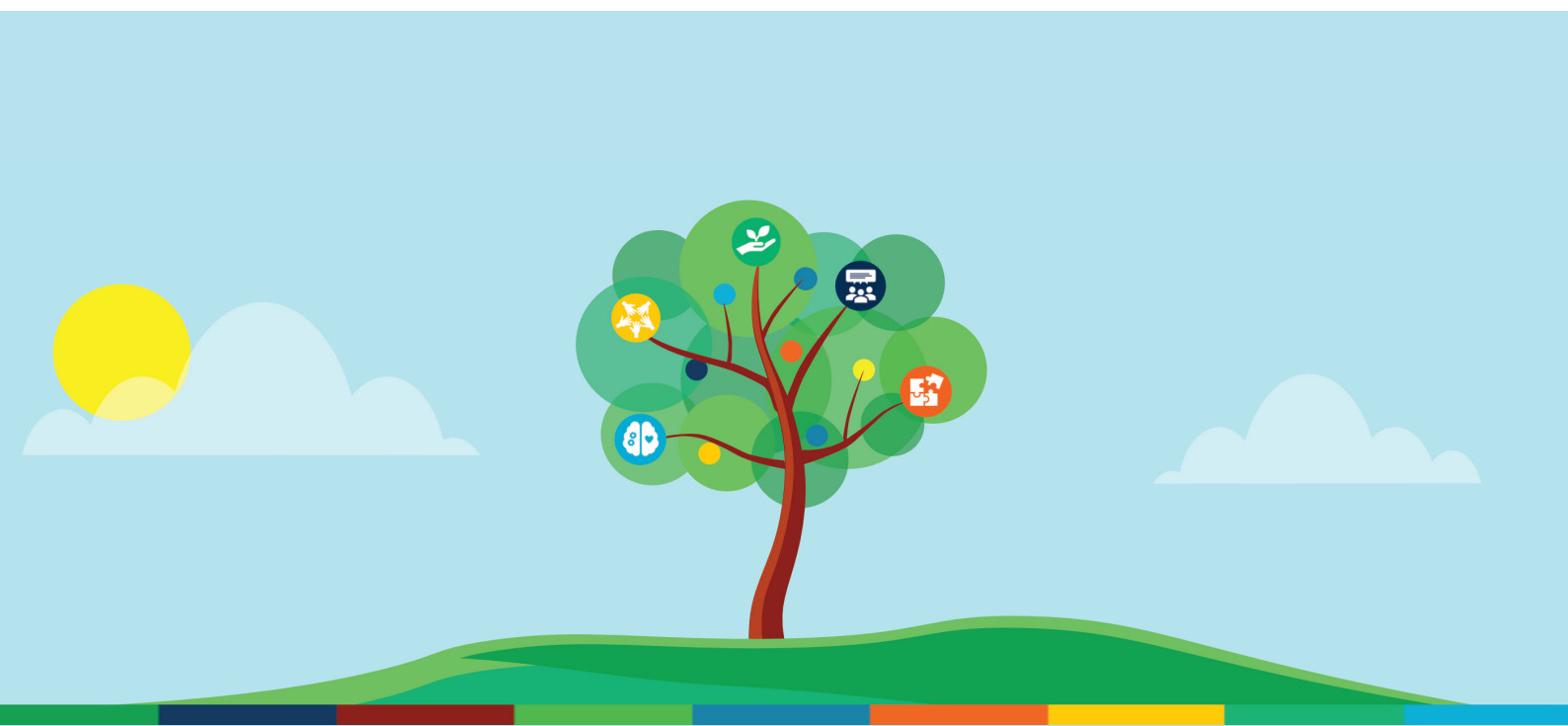
Introduction

Launched at the World Economic Forum in January 2020, Catalyst 2030 is a global community of leading social entrepreneurs, funders and other social change innovators who believe collective action and bold, new strategies are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Co-created by a leading group of social entrepreneurs and innovators, Catalyst 2030 is a collaborative movement for joint action. Our aim is to build a broad, multi-stakeholder global movement to transform systems, resulting in a significant dent in the climate crisis, increased sustainability, reduced poverty and a positive impact on the lives of millions.

