Delivering lasting, transformative change

Introduction

For more than half a century, FHI 360 has delivered research and programs with significant impact around the world. We know that lasting change happens when individuals, communities, governments and private entities identify an urgently needed transformation and are at the heart of developing and implementing the solution that they find most effective.

Our new Sustainable Impact Framework lays out the actions and pathways that foster sustainable, positive impact — and that ensure it is defined by affected communities themselves. The framework defines what sustainable impact means for FHI 360 and charts how we deliver or influence it, as we strive to ensure that people everywhere can access the opportunities they need to lead full, healthy lives.

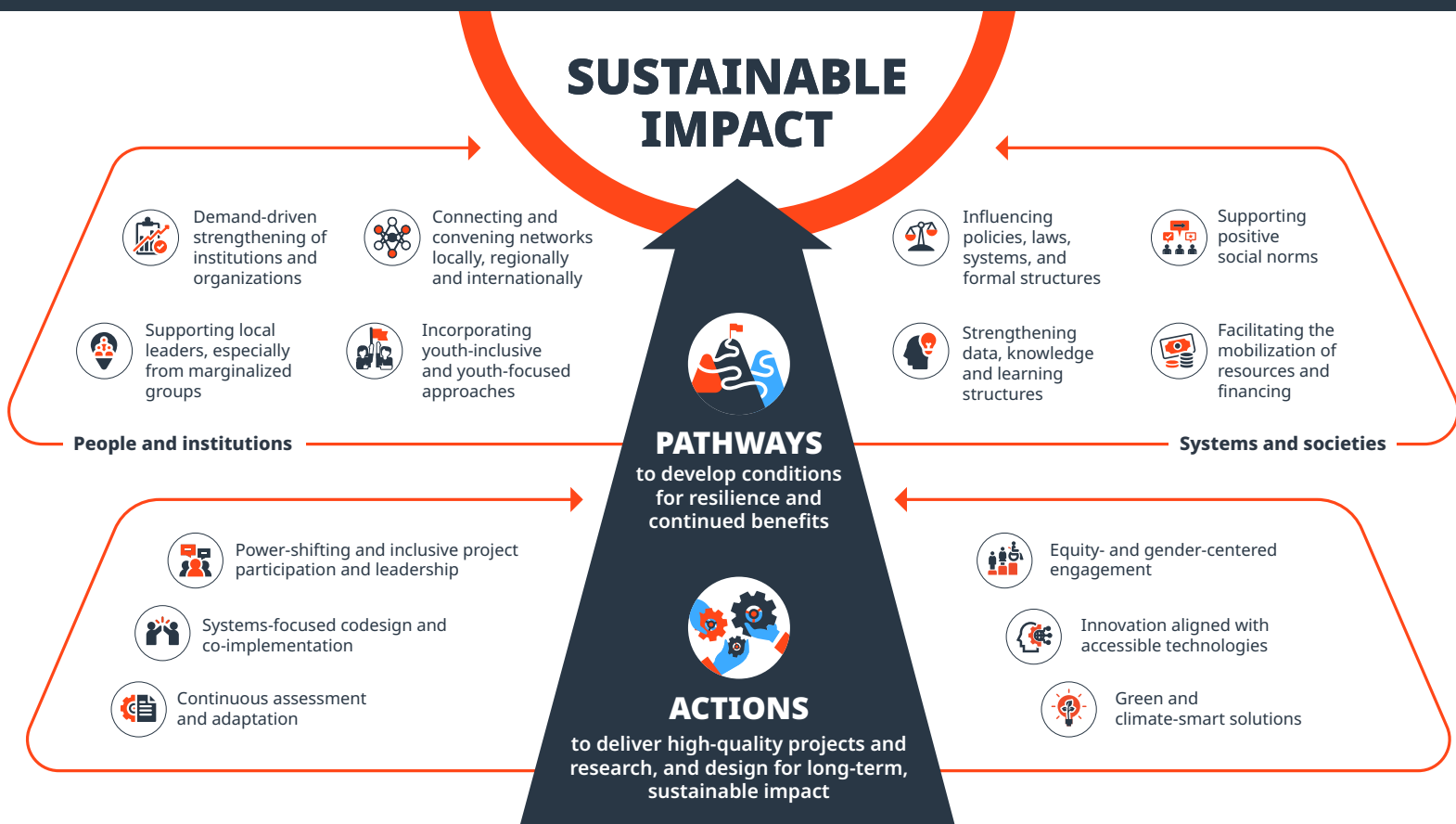DICT

Sustainable impact (n)
səˈsteɪnəbᵊl ˈɪmpækt

When local systems continue to produce locally defined benefits, and are resilient to shocks, after a project has concluded.

OUR STRATEGY

Sustainable Impact Framework

At the base of our framework are **six actions** that teams can take to deliver high-quality programs and research while prioritizing sustainable impact. The next level includes **eight program theory pathways**. These are ways that our teams design projects to strengthen resilience and promote continued results. The actions and pathways a project takes depend on its objectives and resources. Four of these pathways focus on engagement with people and institutions; the other four focus on influencing societies and systems. By combining these actions and pathways, FHI 360 strives for lasting, transformative change.

SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

PATHWAYS
to develop conditions for resilience and continued benefits

ACTIONS
to deliver high-quality projects and research, and design for long-term, sustainable impact

People and institutions

- Demand-driven strengthening of institutions and organizations
- Connecting and convening networks locally, regionally and internationally
- Supporting local leaders, especially from marginalized groups
- Incorporating youth-inclusive and youth-focused approaches
- Power-shifting and inclusive project participation and leadership
- Systems-focused codesign and co-implementation
- Continuous assessment and adaptation

Systems and societies

- Influencing policies, laws, systems, and formal structures
- Supporting positive social norms
- Strengthening data, knowledge and learning structures
- Facilitating the mobilization of resources and financing
- Equity- and gender-centered engagement
- Innovation aligned with accessible technologies
- Green and climate-smart solutions

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FHI 360's Sustainable Impact Framework

Actions to deliver high-quality programs and research, and design for long-term, sustainable impact

ACTION 1 Power-shifting and inclusive project participation and leadership

We support local leaders and organizations in assuming leadership roles in projects and activities. Local leadership during the project creates the foundation for sustained solutions and ensures we understand and address local needs.

ACTION 2 Systems-focused codesign and co-implementation

During design and implementation, our projects take a whole-of-society, or systems, approach that accounts for the full relevant ecosystem — one that can include government, the private sector, the media, universities, civil society, communities and others. Codesign and co-implementation involve meaningful participation of representatives across the project ecosystem — funders, partners and participants. This collaborative approach promotes a common understanding of pressing needs and what must happen to meet them.

ACTION 3 Continuous assessment and adaptation

We routinely assess where we stand and adapt as we go. Teams may conduct context assessments; stakeholder mapping; formative research; network analysis; monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL); and collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) so that projects remain contextually relevant as they progress.

ACTION 4 Equity- and gender-centered engagement

As we engage with people and institutions and influence societies and systems, we maintain an equity- and gender-centered mindset. We challenge and address existing gender norms, biases and dynamics when they impede progress. We study the historical contexts where we work, seeking to understand how they shape the structures and norms, and we continuously challenge our own biases.

ACTION 5 Innovation in alignment with accessible technologies

Project teams explore, pilot and scale human-centered innovation designed in direct response to identified needs, choosing technology with long-term resource availability in mind. We define innovation as the systematic ideation, development, testing and implementation of solutions to achieve greater social impact in response to identified needs. Sustainable innovation responds to needs with solutions that are appropriate to the context.

ACTION 6 Green and climate-smart solutions

We seek and apply environmentally conscious and climate-smart practices throughout our work to limit our negative impact and introduce environmentally sustainable solutions. We look for green and climate-smart choices in project implementation and guide our partners and participants to make similar choices. We encourage our funders to include program elements that address environment and climate challenges across sectors.

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Pathways to develop conditions for resilience and continued benefits

PATHWAY 1 Demand-driven strengthening of institutions and organizations

All institutions and organizations, regardless of location, size and experience, require ongoing organizational development. We work with organizations to understand their needs and strengthen their capacities to achieve their objectives. When done successfully, organizational development results in institutions and organizations across local systems that are more capable of navigating current and future challenges to benefit their constituents and communities.

PATHWAY 2 Connecting and convening networks locally, regionally and internationally

To promote learning and action, we facilitate connections and ongoing coordination and communication between system actors and institutions.

As the roles for international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) evolve in the transition to localization and locally led development, we can consistently play the role of connector or convenor, bringing organizations and communities together for problem-solving, learning and collaboration.

PATHWAY 3 Supporting local leaders, especially from marginalized groups

In all activities, we support local leaders who can continue to advocate for and create positive change. Activities that best support local leaders reflect local priorities, account for context and prepare leaders to create conditions for transformative change. By supporting leaders from marginalized groups, we also expand social equity.

PATHWAY 4 Incorporating youth-inclusive and youth-focused approaches

Today's young people are the future's leaders, so we engage with and support them in project activities and pay attention to the intended — and unintended — consequences of our programs' impact on them.

PATHWAY 5 Influencing policies, laws, systems, and formal structures

We support civil society, networks, governments, and regional and international bodies to implement or update policy, regulatory or structural changes that create and sustain positive impact. We design our work to influence change at the highest levels because formal shifts to legal or regulatory systems often foster transformative and wide-reaching impact.

PATHWAY 6 Supporting positive social norms

We facilitate sustained behavior change by assisting local partners to support positive social norms that reinforce locally identified goals. Social norms reflect the behaviors that are expected, tolerated and censured by communities and societies; as social norms evolve, individual behavior change often follows. Many projects target behavior change directly to achieve project outcomes. When we also engage with social norms, we promote sustainable change.

PATHWAY 7 Strengthening data, knowledge, and learning structures

We strengthen structures that support individuals to learn and to use data and evidence. While the first pathway focuses on organizational capacity strengthening, this pathway focuses on how we sustainably strengthen individuals' capacities by supporting local structures (like universities or professional networks) that allow them to learn, apply knowledge, use data and adapt.

PATHWAY 8 Facilitating the mobilization of resources and financing

We facilitate the mobilization of resources necessary for partners and participants to continue to produce desired results. When possible, we work with local and national partners to identify and mobilize funding streams.

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ABOUT FHI 360

FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so that people everywhere can access the opportunities they need to lead full, healthy lives. Our staff of more than 4,000 experts work in over 60 countries around the world.

FHI 360 HEADQUARTERS

359 Blackwell Street, Suite 200
Durham, NC 27701 USA
T 1.919.544.7040

WWW.FHI360.ORG