17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

17 ROOMS FLAGSHIP
2023 SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS
DECEMBER 2023

A case for change:

Where to put your money when you talk about system change

A call for donors to invest in collective leadership development toward system change

Room 17
Building understanding of collective leadership development as a path to system change

The 17 Rooms initiative is co-hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development at The Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation. Each Room, one per SDG, was asked to identify actionable priorities that can be advanced by the end of 2024 to improve some component of 2030 outcomes for its respective Goal.

The Case For Change was produced by Room 17, a working group for Sustainable Development Goal 17 on Partnerships for the goals that convened as part of the 2023 17 Rooms flagship.

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What is collective leadership for system change and why do we need to invest in it?

By **collective leadership for sustainable development**, we mean...

Stakeholders **throughout whole ecosystems** exercising agency and leadership ...

Who have **shared purpose reflecting commitment to justice and sustainable development**

Who are **locally rooted, diverse, and inclusive**, especially of people who have experienced the inequities being addressed

Who are engaged in community and have the networks and relationships to **collaborate and learn together**

Without collective leadership, systems won't change—because systems are made of people, and it's people who have the power to change (or preserve) systems.

What does it look like to invest in collective leadership development?

Investments should foster the leadership of **people throughout ecosystems**, including people with positional authority and people with the most proximity to the issues at hand.

Investments should foster **shared purpose** toward strengthening systems and achieving equity, justice, and sustainable development.
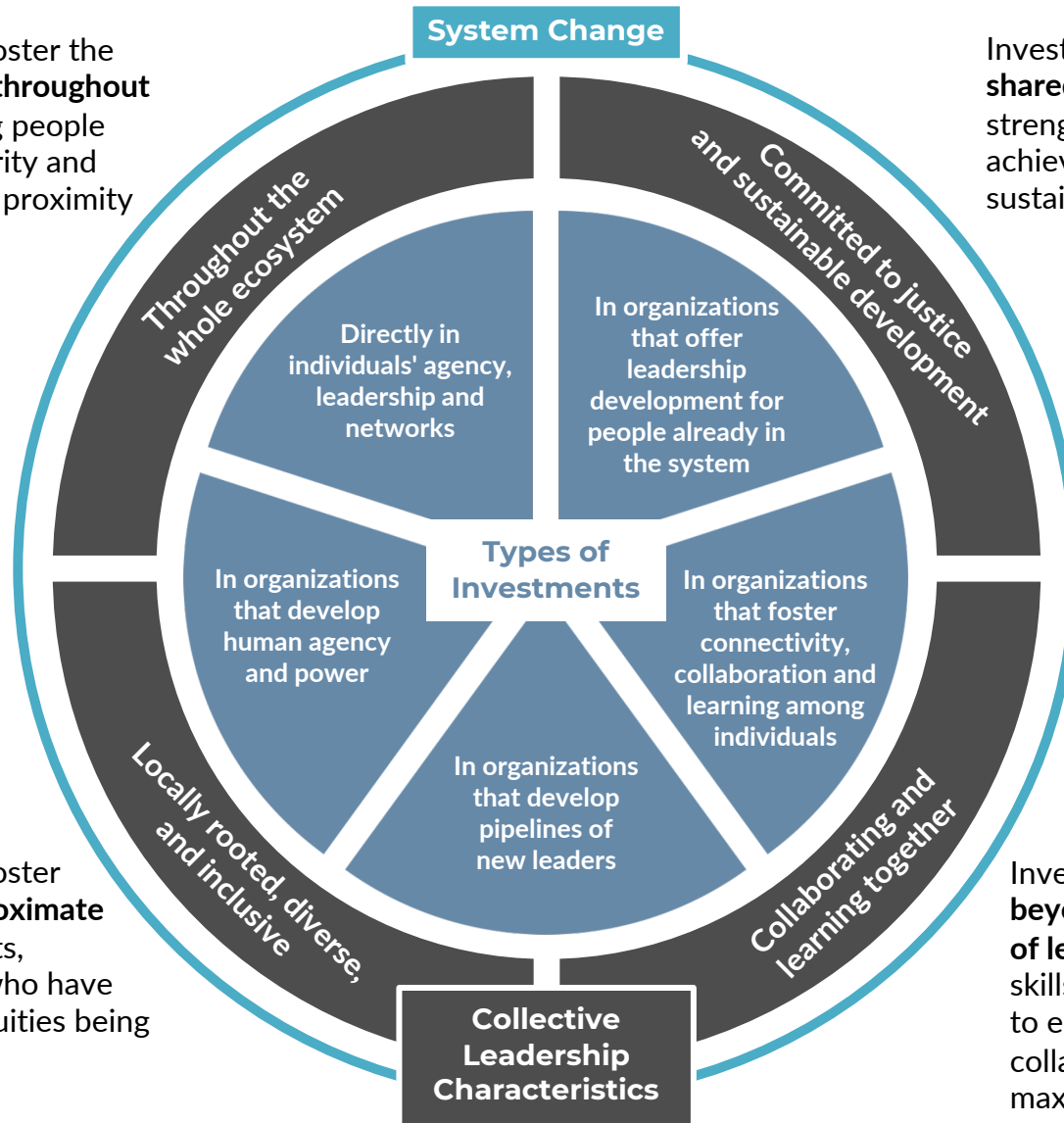
Investments should foster **diverse leadership proximate** to developing contexts, especially in people who have experienced the inequities being addressed.

