



UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM
STAFF COLLEGE

The Nelson Mandela Project for Social Change

**FIRST PARTNERS MEETING
29-30 APRIL, 2024**



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Introduction

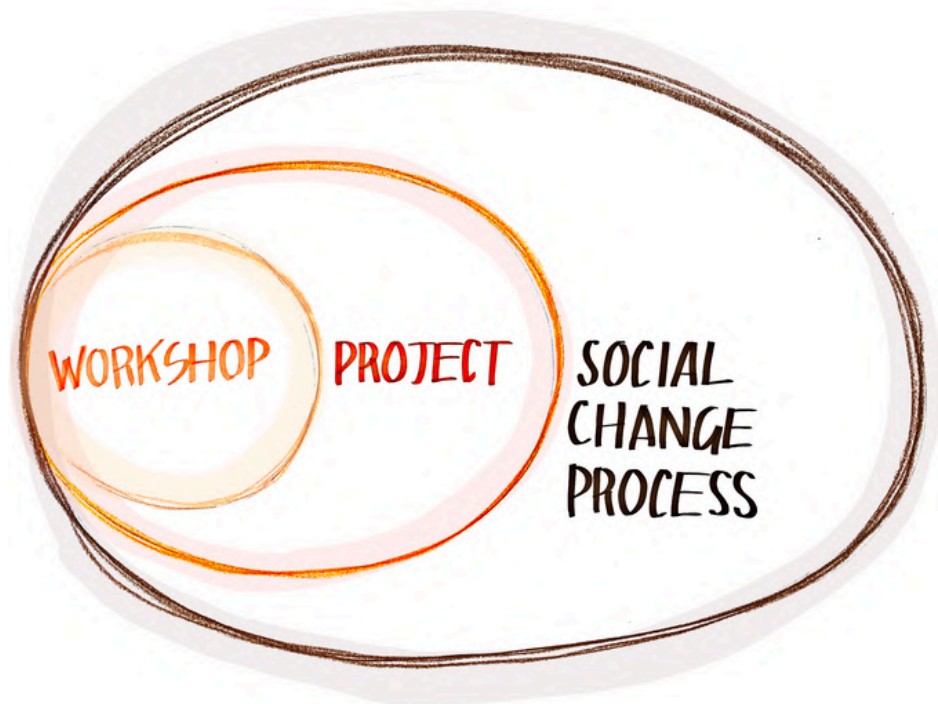
On 29 and 30 April 2024, the founding partners of the Nelson Mandela Project for Social Change, as well as special guests and observers, convened at UNSSC's campus in Turin, Italy for the first in-person meeting with the following objectives:

- **Co-create and co-author the project concept and deliverables.**
- **Develop shared ownership around the project's objectives, as well as partners' contributions to achieve them.**

The Project's philosophy is anchored in Nelson Mandela's fundamental leadership insights: promoting a culture of value based and adaptive leadership, resilience, and empathy, and reflecting a determination to create a genuine and safe dialogue space to foster social change.

The Nelson Mandela Project for Social Change will work with key partners in academia, the public sector, civil society and beyond to gather thought leaders and change makers to reimagine ways to bring communities and societies together.

The Workshop was attended by participants from the five founding academic institutions, namely the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, Austral University, Argentina, IE University, Spain, the National University of Singapore and the University of Cape Town and UNSSC, as well as the Harvard Kennedy School as observer and Richard Stengel as special guest.



The workshop that took place during the First Partners Meeting is the first stepping stone of the Nelson Mandela Project for Social Change. The Workshop and the Project intend to nurture social change through synergies generated by the intersection of the spheres of influence of the participating institutions.

Overall, participants discussed desired outcomes, envisaged contributions by their institutions, necessary resources and a timeline for implementation.

Specifically, they decided to aim at establishing **regional hubs**, strengthening the agency and network of global champions for social change, as well as a **Nelson Mandela Global Academy for Social Change Leadership** to form a global network of social change champions, while honing their skills and deepen the impact of their combined initiatives.

While UNSSC has kickstarted the process and will co-ordinate efforts during the initial stages, the project relies on a co-creative process, built on shared ownership, efforts to secure resources and accountability for results.

Decision Log

Overall, participants agreed on specific follow-up actions regarding the **overall project (OP)**, **the regional hubs (RH)** and the **Nelson Mandela Global Academy for Social Change (GA)**.

2024	WHEN	WHAT		WHO
	By mid June	OP	Write two pager concept (common narrative)	UNSSC
	By mid-July	OP	Write overall project proposal with budget (draft) <small>* including objectives, outputs/outcome and timeline, and a budget, as well as modalities of payment / funding that are compatible with UNSSC rules of procurement.</small>	UNSSC
	Mid – end July	OP	Comment proposal	All unis
	By end July	OP	Finalize proposal and budget	UNSSC
	July - Sept	RH	Scope regional key actors in the area of social change at regional level	All unis
	July - Sept	OP	Scope funding opportunities and possible donors for regional and global activities	All unis and UNSSC
	July onwards	OP	Fundraising	All unis and UNSSC
	Sept/Oct	GA	Co-design programme structure	UNSSC and all unis
	Dec - Feb	GA	Secure speakers, design syllabi	UNSSC and resp unis
	Nov/Dec	OP	Check in meeting (virtual or Beirut, Madrid or CT)	UNSSC/AUB/I E/UCT?

