

8 Elements of Strong Strategy

DISTINCTIVE

Is a strong fit for our network versus other efforts in this space.

Is outward-facing, engaging and creates strong “pull” toward our work.

Adds unique value to existing efforts.

Can only be accomplished by a network, not by one organization or partnership.

VIABLE

We can fully resource the strategy, ideally outside our base budget.

We can deliver the strategy through our extended network.

Delivers early results and quick wins with efficient use of resources.

We’ve minimized the likelihood of failure or unintended consequences.

MEANINGFUL

Will produce real outcomes that are important to our constituents.

Builds credibility, interest and collaboration where needed with our allies (corporate, NGO, public sector, other)

HUMAN-SCALE

Focused on shifting the experiences of the real people who are most harmed by the current system.

Grounded in empathetic understanding of the values and needs of everyone in the system of concern.

Clear about how each stakeholder can contribute to the larger strategy and work.

INTEGRATED

Comprised of a holistic set of solutions that work together to magnify impact.

Defines solution pathways from near-term to long-term.

Aligned with our network’s unique assets, connections, and identity.

Addresses both internal developmental needs and external conditions.

AUDACIOUS

The overarching objective is big enough that it excites and motivates our key stakeholders.

The goals are specific and timebound, forcing us to think and act at scale.

Offers a scale of vision and impact that will attract more partners and supporters.

Defines a clear future state from which we can backcast strong strategic pathways.

ADAPTIVE

Is a living plan that’s actively being worked and evolved as we learn more and as the context shifts.

Hypotheses about cause and effect relationships are testable so we can test our theories of change.

Defines a learning agenda to improve and refine the strategy over time.

SYSTEMIC

Can produce cascading effects—a chain reaction of positive results.

Will shift dominant mindsets, paradigms, and frameworks.

Builds a platform and a change system to foster systemic change over time.

Our approach to strategy development over time is systematic and has structures and processes for deepening our learning and adaptation.