

Impact Report

2024



making good
change happen

“

Wasafiri helped establish the cross-sector collaboration that is now improving Africa's agricultural economies.”

Boaz Keizire
Head of Policy, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

Wasafiri is a consultancy and institute helping leaders and organisations tackle some of the world's most complex problems.

From our offices in Kenya, UK, and USA, we have a long-standing record of helping our clients achieve impact at scale on the systems related to conflict, poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation.

Together, we are helping to create a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world.

A word from Alex Rees - Managing Director

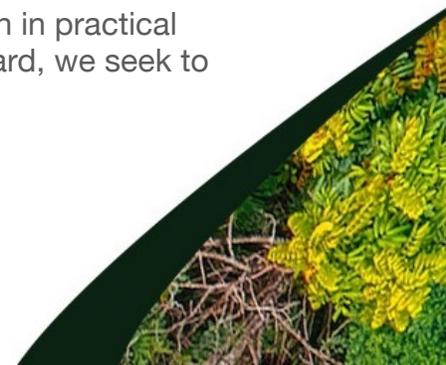


Wasafiri exists to make good change happen. We help leaders and organisations address complex problems contributing to a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world. We do this through designing and implementing systems change initiatives, research and learning, and generating stronger systems leadership that better connect people in businesses, governments and civil society organisations. We seek to amplify voices who are at the heart of changes that are needed and are less often heard. I'm proud to say that throughout our work of over fourteen years, Wasafiri has been aligned with the B Corp mission: using business as a force for good. We've made good progress; but we've ambition to do better and B Corp's reporting helps us with this.

Systemcraft is a systems change approach that Wasafiri developed to help leaders and organisations address complex problems. It forms how we engage with educational initiatives and change projects. It is open source. Helping as many leaders as possible, and at all levels from local to global, to apply Systemcraft, is core to our mission. More and more leaders call for systems change. But leaders and organisations often lack the mindset, frameworks, and tools to progress efforts.

During 2023/4 I am very proud of our work with diverse organisations seeking systems change. This included efforts to decentralise humanitarian aid around the world, build sub-national food systems leadership networks in Kenya and Rwanda, better understand circularity of waste in Nairobi, Kenya, and help a consortia of organisations build resilience to flooding. Beyond working with diverse partnerships, and often from global to local levels, Wasafiri took great strides forward in reaching hundreds of leaders with Systemcraft working in the sustainability field. We worked the University of Cambridge's Institute for Sustainability Leadership to integrate Systemcraft into postgraduate and undergraduate courses. And we supported systems leadership among cohorts of Fellows in the London based Forward Institute with Systemcraft integrated into the curriculum.

Taken collectively, Wasafiri deepened the ability of hundreds of leaders to achieve systems change. We make good change happen in practical ways, build better knowledge to inform action, and educate to equip leaders to take an applied systems change approach. Looking forward, we seek to help more leaders achieve systems change.



The world is facing an array of challenges that it has never encountered before. From climate change to inequality; from food security to migration; from gender equity to modern day slavery: the list goes on. These challenges are societal and environmental, and affect individuals, organisations, and ecosystems alike.

These challenges are global and systemic. Is climate change one country's responsibility? Can we feed the growing, global population without damaging the natural environment? Is economic prosperity possible without gender equality? And which organisation is responsible for addressing each, or all, of these problems?

The challenges that we face are deeply interconnected. As a result, we are experiencing trans-boundary, dynamic problems that are everyone's business yet no one's responsibility. Lines of accountability are blurred, and it is no longer clear who should lead in addressing these problems. These challenges are global, systemic, and complex.

We believe that businesses of all sizes have a powerful role to play in tackling these problems. We are no exception; our clients, partners, staff, and consultants are all valued members of the Wasafiri network and serve as vital guides for our journey of growth and impact. Together, we're proud to have been honoured by B-Corporation in 2019 as a 'Best for the World Company' for helping our clients tackle deep problems such as poverty, insecurity and inequality. We're committed to continuously exploring how to become a more adaptive and innovative, human-centered organisation.

Our B Corp Journey



Much of our work centres around helping our clients to improve their impact in serving ‘in-need’ populations. For the work we do, that refers to communities struggling with seemingly intractable issues such as poverty, insecurity, or lack of opportunities.

For us, this role means delivering value to all our stakeholders, rather than simply maximising profit for our owners. And the B Corp certification provides a global standard against which we are held to account for our ideals.