2025	WHEN	WHAT		WHO
	By March	GA	Promote programme, outreach	UNSSC and all unis
	April	RH	Regional Meetings	Resp unis
	May	OP/RH	Annual Global Meeting Place TBD	UNSSC and all unis
	June	OP/RH	Report with results of scoping exercise	
	By July/August	GA	Cohort selected	UNSSC and resp unis
	Oct - April	GA	Implementation of first Nelson Mandela Global Academy for Social Change Leadership	UNSSC and resp unis

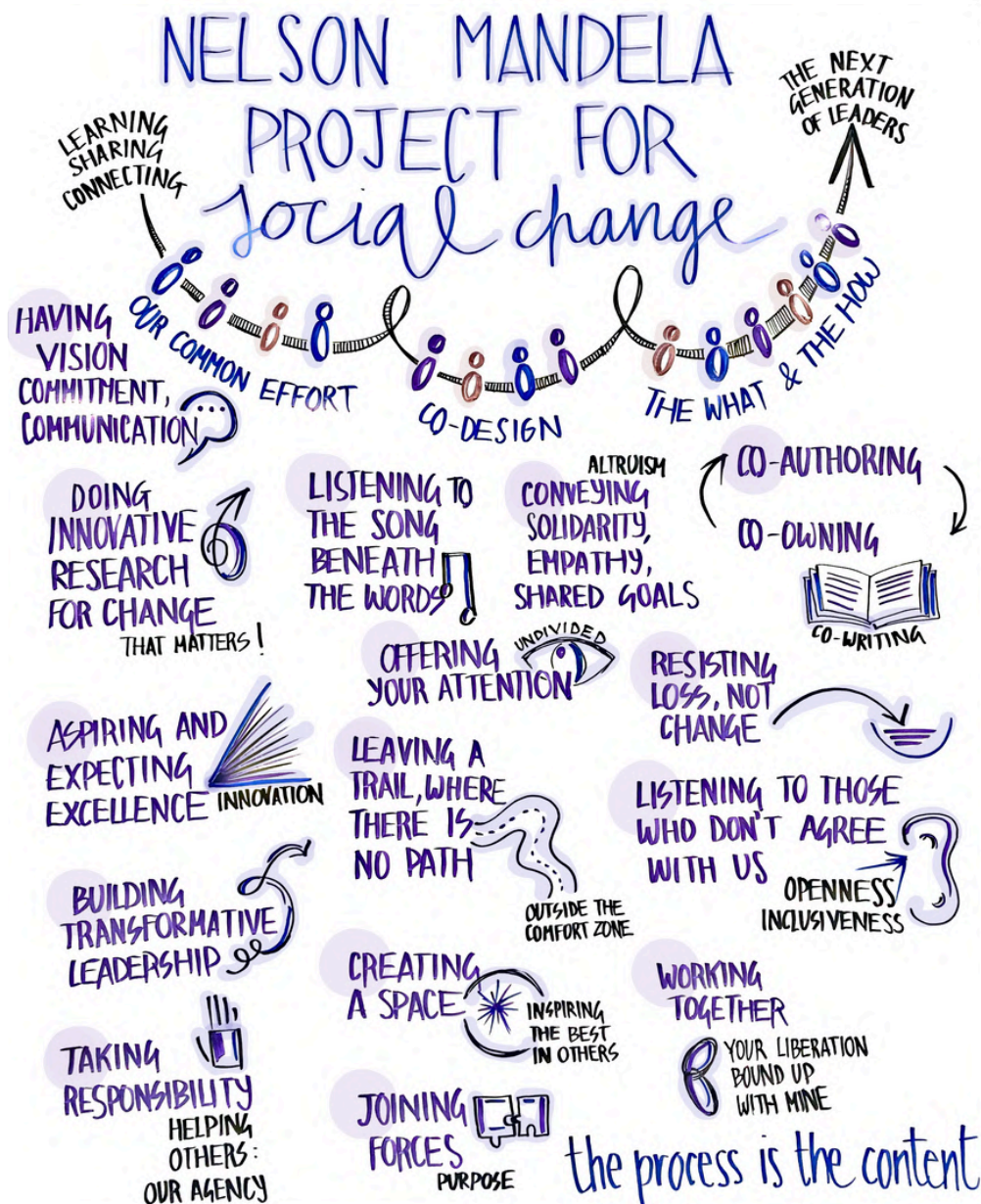
2026		GA	Implementation of first Nelson Mandela Global Academy for Social Change Leadership	UNSSC and resp unis
	May	GA	Final F2F Event in Cape Town	UNSSC and resp unis
	May	OP	Annual Global Meeting Cape Town	UNSSC and all unis

