



# PATHWAYS TO TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

A Toolkit for System Leaders to Co-Create  
the Pathways to Collaboration





## INTRODUCTION

Local, regional and global inclusive collaborative action is deeply needed if we want to transform education systems. Catalyst 2030 was started with the recognition that connecting people and organizations across boundaries contributes to stronger foundations for systemic change in communities, nations, and regions globally.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2022). *Catalysing Change: Catalytic networks and catalysing collaboration towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals*.

This toolkit provides practical steps to support education systems worldwide in moving towards a more expanded view of education laid out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 4, which describes what quality education should look like in this century.<sup>2</sup> This toolkit is a companion to the Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven Solutions from Social Entrepreneurs report published by Catalyst 2030's Issue-Based Education Collaboration in September 2022 (hereafter referred to as the "2022 Catalyst 2030 report" or the "the 2022 report").<sup>3</sup>

**We believe that our collective ability to meet the needs outlined in the expanded visions of education hinges on governments, social entrepreneurs, education leaders, and other key stakeholders such as learners, teachers, parents, and community leaders to work together.**

Many governments are already making partnerships a part of the DNA of how they serve and lead their communities. Drawing on Catalyst 2030's strength as a global network that has brought individuals and organisations across sectors to catalyse collaborations toward achieving the SDGs, this toolkit was developed after interviewing 20 leaders from the social sectors and the government and after conducting surveys and focus groups in which 60 additional social entrepreneurs and educators working in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America participated.

The toolkit acts as a practical, action-oriented conversation starter to foster flexible and sustainable collaborations in education policy and practice. It:

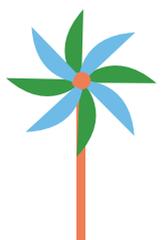
- *Builds on the vision and learning principles outlined in the 2022 Catalyst report.*
- *Names the three needs identified by the 2022 Catalyst report and the United Nations Secretary-General's Vision for Education.<sup>4</sup>*
- *Provides guidance to education system leaders on how to have meaningful conversations with other stakeholders to begin implementing the learning principles outlined in the 2022 Catalyst report.*

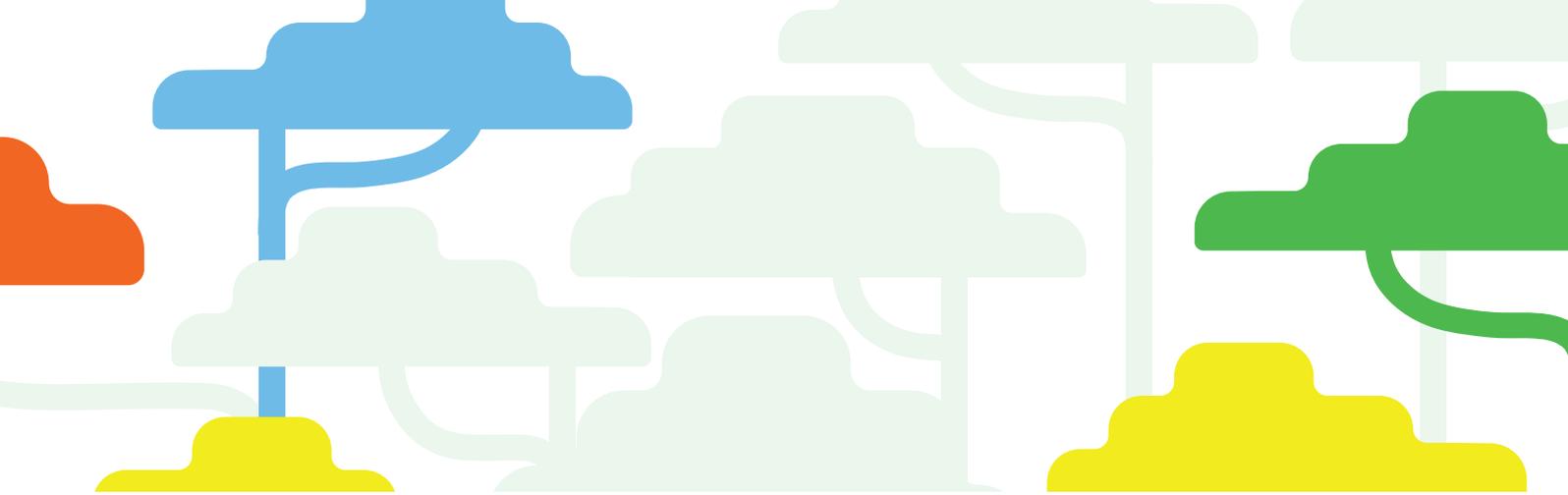
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2 United Nations (n.d.). SDG 4. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

3 Catalyst 2030 (2022). *Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven Solutions from Social Entrepreneurs*.

4 UN Secretary-General (2022). *Transforming Education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future*. UN.





## Section 1.

# WE ENVISION A NEW EDUCATION

The Catalyst Education Group envisions an education that “facilitates the flourishing of all people, societies, and the planet” in their 2022 report.<sup>5</sup>

**The members asked all educators and governments responsible for running large education systems to do the following:**

1. “to adopt a learner-centric, participatory approach to education policymaking and implementation,
2. to catalyse the pursuit of a shared reimagined purpose of education and delivery by all stakeholders in the learning ecosystem.”<sup>6</sup>

It proposed the following vision of education:

*Education is to be understood broadly and comprehensively, as enabling the learning of the knowledge, skills, and values needed to live a life of personal flourishing and the capacity to shape the future, with a deep sense of caring, connectedness with the universe/planet and everyone in it. Given the rapidly changing future, the purpose of education must enable people, societies, and the planet to thrive.*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2022). *Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven Solutions from Social Entrepreneurs*. (p.7).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