Catalyst 2030 urges institutions to re-examine how they currently address the SDGs. A shift towards approaches that are focused on collaborative systems change through partnership and joint action is needed. We believe without systemic approaches the current disparate efforts will leave organisations, governments and civil society with clean-up efforts without addressing sources of the problems. The conviction that partnerships will accelerate the SDGs is a fundamental driving force of this movement of innovators.

Catalyst 2030 is mainly a volunteer movement that started out with a handful of social entrepreneurs connecting on WhatsApp and Zoom. Within 18 months, the movement has grown to more than 500 members from around the world.

The Problem

According to the Social Progress Index (SPI), the SDGs will not be achieved until 2082. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely delayed SDG achievement by a further ten years. Catalyst 2030 members have identified three key challenges that are stalling progress:

1. Many global, regional and local institutions and governments do not have the means to address the complexity of societal problems at scale.

2. There is minimal coordination among social entrepreneurs and other social innovators who have the capability and freedom to influence system actors and build their capacities.

3. The pace of adoption of financial and funding models to advance systems change has not accelerated to match demand. The system in which we operate is one with severely unequal power dynamics and outdated practices.

Catalyst 2030 members aim at accelerating progress towards the SGDs by radically transforming social innovation ecosystems and driving systems change interventions at the country level. This will require an unprecedented mobilisation of entrepreneurs, partners and resources working collaboratively to effect this change. Together, we aim at making a substantial dent in this era's crises and leaving lasting and positive change in the lives of billions of people.

Values Drive Our Community

Our core values underpin everything we do. Our vision:

> A world where we achieve the SDGs by 2030 through an unprecedented mobilisation of social entrepreneurs, partners and resources

People and nature at the centre
In everything we do, we place people, nature, and their ways of life, at the heart of what we do. We stand accountable to them for our actions.

Co-creative mindset
The future of innovation is co-creation. We seek to acknowledge our own biases and silos and work to move beyond them. This includes sharing all relevant data when we collaborate and that whatever Catalyst 2030 produces is non-proprietary.

Collaborative leadership
We prioritise co-creating approaches that reflect shared ownership and credit collective impact. Shared norms are based on the needs and challenges we face.

Humble audacity
We have audacious goals and approach them with the humility that none of us alone knows how they can be best accomplished.

Spirit of generosity
On any given day we are all donors, doers, visionaries or clients. We commit to sharing our knowledge, time and networks freely without expectation of receiving anything in return, other than the achievement of collective goals.

Our values clarify and explain how we will go about accomplishing our mission:

> Catalysing collaboration across sectors to unleash
> our collective potential for global systems change

Further, we aim to provide our engaged community of social entrepreneurs with the tools and resources to co-create systems level change and develop the measurement standards to evaluate their impact.

Catalyst members have committed to embodying the change it wishes to see in the world. We actively facilitate a culture of diversity including gender, race and geographies. Additionally, the Catalyst community strives to achieve a variety of communities in terms of the scale, sector and focus of member organisations. Emphasis is placed on giving voice to those closest to the issues at hand.

What follows in this document is an overview of the process involved in creating our Theory of Change (ToC), the theory, its implications and the operationalisation of the theory into existing structures.

The Process of Creating the Theory of Change

Catalyst 2030's Theory of Change evolved over the course of 2020. It began when social change innovators gathered at the Althorp Estate in Northhamptonshire in the UK in February 2020. The nearly 80 participants crafted shared ideas of what the world could look like by treating the problems that have given rise to the SDGs, rather than the symptoms. At Althorp, this original group created a set of assumptions, rather than a Theory of Change (ToC), as they believed it is important to test those assumptions, learn together and collaboratively build the ToC with the community.

This powerful concept led to a working mission, vision, values approach and priorities. Consultations with members, facilitated by a McKinsey & Company office in Germany have taken place at numerous points that have helped refine the strategy.

Later in 2020, a Working Group composed and led by Catalyst members[1] was formed specifically to develop a more formal iteration of the ToC. The Working Group facilitated data collection and feedback sessions with the entire Catalyst community, as well as the theoretical research that went into the ToC.