DAY 1

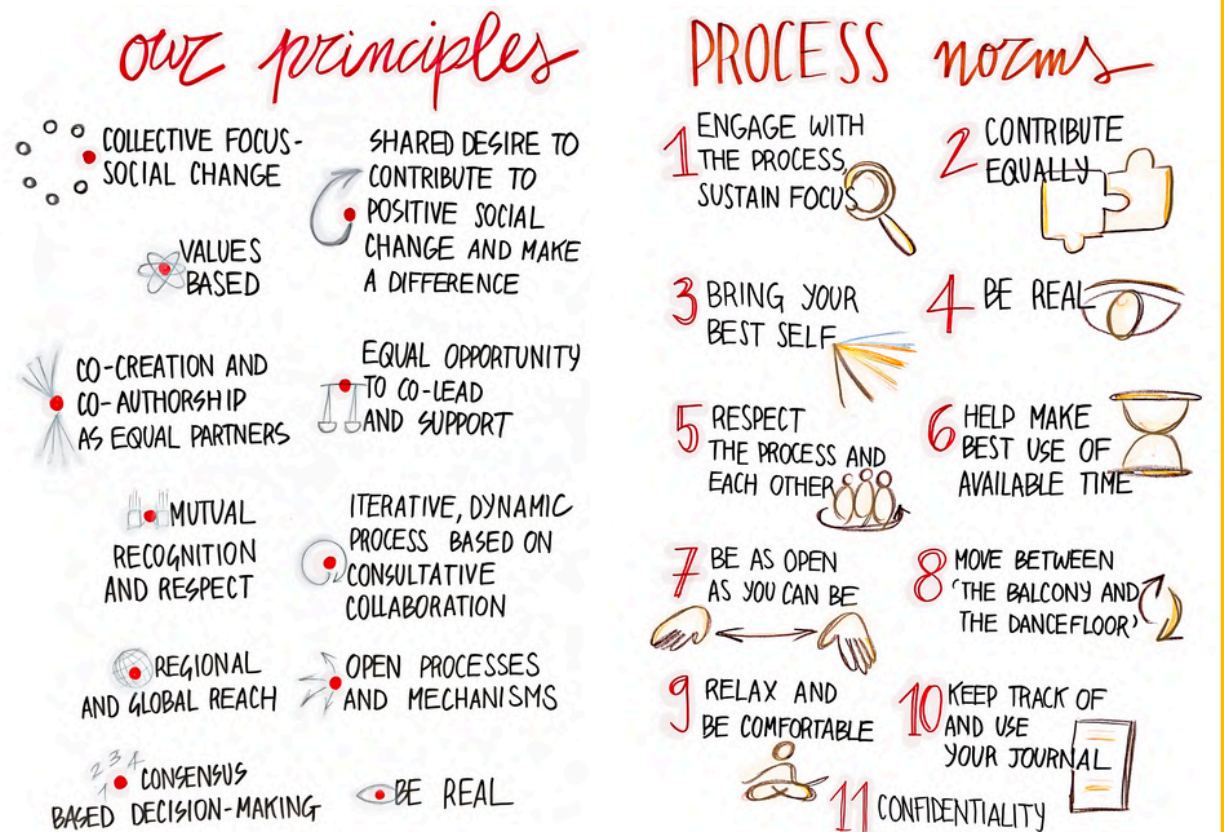
1. Welcome and Opening Session

A Nelson Mandela Inspired Approach to Social Change

Participants were welcomed by Jafar Javan, UNSSC Director, the lead facilitators and the UNSSC organizing team. The sessions started with a round of introductions, greetings and sharing personal inspirational quotes.



The facilitators agreed on process norms and principles for the workshop with the participants, in order to underline the participatory and genuinely co-creative nature of the two days spent together.

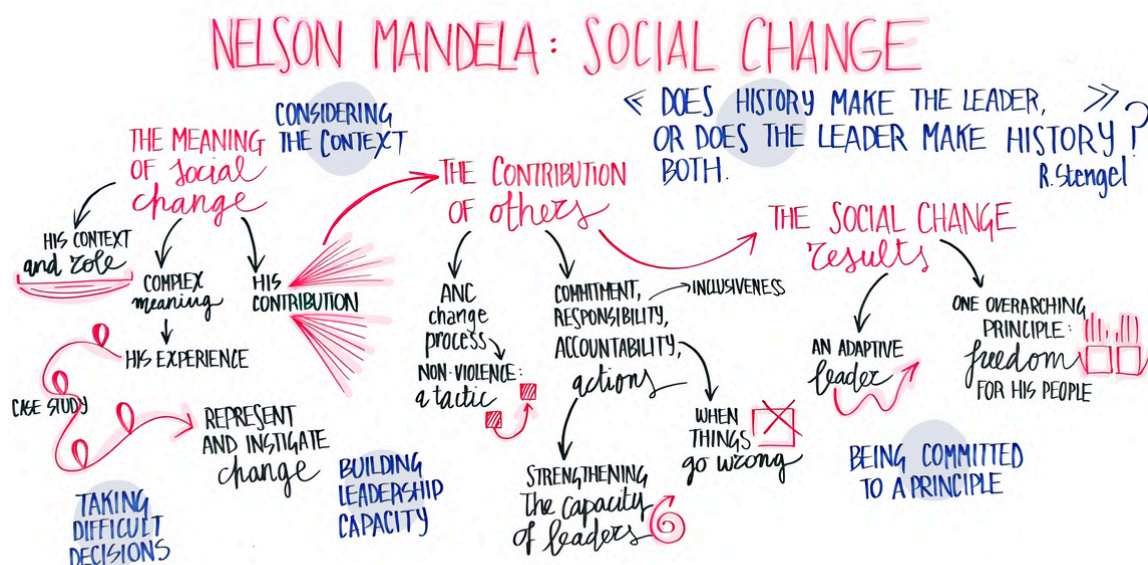


Simona Costanzo Sow, Chief, Academic Partnerships at UNSSC, underlined the process that had led to the workshop, starting with an initial brainstorm between the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at UCT and UNSSC in Cape Town in spring 2023 and evolving over one year with a visit to the American University of Beirut in October, various bilateral conversations with core academic UNSSC partners, such as IE University and the National University of Singapore, a visit by Austral University to Turin and finally an online discussion in January 2024 with all founding partners.

After the workshop design briefing, an interview was conducted with Richard Stengel, best known for his collaboration with Nelson Mandela on his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. This was followed by a journal writing session where participants were encouraged to reflect on Nelson Mandela's approach to leadership and to consider which significant aspects of social change should be amplified.

2. Richard Stengel 's Remarks on Nelson Mandela and Social Change

- Nelson Mandela had two overarching goals, freedom for his people and racial equality.
- He was a pragmatic leader who knew when to prioritize his principles and when to negotiate. He understood that not all principles are equal, and they must be evaluated based on their significance.
- He remained practical and pragmatic in his approach to achieving his goals.
- In 1956, he led a strike which wasn't successful, and he realized that he was part of the problem, so he took accountability. Nelson Mandela could consider multiple viewpoints, allowing him to excel in reconciliation, with the added importance of following evidence-based solutions. His life is an extraordinary example of adaptive leadership.
- The Nelson Mandela Project for Social Change is timely due to the growing discussions, debates and rhetoric around 'the failed revolution' and 'broken promises' amongst younger generations. Nelson Mandela understood that he was both a symbol and an instigator of change. That's how he conducted himself while in office.
- Embracing the complexity of motives and beliefs can lead to greater wisdom and empathy, it's essential to seek out the many shades of gray in between extremes.





