



# BERTHA CENTRE VISION & STRATEGY 2022 – 2026

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



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## WORKING EVERY DAY TO CREATE A MORE JUST WORLD

It is a profound responsibility to lead the Bertha Centre at this time. We are at an inflection point as an institution, as a society and as humanity.

We have entered our second decade of operation as of 2021, and have made tremendous progress in establishing ourselves as a leading academic centre committed to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship for social justice. At the same time, South Africa is grappling with a double crisis: a decade of socio-economic stagnation which has exacerbated our deep social crises of persistent poverty, unemployment and inequality; and the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused tragic loss of life, disrupted our way of life and further highlighted social inequalities. Globally, the pandemic has – amid enormous human suffering – occasioned broad and deep reflection on social, economic and environmental inequalities and injustices.

As the Bertha Centre, we are convinced that these developments show that our work is more relevant and urgent than ever. Social innovation, social entrepreneurship, and systems justice are critical tools to create a more just society. There is increasing awareness across sectors that new, bottom-up, people-centred approaches are needed. Social innovation can unlock and apply human, social, and financial capital to create better outcomes for all of us.

Over the next five years: we will support changemakers in South Africa and across Africa; work to transform the allocation of resources from a narrow logic based on financial profit to one which values sustainable social impact; work with partners to mainstream social innovation in a range of institutions; and be a bold, empathetic voice for social innovation for social justice.

As part of our evolution, we will expand into new areas, including policy and governance innovation and climate justice among others. Many of our partners have encouraged us to play a stronger advocacy role, which we see as critical to realising systemic change. We believe we can play an important role in applying social innovation to societal challenges and opportunities, highlighting work by the Centre and others which is creating social impact, and building a social innovation knowledge base which is accessible to practitioners across Africa.

We are committed to strengthening our institution, working creatively and collaboratively with our partners, fellow practitioners and changemakers. Above all, we will continue to live our values and work every day to create a more just world.

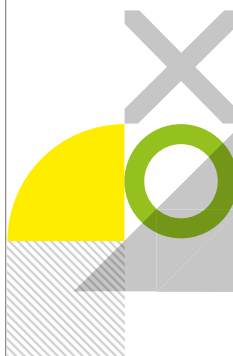
- Dr Solange Rosa, Bertha Centre Director