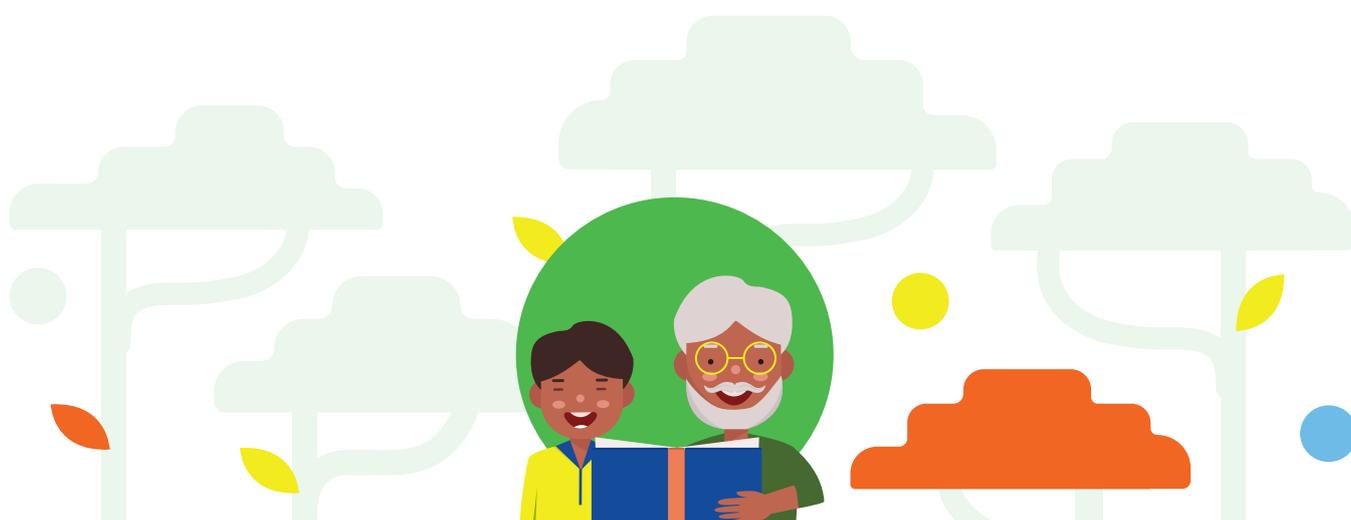
## Section 2.

# CATALYST 2030'S SET OF EIGHT PRINCIPLES THAT REDEFINE LEARNING

With this vision, the 2022 Catalyst Report proposed eight learning principles that emerged from the study of a globally representative sample of 37 holistic learning models. They were derived from the insights of practitioners and further validated by the voices of young learners and corroborated by the perspectives of ecosystem enablers.

**The eight learning principles are the following:<sup>8</sup>**

- 1. Learner-Centric Models and Learner-Led Approach** – recognises the learner's agency, responsibility, and ability to become autonomous in their lifelong learning journey.
  - a. Curricula might be more personalized and co-created with the learner, while taking into consideration community context, such as cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and social conditions, particularly for those who may be marginalized, disabled, migrants, or victims of conflict.*
  - b. The role of the teacher evolves to that of a facilitator, mentor, and guide to support learners on their learning journeys.*
  - c. Success may be defined and reported in less linear and broader ways, focusing on how learners have grown and improved their capabilities, skills, and learning.*



<sup>8</sup> For a more robust discussion of these Learning Principles, including examples, please see the 2022 Catalyst Report.

**2. Skills for Life (Life Skills and Social Emotional Well-Being)** – recognises the need for skills beyond academic ability, to lead a thriving life and navigate the complexities and uncertainties of current and future times.

- a. *Curricula acknowledge that the holistic development of a learner is incomplete without a focus on their social and emotional well-being and life skills that are vital for everyday living.*
- b. *The role of the teacher evolves to that of a facilitator, mentor, and guide to support learners on their learning journeys.*
- c. *Success may be defined and reported in less linear and broader ways, focusing on how learners have grown and improved their capabilities, skills, and learning.*

**3. Learning a Living** – recognises the need to equip learners with the skills needed to secure a livelihood/ income-generating opportunities throughout their lives.

- a. *Curricular examples include social, digital/technological, and financial education that allows learners to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and inequality.*
- b. *Academic curricula might blend with vocational training and skills learning that enable learners to make a seamless “school to work” transition and realise the importance of transferable skills such as setting goals and making good decisions.*
- c. *Because of the rapidly evolving nature of jobs due to technological changes, helping learners connect learning to earning a living is a critically important learning principle.*



**4. Social Justice and Community-based Learning** – recognises the pivotal role that education plays in a democratic, pluralistic, complex society.

- a. *Curricular content might include current and historical events involving gender, race/ethnicity, spirituality/religion, socio-economic class, and sexual orientation. These topics will need to be discussed in safe spaces that allow learners to name their realities and examine systemic privileges and discrimination.*
- b. *Pedagogical approaches include sensitively and inclusively encouraging learners to be reflective about individual and collective decisions, including developing their ability to empathize, think critically, identify, question, and analyse representations and omissions, discrimination, and inequality.*
- c. *Learning spaces might invite local community leaders and organisations into them so that learning environments reflect the worlds that learners inhabit in their homes and communities.*

**5. Learning for People and Planetary Change** – recognises that intercultural and interdisciplinary approaches to addressing complex challenges can reinforce learners’ sense of belonging to their community and to the broader world, including the environment.

- a. *Curricula might include topics such as sustainable development, global citizenship, and cultural diversity.*
- b. *Pedagogies might include design thinking and experiential learning and cultivating ways for learners to become involved with policymakers in their schools, communities, regions, and nations.*
- c. *Learning could take place on platforms where learners can exchange ideas about contributing positively to their communities with each other, across geographies.*



**6. Learning for Civic Participation** – recognises that young people must be engaged in discussions and actions about rights and responsibilities and empowered to actively participate in building peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.

- a. *Curricula include content that links the concepts in school to learners’ “real world” actions to impact their own and others’ lives positively. This might include visits to government institutions and interactions with government officials.*
- b. *Pedagogical approaches would move beyond knowledge about civics to projects such as encouraging learners to conduct surveys about constitutional literacy among their peers, for example, and then finding creative ways to improve the metric.<sup>9</sup>*
- c. *Voluntary and/or compulsory service learning in the community might extend learning that occurs inside classrooms.*

**7. Accessible and Inclusive Learning** – recognises the diverse needs and interests of learners and communities, with particular attention to two categories of accessibility: a) marginalised populations such as remote communities and those communities who have been systemically excluded and b) learners who are differently abled, whether physical, cognitive, psychological, and/or neurological.

- a. *Curricula and pedagogical practices include a focus on inclusive play and learning; they also include changing perceptions towards children who are differently abled to foster inclusion, even and especially from early childhood.*
- b. *Ecosystem approaches include developing and supporting parents, teachers, and early childhood development practitioners so that children who are differently abled are not excluded from mainstream schools.*
- c. *Ecosystem work includes capturing insights and devoting system resources to design prototype tools that can be shared with stakeholders.*