Main Reflections from Participants

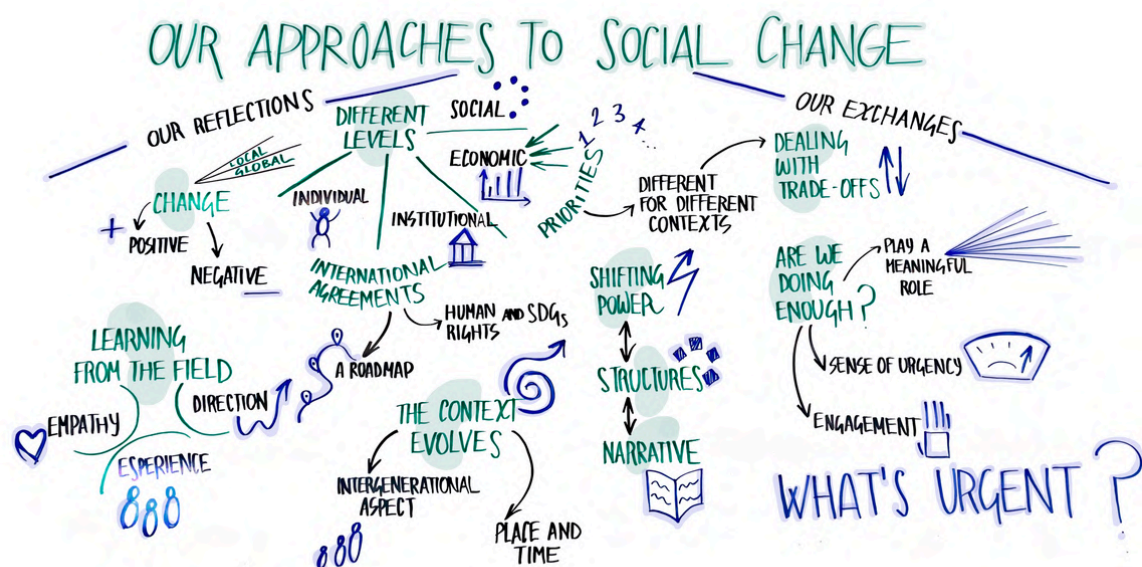
- Appreciation for the work and dedication that went into ensuring the development of the first in-person meeting of the Project.
- Innovation is vital for organisations.
- Reflection and deliberation over Nelson Mandela's legacy and whether it has lived up to the expectations of today's younger generation.
- This meeting is a good example of global institutions joining forces with a mixture of expertise, nationalities and cultures, all coming together to create something profound, monumental and impactful.
- As representatives of learning institutions, there's an agreed understanding of the impact of education and how it can both empower and initiate positive change across the world.

3. Transformatory Social Change and Leadership

Participants were divided into four groups to create a shared understanding of the concepts central to the Project and its related work. They were encouraged to build on previous exchanges and focus on how the initiative can most effectively support urgent areas of attention and capacity for positive social change, drawing on organizational interest, capacity and spheres of influence.

Overall, participants discussed the locus of social change at individual, institutional, societal, national, as well as global level. They revisited current events and megatrends, shaping divergent and increasingly divisive global political and leadership narratives, such as the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the role of technology. They stressed the need to engage younger generations and provide spaces for a diversity of voices, in a context that challenges post-World War II structures and dominant Western consensus on global governance, including in the sphere of finance and trade. Participants agreed on the need to create new dialogue spaces, allowing to address power dynamics and genuinely participatory spaces increasing the ability to understand different perspectives.

Through various iterations, group discussions and a final debrief, they discussed urgent issues that require new approaches for social change and ways to address them in general and through the project activities and network of partners. (See Annex A)



4. End of day reflections

The participants showed appreciation for the opportunity to meet, brainstorm and deliberate together and emphasized the sense of ownership which was developing. The group noted similarities in challenges across the regions, including the loss of trust in institutions, rise in conflicts, rising inequality, and the impact of climate change.

The need to develop practical, 'hardheaded' initiatives and the need for long term commitment were expressed. Participants expressed commitment and enthusiasm and underlined the importance for UNSSC to champion the project overall, at least during initial phases, as main United Nations catalyst and focal point.