The process itself was facilitated by a smaller design team which iterated the ToC with the wider Working Group before sharing a preliminary conceptualisation with the General Assembly (entire membership). The smaller design team convened a panel composed of leading academics in the field of social innovation[2]. Catalyst's consultative approaches provided a platform for all members to collaborate on forming the final Theory of Change.

As for theory, the ToC has been created by connecting various influences including social movement principles, theories of transformation and collective impact literature. Within Catalyst 2030, the ToC has also been referred to as the Theory of X. This reflects the fact that the ToC ties together multiple approaches. The ToC posits that developing shared values and shifting dominant culture towards equity will result in greater collaboration. It will be explored in greater depth in the future within Catalyst, drawing on network acceleration principles as well as the work of a founder member[3].

The 3H Framework

Tying these sources together has been the process and methodology of the Three Horizons Framework (3H), shepherded by Catalyst members[4] and conducted with input from a representative sample of our membership through a survey. Thinking about the future implies learning to think differently. Emerging change will challenge our current assumptions and over time today's decisions, policies and products will become obsolete. How can we future-proof our thinking and planning?

The 3H Framework helps by asking people first to make their assumptions explicit and then to explore emerging change as a way of reframing what they think, what they want and what they do. The final step looks back at history, forward at the possibilities and creates actions that bridge from today to tomorrow. This process was selected by the Catalyst community because it was highly participatory and robust enough to help visualise linkages across time and ideas.

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[1] Debbi Brock and John Kania, Co-chairs

[2] Julia Battilana, Charmagne Campbell-Patton & Alnoor Ebrahim, Academic Leaders in Social Innovation/Evaluation

[3] Jeroo Billimoria, Chief Facilitator

[4] Ian Kendrick and Steve Waddell, Three Horizons Leaders

What are the Three Horizons?

The First Horizon (H1) ...

... is the **dominant system at present** - 'business as usual'. We rely on these systems being stable and reliable but as the world changes, so aspects of H1 begin to feel out of place or no longer fit the purpose. Eventually business as usual will be superseded by new ways of doing things.
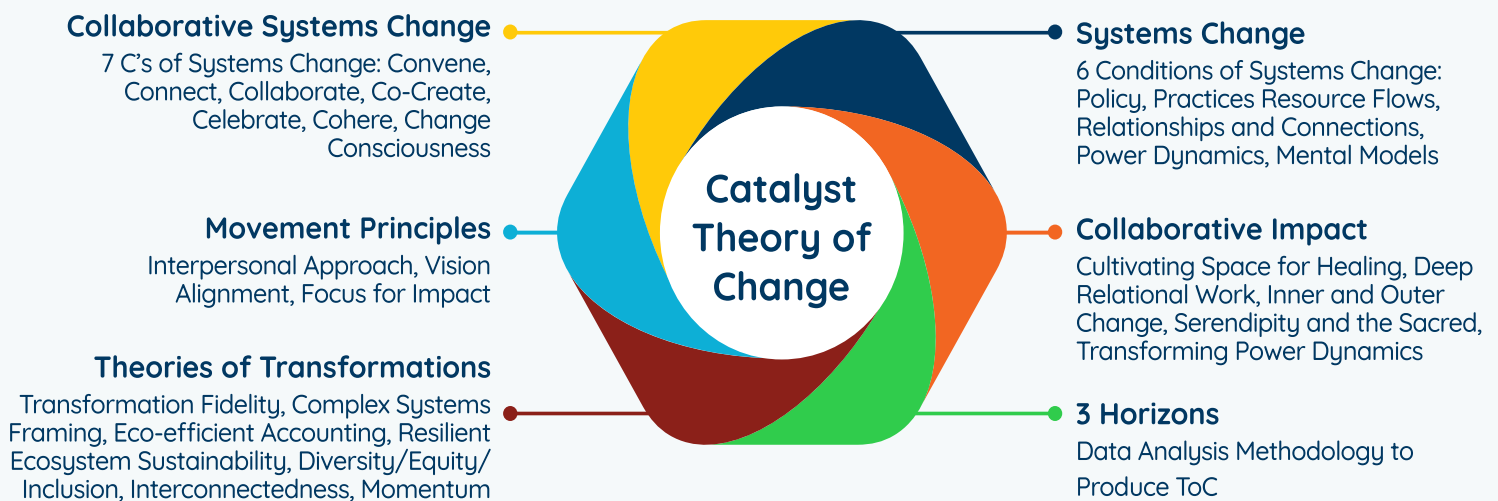
The Third Horizon (H3) ...