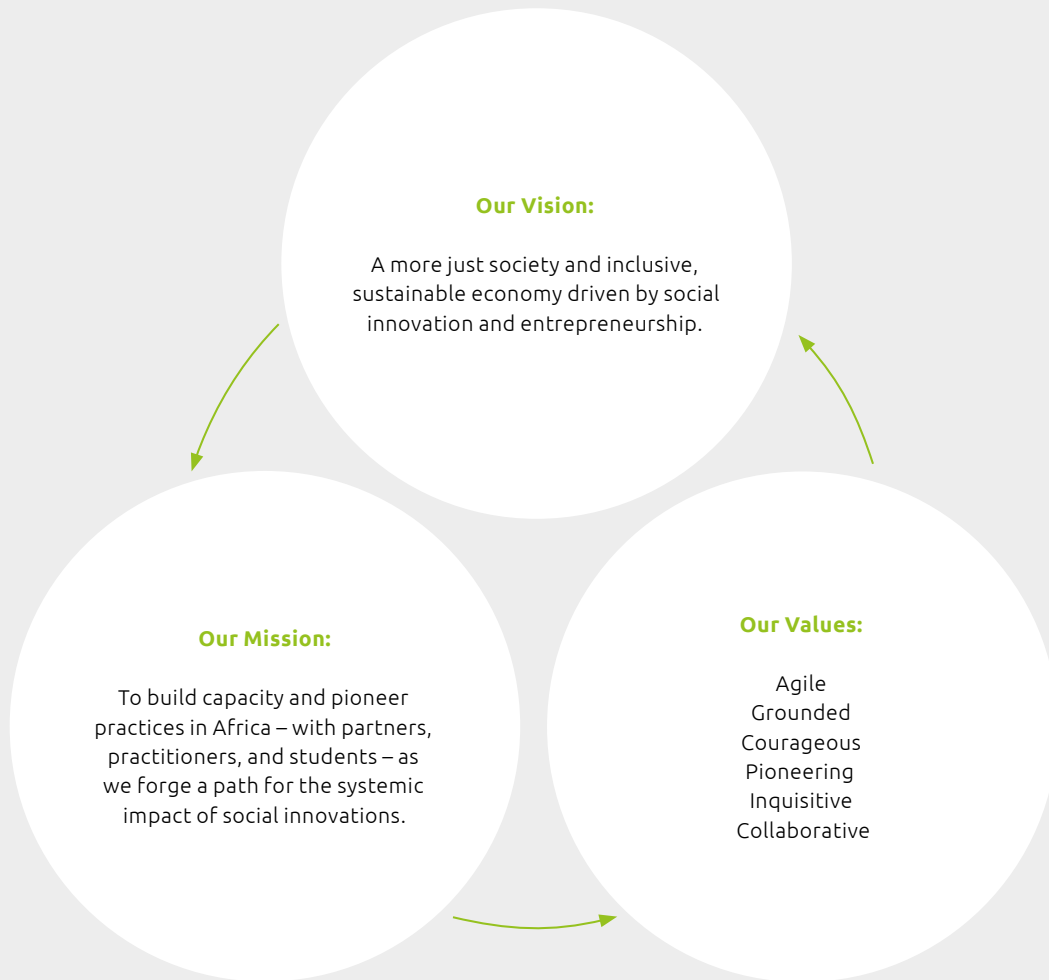
## INTRODUCTION

The building blocks to a dignified, secure, fully actualised life are not available to all of humanity. This is especially so in South Africa, which while a middle-income country, has high levels of poverty and is one of the world's most unequal societies. This context sets the stage for the vital importance of the Bertha Centre of Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, an academic centre focused on creating a more just and inclusive society, in South Africa, Africa and the Global South.

Established in partnership with the Bertha Foundation in 2011, the Bertha Centre has become a leading, globally recognised academic centre, dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Bertha Centre is one of the specialised units at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, with 17 staff, 5 focus areas and 2 main campuses, one near the Cape Town waterfront and the other in Philippi Village, the only township-based campus in the world.



# OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



## OUR CORE WORK



### Educating for Impact

We are dedicated to teaching for impact, and believe that by growing and supporting a cohort of game-changing next generation leaders on the African continent, we are catalysing change.



### Researching for Action

In researching for action, our focus is to build an evidence base that demonstrates the impact of African-centred social innovation and entrepreneurship and disseminate actionable insights.



### Convening for Results

Bringing together and engaging an inclusive set of stakeholders through discourse, to design, exchange and collaborate in systems, we aim to convene for results.



### Catalysing for Change

We strive to catalyse for change through pioneering, exploring, testing and scaling innovative initiatives with our various partners.



### Advocating for justice

We seek to promote social justice through empathic advocacy and presenting evidence to policymakers on social impact.



## OUR IMPACT PORTFOLIOS

We work to achieve our goals through portfolios working in specific thematic areas. Each of our portfolios has its own goals, strategic objectives and activities, with **systems innovation** and **social justice** as a cross-cutting and integrating area of work.

### Education

- We work to understand, innovate and share knowledge in order to promote equitable access to quality education.
- We are committed to helping build and apply the evidence-base of what is working to improve the education pipeline.
- We convene, research, catalyse and share knowledge with the range of education stakeholders from educators to social change organisations to government officials and funders.

### Health systems innovation

- We foster convening of organisations, cross-disciplinary practitioners, academics, students, and community members.
- We create and promote spaces for discourse and experimentation in health systems innovation.
- Our work is based on an understanding of real health needs and the belief that social innovation for health is a mechanism through which health systems – in South Africa, across Africa, and globally – can move closer to achieving health equity.