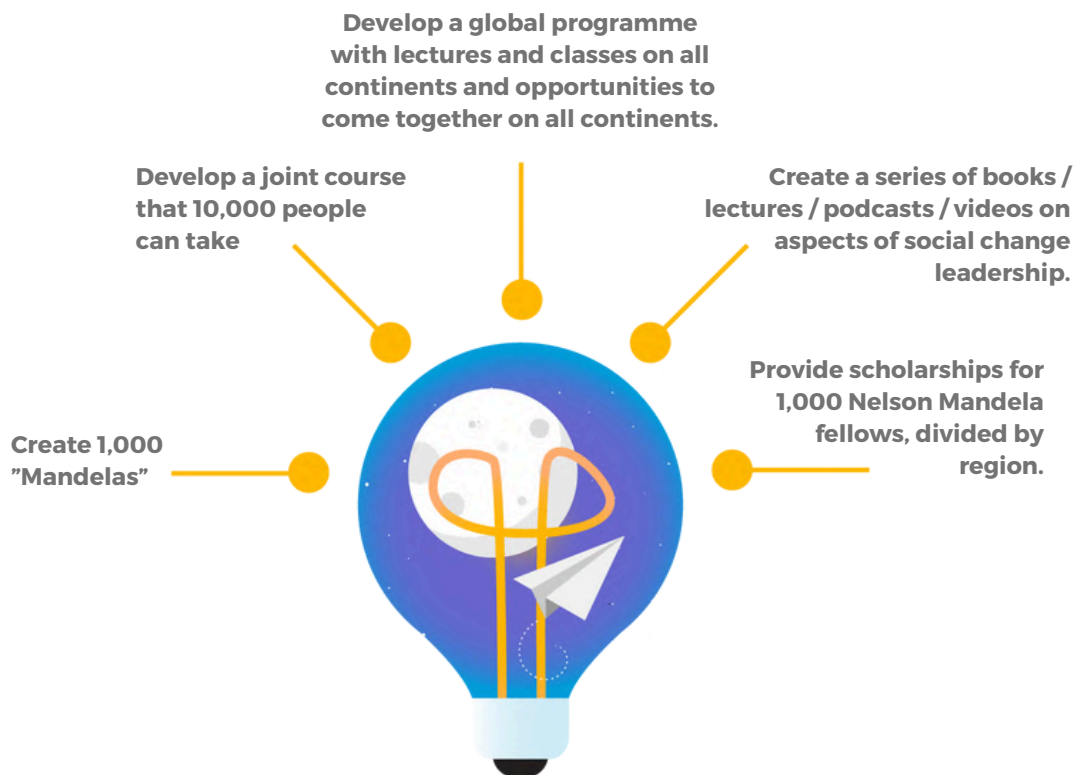


DAY 2.

1. Partners' Perspectives on Priorities

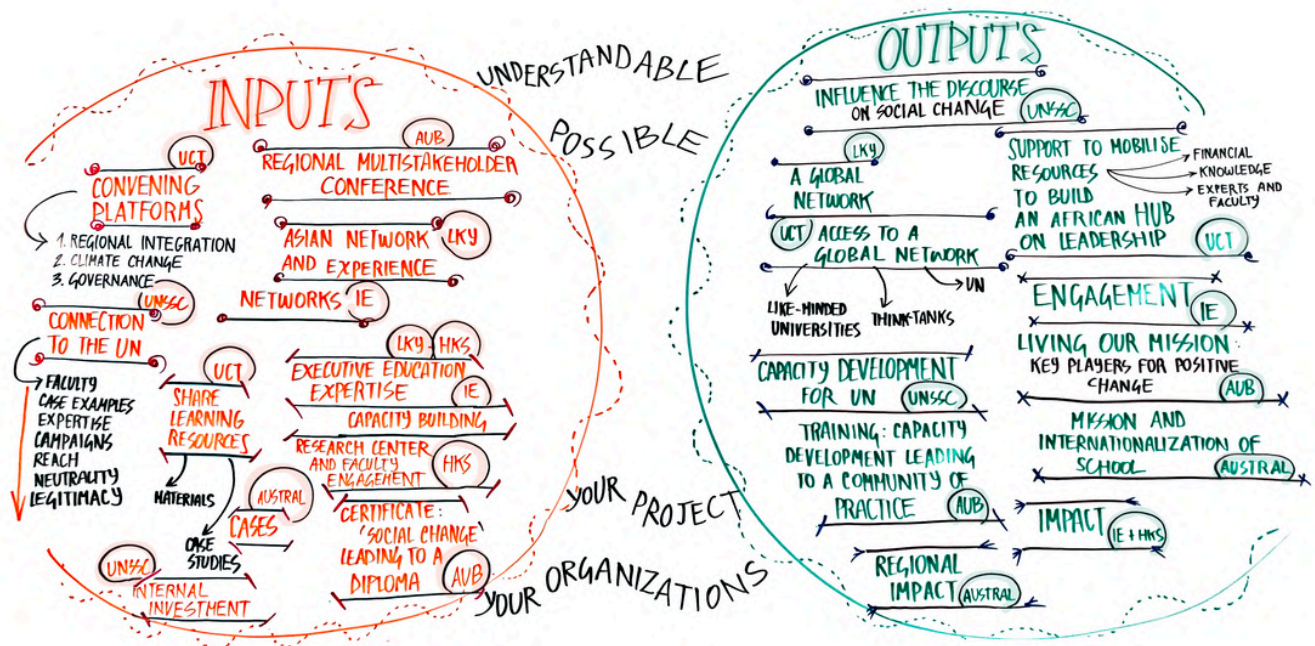
On the second day, partners started with a quick visioning exercise in terms of the project's moonshot objective. Participants asked: How can the project amplify its impact? How can the combined brain power and connection of networks catalyze social change?

Some thoughts generated through the ideation included:



Participants agreed that it was crucial to identify concrete initiatives to start with, including next steps, deliverables, milestones and budget, as well as a division of responsibilities.

Based on the initial plenary reflections, participants divided into small groups for an entity-based discussion, focusing on their **specific institutional priorities and envisaged contributions (Annex B)** before aggregating again as a group, discussing initial priorities and next steps in light of the take aways from Day 1.





2. Activities and Way Forward

After the reflection on institutional expectations and contributions, participants divided in groups to discuss two initiatives under the project which could help to kickstart concrete activities under the umbrella of the overall project: the creation of **regional hubs or networks**, as well as the **Global Academy for Social Change**.


Nelson Mandela Regional Hubs and Networks

The idea of the regional hubs is to provide an anchorage for regional perspectives and specific activities carried out by members of the network in the name of the Nelson Mandela project. The regional hubs should function as focal point for regional ecosystems for social change, convening regional communities of practice and facilitating the production of knowledge products on social change.

Regional hubs could organize events (webinars/conferences) to discuss global drivers, disrupters and public policies of social change through a local lens in different regions. They could identify good practices and think about specific issues / divisive issues affecting each region. They should be based on engaging local stakeholders and change-markers. Regional hubs would set the agenda for the future of the Mandela project.

Proposed steps to develop regional hubs:

1. Universities involved in the Nelson Mandela project should be the primary initial hubs for each region.
2. By end of May, development of a **two page “concept note”** regarding the definition of the concept of social change and scope of the project. Initial draft to be written by the College. The definition should be pragmatic and based on a set of criteria, to guide the kinds of initiatives and projects within the identified substantive focus areas that are conducive to social change.