...emerges as the **long-term successor to 'business as usual'**. It grows from fringe activity in the present that introduces completely new ways of doing things but which turn out to be much better fitted to the world that is emerging than the dominant H1 systems. We call these early manifestations 'pockets of the future in the present'.

The Second Horizon (H2) ...

...is a pattern of **transition and transformation** activities and innovations in the journey from H1 to H3 with people trying things out in response to the ways in which the landscape is changing. Some of these innovations will be absorbed by H1 systems to prolong their life while some will pave the way for the emergence of the radically different H3 systems. It is in the Second Horizon that the transformation between H1 and H3 is catalysed.

Approaches Incorporated in Our Theory of Change

Collaborative Systems Change

7 C's of Systems Change: Convene, Connect, Collaborate, Co-Create, Celebrate, Cohere, Change Consciousness

Movement Principles

Interpersonal Approach, Vision Alignment, Focus for Impact

Theories of Transformations

Transformation Fidelity, Complex Systems Framing, Eco-efficient Accounting, Resilient Ecosystem Sustainability, Diversity/Equity/Inclusion, Interconnectedness, Momentum

Catalyst Theory of Change

Systems Change

6 Conditions of Systems Change: Policy, Practices Resource Flows, Relationships and Connections, Power Dynamics, Mental Models

Collaborative Impact

Cultivating Space for Healing, Deep Relational Work, Inner and Outer Change, Serendipity and the Sacred, Transforming Power Dynamics

3 Horizons

Data Analysis Methodology to Produce ToC

The next section covers the foundational features of Catalyst 2030 as a community and how they support the ambitious vision of the organisation and its members.

Catalyst 2030 Theory of Change and Implications

Catalyst 2030 works from a guiding ethos of collaborative systems change. Collaborative systems change is an approach to transparently mobilise a diverse set of actors in order to collectively imagine and create positive, systemic change. This change can occur in existing systems, or it can be used to create new, more inclusive systems where they did not otherwise exist.

Collaborative systems change seeks to counteract the dominant paradigm for development, which focuses on top-down solutions implemented through hierarchical institutions. There is no one big answer to complex problems. Instead, there is an abundance of smaller efforts working in harmony that culminate in widespread adoption of new ways of thinking and doing. By aiming at change at the systems level we can achieve the greatest impact and truly realise our vision.

> *By aiming at change at the systems level we can achieve the greatest impact and truly realise our vision.*

To reach this inclusive and equitable world envisioned by the Catalyst membership, fundamental transformation of important dimensions of the system is crucial. The Three Horizons process revealed that to address inadequacies in our present Horizon 1 and move proactively towards Horizon 3, Catalyst's ToC must take action consistent with what is outlined in Horizon 2. In other words, we have a desired future we are trying to reach and we have identified pathways to getting there.

We envision the following desired future

For social entrepreneurs to significantly contribute to SDG attainment, we envisage our desired future.

Systems change happening in the world includes the following five characteristics:

- ⟳ Widespread collaboration
- ⟳ Measurement tools that support systems change
- ⟳ Significant grassroots and community leadership
- ⟳ Ongoing support and recognition for social innovators
- ⟳ Funding models that support systems change.

What is Our Path to Getting There?

The core premise enabling realisation of the desired future revolves around accelerating collective action. Energising necessary collective action will require focused efforts against the following:

Strengthening political and community engagement:
Government at all levels will support social entrepreneurs and will actively be included in policy and decision-making processes.

