THE ELDERS

Our vision for a peaceful, just and sustainable world

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK | 2018-2022
The Elders will support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair.

NELSON MANDELA, launching The Elders in 2007
INTRODUCTION

The world has changed markedly since Nelson Mandela founded The Elders in 2007. The impacts of the global financial crisis were unforeseen, the ways in which people connect online have been transformed, political norms have been upended, and multilateral solutions to shared problems are in decline. Unilateralism and the threat posed by nuclear weapons have joined migration and climate change at the top of the international agenda.

This booklet sets out how we, The Elders, contribute to addressing some of the challenges of leadership, peace-building, inequality, exclusion and injustice in a rapidly-changing world.
Founded in 2007 by Nelson Mandela, we represent an independent voice, not bound by the interests of any nation, government or institution. We are committed to promoting the common interests of humanity, and the universal human rights we all share.

**WHO WE ARE**

The Elders are an independent group of global leaders working together for peace, justice and human rights.

**THE ELDERS’ MISSION**

We will use our independence, collective experience and influence to work for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. Working both publicly and through private diplomacy, we will engage with global leaders and civil society at all levels to resolve conflict and address its root causes, to challenge injustice, and to champion ethical leadership and good governance.

**THE ELDERS’ VISION**

Our vision is of a world where people live in peace, conscious of their common humanity and their shared responsibilities for each other, for the planet and for future generations. We envisage a world in which there is universal respect for human rights, in which poverty has been eliminated, in which people are free from fear and oppression and are able to fulfil their true potential.
NELSON MANDELA
(1918-2013)

FOUNDER OF THE ELDER

Former President of South Africa and Nobel Peace Laureate, a leader who dedicated his life to the anti-apartheid struggle, democracy and equality; founder of The Elders.

To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

NELSON MANDELA
MARY ROBINSON
CHAIR OF THE ELDERS
First woman President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Chair of The Elders, a passionate, forceful advocate for climate justice, gender equality, peace building and human dignity.

GRAÇA MACHEL
DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE ELDERS
International advocate for women’s and children’s rights, former freedom fighter and first Education Minister of Mozambique; co-founder of The Elders.

BAN KI-MOON
DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE ELDERS
Former UN Secretary-General and South Korean Foreign Minister; championed the world’s vulnerable by putting sustainable development, climate change, and gender equality at the top of the UN agenda.

LAKHDAR BRAHIMI
Former Algerian freedom fighter, Foreign Minister, conflict mediator and UN diplomat, an expert in peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction.
GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

First woman Prime Minister of Norway and WHO Director-General: a medical doctor who champions health as a human right; put sustainable development on the international agenda.

HINA JILANI

Pioneering lawyer and pro-democracy campaigner; a leading activist in Pakistan’s women’s movement and international champion of human rights.

ZEID RAAD AL HUSSEIN

Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; champion of international justice and multilateralism; veteran Jordanian diplomat and peacekeeping expert.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF

Former President of Liberia and Africa’s first elected female head of state; Nobel Peace Laureate; a leading promoter of peace, justice and democratic rule; a voice for freedom and advocate for health for all.
RICARDO LAGOS

Former President of Chile and UN Special Envoy on Climate Change; tenacious fighter for democracy and human rights; implemented health reform and reduced economic inequality while diversifying Chile’s external trade in the era of globalisation.

ERNESTO ZEDILLO

Former President of Mexico who led profound democratic and social reforms, economist and advocate of multilateralism and nuclear non-proliferation.

JUAN MANUEL SANTOS

Former President of Colombia, a Nobel Peace Laureate who led complex peace negotiations, ending over 50 years of intractable civil war.
The Elders Emeritus

Emeritus Elders are those who have stepped down from their front-line role as a member of The Elders. We are deeply grateful for their service and their continued wisdom and support.

MARTTI AHTISAARI
Former President of Finland; Nobel Peace Laureate and expert in international peace mediation, diplomacy and post-conflict state building.

ELA BHATT
The ‘gentle revolutionary’; a pioneer in women’s empowerment and grassroots development, founder of the more than one million-strong Self-Employed Women’s Association in India.

FERNANDO HENRIQUE CARDOSO
Former President of Brazil; implemented major land reform programme, reduced poverty and significantly improved health and education.