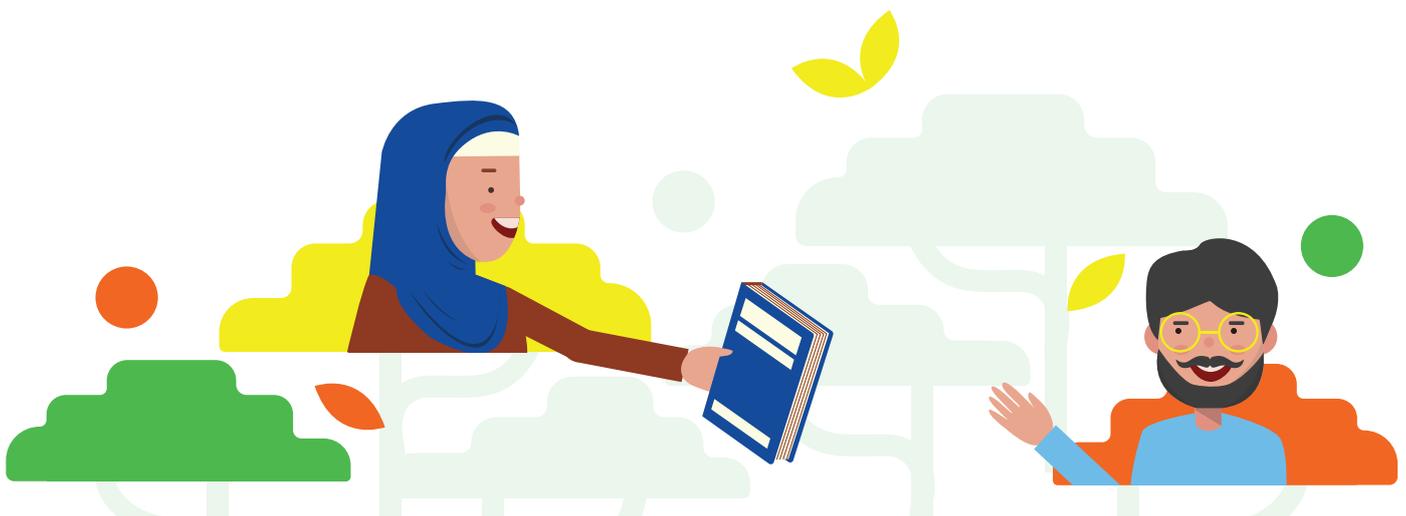


<sup>9</sup> Example drawn from *ibid.*, p.42.

**8. Learning in Conflict Zones** – recognises that our education systems are not conventionally prepared to address the learning needs in conflict or post-conflict situations and emphasises that ensuring learners’ continued access to education during conflict must be a priority.

- a.** *Communities and societies in conflict can include those experiencing civil unrest due to political, cultural, or religious tensions; absence of law and order, including the prevalence of high rate of crimes in communities; regions with external or internal armed conflicts, resulting in mass displacement and/or refugee situations.*
- b.** *Curricular and pedagogical content can include skills related to peacefully resolving conflicts and addressing interpersonal violence, including verbal and nonverbal forms of conflict. Partnering with community organisations to develop and implement creative solutions and interventions would help ensure that learners encounter culturally appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in multiple contexts in a consistent way.*
- c.** *Equipping teachers, parents, and education leaders with the knowledge and skills to manage anger, grief, trauma, bullying, and other related phenomena and build peaceful, safe, and inclusive spaces are keys to implementing this learning principle.*

The 2022 Catalyst report detailed how stakeholders could adopt these evidence-based learning principles to enable all learners to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The report showcased effective strategies designed and tried by education innovators from local communities around the world.



### **Section 3.**

## **THREE NEEDS FOR EDUCATION THAT EMERGE FROM THE 2022 CATALYST REPORT AND THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S VISION FOR EDUCATION**

The Catalyst 2030 Pathways to Transforming Education report and the UN Secretary-General's vision statement align in many ways, including naming the following three key needs for education systems.

### **NEED ONE:**

**We need a renewal of vision about the purpose of education to meet the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.**

- Both documents point to the fact that we are in a unique moment in history when our communities are undergoing changes at a scale and rate rarely seen before.
- They note that our children face challenges and opportunities that require us to reimagine education systems and work to transform them.
- The documents propose that identifying, supporting, and expanding local learning ecosystems that empower individuals and communities to reshape the present and create a more just, sustainable, resilient, and peaceful future is integral to reshaping our vision for education.

### **NEED TWO:**

**We need an integration of all relevant voices (learners, teachers, parents, community leaders, education innovators, among others) to foster collective leadership for learning.**

- Both documents highlight the fact that formal education systems can no longer act on their own.
- They urge learning systems to broaden their embrace to welcome insights and active leadership from local, regional, and national levels.

- *The documents emphasise that education visions, commitments, resources, actions, and results must be aligned with the collective efforts of governments, social entrepreneurs, communities, education leaders, teachers, parents, learners, intermediaries, and funders so that even the most marginalized learners can benefit from the newly integrated eco-systems for learning.*

### **NEED THREE:**

**We need a transformation of the why, what, and how of learning to equip young people with the knowledge, experience, skills, and values needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.**

- *Both documents make the case for education systems that equip young people with the ability to learn all along their lifespan, including learning for careers, civics, and holistic well-being.*
- *They emphasize the personal and social aspects of learning, including knowing how to resolve conflicts peacefully and how to impact their communities so that they are able to create futures that are more just, sustainable, equitable, and peaceful.*
- *They point to technology as a key enabler and key content for learning and emphasize the responsibility to create equitable and inclusive learning spaces that serve especially the most marginalised learners well.*
- *The documents urge the alignment of resources and leadership to address the need for transforming the content, method, and purposes of education.*