We became a B Corp in early 2018. Whilst it recognised some of the things we do well, it also pushed us to improve. For example, we altered our articles of association to formally recognise, and legally bind us, to our shared value principles. It has prompted us to re-examine how we can reduce our impact on the environment, and to codify our standards of conduct and behaviour.

Among nearly 3,000 certified ‘B Corporations’ spanning 64 countries, Wasafiri was recognised as among the top ten percent honoured by B Corp as a **‘Best for the World 2019’ company.** We were delighted, a bit stunned, and deeply grateful to our committed, tireless staff and consultants.

Our Impact Areas

Working for a more peaceful, sustainable and equitable world



Inclusion & Peace

- Preventing violent extremism
- Tackling cross-border conflict
- Strengthening accountable governance



Climate & Nature

- Net Zero for high carbon economies
- Creating a circular economy
- Climate smart agriculture
- Climate resilience & adaptation



Food & Inclusive Growth

- Creating sustainable value chains
- Transforming Africa's food systems
- Graduation from extreme poverty
- Growing youth empowerment

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Wasafiri have helped improve our understanding of violent extremism in East Africa

Onno Koopmans - Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Our Services



Advisory, insight and leadership for systems change



Design & Implementation Advisory

Enhancing the impact of systems
change initiatives



Research & Learning

Improving decision-making for
system change initiatives



Systems Leadership

Catalysing the capacity of people
working on system change

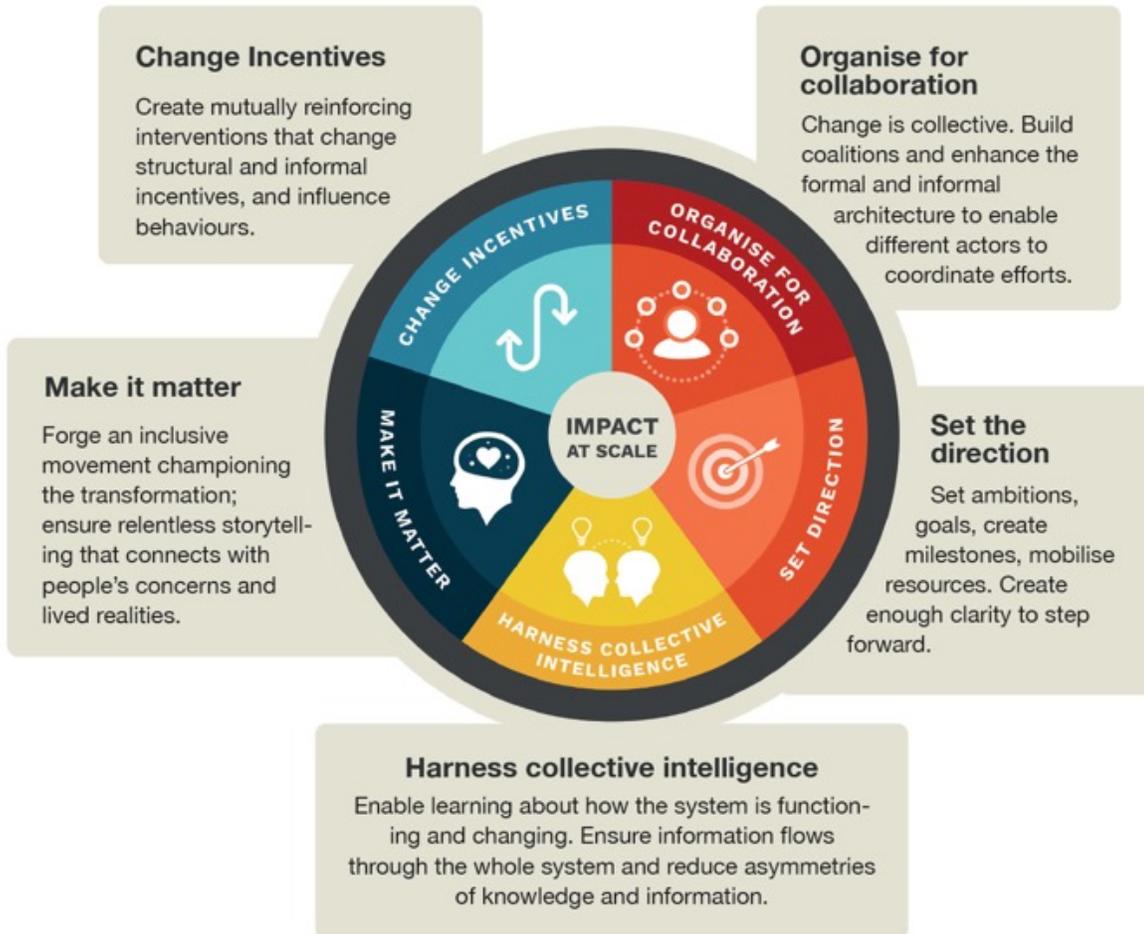
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Boaz Kiere - Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