### Innovative finance

- We use innovative finance as a toolbox to ignite change in impact investing, which we believe is one of today's greatest driving forces in changing the world.
- Where the tools don't exist, we create them.
- Our approach is twofold: develop the talent and knowledge that will shape the future of business and finance, and build the impact investing ecosystem through the creation of spaces and structures for collaboration.

### Systems justice innovation

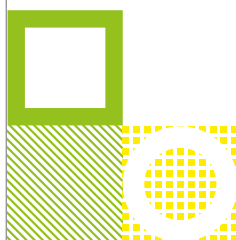
- We are working toward setting an agenda for social and ecologically just global systems work from inside Africa's leading business school.
- We are driven by African-centred and globally relevant approaches to social justice work with a systems innovation lens (Global / high-level).
- We work to transform the underlying systemic drivers of social injustice by leveraging social innovations for systems change.

### Youth development and innovation

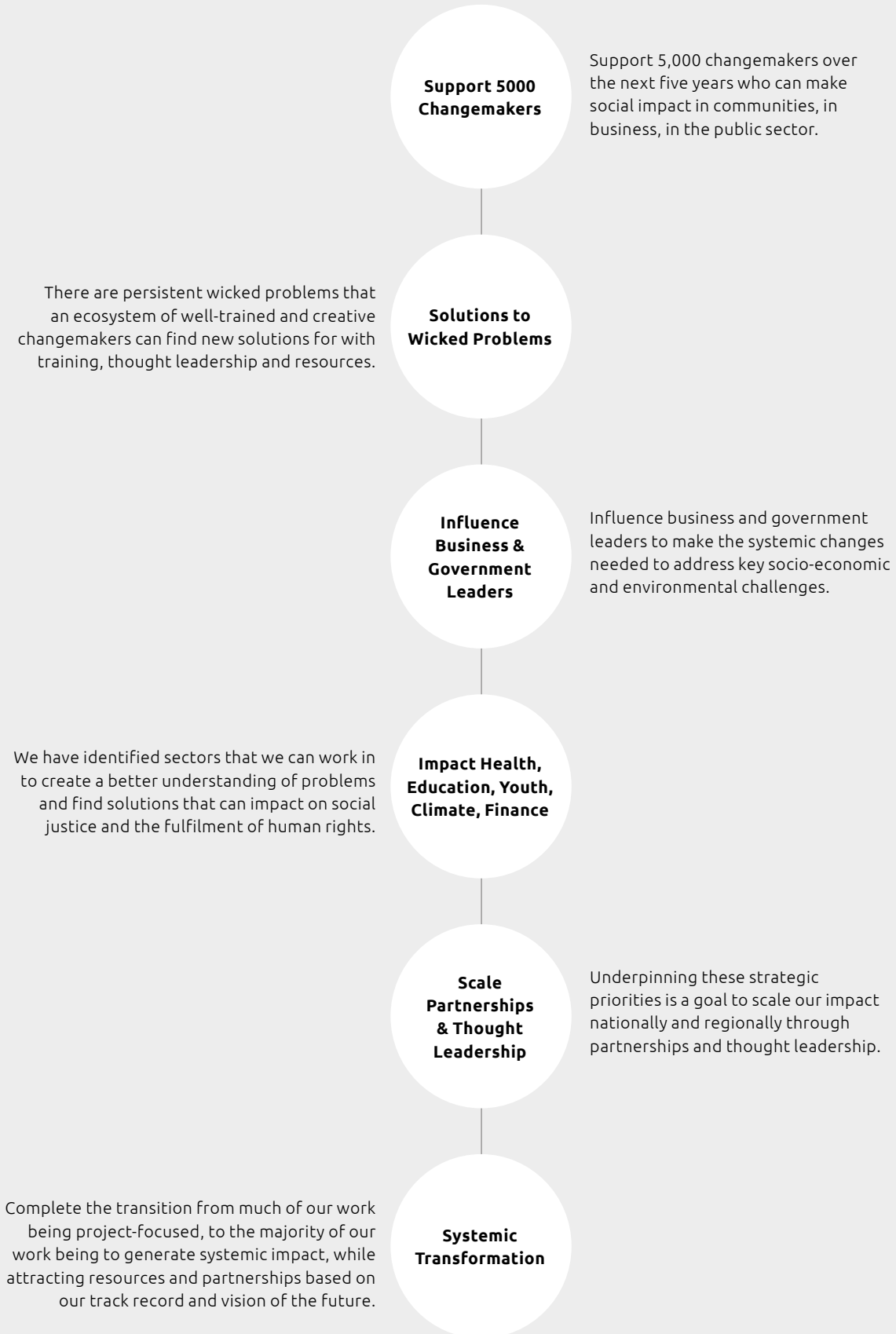
- We strive to support Africa's youth to transition to further education and/or employment through unearthing effective, affordable, and inclusive solutions and supporting the accelerated uptake of these solutions in low-income settings.
- We target youth between the ages of 15-35 through skills development in social innovation, personal development, entrepreneurship, and workplace skills.
- We capacitate youth development organisations to be more systematically effective and impactful.