JIMMY CARTER
Former President of the United States; Nobel Peace Laureate and veteran peace negotiator, dedicated to advancing peace, democracy and health worldwide.

DESMOND TUTU
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town and Nobel Peace Laureate; a veteran anti-apartheid activist and peace campaigner widely regarded as ‘South Africa’s moral conscience’.

Emeritus Elders are those who have stepped down from their front-line role as a member of The Elders. We are deeply grateful for their service and their continued wisdom and support.
Today’s real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated. Today, no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from national crises in another.

KOFI ANNAN

Former UN Secretary-General, Nobel Peace Laureate and Chair of The Elders (2013-2018), put development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and peace at the top of the United Nations agenda.
[Image captions on page 45]
THE ELDERS’ PROGRAMMES

At the heart of our work are three themes:
- Governance and Leadership;
- Conflict, its Causes and Consequences; and
- Inequality, Exclusion and Injustice.

These inform our six programme areas:
- Ethical Leadership and Multilateral Cooperation
- Climate Change
- Conflict Countries and Regions
- Refugees and Migration
- Universal Health Coverage
- Access to Justice

Equality for women and girls is a cornerstone of the Elders’ commitment to securing dignity and rights for all, informing our priorities across every aspect of our work. We also seek to empower young people and promote intergenerational dialogue across our initiatives.
The rules-based global political system faces great uncertainty, with diminishing faith in multilateral institutions and declining levels of trust in political leadership worldwide.

We actively support international co-operation and strong multilateral institutions as the most effective means of tackling global challenges, including nuclear disarmament.

**ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION**

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

- By developing individual relationships with global leaders, The Elders can influence them to strengthen their commitment to ethical leadership and multilateral cooperation.
- The Elders’ global reputation can influence the terms of debate around protecting and strengthening international institutions.

**THE IMPACT**

Our work can help:

- Enhance trust and support in the multilateral system.
- Encourage the resolve of world leaders to show ethical leadership on major global issues.
- Strengthen others’ efforts to end the escalation in nuclear proliferation and to challenge the adoption of more dangerous nuclear use policies.
- Increase collaboration by members of the UN Security Council to address conflict.
CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is already having a significant impact on the lives of people around the world. Failure to act urgently will mean a reversal in development gains for the poorest and most vulnerable people in society, further damage to the natural world and increased financial losses.

We want to help ensure a just transition to the low carbon economy, create political space for ambitious action, and encourage innovative new solutions to tackling climate change.

THEORY OF CHANGE

- The Elders’ relationships with leaders can be decisive in persuading them to maintain a high level of ambition
- The Elders’ moral authority can create the space for climate advocates to be heard at the highest levels
- When The Elders promote new ideas, they will be listened to, and those ideas will gain traction more quickly

THE IMPACT

Our work can help:

- The importance of raising ambition is integrated into the discussion at the highest levels of decision making
- That discussions emphasise a just transition that benefits everyone
- Voices and actions of climate champions are brought to the fore of the international agenda, creating the political space for more ambitious action
- New and innovative ideas are incubated and supported, helping to create systemic change to support a low carbon future
CONFLICT COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

Peace-making is in crisis worldwide. Regional and international bodies mandated to uphold peace and security have repeatedly been prevented from doing so by power struggles and rivalries among their members.

We believe that, when the circumstances are right, The Elders can provide decisive assistance in the efforts to secure peaceful resolution to conflict.

THEORY OF CHANGE

- The Elders’ early intervention in conflict situations can buy time for other actors to help defuse the situation.
- The Elders can seek to persuade parties to a conflict to back down from public positions and save face...
- ...which will encourage leaders considering military action to put more emphasis on talks.

THE IMPACT

Our work can help:

- In selective circumstances, contribute to the resolution of ongoing inter- or intra-state conflict.
- Avert the outbreak of war in a country or region.
- Maintain or consolidate peace through indirect intervention.
There are vast numbers of people on the move, both through forced displacement and voluntary migration. Large flows of refugees and migrants have highlighted gaping deficiencies in current response mechanisms, with inadequate responsibility-sharing and the rights of those on the move often eschewed.