Systemcraft

Our practical framework for complex problems



wasafiri

Strengthens collective, adaptive responses to complex problems.

Supports decision makers to identify 'what next?'

Impels a shift from solution-provider to change-entrepreneur.

Ensures people affected by complex problems are at the heart of everything we do.

“*So, what next?*”

Our Approach: Ubuntu



At the heart of Wasafiri is a veneration for People, Nature, and the profound interdependence that connects us all. Together we create joy and beauty in the world, and we also create struggle and hurt. Our collective work is to endlessly steward our human and ecological relationships into a state of balance in which all People and Nature can thrive.

This sentiment is encapsulated by the African philosophy of Ubuntu. Archbishop Tutu says Ubuntu "is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours.' We belong in a bundle of life." Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee defined it as: **"I am what I am because of who we all are."**

For Wasafiri, Ubuntu calls upon us to recognise that **we are in this together** - us, our clients, the communities we serve, and the natural systems upon which all life depends. It asks us to thrive by helping others thrive. And to do so with warmth, humility, and kindness.

We have co-created a set of Ubuntu Rules. These represent our accumulated wisdom about how to translate Ubuntu into practice in the life of the business. They provide simple handrails to guide decision-making across the business every day. Above all though, Ubuntu.



GOVERNANCE 19.8

Good governance fosters a culture of responsibility, transparency, and ethical behaviour. It is a fundamental element for achieving sustainable growth, building trust among stakeholders, and addressing complex challenges effectively.

What we said we'd do

- Develop KPIs for the Board that reflect Wasafiri's social and environmental performance.
- Elevate the visibility of our code of conduct across the business.
- Improve the representation of our management discussions so those providing input to decisions better reflect those impacted by the decisions.

What we've learnt

- Improving governance in a small organization whilst trying to manage resources efficiently and promote agile decision-making can be hard. There can be synergies and there can be trade-offs. Steps intended to strengthen governance can result in slower decision making, increased complexity and reduced innovation. At Wasafiri we challenge ourselves when making improvements to governance to do so without compromising those elements of our operating systems that we value. Principles such as transparency, decentralized decision making, and strong feedback loops allow us to maintain a fast-paced agility and personal culture whilst improving our governance practices.

What we have done

- Our code of conduct is shared with all our staff and consultants during the onboarding stage. All consultants and staff review and sign it every time we enter a contract with them.
- Our DEI policy was reviewed and improved with a new reporting mechanism and approved by the Board.
- A Kenyan employee is typically invited to each board meeting to support a diversity of viewpoint and inclusive decision-making.
- Our pay precedent was systematically reviewed with a DEI lens including with input from DEI champions.
- Our remuneration committee included a Kenyan employee to improve the representation of our staff in decisions around pay.

What we plan to do next

- Increase the transparency of our decision making and performance through weekly engagement with all staff.
- Roll-out a new DEI reporting mechanism.
- Strengthen our project close-down process with the aim to reinforce accountability, highlight gaps and improve transparency. • Encourage fast paced and intentional experimentation, learning and adaptation.

WORKERS 31.2

The value workers bring to an organisation extend beyond their roles. And a culture that promotes social responsibility and ethical leadership will help organisations effectively navigate the challenges of making positive change in the world.

What we said we'd do

- Create a leadership development programme to provide an accelerated route to senior positions.
- Have a full review of our pay precedents to ensure they are fair and consistent with our company values.

What we've learnt

- Providing sufficient professional development in a small organisation can be tough. Supporting staff to grow and develop may involve them leaving our organisation. This may mean the ability for staff to join, grow and leave in a positive way and without friction may be a better indication of a healthy organisation that values its workers than the other traditional metrics such as 'staff retention rate'.
- How you pay people should reflect the organisation's values.