3. Scoping exercise and academic desk review (June – September 2024): universities should start by collecting information about 5 - 10 key actors in their region who are active in the realm of social change and could engage in a regional social change ecosystem. This should include institutions who are engaged in the key substantive areas identified as areas of focus for the project (climate change, migration, diversity, gender empowerment, inequality) but also based on regional realities and priorities. UNSSC should do the same within the UN.

4. Explore funding opportunities (June – September 2024): Universities should also consult their own offices of grants and contracts and identify the funding landscape in their region regarding social change (actors, priorities, emerging trends...). (Kofi Annan Foundation in Africa?). Funding entities should be associated early on. Each university should provide a stocktake report with the results of this exercise in terms of substance and funding.

5. Convene a review meeting: (timeline 6 months Dec 2024) review of stocktake and overall project budget / fundraising plan / Presentation of the results of the academic desk review/ white paper.

6. Regional communities of practice: connecting key actors, convened by the regional hubs (by mid 2025)

7. Global meeting in Cape Town mid 2025 with Report about findings could also take place earlier. It could become the launch date of the overall project.

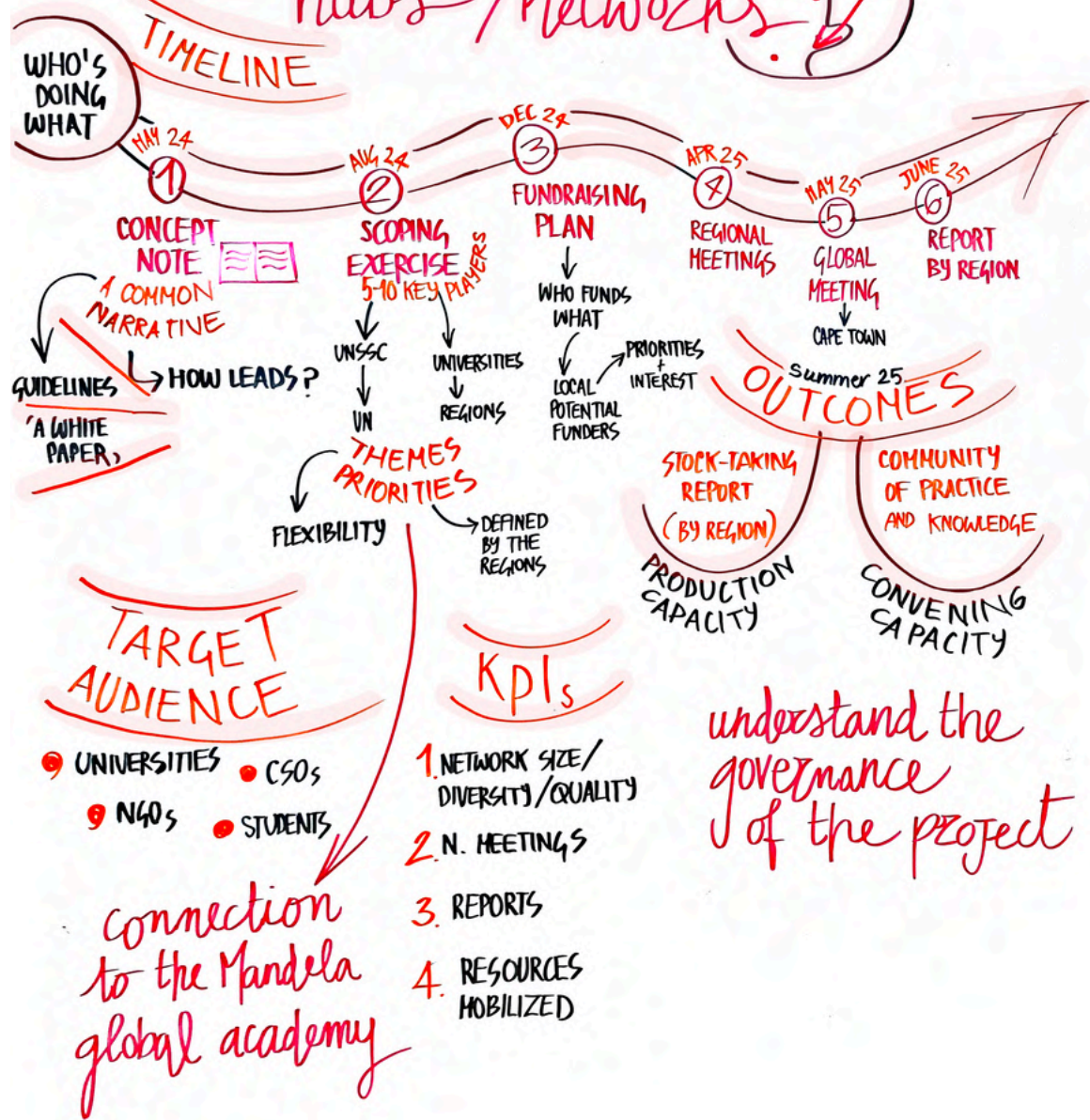
Target audience

Universities, NGOs, civil society organizations, students, youth groups.

KPIs

- Size and diversity of network
- Diversity of network
- Quality of network – how engaged are the partners in this; how serious and active are they as institutions that we have identified.
- Substantive outputs
- Number of meetings
- Reports (stock taking)
- Resources mobilized

REGIONAL hubs / networks





Nelson Mandela Global Academy for Social Change

The bigger group of participants gathered to build on the idea of a Social Change Leadership Academy. As per the original concept shared in December 2023, the idea of the Nelson Mandela Global Academy is to deliver an annual programme on various aspects of Social Change Leadership, designed and implemented by UNSSC and the participating universities for a global cohort of change makers with a track record in social innovation, sustainable development leadership, or other aspects of systems transformation toward positive social change.

The six-months semi-academic program would be conducted online through regular online classes and workshops, with a final rotating face-to-face encounter in one of the campuses of the participating institutions, starting in Cape Town.