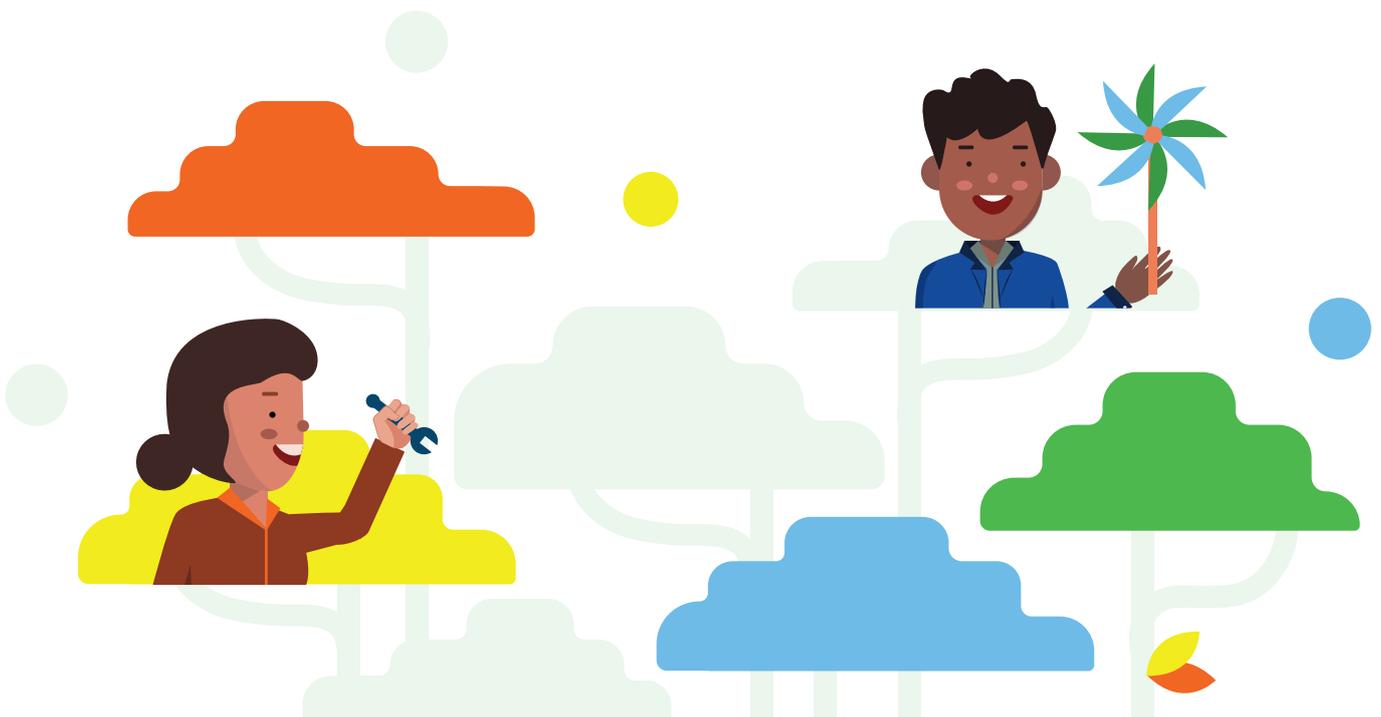
## Section 4.

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT TO MEET THE THREE NEEDS AND IMPLEMENT THE EIGHT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Meeting the three needs and implementing the eight learning principles will require governments and education leaders to learn from each other and work together. If they are to partner, mutual learning built on mutual curiosity and mutual respect needs to be encouraged.

Thus, this toolkit is meant to be a starting point for a collective journey to transform education together. It offers a few of the basic conditions for co-creating pathways to transform education, such as conversation, understanding each other's strengths and challenges, working together, and building trust and relationships.

We acknowledge that there are multiple pathways to transforming education that are globally informed and locally rooted. System leaders can use this toolkit for personal reflection but more importantly, for team or network conversations in their jurisdictions.



## SECTION ONE OF THE TOOLKIT:

“Why do you engage in this work? What is your vision for education?”

## CORRESPONDS WITH NEED ONE:

**We need a renewal of vision about the purpose of education to meet the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.**

The toolkit begins with this question for several reasons.

**First**, Simon Sinek famously said that great leaders who want to inspire action begin with articulating the “why.”<sup>10</sup>

**Second**, interviews and focus groups found that governments and social entrepreneurs partner with each other because they have a vision for education that makes it necessary to collaborate with others, such as an understanding of the scope and breadth of challenges and opportunities associated with their vision.

**Third**, leaders who partner also understand that implementing their vision with others can increase efficiency and effectiveness, creating value and limiting costs.

**Key quotes from interviews that illustrate these points are the following:**

Janine Tao, Executive Director of Solve Education in Singapore and Indonesia:

*“Education is such a big [issue] that [we] need many different people to collaborate. We can build schools, but what about those who don’t go to school because they need to work or [because] they’re already married, or because there are no schools next to them? If we only rely on teachers, 263 million children and youth who are out of school will be missing opportunities to learn. That is about 20% of our next generation.”*

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action?](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?)

Shri. Thavaseelan K., Nagaland’s Deputy Commission in India:

*“We work with several foundations and several nonprofits because they can help us with [being informed about] best practices, with what is working, what is not working, [and] what is happening in the rest of the country. The first thing we have to realise is that all the talent in the world is not within the government.... Because while you have people with incredible experience within government, but given how fast the world is changing, the people within government may not always keep pace with what is happening outside the world.”*

Luis Camargo, Founder and Director of OpEPA in Colombia:

*“Part of what we are doing is envisioning ways of doing water monitoring, through schools and science programs. ... Schools can become actors that play a role in the whole system of health monitoring, and maintenance,... lower[ing] the cost,... while teaching valuable skills, knowledge, and attitudes about caring for the environment to students.”*

**Thus, first section of the toolkit encourages system leaders to do the following:**

- *Gather those in their current circle of education stakeholders,*
- *Share their visions about education,*
- *Listen to each others’ visions,*
- *Find out about their jurisdiction’s existing (official) visions, such as key documents,<sup>11</sup>*
- *Compare those visions to that of the UN Secretary-General’s Vision for Education, and*
- *Discuss their takeaways and reflections.*

**The hope** is that these steps would encourage system leaders to build a collective vision – a collective “why” - big enough to stretch across their collective efforts that would withstand the challenges that come their way and also allow them to take advantage of opportunities in their contexts.

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Singapore’s vision statement here (<https://www.moe.gov.sg/about-us/our-mission-and-vision>) or the UN’s description of Sierra Leone’s vision statement for education here (<https://sierraleone.un.org/en/198857-republic-sierra-leone-national-statement-transforming-education-summit>) or South Africa’s vision for education here (<https://www.education.gov.za/AboutUs/AboutDBE.aspx>)

## SECTION TWO OF THE TOOLKIT:

**“With whom will you work to achieve these visions and advance the SDGs?”**

## CORRESPONDS WITH NEED TWO:

**We need an integration of all relevant voices (learners, teachers, parents, community leaders, education innovators, among others) to foster collective leadership for learning.**

Once there is an initial vision for education, the toolkit asks leaders to identify others with whom to implement their collective vision. The toolkit poses this question as a natural follow-up to the first section for a couple of reasons.

**First**, one of the findings from research literature and the interviews with system leaders was that implementing visions for transformative education takes time. Efforts must be sustained over the long term, including through political cycles that are often too short for meaningful systems change, and through frequent staff turnover in organisations.

**Second**, it may be challenging to find partners organically because there are often very few structures or processes in place for partnerships. While some governments and communities intentionally cultivated partnership skills in the professional development of leaders, it was still a challenge for leaders who desired partnerships to find other leaders in other sectors who were humble, open, and skilled in cultivating and developing partnerships. Thus, it requires a more systematic and intentional effort to forge partnerships.

**Third**, those who were interviewed noted that it takes special knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to form partnerships, including people who understand what partners need, who know the challenges and pressures different partners face, and who can navigate the industry-specific cultures.