Fueling collaboration:
Catalyst 2030 will play a key role in supporting collaboration, networks, coalitions amongst social entrepreneurs as well as between social entrepreneurs and others.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

Supporting dominant culture shifts towards equity:
Societies will orient to a different set of values and behaviours. These include peace and justice supported by law, listening, as well as talking, power shifts in favour of the traditionally marginalised, moving from hero-oriented to collaborative action, and making a spiritual awareness and inner well-being integral to action.
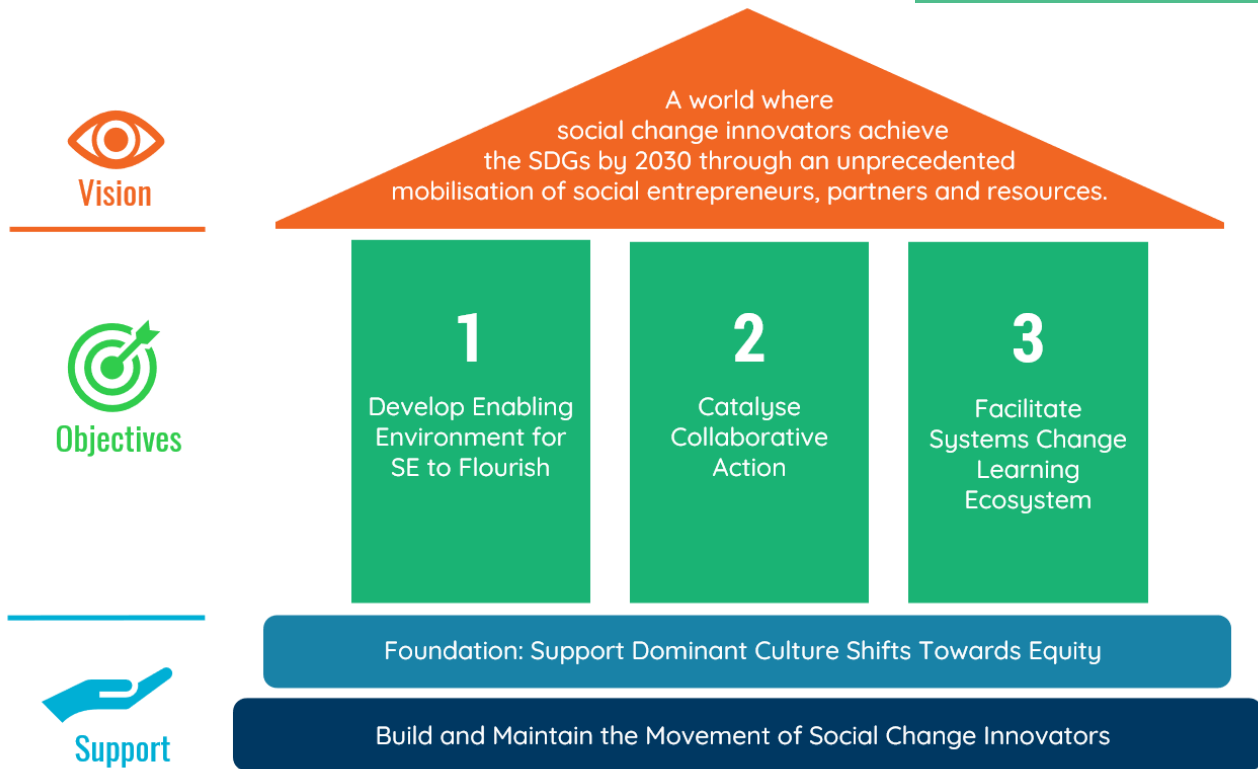
Strengthening systems level funding:
Changes in funders' structures, processes and behaviours will support collaboration and systems change approaches.

Developing and using systems change tools:
Success in collective action will be enabled by continued development, training and use of systems change tools.
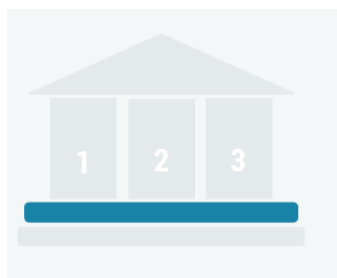
Vision

A world where social change innovators achieve the SDGs by 2030 through an unprecedented mobilisation of social entrepreneurs, partners and resources.

