

Development: A process of lifting the ability of individuals and societies to influence and make decisions and choices that impact their lives — and then to actualize at least some of the critical choices they have made. Development efforts provide avenues for the empowerment of those who are most often marginalized or disadvantaged within a community or society.

Leadership: The process of guiding a group of people, organization, network, or coalition toward a desired transformation; often reliant upon a set of qualities within an individual, group or institution that inspires or builds capacity for transformational change, through the capacity, credibility, and moral authority of the leader.

Movement: Change that makes society more just and more equitable, addressing the wellbeing of all. The term “change” when lacking the modifier “transformation” can often be limited to substituting or replacing elements and processes. Our concern is transformations that cut across communities and societies. For this, change must be transformational, making a real difference to lives and to the wellbeing of societies.

Outcomes/Impact: These measurements help to understanding the difference that efforts at transformational change actually make against stated goals or targets. The terms concern qualitative and/or quantitative measurements of change. By setting these benchmarks, leaders and movements accept accountability for their efforts. The clarity these benchmarks provide to outcomes and impact help our understanding what motivates change as well as of what facilitates or obstructs it.

Replication: Another favorite in the development lexicon. It interprets success by the ability of a ‘model’ for change to be copied or transplanted elsewhere. Yet communities and societies, the context for change and transformation, are seldom carbon copies of one another. Instead, each can be unique in important ways. While their experiences and processes may not be replicable, these can have lessons for others. What may be needed therefore is to *extend*, not replicate, the learning that emerges from one set of circumstances to other efforts at transformation. For this, documentation and sharing are critical, linked to a fresh understanding of scale.

Scale: Scale is often interpreted as crunching numbers to assess power and influence. Yet scale may be more about sharing and about ripple effects. The term ‘scale’, linked to outcomes and impact, confronts so much of what happens in the ‘development industry’. Efforts at change are often challenged by the notion that success is a statistical measurement: the larger the numbers, the more meaningful the effort. Yet transformations often begin and are sustained in small numbers of individuals, households and communities. Strength and influence may emerge not from numbers, but rather from a catalyst upon which others can draw and learn. “Be the change you want to see” (Gandhi) is about scale applied within, before it can be a demonstration for others. The pursuit of growth as a statistical demonstration of ‘scale’ can risk destroying the very qualities upon which a vision and a mission may have been based.

Social enterprise: Institution that uses business methods to advance its social or mission objectives, which in turn are consistent with public or community benefit.

Social innovation: Collective efforts at solving problems creatively, with a lens on approaches that are new, or with particular respect for new applications of existing grassroots knowledge and wisdom; concepts and strategies that are more effective, efficient, sustainable or more just than current solutions (as defined by Stanford School of Business).

Transformation/transformational: Change that makes society more just and more equitable, addressing the wellbeing of all. The term “change” when lacking the modifier “transformation” can often be limited to substituting or replacing elements and processes. Our concern is transformations that cut across communities and societies. For this, change must be transformational, making a real difference to lives and to the wellbeing of societies.