**Key quotes from research literature and interviews that illustrate these points are the following:**

Rana Dajani, founder of We Love Reading in Jordan, reflected:

*“Governments change so fast, there’s not enough time to build. Nobody builds on the person before them because they want to prove themselves.”*

Urvashi Sahni, Founding President and CEO of Study Hall Educational Foundation, India, noted the rarity of finding willing partners:

*“Because [the then-Secretary of Education of Jaipur] was so keen, I went to the advisory council meetings nine times when I was expected to go only twice. I was so thrilled to see a government officer who was so interested, who was so willing to make this happen, [that] I went at my own expense to another state that was not mine.”*

Mathias Mulumba, Financial Literacy Coordinator/ Curriculum Specialist, National Curriculum Development Centre in Uganda, explained that to pilot a financial literacy curriculum, the NCDC (National Curriculum Development Center) used the support of several organizations:

- 1) a German entity, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) GmbH) who provided funding and technical expertise,*
- 2) local NGOs and their curriculum,*
- 3) the international NGO Aflatoun who supported the local NGOs, and*
- 4) schools to gather input about whether the curricular materials they were developing were working.*

*“Some of these organizations have been working with NCDC for over 10 years,” Mulumba noted.*

The New Allies report from Catalyst 2030 observes that

*“many civil servants have little or no exposure to systemic approaches in their formal training...; moreover, they tend to be incentivised – explicitly or implicitly – to look at short-term, output-oriented metrics*

*and to avoid even relatively small risks”<sup>12</sup> The report further notes that social entrepreneurs may at least initially “be less familiar with public sector terminology and less skilled at navigating administrative processes. As a consequence, civil servants and systems social entrepreneurs often lack a common language for, and understanding of, effective approaches to address societal issues.”<sup>13</sup>*

**Thus, the second section of the toolkit encourages system leaders to do the following:**

- *Read excerpts from the 2022 Catalyst Report and from the UN Secretary-General’s Vision Statement that are specifically about the need for collaboration.*
- *List the government representatives, civil society partners, and private sector entities with whom they are working or speaking about advancing the SDGs or other key priorities in education.*
- *List those with whom they would like to work but do not yet know.*
- *Describe how their jurisdictions include local communities, NGOs, the private sector, parents, students, educators, and other key stakeholders in their conversations about education. If their jurisdictions do not include local communities, what would enable their inclusion?*
- *Discuss the following: If students are included in the answers to the questions above, what kinds of students are they? What could their jurisdictions do to include all voices?*
- *Discuss how education leaders are collaborating with other government entities such as the ministries of finance, environment, and/or culture.*
- *Note key takeaways and reflections from the discussion above.*

**The hope** is that these steps would give a good initial diagnosis about how well leaders’ jurisdictions are cultivating collective leadership across the education ecosystem. System leaders might begin to learn the conditions that enable strong partnerships in their jurisdictions. This would help them begin to strengthen those parts of the system that are not yet as strong in building collective leadership.

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<sup>12</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2021). *New Allies: How governments can unlock the potential of social entrepreneurs for the common good.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## SECTION THREE OF THE TOOLKIT:

“What will you do together?”

### CORRESPONDS WITH NEED THREE:

**We need a transformation of the why, what, and how of learning to equip young people with the knowledge, experience, skills, and values needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.**

The third section of the toolkit encourages education leaders to decide what they will do together. For education systems to be transformed and the collective vision for education developed in Section One of the Toolkit to be implemented, leaders must act together.

While this section of the toolkit and the appendix at the end of the document suggest a few key steps for acting together, interviews, focus groups, and surveys also brought forth the following foundational activities to consider doing together as part of the process.

**First**, the group might consider ways to institutionalise partnerships. One way to institutionalise acting together in partnership would be to designate an organisation as a backbone or bridge organisation that connects the private sector, academia, and government for the purpose of achieving collective impact.<sup>14</sup>

**Second**, system leaders might consider partnering with career administrators in the middle layer of government bureaucracies and organisations who will stay through changes in the political and leadership cycles.

**Third**, system leaders might consider activities that build trust, such as inviting each other to learn more about their work. They might also engage in collective and collaborative learning, with evaluations that are transparent. A transparent, co-developed evaluation system or plan would not only build capacity but also trust, as stakeholders would know that decisions are based after careful examination of concrete evidence and not arbitrarily.

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example: [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

**Key quotes from interviews that illustrate these points are the following:**

Dina Buchbinder, Founder and President, Education for Sharing, in Mexico observed,

*“One thing that we have done very specifically to create trust is to really not just tell the [potential partners] about what we do, but really try to understand where are they, what are they facing, what challenges are they grappling with, in terms of required administrative requirements and what the national agenda is – and where do we fit in and how can we serve that? How can we really contribute and collaborate in terms of bringing value to what they have already established?”*

Roeland Monasch, CEO of Aflatoun International, whose organization works in over 100 countries, shared,

*“Often, we identify one or more people within the government, and we invite them to our global conference. Aside from us visiting them, we try to engage with them; we [introduce] them to other countries [where our work is already in progress] and then they get inspired and then they inspire each other.”*

Sofialeticia Morales Garza, Nuevo Leon Secretary of Education, Mexico is specific about the need to use evaluations to build trust and not punish. She says,

*“We do not use the evaluation [to] punish anybody but just to improve the quality of education; giving information to each principal or director of different schools, for example, is in service of improving together.”*

Building trust requires a leaning toward one another, a genuine curiosity to learn more about each other, and experiencing together the kind of work that they might do together. Indeed, transformative change is more than transactional change and relationships.

**Thus, the third section of the toolkit encourages system leaders to do the following:**

- *Identify the strengths of the organisations and their leaders.*
- *Identify the qualities that organisations and leaders in the collective desire to cultivate from their partners.*
- *Identify what kinds of collective action and partnerships already exist in the jurisdiction.*
- *Identify what system leaders want to do together to advance their collective vision.*
- *What recommendations experienced leaders and organisations have about partnering and acting together.*
- *Summarize key reflections and next action steps.*
- *Note key takeaways and reflections from the discussion above.*

**The hope** for this section of the toolkit is that system leaders assess what actions and partnerships already exist and learn from them. Being clear about one's own strengths and about what one wants to gain from partnerships would assist system leaders in focusing on easier points of natural partnerships and connections before delving more deeply into what it would take to continue to co-create pathways to the kind of transformative education that the 2022 Catalyst Report and UN Secretary-General's Vision Statements both espouse.