Objectives

1 Develop Enabling Environment for SE to Flourish

2 Catalyse Collaborative Action

3 Facilitate Systems Change Learning Ecosystem

Foundation: Support Dominant Culture Shifts Towards Equity

Support

Build and Maintain the Movement of Social Change Innovators

The foundation and pillars are the basis of the strategy to implement the mission of Catalyst 2030 and include the following key components:

Base: Build and Maintain the Movement of Social Change Innovators

Co-create and operate the Catalyst support infrastructure to keep the movement thriving with members focused on impact whilst also finding ways of engaging their physical, professional and mental well-being.

➲ **Why this is important:** To develop better collaboration for greater impact and ensure that changemakers are breaking out of their silos in a structured yet personally healthy way.

Foundation: Support Dominant Culture Shifts Towards Equity

To shift norms away from dominant culture decision making and create a more equitable balance of power, Catalyst will engage collaboratively with relevant stakeholders in ways that place value on important orientations such as systems, community, and collaboration.

➲ **Why this is important:** To decolonise development and move away from top-down mandated approaches that ignore or trivialise the value of local approaches and communities
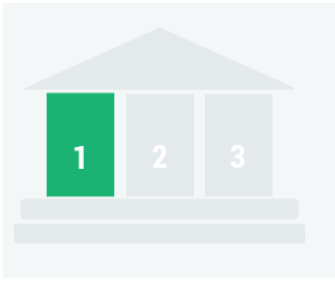
Pillar 1: Develop Enabling Environment for SEs to Flourish

Catalyst 2030 will develop the (1) profile and understanding of SE's roles, (2) scale and responsiveness of the SE funding system, (3) improvement of policy, frameworks, and sustainability practices at the country level and issues at a specific level and (4) communities' foundational role in realising the mission.

⮑ **Why this is important**: The current playing field heavily favours established large entities, and their approaches to change are not necessarily built upon the knowledge and experience of those close to the issue. Governments, bilaterals/multilaterals, and donors must have access to social change innovators and their solutions.
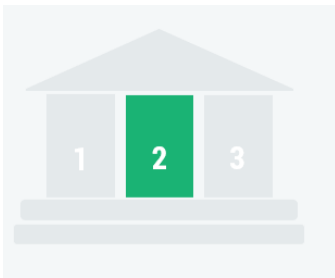
Pillar 2: Catalyse Collaborative Action

To address the scale and complexity of systems change around the SDGs, Catalyst 2030 will emphasise collaborative action (1) among social entrepreneurs, and (2) with other stakeholders pursuing systems change centred on people-driven initiatives at the community level and cross-cutting issues and collaborative projects.

⮑ **Why this is important:** An unprecedented scale of collaborations and efficient scaling will need to occur between different stakeholders if we are to achieve the SDGs. Including other stakeholders brings in different ways of thinking and working, which can lead to more effective initiatives.
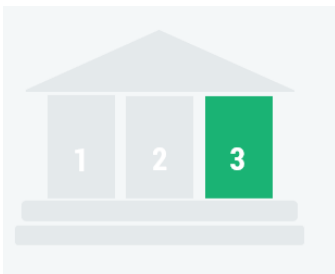
Pillar 3: Facilitate a Systems Change Learning Ecosystem

Recognising that the systems change challenge requires new mental models, cultures, tools, processes and organising approaches, Catalyst 2030 will stimulate an on-going evolution of a learning ecosystem for social innovators and adapt and change based on learning and evidence. The pillar will facilitate peer-to-peer learning; identifying, sharing, and co-creating tools to achieve systems level change; and unlock Knowledge Theory as a driver of systems change.

⮑ **Why this is important:** There is a palpable need for peer learning coming from changemakers. Lessons learnt and practitioner developed ways of working are crucial.

Catalyst 2030 should hold itself accountable for contributing to and achieving progress against the desired outcomes. The setting and achievement of outcomes is done through all of the working groups in the community.