Investments should move **beyond individual conceptions of leadership** and foster the skills, mindsets, and conditions to enable leadership that is collaborative and that maximizes diverse perspectives.

System Change

Throughout the whole ecosystem

Committed to justice and sustainable development

Collaborating and learning together

Locally rooted, diverse, and inclusive

Collective Leadership Characteristics

Types of Investments

Directly in individuals' agency, leadership and networks

In organizations that offer leadership development for people already in the system

In organizations that develop human agency and power

In organizations that foster connectivity, collaboration and learning among individuals

In organizations that develop pipelines of new leaders

What are we suggesting donors do differently?

We're asking donors to embrace the understanding and mindset that one of the most sustainable paths to system change is for diverse, locally rooted people throughout that ecosystem to exert agency and leadership toward shared purpose while collaborating and learning together.

We'd like to see donors do things differently	
From only …	**To also …**
Analyzing the evidence and deciding which intervention/project to spread.	Prioritizing investments in agency, leadership development, and networks so that proximate actors can pioneer solutions and continuously improve over time.
Deciding what strategies will work to accomplish objectives and searching for grantees who will pursue these strategies.	Providing general operating support so proximate leaders can pursue strategies they believe make sense.
Assuming that localization and attention to those formerly excluded means there's a lack of leadership capacity within communities.	Recognizing that leadership already exists within people in marginalized contexts and that what's needed is to invest in fostering the development of that leadership.
Investing in the leadership of a few high-profile people.	Investing in people throughout ecosystems who can shift policy, practice, and culture.
Prioritizing short-term interventions and scalability over more durable, long-term change.	Investing in agency and adaptive leadership development that strengthens and transforms systems sustainably.

How does investing in collective leadership development complement other movements that philanthropists might be focusing on?

- **Localization:** To achieve locally led development, more funding to local actors needs to be paired with more investment in developing their agency and leadership— investments that have often been made in a privileged few who aren't locally rooted in developing contexts.

- **Trust-based philanthropy:** Shifting power and creating a more equitable philanthropic sector requires fortifying the agency and leadership of people without the power and privilege created by control over resources.

- **Best buys:** We need to invest not only in technical interventions with the promise of short-term outcomes and high scalability (investing in things), but also in developing the adaptive leadership of people throughout ecosystems who can affect the system change required to address the roots of the issues and achieve long-term, sustainable development.

- **Effective altruism:** The ultimate long-termism is developing collective leadership so that all communities, all over the world, have the resilience and adaptive capacity to respond and evolve in the face of threats and opportunities.