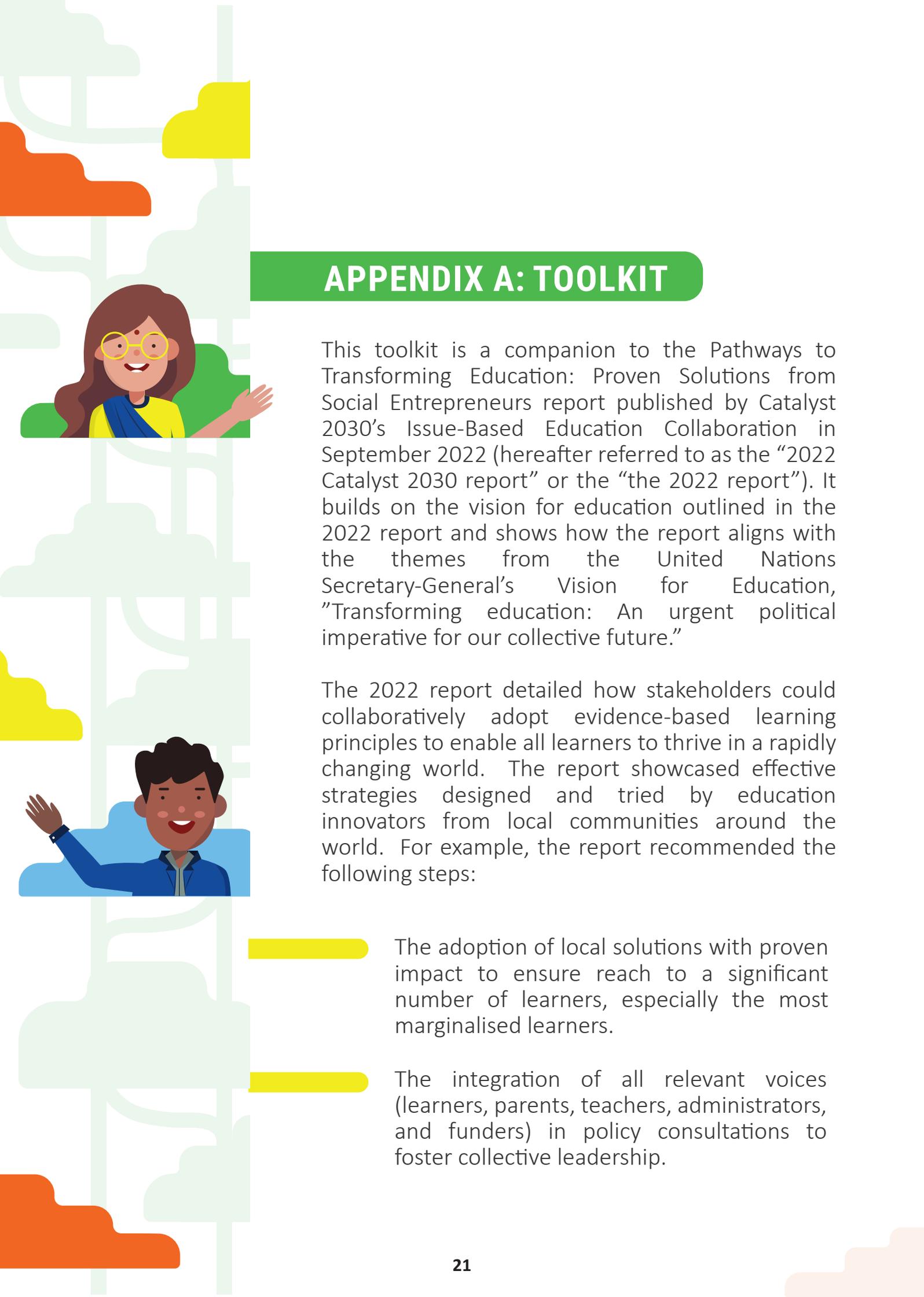
## CONCLUSION

Thus, each section of the toolkit below outlines key principles that emerged as shared themes across the interviews, surveys, and focus groups that were conducted in the spring of 2023. Every section expands upon and demonstrates these principles. To effectively engage relevant stakeholders, we developed this toolkit to bring to practice the call by António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, for a “whole of government effort necessitating a new eco-system for education, with a clear line of accountability between vision, commitments, resources, actions, and results.”<sup>15</sup>

What emerged as a dominant theme from interviews was that at the centre of transformative partnerships are people who are deeply connected with their purpose, vision, and mission. They see their community, which includes the government, as deeply influential in shaping the well-being of their region and country. They had been shaped by past experiences that had taught them to value others in their community. They hold fast, with hope, to a vision of the future in which challenges have not only been met but addressed together with others, with rigour, creativity, excellence, and integrity.

This toolkit serves to capture and give flesh to these insights, with words from systems leaders themselves. Catalyst 2030 is with you in the journey of embracing a new vision for education and the learning principles to transform education. Please reach out for support and with your stories of success and inspiration.

<sup>15</sup> UN Secretary-General (2022). *Transforming Education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future*. UN, p.7.



## APPENDIX A: TOOLKIT



This toolkit is a companion to the Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven Solutions from Social Entrepreneurs report published by Catalyst 2030's Issue-Based Education Collaboration in September 2022 (hereafter referred to as the "2022 Catalyst 2030 report" or the "the 2022 report"). It builds on the vision for education outlined in the 2022 report and shows how the report aligns with the themes from the United Nations Secretary-General's Vision for Education, "Transforming education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future."



The 2022 report detailed how stakeholders could collaboratively adopt evidence-based learning principles to enable all learners to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The report showcased effective strategies designed and tried by education innovators from local communities around the world. For example, the report recommended the following steps:

— The adoption of local solutions with proven impact to ensure reach to a significant number of learners, especially the most marginalised learners.

— The integration of all relevant voices (learners, parents, teachers, administrators, and funders) in policy consultations to foster collective leadership.

This toolkit builds on the recommendations made in the report. It is meant to act as a conversation starter to foster flexible, sustainable collaborations in education policy and practice; it is not a rigid roadmap for implementation. It is meant to provide practical steps to support education systems worldwide in moving towards a more expanded view of education laid out in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 4, which describes what quality education should look like in this century. <sup>16</sup>



## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

We acknowledge that there are multiple pathways to transforming education that are globally informed and locally rooted. System leaders can use this toolkit for personal reflection but more importantly, for team or network conversations in your jurisdictions. Catalyst 2030 was started with the recognition that connecting people and organizations across boundaries contributes to stronger foundations for systemic change in communities, nations, and regions globally.<sup>17</sup> This toolkit is meant to be a starting point for a collective journey to transform education together.

Based on interviews and focus groups with systems leaders, social entrepreneurs, and educators, and on surveys completed by social entrepreneurs and educators, this toolkit was conceptualised to offer a few of the basic conditions for co-creating pathways to transform education, such as conversation, understanding each other's strengths and challenges, working together, and building trust and relationships.



**Governments and social entrepreneurs have much to learn from each other. If they are to partner, mutual learning built on mutual curiosity and mutual respect needs to be encouraged.** Reflective discussion questions and action steps are included to help governments, multilateral agencies, social entrepreneurs and educators collaborate to transform education and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals together.