Resources:

- UNSSC will formulate a project proposal for the online and face to face phase with a budget, including admin costs, costs for the engagement of professors and all other aspects required.
- The programme will have a per person fee and build in scholarships for a part of the cohort.

All universities are expected to identify possible funders and agree on ways to present the proposal to funders. The budget for the Global Academy could be presented as part of the overall Nelson Mandela project or a separate voice. This will depend on funders as well and is connected to the discussion about funding entities related to the regional hubs.

If possible, foundations/funding entities could be identified who can provide seed funding for some of the projects the participants develop.

The need to determine the budget and opportunities to present it was identified as a priority. It was agreed that each university should also engage with its department looking into funding opportunities to identify possible donors. The importance of having full and partial scholarships to enable some of the participants to engage was underlined. Some funders might also be interested in becoming founding members.

As to the governance of the project, it was agreed that each institution should nominate a focal point for the Global Academy. A discussion took place about the specific target audience and interest in different contexts and participants agreed that the programme is unique and could spark interest of multiple audiences.





Final Discussion

Synergies should be explored between the two initiatives in terms of timing, topics, gaps and potential participants and their institutions. All pieces of the discussion are connected, and as such, they should be designed in ways that reap maximum synergies and generate spinoffs. (For example, one could envisage the development of a social change index, similar to the work on a social transformation index IE was involved in).

Additional ideas:

Develop a Certificate on Social Change targeting civil society actors & activists in the regions:

- Developing modules to build capacity in social change.
- Organizing regional conferences to make social change actors know about our network and to know about the availability of the developed modules.
- Think of mechanisms to institutionalize social change within our institutions and involving students, faculty and alumni in amplifying the initiative.

Podcast “INSPIRE CHANGE”

Each institution could suggest 5 people every year to be interviewed on social change to bring a regional/topical perspective. The podcast could be used as part of the learning material of the Global Academy, as well as a learning and advocacy tool for a broader audience.

Jafar Javan confirmed the readiness of UNSSC to make available the necessary funds for UNSSC to begin the initial six-months groundwork of launching the project. However, the Staff College should not be the only institution expected to contribute funding, resources, staff and time; each institution should try to do what they can.

Participants mentioned possible funders or partners that could be approached, such as the Kofi Annan Foundation, Mandela Rhodes Trust / Foundation (created a Mandela scholarship for African students studying leadership in Africa), the Lived Experience Governance Framework (LEDGE) Project, as well as the Obama Mandela Fellows Programme. The Nelson Mandela Project is the only truly global project carrying Nelson Mandela's name and it has a unique focus on social change with a forward looking approach, aiming at enabling future actions. This should be appealing for donors. As previously agreed, all partners will have to scope possible funding institutions.

While for the initial stages the group decided that UNSSC should lead the project, it was suggested that there should be some form of a coordination/governance body moving forward. A rotating leader / chair, a steering committee and a board of advisors should be defined and implemented.

It was suggested that the next partners' meeting should be hosted by another partnering institution and AUB suggested Beirut as an option.

Participants came together for a final round of feedback and underlined their appreciation for the co-creative process. They confirmed that the workshop had increased the sense ownership for the ideas jointly developed, underlined their readiness to engage in the next steps and expressed appreciation for the facilitators, hosts and organizing team for all their efforts.






Annexes

- Participants List.
- Annex A. Day 1 Reflections on Understanding of Social Change
- Annex B. Discussion about specific institutional priorities and envisaged contributions

Participants List

Mr/ Ms	Last Name	First Name	Organization	Title
Ms	Abou-Habib	Lina	American University of Beirut	Director of the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship
Ms	Afiouni	Fida	American University of Beirut	Associate Provost and Director of AUB's Continuing Education Centre
Ms	Haddad	Tania	American University of Beirut	Director of Global Engagement Initiative
Mr	Santiago	Alfonso	Austral University	Director, School of Politics, Government and International Relations
Ms	Capman	Amy	Harvard University	Executive Director of Program Development for Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education
Mr	Alonso Arroba	Ángel	IE University	Vice Dean, IE School of Politics, Economics & Global Affairs
Ms	Figueroa-Alcorta Marin	Ángeles	IE University	Executive Director for Partnerships, IE School of Politics, Economics & Global Affairs
Mr	Mancini	Francesco	National University of Singapore	Vice Dean (Executive Education), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
Mr	Ismail	Faizel	University of Cape Town	Director of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance
Ms	Parenzee	Penny	University of Cape Town	Acting Programme Manager, Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance
Ms	Costanzo Sow	Simona	United Nations System Staff College	Chief, Academic Partnerships



Mr/ Ms	Last Name	First Name	Organization	Title
Mr	Javan	Jafar	United Nations System Staff College	Director
Ms	Weinlich	Silke	United Nations System Staff College	Deputy Director, Learning and Knowledge Services
Mr	Stengel	Richard		Special Guest
Ms	Keays	Patricia		Co-lead Facilitator
Mr	Segre	Gabriele		Co-lead Facilitator
Ms	Ricci	Giulia		Co-facilitator and Graphic Recorder



Annex A

Day 1 Reflections on Understanding of Social Change (from flipcharts)

What is urgent?

- Polarization: verbal violence, divisiveness, anger make it hard to talk to each other.
- Power dynamics: how can democracy be protected?
- Do we think for others or with others?
- How to heal? Is everything we believe in falling apart?
- Role of education: tolerance, trust, respect.
- Decolonization and its effect on relations.
- Question privilege, bias and arrogance.

Economic basic needs (poverty):

- Social integration/polarization
- Sectarianism
- Political conditions/corruption
- Loss of trust in institutions
- Plant sustainability

What do we need to change?

- Identify the problem – disturbing the status quo.
- The importance of agenda setting: stakeholder engagement, advocacy groups, enabling grassroots spaces, work with decision makers.
- Coalition building, mobilization and spaces for engagement: group discussions, debates, alliances, identify potential solution strategies.
- Resource mobilization: learning from others, funding, expertise, capacity building, partnership building expertise, skills.
- Communication/social Media /traditional media/podcasts.