Illustrative examples of types of investments

Investments in organizations that develop pipelines of new leaders

African Leadership Academy
Ashoka University
Atlas Corps
Campaign for Female Education
Echoing Green
Earth University
Educate Girls
Emerging Leaders Foundation
Emerging Public Leaders
Gandhi Fellowship
Global Health Corps
LALA
Mandela Washington Fellowship
Teach For All
United World Colleges

Investments in organizations that develop existing leaders

Acumen Fellowship Program
AMP Health
Archbishop Desmond Tutu Leadership Fellowships
The Asia Foundation Fellows
Aspire Leaders Program
Atlantic Fellows
Brookings Echidna Global Scholars Program
Harvard Kennedy School – Building State Capability
Indian School of Democracy
Leadership for Education Equity
Malala Fund
Obama Fellowship Foundation
TED Fellows

Investments in organizations that develop human agency

Ashoka Young Changemakers
STiR Education
Dream a Dream

Note: **This is not an exhaustive list.**

Organizations/programs listed were identified by Room 17 members.

These organizations/ programs have been categorized based on where they might primarily identify but many could fall into multiple categories.

If you know of any other organizations/ programs that develop collective leadership please contact people@peoplefirstdev.org

Investments directly in individuals' agency and leadership development
(*e.g., operation scholarship and fellowship programs*)

Ford Foundation Global Fellowship
Lemann Foundation Scholarship Programs
Mastercard Foundation Scholarship Program
Penn State Millennium Scholars

Investments in fostering the relationships between individuals and/or organizations to foster creativity and collaboration
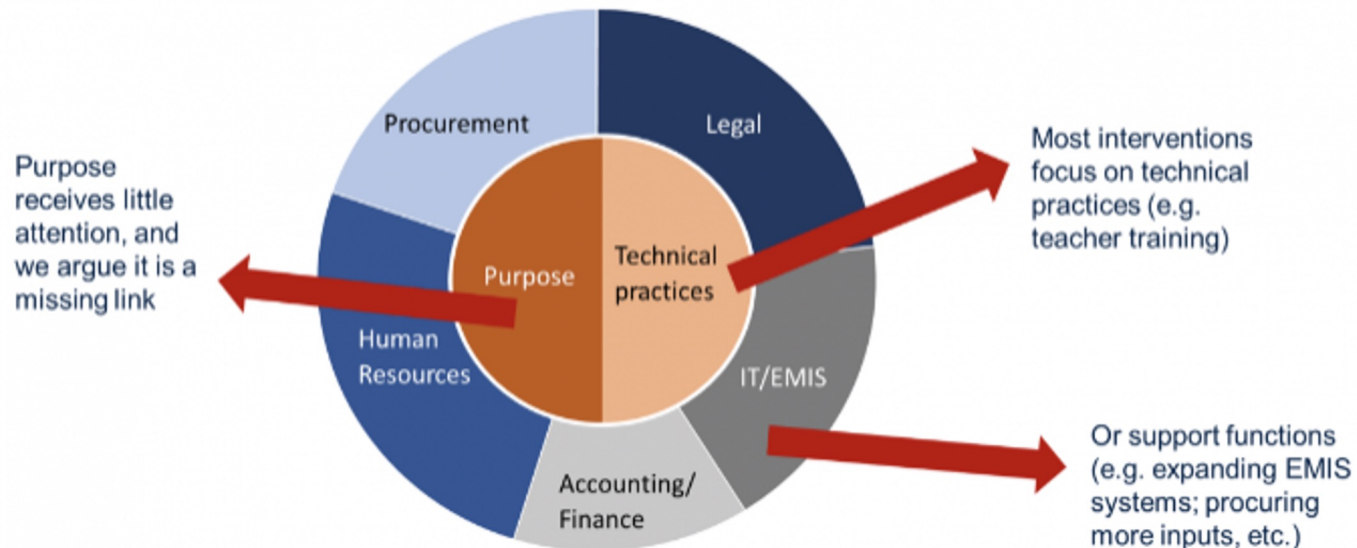
17 Rooms
AVPN
RELI
Synergos

Recent findings from <u>RISE,</u> a major global education research program focused on education systems, indicate that when systems have a collective commitment to the purpose of advancing learning for all, they are able to iterate and adapt their way toward improving learning outcomes. The results imply a need to revisit the prevailing solutions-led international development paradigm and achieve a better balance between investing in scaling discreet solutions and investing in developing the purpose-driven leadership of the people who will be responsible for adapting them and continuously improving over time in their local contexts.

Conceptual framework for understanding drivers of education system performance

Source: Kaffenberger, 2021