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<sup>16</sup> United Nations (n.d.). SDG 4. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

<sup>17</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2022). *Catalysing Change: Catalytic networks and catalysing collaboration towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals*. <https://catalyst2030.net/resources/catalysing-change-2022/>

# 7 WHY DO YOU ENGAGE IN THIS WORK? WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR EDUCATION?

Government leaders and social entrepreneurs interviewed for this addendum to the report observed that the most effective and helpful partners in their work are those who seem to have a purpose beyond themselves and a vision bigger than their job or organization.

In the forward to the 2022 report, the co-chairs, Dr. Urvashi Sahni, Roeland Monasch, and Olivier Brechard proposed the following concept of education:

*“Education is to be understood broadly and comprehensively, as enabling the learning of the knowledge, skills, and values needed to flourish and shape the future, with a deep sense of caring and connectedness with the planet and everyone in it. Given a rapidly changing world, the purpose of education must enable people, societies, and the planet to thrive.”*<sup>18</sup>

This statement aligns with the United Nations Secretary-General’s statement on transforming education, which was issued during the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. Informed by an inclusive preparatory process, he issued a Vision Statement to the Member States and the global public to support the joint efforts towards a transforming education. In it, he wrote the following words:

*“A truly transformative education should build on what communities, families, parents, and children treasure most. It should respond to local, national and global needs, cultures, and capacities. It should promote the holistic development of all learners throughout their lives, supporting them to realise their aspirations and to contribute to their families, communities, and societies.”*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2022). *Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven solutions from social entrepreneurs*  
<https://catalyst2030.net/resources/pathways-to-transforming-education-proven-solutions-from-social-entrepreneurs/>

<sup>19</sup> UN Secretary-General (2022). *Transforming education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future*. UN Transforming Education Summit 2022.  
[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/09/sg\\_vision\\_statement\\_on\\_transforming\\_education.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/09/sg_vision_statement_on_transforming_education.pdf)



## REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION 1: Collective Vision

1. In 2-3 sentences, describe your vision for education. OR sketch a picture of your vision for education below. Why do you engage in this work? What draws you?
2. Share your visions for education with each other in your groups.
3. What is your jurisdiction's vision for education? How do you know?
4. How does your collective vision for education line up with the UN Secretary-General's Vision for Education?
5. Write your key takeaway summaries from your reflections and discussions here:



## 2 WITH WHOM WILL YOU WORK TO ACHIEVE THESE VISIONS AND ADVANCE THE SDGS?

To advance these visions of education into action, the 2022 Pathways to Education Report included a call to collaborate. It stated:

*“At Catalyst 2030, our goal for SDG4 is to catalyse enduring connections that can help 21st-century learners thrive. The principles [in this report] are grounded in... ecosystem encompassing approaches to collaboration. The intent is to extend learning and the practices facilitating it, far beyond the conventional spheres.”*<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, the UN Secretary-General ends his vision statement by calling for collective leadership:

*“Education transformation requires the collective commitment and action of visionary political leaders at all levels, parents, students, teachers, and the public at large... Inclusive and participatory mechanisms to accompany and guide national transformation efforts are also critical.”*<sup>21</sup>

SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals, further states that the 2030 Agenda *“requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society”*.<sup>22</sup> Researchers further note that sustainable development is a complex concept, *“dealing with different temporal and spatial scales and with multiple stakeholders. As such, it requires a pluralistic approach to deal with multiple actors and multiple levels, so as to create a common vision of the planet’s future, and to resolve potential trade-offs.”*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Catalyst 2030 (2022). Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven solutions from social entrepreneurs (p. 69). <https://catalyst2030.net/resources/pathways-to-transforming-education-proven-solutions-from-social-entrepreneurs/>

<sup>21</sup> UN Secretary-General (2022). Transforming education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future. UN Transforming Education Summit 2022. [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/09/sg\\_vision\\_statement\\_on\\_transforming\\_education.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/09/sg_vision_statement_on_transforming_education.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

<sup>23</sup> Mariani, L., Trivellato, B., Martini, M. et al. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals Through Collaborative Innovation: Evidence from Four European Initiatives. *J Bus Ethics* 180, 1075–1095 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05193-z>



## REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION 2: Cultivating Collective Leadership

1. List the government representatives, civil society partners, and private sector entities with whom you are working or speaking about advancing the SDGs or key priorities in education.
2. List those with whom you would like to work, but do not yet know.
3. Describe how your jurisdiction includes local communities, NGOs, the private sector, parents, students, educators, and other key stakeholders in their conversations about education. If they do not include local communities, what would enable their inclusion?
4. If students are included in your answers to the questions above, are they only the best performers or those who have dropped out or have been pushed out of schools and/or are otherwise most marginalised? What could your jurisdiction do to include all voices?
5. How are education leaders collaborating with other government entities, such as the ministry of finance, environment, and/or culture in your jurisdiction?
6. Write any key takeaways or notes from your discussion in the space below.



# 3 WHAT WILL YOU DO TOGETHER?

To highlight the shared themes across the 2022 Catalyst 2030 report and the UN Secretary-General's Vision Statement on Transforming Education, we summarise the following set of recommendations from the 2022 Catalyst Transforming Pathways to Education report. Based on the experiences of education social entrepreneurs and innovators around the world, the recommendations call for collaborations: <sup>9</sup>

**1.** For governments to adopt a participatory approach to policy-making and a partnership approach to policy implementation for education. This can mean:

- *Organising periodic consultations with a wide group of stakeholders to reinforce a shared purpose for education.*
- *Fostering collective leadership within local learning ecosystems.*

**2.** For funders to create creative funding models to enable local grassroots educator innovators to work together towards achieving sustainable development goals. This can mean:

- *Investing in local leaders who are familiar with the local context, problems, and solutions.*
- *Balancing short-term project funding with unrestricted, long-term capacity-building efforts that sustain efforts across political cycles to give innovations time to be implemented.*

**3.** For social entrepreneurs and civil society to explore collaborations to address learner needs. This can mean:

- *Collaborating to expand access to the identified breadth of skills for learners.*
- *Joining together to move from an organisational way of thinking to a sectoral way of thinking that enables systems to change.*

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<sup>24</sup> The section was adapted from: Catalyst 2030 (2022). Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven solutions from social entrepreneurs.