We will help maintain the spotlight on the plight of refugees and migrants; challenging negative narratives, supporting multilateral mechanisms, and emphasising the benefits of migration. We will champion the need for compassion, tolerance and solidarity in response to vulnerable people on the move.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

- The Elders’ moral authority allows their challenges to negative narratives on refugees and migration to have traction
- The Elders’ public advocacy can help to inspire and strengthen coalitions and organisations working in this field

**THE IMPACT**

*Our work can help:*

- Ensure decision-makers and influencers will be more aware of best practices and motivated to implement them
- Encourage coalitions to form and implement key elements of the Global Compacts on migration and on refugees
- Address the need to improve responses to refugees and migrants raised on international agenda
UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)

UHC is achieved when everybody receives the healthcare they need without suffering financial hardship. It is the best way to achieve the health Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and also contributes to achieving the SDGs focused on economic growth, reducing poverty and inequality, and building peace and stability.

We believe our interventions can encourage political leaders to take the bold steps needed to implement UHC reforms. We will aim to do this through global and country-level activity to promote the merits of UHC and its fundamental role in national development strategies.

THEORY OF CHANGE

- The Elders’ interventions inspire and encourage heads of state to initiate, support and sustain major UHC reforms in their countries.
- The Elders’ advocacy supports and inspires civil society and other organisations working to achieve UHC.

THE IMPACT

Our work can help:

- Ensure people receive effective health coverage
- Improve health outcomes
- Lower impoverishment due to health costs
More than five billion people still live outside the protection of the law. When justice and security is only available to the rich and the powerful, when there is impunity for those who break laws and abuse rights, this weakens states and their capacity to preserve the rule of law and to pursue development, social justice and economic growth as agreed under the SDGs.

**Access to Justice**

Access to justice for all is an important human right. We will amplify the voices of grassroots activists and civil society, and engage with heads of state and policymakers to help make access to justice a priority. Violence against women is a profound global injustice. We will encourage action by political, traditional and religious leaders to change behaviour and ensure justice for survivors.

**THE IMPACT**

Our work can help:

- Champion civil society and political pioneers of Access to Justice
- Strengthen women’s access to justice in relation to violence against them
- Support the growth and impact of the movement for access to justice
- Countries achieve significant improvements in access to quality justice in line with SDG 16.3 and related targets
- Decision-makers thinking about justice shifts from processes and buildings, towards solving the justice problems that matter most to people

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

- The Elders can provide **strength by association** to civil society and political champions’ positions, leading to stronger government commitments
- By **challenging entrenched interests**, The Elders can reduce the influence of those holding back progress
- Ending the normalisation of domestic violence can be accelerated through more **accessible mechanisms for justice** especially for women and girls

**Photo:** My Choices Foundation

Champion civil society and political pioneers of Access to Justice

Strengthen women’s access to justice in relation to violence

Support the growth and impact of the movement for access to justice

Countries achieve significant improvements in access to quality justice in line with SDG 16.3 and related targets

Decision-makers thinking about justice shifts from processes and buildings, towards solving the justice problems that matter most to people
COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

We communicate and engage on a broad range of levels – from private diplomacy through to public advocacy. We draw on our reputation and expertise to build and amplify partnerships that can deliver real-world impact.

The Elders’ communications and engagement work has three closely connected goals:

1. To influence leaders and expand political will towards actions that promote peace, justice and human rights.
2. To inspire and connect others whose work is aligned with The Elders’ mission and programmes, to amplify their voices and efforts, and to catalyse effective actions.
3. To strengthen the legitimacy, credibility and reach of The Elders’ collective voice.

We seek to reach out to influencers, opinion-formers, and national and international decision-makers to help bring about change.

When necessary, if we believe it can leverage progress, we will engage with wider audiences - often to exert pressure or rally support around the change we want to see.

We will seek to maximise our individual and collective voice as The Elders – not only to influence and inspire leaders from the grassroots to the world stage, but also to amplify and support those having a positive impact on the issues we hold dear.

Ban Ki-moon and Ernesto Zedillo join young leaders for a dialogue on pathways to peace, in London in October 2017.
As Elders, we don’t claim to have all the answers, or to be able to solve all the world’s problems. But we believe that we can have an impact on some of the most pressing challenges faced by humanity today. Together, as The Elders, we hope we can make a difference.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Elders are grateful to the individuals, trusts and foundations on their Advisory Council, whose support and advice allows them to carry out their work. Further information is available on The Elders’ website.

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Mary Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland meet climate activist Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner during the People’s Climate March in New York, USA in September 2014.
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