What is needed to enable the process of social change?

- Space for dialogue
- Consensus building
- An understanding of power asymmetries, influences and interests in relations
- Governance
- Agency



How do we reinstate the rules of engagement?

- Connections
- Creativity/disruption/ideas
- Narratives/vision/mindset shifts
- Mobilization, social movements, stakeholders, agents of change, leaders
- Institutional changes (law, norms)
- Alliances
- Resources and time
- Strategies to co-opt/accountability
- Urgent shifting of power structures
- Engaging the community
- Using creativity, out-of-the-box-thinking, different forms of sensing and knowing
- Bottom-up approach
- Documenting
- Acknowledging that change is important

How can the Nelson Mandela Project support in triggering the process of social change?

- Create incremental processes towards change
- Building norms
- Identify skills and capabilities needed for cohesion
- Keep ethics at the core
- Empathy, solidarity, basic values
- Connecting people and institutions
- Identify and share good practices
- Codify knowledge on the how
- Recognition of social change leaders and initiatives
- Dissemination of the narrative and knowledge products (with focus on social media and convening activities)
- Mobilization of resources to support social change
- Capacity development of change agents, institutions and policy makers
- Direct advocacy to decision makers
- Outreach and sensitivity/ awareness of younger generations (instilling a sense of hope and urgency)
- Connecting people and institutions
- Partnering with the UN
- Documenting lessons learnt



What can the network of organizations offer and contribute to this process?

- Provide expertise for research and training/capacity development.
- Use networks/communications teams to amplify the work.
- Bring in networks (UN, national and international connections).
- Offer physical and virtual space, venues and convening power.
- Identification of today's and tomorrow's leaders.
- Lead by example/public commitment.
- Joint fundraising.
- Connection to key funders.
- Staff time.
- Hub for the regions, convening capabilities.
- Bridge academia with activism/policy actions.
- Connection to the UN.
- Trust.
- Research, case studies, policy briefs, conferences.
- Communities of practice.
- Webinars.

Annex B


Discussion about specific institutional priorities and envisaged contributions

What does my organization <u>want to get out</u> of the Project?	
Outputs / Outcomes / Impact	
American University of Beirut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained civil society activists. • Policy Paper Recommendations • Community of Practice • Key player for positive change • Knowledge exchange / Alignment with other partners • Impact Community • Impact Change
Austral University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to internationalize the School • Develop activities in line with Austral's mission • Strengthen regional impact on social change
IE University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and capacity building (leadership: including lessons from private sector, sustainability, technology and AI, societal impact, global governance) • Research (applied, policy briefs, papers). • Convening events conferences (physical and virtual). • Networks (impact, private session, multilateral, national, European, think tanks). • Fundraising (drawing on networks, experience). • Dissemination (communications, visibility). • Impact future leaders (youth, students).
NUS - LKY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A global network on Social Change • Impact through various cohorts of change makers • An innovative joint offering on social change
University of Cape Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build an African hub on leadership • Access to a global network (UN) like-minded university think tanks • Support, mobilize resources, financial, experts, sharing faculty
UNSSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a knowledge broker and dialogue enabler around social change, societal transformation and social innovation for the UN and beyond. • Be part of a coalition supporting multilateralism and social innovation that is more than the sum of its parts. • Create a network of universities and UN agencies. • A relevant offer for UN colleagues and beyond, connected to their demands and realities. (eg capacity building on social change, case studies, resources, targeted and potentially fee based offerings, as well as widely accessible knowledge products on social change (eg podcasts) • Create a cohort of social change makers.

How can my organization contribute to the project?

Inputs

American University of Beirut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUB as an amplifier • Certificate: 1st cohort, later diploma. • Partnership: Co-creation of certificate with an external partner and a UN agency. • Regional Multistakeholder conference on Social Change: • Co-organized AI and Provost Office • Contextualize intervention/regional perspective • Mobilize more people/stakeholders • Invite students / co-create (foster intergenerational dialogue) • Reading the Middle East dialogue series: diplomats and UN staff • Series of podcasts, courses and certificates. • High level and multi-stakeholders, round tables, policy recommendations. • Series of talks (webinar about impact). • Development of a course.
Austral University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • A Latin American perspective • Faculty and substantive inputs in areas of expertise (Human Rights, governance, rule of law, citizenship, local development, urbanization, negotiation and reconciliation) and others)
NUS - LKY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Asian perspective and experience • Access to networks, faculty and research • Solid experience in executive education programmes
IE University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & Capacity Building: Leadership (lessons from private-public sectors); Sustainability (ESG); Tech & AI (social impact); Global governance (reform) • Research: Applied policy briefs, papers, etc. • Convening: Events, conferences, etc; Face-to-face (hosting, venue); Online • Networks: Impact / policymaking; Private sector; Multilateral (UN & beyond); National / European; Other academic institutions & think tanks (APSIA, CIVIA, etc.) • Fundraising: Leveraging networks; Experience • Dissemination: Communications, visibility • Future leaders (youth, students)



University of Cape Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share learning resources (materials, experiences) • Convening capabilities on complex global challenges, regional integration, climate change, corruption, building resilience, civil society partnerships • Substantive content, research
UNSSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal investment in the project, fundraise, match partner investments • Provision of infrastructure (digital platforms). • Staff time and knowledge on running courses. • organize events in locations with UN presence. • Identify and bring knowledge through various UN organizations and offices around the world. • Connection to UN • Provide access to UN entities/UN cases/UN personnel. • Act as the link to system wide initiatives (UN 2.0, youth, SDG Action). • Identification of relevant people at the UN to serve as faculty. • Bring regional expertise to various UN events dedicated to social change. • Recognition as relevant player in brokering relations with academics.



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