

# Integrated Development

**A THEORY OF CHANGE**

**fhi360**  
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES



## TOO MANY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES HAVE LIMITED IMPACT.

Preferred and predetermined solutions often drive responses, regardless of the real problem or its actual causes, evidence of effectiveness, or meaningful local participation in making decisions and solving problems. Moreover, many development efforts (effective or not) are uncoordinated, overlapping, or duplicative and thus waste valuable and limited resources. At the same time, we know that determinants of quality of life, particularly

at the household level, are so intimately linked that successes in one domain are often limited or negatively affected by problems in another. For example, improvements in food security and nutrition go only so far when families do not have access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene. We understand that problems are connected but do not yet know whether, when, or how their solutions should be similarly connected.



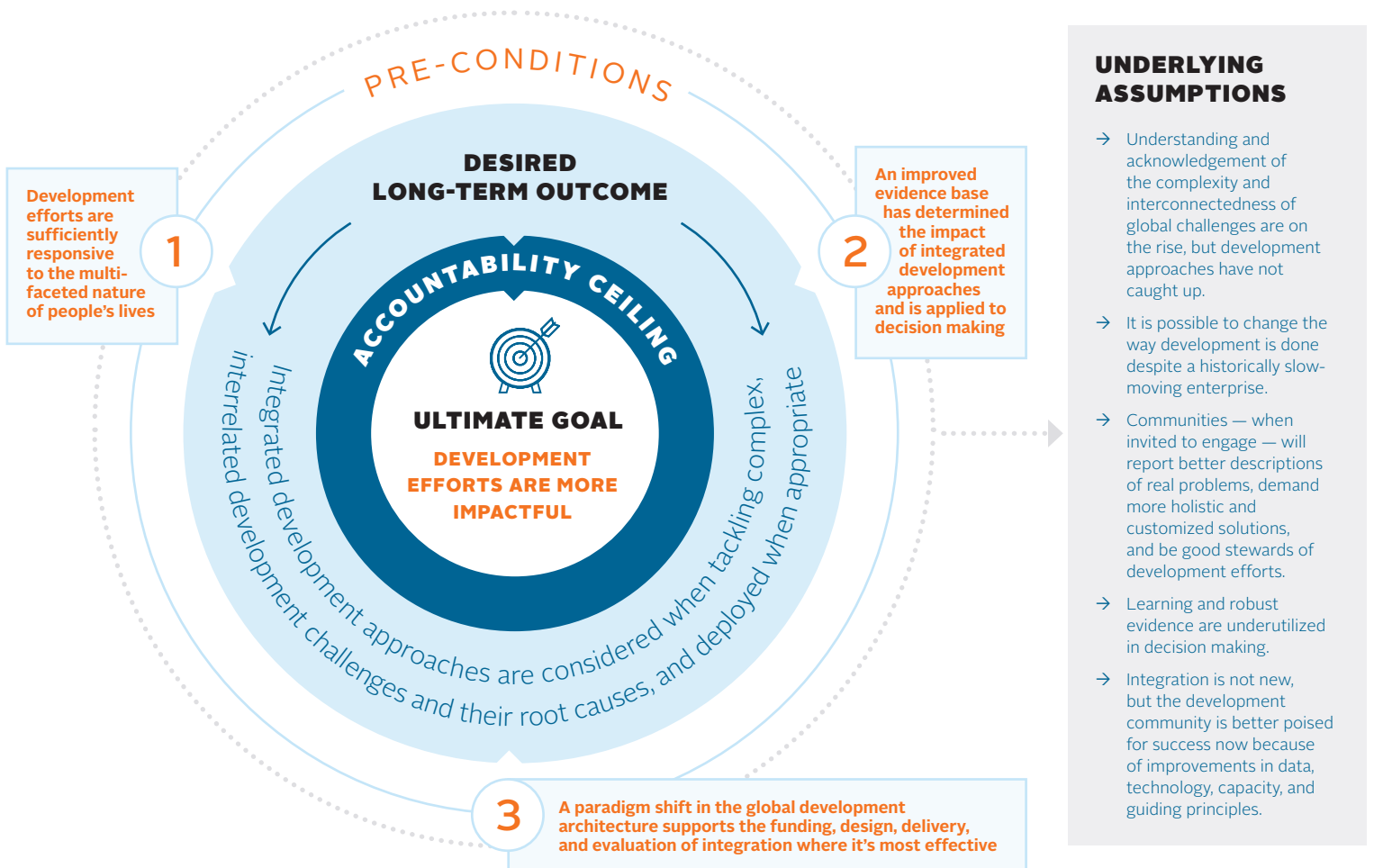
Therefore, deepening our understanding of the complexity of challenges and contexts and customizing our responses to simultaneously address multiple aspects of communities and people's lives could provide a powerful opportunity to improve the way development efforts are designed, delivered, and evaluated.