<https://catalyst2030.net/resources/pathways-to-transforming-education-proven-solutions-from-social-entrepreneurs/>

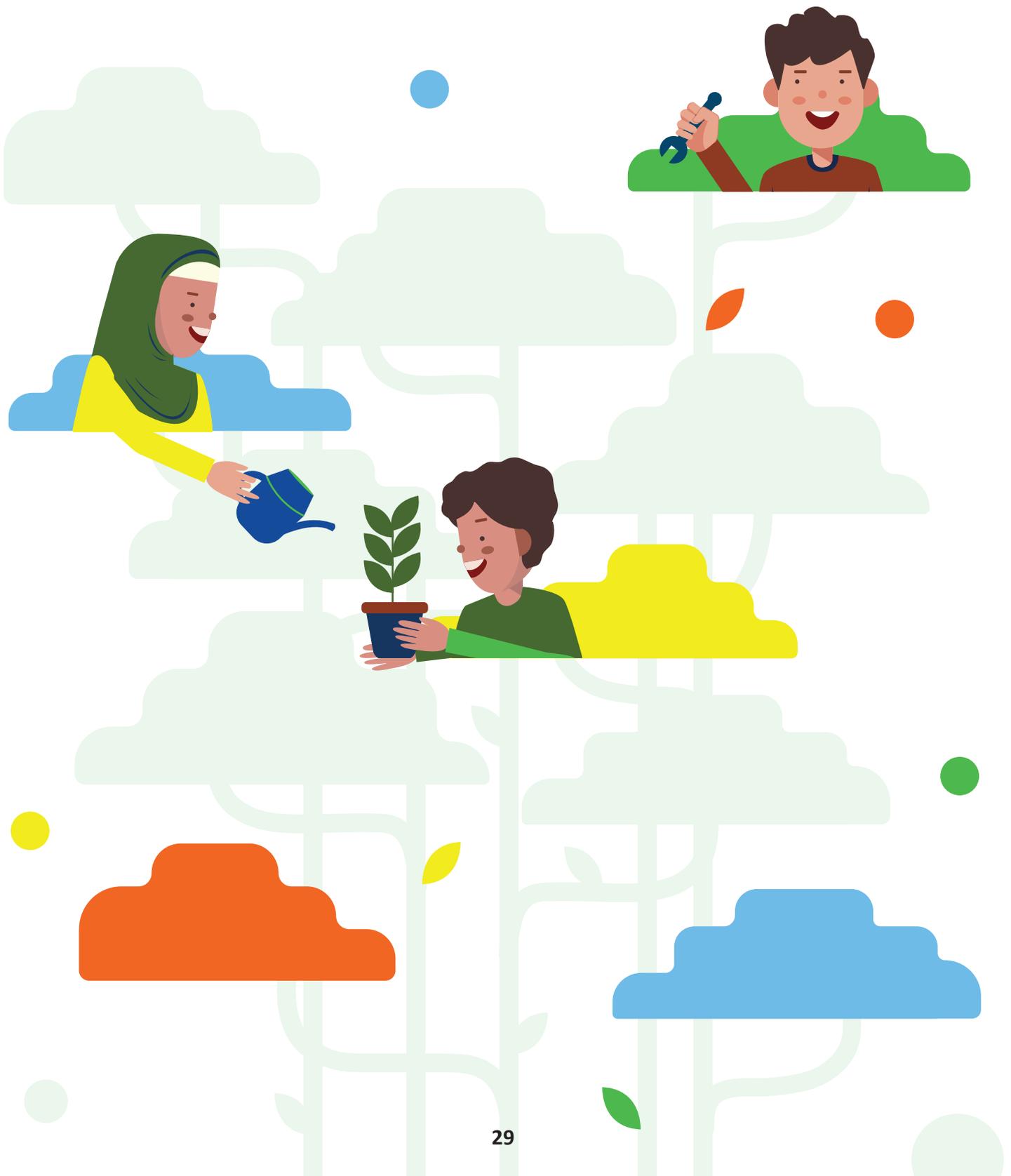


## REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION 3: Acting Together

1. What strengths or gifts do you and/or your organisation bring to your partners, current or future?
2. What strengths or gifts do or would you want to receive from your partners, current or future?
3. What are you already doing together with partners to advance education for all learners and/or advance the SDGs?
4. What do you want to do together with partners to advance education for all learners and/or advance the SDGs?
5. What recommendations do you have to others in your jurisdiction about partnering and acting together?
6. Write your summary and/or takeaway notes below.



Catalyst 2030 recognises that making recommendations is just one step in the movement toward co-creating pathways to transforming education. Thus it is offering this toolkit for systems leaders on how to co-create the pathways to the kind of transformative education that the Catalyst 2030 Pathways to Transforming Education Report from 2022 and the UN Secretary-General’s Vision Statement both espouse.



## APPENDIX B:

### Action Steps to Take toward Working Together:

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- 1.** Identify the relevant government agency, private sector, or civil society partners.
    - Research the government structure and the local jurisdiction to identify the business, the organization, the department, or the agency with the relevant authority or expertise for the issue you want to collaborate on.*
    - Social entrepreneurs want to work with the government, for example, to scale their best practices. Governments can be curious about the experience, expertise and breadth of knowledge that people from civil society might have.*
    - Research can involve reaching out to your social network, including other organizations who already have relationships with or are already working with your potential partners.*
    - Brokered introductions are helpful, including government-to-government introductions or civil society organisation to civil society organisation.*
    - Governments and civil sector organisations such as funders can hold periodic open meetings which those who are interested can attend, to build their networks.*
    - Ensure local partners are engaged, including supporting them to find funding.*
- 



## 2. Build relationships with those you consider potential partners.

- *Set up a 1:1 meeting or attend meetings or events where potential partners will be present.*
- *Before and during the meeting or event, seek to understand their priorities and needs. Listen to their objectives and goals, including any gaps and challenges.*
- *Show them what your organization offers, including ready-made plans and proofs of concept. On-site visits are particularly helpful in introducing civil society organisations and governments to each other.*
- *Identify shared goals and objectives and work in a way that builds trust over years and over changing political administrations.*
- *Consider the linguistic, socio-economic, and other cultural contexts from which your partners come and support participation from everyone by co-constructing an inclusive environment for collaboration. Even from within your jurisdiction there may be many cultures and languages present.*



## 3. Implement the collaboration, including co-developing plans to monitor and evaluate.

- *Develop and use measurement frameworks that are learner-centred and use them to serve as guidance documents for continual learning, engagement and intentional conversations with partners about improvement and growth.*
- *Avoid duplication of effort and streamline toward systems change by adopting joint reporting and/or consider using standard reporting tools that can be shared with and across multiple organizations.*
- *Use technology to ensure accessibility and equitable access.*
- *Plan for longevity by co-developing 1-, 3-, 5-, 10- and 15-year strategic plans with partners, including funders.*
- *Support the collaboration necessary for effective implementation by building the infrastructure for sustained engagement. This could include building a backbone organisation and roles within respective government agencies and other organisations for continued co-ordination and communication.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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