### Scholars programme

- We provide pathways for radical social justice-oriented entrepreneurs and leaders in commerce and innovation to complete an academic programme at the Graduate School of Business (GSB).
- Through our programme, we aim to grow the community of social entrepreneurs and innovators on the African continent applying their innovations and business acumen for socio-economic and environmental justice.
- We strive to build a supportive and resourceful network of innovators, entrepreneurs, out-of-the-box thinkers, system-entrepreneurs, changemakers and social activists who are inspired and passionate about having tangible impact in their communities and beyond.



# OUR VISION FOR 2022-2026



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES TO REALIZE OUR VISION

We will focus on a set of four strategic priorities and eight related outcomes to realize our vision of a **more just society and inclusive, sustainable economy driven by social innovation and entrepreneurship.**



### **Strategic Priority 1: Increase the number of change makers having a systemic social impact**

- A growing and diverse community of 5000\* change makers creating systemic impact across the continent
- A networked community of changemakers which remains connected and continues to collaborate

### **Strategic Priority 2: Transform the way resources are used for social impact**

- Drive capital toward social impact
- Build radical collaboration models of social innovation that foster systems change

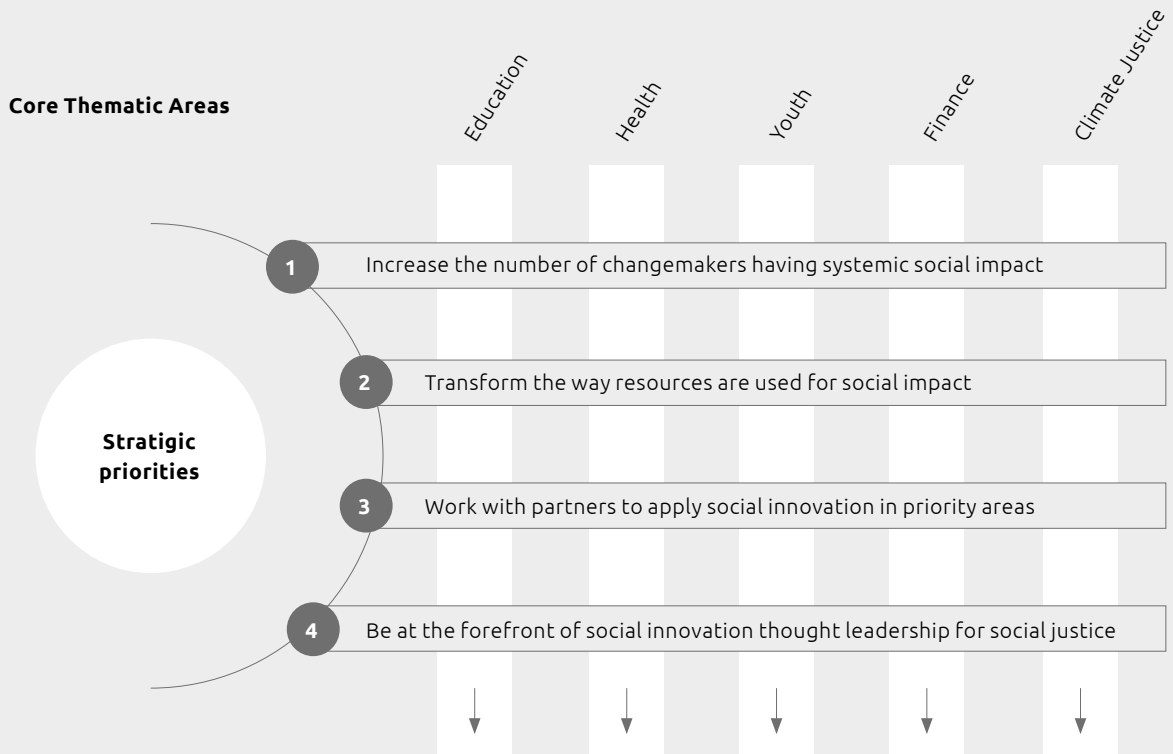
### **Strategic Priority 3: Work with partners to apply social innovation in priority areas**