**Integrated Development: A Theory of Change**<sup>1</sup> outlines the ultimate goal and long-term outcome we seek to achieve through this lens. Our **ultimate goal**, **“Development efforts are more impactful,”** goes above and beyond what is commonly referred to as an ‘accountability ceiling,’ which separates the outcomes an organization will monitor (and claim credit for attaining) from the higher-order outcomes that are beyond the organization’s power to achieve (i.e., those outcomes influenced by multiple external factors). Therefore, our **long-term outcome**, serving as the goal within our accountability ceiling (i.e., what we can influence), is **“Integrated development approaches are considered when tackling complex, interrelated development challenges and their root causes, and deployed when appropriate.”** Importantly, this outcome treats integrated development as a possible means to an end, and therefore is neither a goal in itself nor necessarily the most appropriate approach in all cases. The core aim, rather, is for integrated approaches to be explored for effectiveness, routinely considered within decision making, and systematically supported if they will add value and produce the most impact.

To realize our long-term outcome, three broad pre-conditions must be present: 1) development efforts are sufficiently responsive to the multi-faceted nature of people’s lives, 2) an improved evidence base has determined the impact of integrated development approaches and is applied to decision making, and 3) a paradigm shift in the global development architecture supports the funding, design, delivery, and evaluation of integration where it is most effective. By articulating these pre-conditions, the changes required to create them, and the activities that will realistically produce the desired outcomes, the theory of change seeks to answer the question “What will it take to address human development challenges holistically using integrated development approaches where appropriate?” It also describes the core assumptions underlying our overarching theory. For each pre-condition, the relevant changes, outcomes, and activities are briefly described on the following pages.

<sup>1</sup> FHI 360 defines integrated development as an intentional approach that links the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs across disciplines and sectors to produce an amplified, lasting impact on people’s lives.

<sup>2</sup> In standard Theory of Change language, the term pre-condition means any and all outcomes that must be achieved before a long-term outcome can be realized.