What we have done

- We designed and enrolled our first member into our 'License to Lead' Programme (L2L). This is a professional accelerator initiative that aims to elevate the leadership practice at Wasafiri through an investment each year in one of our staff members every year for five years.
- We conducted a full review of all our pay precedents, exploring questions such as 'could we be more inclusive when reviewing pay?'
- We discussed our pay review precedent during our staff retreat. There was input from across the business and as a result changes were made, improving the fairness and consistency of how we interpret and apply our pay precedents.
- We supported our consultant networks to improve their skills and widen their network through running Systemcraft workshops and facilitating a network of systems change practitioners.

What we plan to do next

- Improve our approach to professional development for staff supporting and managing projects.
- Develop mechanisms to strengthen our bonds as 'one team'.
- Curate a development programme to support staff in finding and developing external partnerships through a deeper understanding of; facilitation, sense-making/analysis, bid writing, blog writing, and our core offering, Systemcraft.

COMMUNITY 14.9

By contributing positively to the community's welfare, business acknowledges its role as a responsible and caring member of the broader social fabric, fostering harmony and shared prosperity.

What we said we'd do

- Develop a multi-year DEI agenda.
- Increase the diversity we have in our leadership.
- Elevate African voices in our meetings.
- Increase and improve the reporting we do on DEI.

What we've learnt

- To ensure DEI ambitions are realised, organisations need to be intentional with it, hold it as a high priority, generate a long-term commitment and dedicate time and resources to its success.
- Good conversations about inclusion take time if they are to produce insight and are best held in a safe space.

What we have done

- We developed an ambitious multi-year DEI agenda and committed time and resources towards it that included a core team with the managing director.
- We have increased the diversity of viewpoint on our board meetings and remuneration committee.
- We started our 'License to Lead' Programme (L2L) which aims to grow a diverse generation of leaders. We recognise that there are fewer leadership and management development opportunities for African and Africa based staff. We want to put this right with our five-year commitment to L2L.
- We updated our DEI Policy. This includes a new reporting process to the Board

What we plan to do next

- Integrate DEI conversations into our weekly company meetings.
- Invest in our License to Lead programme and advance with a second candidate.
- Complete an inaugural DEI report, including performance against goals and DEI metrics.

ENVIRONMENT 2.3

Protecting the environment mitigates climate change, preserves biodiversity, and ensures a sustainable future for generations to come.

What we said we'd do

- Further reduce our carbon footprint through encouraging alternative ways of working that are more environmentally friendly.
- Look at ways to reduce our carbon footprint in our contracted work. By including the environmental impact of our work in the design and budgeting of our projects.
- Grow our work with leaders and organisations improving climate and nature outcomes.

What we've learnt

- When budgets are tight, we've found it hard to encourage organisations to budget for environmental consideration in their scope of work unless it's a clear output they are seeking.
- We have found it hard building significant funding/partnerships in the environmental space.

What we have done

- Held a hybrid retreat which involved some staff member joining virtually.
- We worked with The World Economic Forum to help the Global Plastic Action Partnership hone their impact measurement framework, collect evidence for reporting and communicate findings to a broad audience.
- We conducted a systems evaluation to lay the foundations for the 3-year programme "Creating Circular Economy Innovation Cluster in Nairobi" funded by EIT Climate Kick.

What we plan to do next

- Have active discussions and share resources with staff about how we can positively shift our individual and family behaviours to support sustainable living.
- Include environmental impact as a consideration when arranging and running events.
- Continue supporting hybrid working for all staff to reduce car pollution.
- Invest in and grow a climate fellowship programme in Africa as part of a determined effort to grow partnerships and impact to improve nature and climate outcomes.

CUSTOMERS 45.0

Serving customers goes beyond meeting a set of deliverables. Its also about setting high standard for the service provided. This include ensuring keeping data private, marketing data ethically and encouraging strong feedback loops.

What we said we'd do and what we have done

- We helped the Jobtech Alliance take a systems change approach to understand how best to shape the job tech sector in Africa to maximise job creation.
- We worked with B Labs UK to establish new ways of thinking and working on complex problems to help create wider and more long- term impact on the UK's economic system.
- We applied our principles in our work by helping the African Food Fellowship to promote self-organisation among Fellows and make a transition to stronger African leadership of the initiative.
- We facilitated dialogue and discussions within a community of global livestock coalitions working towards sustainability, helping connect and build the foundations for a global community working to make livestock farming more sustainable.
- We partnered with Nottingham Trent University to advance their efforts building 'children's communities'.
- We continued work with the UK's Salford City Council Community Leaders Programme to improve health outcomes for marginalised communities.
- We updated and rolled out our Systemcraft course. This provided our partners with a practical framework to address complex problems.