Catalyst 2030's Seven Core Principles

To date, Catalyst 2030 has been driven by collaborative systems change approaches that mobilise and empower a diverse group of actors to collectively address root causes and imagine the future that achieves large-scale systemic change. The seven compelling principles that have driven the movement value and that have served as markers against which all major activities of the community are:

1. **Convene as an honest broker:** Creating shared spaces for collaboration and co-creation that democratise the engagement of a diverse group of actors

2. **Connect:** Using collaborative systems change principles to connect actors across diverse communities to generously share knowledge and resources to inspire the community of actors towards acceleration on the progress of the SDGs

3. **Co-Create:** Working in a collaborative system, the community members co-create the overall strategy and direction, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to actively contribute to the future

4. **Celebrate:** Through the difficult work ahead, the need for consistent celebration to showcase accomplishments of the movement from awards to events that keep participants engaged

5. **Calibrate:** As the movement expands, impact is supported by research and measurement and necessary recalibration to focus on the "north star" to achieve the SDGs by 2030

6. **Cohere:** Developing coherence within the community's activities and organisations, and a shared identity of fellow travellers in learning about and activating systems change, will be important to growing impact

7. **Change Consciousness:** Shifting norms away from a focus on individuality to a belief that individual and community prosperity can be achieved with the same action.

The last two principles are vital to the organisation's activities and success. By focusing on the principles of coherence and consciousness change, we can start to address the dominance of long-standing mindsets. In Catalyst 2030's Incubation Phase, we are testing these principles to observe the embodiment of accelerator factors.
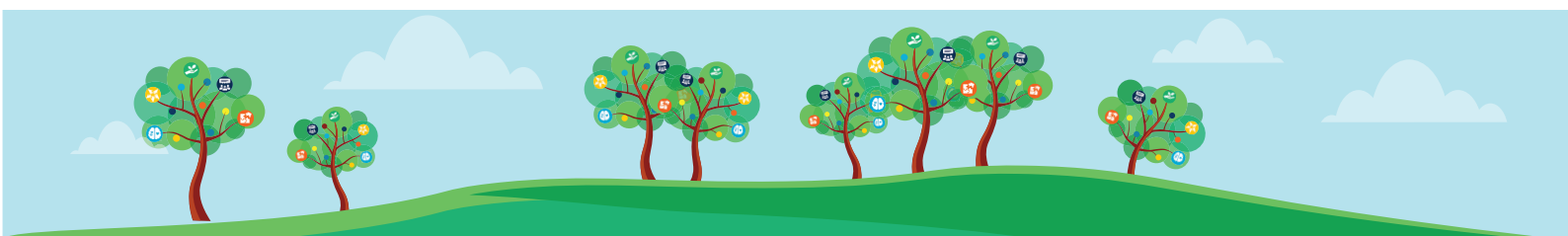
Operationalising the Theory of Change

Developing the Theory of Change for Catalyst 2030 has led to the following recommendations for enhanced structure and focus of working groups and collaboration groups to move towards accelerated impact. The five components of the strategy are represented below, aligned with how the working groups and collaborations will focus on the achievement of long-term systemic change.

Base: Build and Maintain the Movement

Co-create and operate the Catalyst support infrastructure to keep the movement thriving and members focused on impact.

➲ **Working Integration:** WG1: Membership; WG2: Communications; WG12 Impact Assessment. Regional Networks (Africa, ASEAN, Europe, Latin America, MENA) and Country Networks (Catalyst Australia, Brazil, India, USA) have been launched and will expand into other regions.

Foundation: Support Dominant Culture Shifts Towards Equity

To shift norms away from dominant culture decision making, Catalyst2030 will engage in ways that place value on important orientations such as systems, community and collaboration, which will be embraced throughout the movement.

➲ **Working Integration:** Catalysing Change Task Force, Awards Task Force, new task forces coming and going, to explore innovative ways to shift the dominant paradigms

Pillar 1: Develop the Enabling Environment for Social Entrepreneurs to Flourish

Catalyst2030 will develop the (1) profile and understanding of SE's roles, (2) scale and responsiveness of the SE funding system, (3) improvement of policy, frameworks and availability of trusted and verifiable data and (4) communities' foundational role in realising the mission.