- Mainstream social innovation in critical public sector institutions
- Mainstream social innovation in critical private sector institutions

### **Strategic Priority 4: Be at the forefront of social innovation thought leadership for social justice**

- Advance social justice through empathic advocacy
- Showcase and grow a compelling evidence base demonstrating the impact of social innovation in their communities and beyond.

# PRIORITIES MAPPED AGAINST CORE THEMATIC AREAS



While focused on advancing social justice broadly, our work centers primarily on five thematic areas at the core of social justice and sustainable, human-centered development in Africa.

Achievement of these priorities requires coordination, collaboration, and commitment among numerous stakeholders, both internal and external to the Centre. Our implementation plan reflects these synergies and breaks our work down into short-term outcomes (2022: Laying the groundwork); medium-term outcomes (2023-2024: Building impact at scale) and long-term outcomes (2025-2026: System shifts).

## New Thematic Area

In addition to these core areas, we add: Climate justice as a key emerging thematic focus area. Environmental sustainability is one of the most important issues facing all of humanity. As societies globally confront climate change, it is urgent that we center social justice in considering impacts and designing responses. Through this lens, we note that Africa is among the regions most impacted by climate change [1], while having contributed among the least to global warming.

Policy and Governance Innovation to support the public sector to instill a culture of innovation and collaboration to improve service delivery to citizens.



## STRENGTHENING OUR INSTITUTION TO DELIVER ON OUR VISION

### DEI & Racial Justice

Do the internal and external work to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive organisation that authentically promotes racial justice.

### Organisational Culture

Distill and deeply understand our secret sauce: the best elements of the Centre's way of working; increase our resilience, collaboration, and adaptability.

### Human Resources

Establish required resources, capabilities, and best institutional structure; build internal capacity and further career development opportunities.

## IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

Our approach to implementing our strategy is informed by our unique context which requires us to:

### Balance immediate impact and systems change

Much of the Centre's work is focused around changing big, complex systems which produce social outcomes which is inherently long-term work. To maintain our morale and achieve tangible victories which excite our stakeholders, we should strike a balance between working on big, systemic problems while also securing regular, tangible advances, even if they are small in scale.

### Make room for experimentation

A tension exists between traditional strategic planning logic in which tasks have predictable durations and dependencies and social innovation work which is inherently experimental. Some of our most important work will have unpredictable durations.

### Pursue radical change

How radical are our ambitions in pursuit of social justice? This question should always make us uncomfortable. We should pursue radical change while being constructive, and pursue systemic change which challenges our sense of what is achievable.