What we've learnt

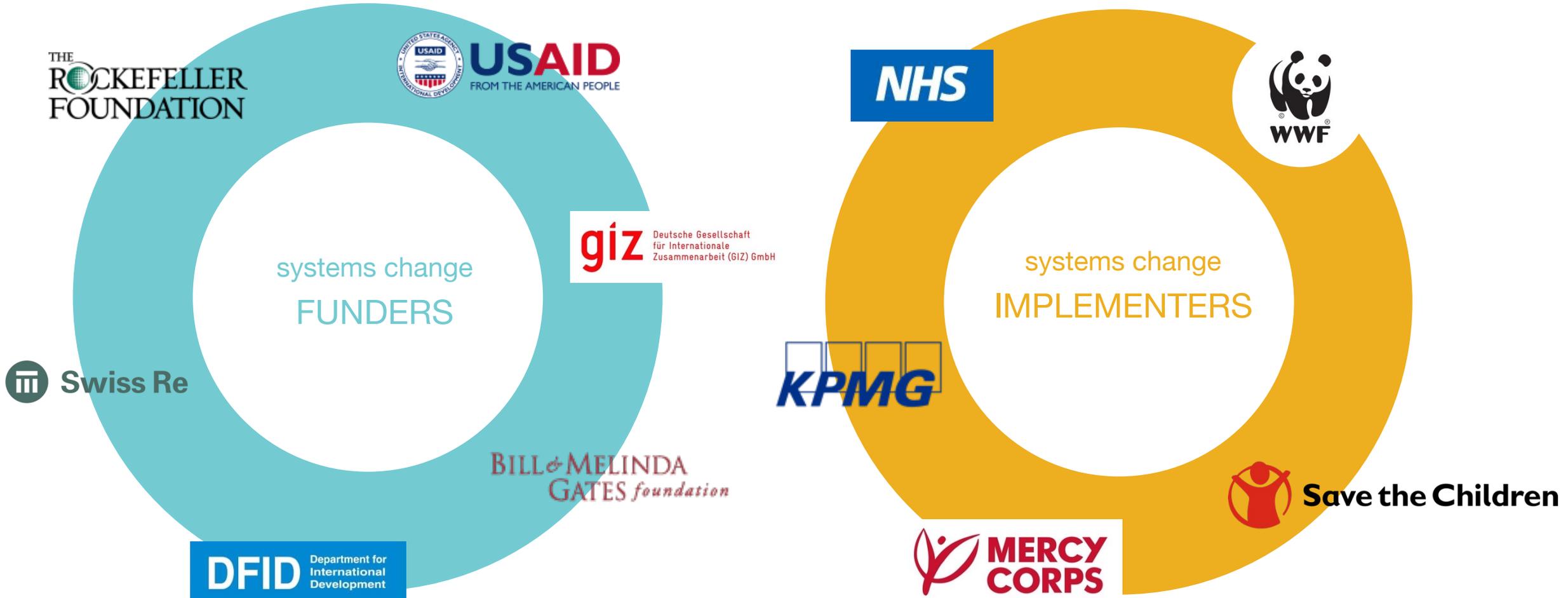
- We approach delivery and the relationships with our clients fundamentally as a thought partnership, and a learning journey for both. The transparency and openness to dialogue and adaptation are highly valued by most of our partners.

What we plan to do next

- Conduct a full data security review to ensure our clients data is fully protected and meets the Cyber Essentials framework.
- Conduct multiple consultation processes with our current and potential partners to better understand the challenges they face and understand how we can best support them.
- Introduce project managers into more of our smaller projects to ensure better service is provided.
- Explore whether we can co-host a 3 day in person network event to deepen relationships and credibility with philanthropic organisations interested in systems change.

Our Clients

We work with some of the world's most respected organisations



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wasafiri

We have enjoyed working with Wasafiri immensely, and have learned a great deal from the process.

We were impressed by your professionalism, knowledge and communication throughout.

Dr Krista Singleton-Cabbage
Deputy Leader, Global Food Practice
WWF International



Design, research & learning,
leadership for systems change



Knowledge and resources to
equip systems leaders



Our framework for tackling
complex challenges

making **good change** happen



making **good change** happen