➲ **Working Integration:** WG5: Systems Change Funding, WG6: Governments and UN Systems Advocacy, WG7: External Stakeholders, WG8: Donors, WG10: Cities, WG11: Next Economies Innovations, Issue-based Groups on Youth, Education, Health, Agriculture.

Pillar 2: Catalyse Collaborative Action

To address the scale and complexity of systems change around the SDGs, Catalyst2030 will emphasise collaborative action (1) amongst social entrepreneurs, and (2) with other stakeholders pursuing systems change.

➲ **Working Integration:** WG3: Enabling Collaboration; WG4: Impact & Client Driven Development, Collaborations Corners and collaboration triggering workshops/events led by WG

Pillar 3: Facilitate Ecosystem Learning

Recognising that the systems change challenge requires new mental models, cultures, tools, processes and organising approaches, Catalyst2030 will stimulate on-going evolution of a learning ecosystem for social innovators and adapt and change, based on learning and evidence.

⮑ **Working Integration:** WG13 Catalysing Theory into Practice

To build and maintain the movement, a decentralised structure has been established with the Secretariat working collaboratively with the various actors to co-create Catalyst 2030. To ensure all the efforts of Catalyst 2030 continue to evolve and grow with an intentional focus to support dominant culture shifts towards equity, this will be integrated into all the work of Catalyst 2030 to ensure collaborative and collective work towards system level change.

Next Steps

The process thus far has allowed Catalyst 2030 to iterate its unique ToC and examine how this relates to the vision, mission and values, key strategic pillars, core principles and its relationship to existing work. The next steps will involve the convening of an Impact Evaluation Working Group, looking at how to evaluate success, measure core principles and develop an impact framework.

The ToC Working Group will continually collaborate with all the other working groups to update outputs and indicators, ensuring harmony with the ToC. Further work will be done exploring accelerating the "X factor" of the Community as well, trying to gain an understanding of just how much more impact can be created through a shared identity and collective consciousness.

Conclusion

The Three Horizons process and our Theory of Change have provided a way of determining what updates Catalyst 2030 should make to the core strategic components that drive its work. The process affirmed much of the original strategy which was developed in February 2020, with two important additions: 1) A focus on shifting dominant culture and conscience that stifle potential for transformation in solving social and environmental problems; and 2) An orientation to facilitating learning among social entrepreneurs to increase their ability to affect complex social and environmental change.

With the establishment of desired outcomes for each of its strategic components, Catalyst 2030 is now better positioned to measure its progress and key contributions to helping social entrepreneurs realise their collective potential in helping to achieve the SDGs.

It is our expectation that Catalyst's ToC and strategy will continue to evolve and require attention as social and environmental context around the globe changes. While context will change, we hope an important constancy will be the collective energy of the Catalyst 2030 community in its dedication to attaining the SDGs.

Acknowledgements

The Theory of Design Team are humbled by the incredible work of our colleagues in the field of social entrepreneurship and innovation who are leading the charge to addressing the SDGs. The collective effort to complete the journey to the Theory of Change for Catalyst 2030, would not have been possible without colleagues around the world who provided their insights to the survey, members of our Working Group and the Expert Panel who challenged us along the path to develop the Catalyst 2030 Theory of Change and strategic enhancements to drive our work.

In the words of Japanese writer, Ryunosuke Satoro:

" Individually we are one drop. Together we are an ocean. "

It is through this collaborative spirit that we are moving towards a better world.

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Jack Sim, World Toilet Organization

Gurpreet Singh, Skoll Foundation

Survey Participants

While the survey was anonymous, many who completed it identified themselves to ensure that we had representation across different membership groups and locations in the world. There was a response rate of 12% of the total Catalyst 2030 membership at the time of the survey launch.

Collective Team Survey Completion

Echoing Green Team, Cheryl Dorsey, *President, Echoing Green*
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Ashoka Team, Diana Wells, *President, Ashoka*

End Notes

For more information on the **theory of change** see www.theoryofchange.org

Catalyst 2030 - https://catalyst2030.net/

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The Water of Systems Change - https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change

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