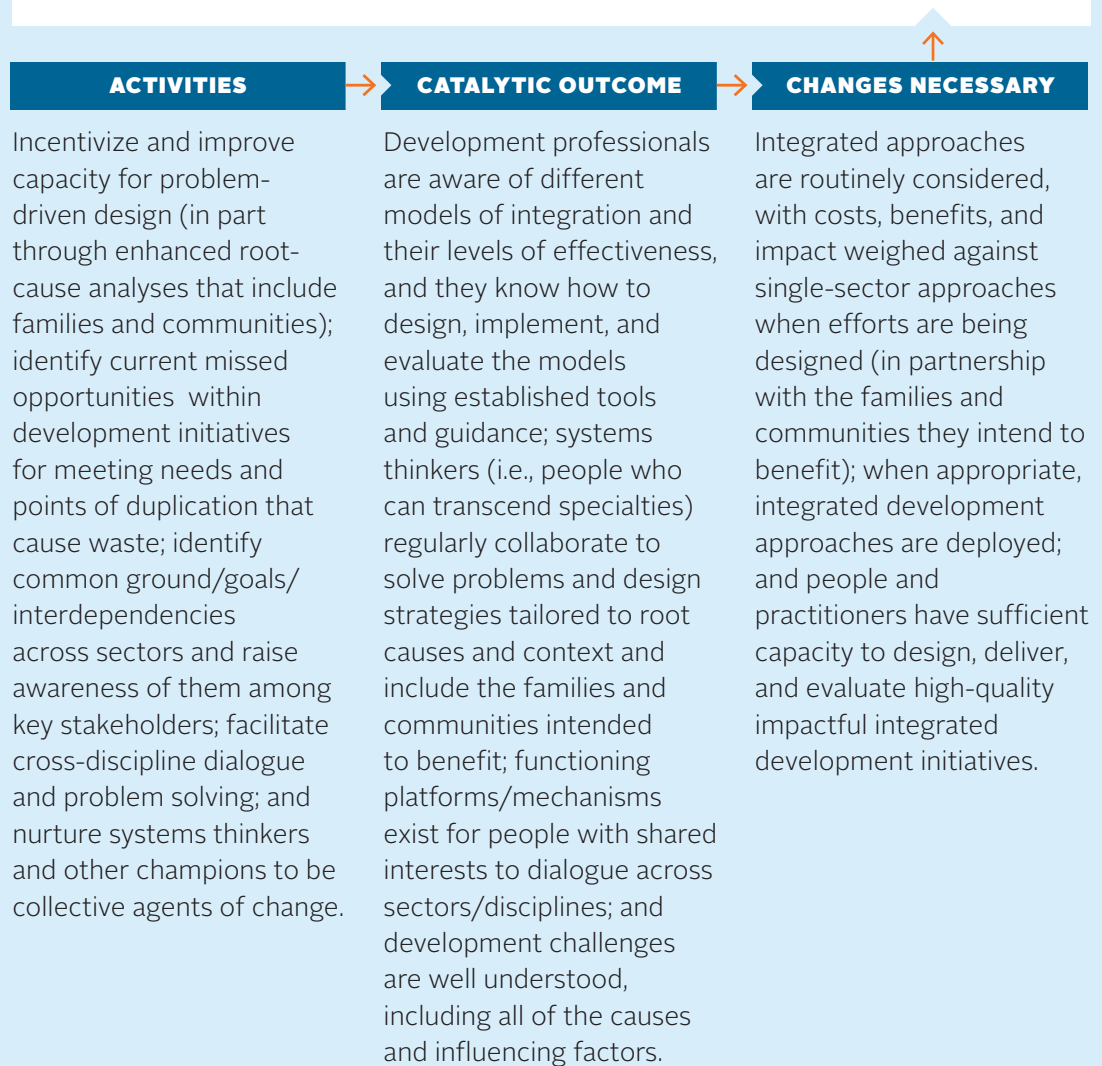


# 1

PRE-CONDITION:

**Development efforts are sufficiently responsive to the multi-faceted nature of people's lives**

To tackle actual problems and their root causes, development initiatives need to be more transparent and effective in addressing the substantial complexity of the problems they seek to solve. In other words, the approaches may need to be as interconnected as the problems. This pre-condition assures that development activities reflect an improved understanding of system complexities, are less assumptive and less-frequently driven by entrenched solutions seeking problems, and deploy activities that are appropriately human-centered in their design and are customized to their contexts.



# 2

PRE-CONDITION:

**An improved evidence base has determined the impact of integrated development approaches and is applied to decision making**

Substantial commitments (financial and behavioral) are required to improve the way we learn about, measure, and refine our initiatives. Moreover, knowledge needs to be applied iteratively, catalyzing the pursuit of promising approaches and the retirement of others revealed to be ineffective (no matter how entrenched, popular, or well-funded). Within this context, many integrated development approaches are being evaluated with respect to their ultimate impact but not for whether there was value added or synergy produced specifically because they were integrated. This pre-condition assures that this knowledge gap has been addressed and that decision makers actively apply findings to development funding, policies, and programs.



# 3

PRE-CONDITION:

**A paradigm shift in the global development architecture supports the funding, design, delivery, and evaluation of integration where it's most effective**

Important changes to the global development enterprise are required to move beyond the status quo and alter deeply entrenched patterns of decision making in development. This pre-condition implies that commitments to doing things differently are made from all spheres of development (i.e., from local communities, experts, policy makers, funders).







# THE POWER OF INTEGRATION

[fhi360.org/integrated-development](http://fhi360.org/integrated-development)



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