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A theory of change framework for Caribbean resilience and sustainability through social entrepreneurship

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Ambica Medine¹, Priscila Bahaw^{2*}, Indiana Minto-Coy³ and Kadamawe A.H.N Knife³

¹School of Business and Digital Entrepreneurship, The College of Science Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago; amedine@costaatt.edu.tt

² Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago; priscilla.bahaw@uwi.edu

³ Mona School of Business and Management, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica; indianna.mintocoy@uwimona.edu.jm; kadamawe.knife@uwimona.edu.jm

* Correspondence: priscilla.bahaw@uwi.edu

Abstract: Traditional sectoral efforts for social development (SD) in Latin America and the Caribbean have largely failed to produce significant results, prompting the introduction of the Transformational Theory of Change (TToC) as a new approach to address socioeconomic decline and environmental degradation while achieving SD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This conceptual paper is grounded in a literature review of social entrepreneurship and effective sustainable development (SD) practices, which informs the development of the TToC. The findings emphasise the importance of a collaborative, multisectoral approach and the role of social enterprises in enhancing resilience and promoting national Sustainable Development (SD). However, such collaborative efforts are scarce in the Caribbean, highlighting the need for the Transformational Change Pathway (TCP) and Collaboration Relationship Enabler (CRE). This TToC is the first of its kind at the national level, advocating for entrepreneurial change at the organisational level to foster resilience, with the TCP and CRE enhancing its applicability and providing a model for SD in developing contexts. However, a key limitation is the lack of genuine collaboration between businesses, governments, and social sector organisations (SSOs), necessitating further research to validate the TToC and its supporting frameworks. By transforming SSOs into social enterprises, the Caribbean can enhance social sector resilience, thereby contributing to national Sustainable Development (SD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with potential applicability beyond the Region.

Keywords: Co-creational Process, Social Entrepreneurship, Theory of Change

1. Introduction

The economic downturn associated with COVID-19 led to Caribbean countries experiencing one of the worst social and economic disasters in over a century (ECLAC, 2022). Like other settings, COVID-19 curtailed business activities, resulting in increased closures, unemployment, and poverty, accompanied by increased social unrest, criminal activity, familial loss, and damage to the social structures that keep society together (ECLAC, 2022). These challenges compounded pre-existing societal threats such as environmental degradation related to climate change and flooding, land and property destruction, and animal and human displacements (Minto-Coy et al.,

2022). Traditionally, nonprofit organisations [NPOs] and other social sector organisations [SSOs] assist in alleviating these social and environmental ills and contribute to sustainable development (Samad et al., 2023). In developing countries, these third-sector organisations generally address gaps that the public and private sectors are unable to meet (Clear et al., 2018). However, in the Caribbean context, most of these organisations lack the resources and capabilities to address these challenges effectively (Bahaw et al., 2025b). These limits are further exacerbated by SSOs' financial dependence on donor organisations (Bowen, 2013; Medine & Minto-Coy, 2023). The global economic downturn, donors' financial constraints, and resultant funding reductions have placed SSOs at a crossroads, stretching their limited resource capabilities at a time when the need for their services has increased. The threat is reduced social impact, increased social unrest, and a threat to the realisation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), even as ineffectiveness and organisational closure are not viable options for national social development [SD]. The call is for newer, more sustainable models for survival.

As a cluster of small island developing states (Pounder, 2015), the Caribbean faces acute vulnerabilities (Minto-Coy et al., 2022). When combined with other challenges, such as crime and violence (seen as public health issues), these hinder social and economic development (Bisca et al., 2024). Within this myriad of challenges, the Government and business are tasked with meeting the SDGs.

1.1. Caribbean Economic Realities - SDGs

Realising the SDGs necessitates significant funding, estimated at around US\$100 billion for the coming decade (Leon, 2022). Regrettably, the Caribbean's challenging economic landscape makes this aspiration unfeasible. Table 1 (below) demonstrates that from 2017 to 2019, most Caribbean countries experienced declining GDP growth rates, with minor projected improvement for 2022 to 2026, except for Guyana. Moreover, the national debt-to-GDP ratio between 2015 and 2020 has consistently remained alarmingly high, reaching as high as 73.7% in 2019, exceeding the critical threshold of 55% of GDP, beyond which further debt accumulation has been noted to hinder economic growth (CMCA, 2021).

Table 1: Past Fiscal Space and Past/Future Growth Indicators in Selected Caribbean Countries

Past Fiscal Space and Past/Future Growth Indicators	Fiscal Imbalance/ GDP ratio			Real GDP growth (Annual per cent change)				
	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Antigua and Barbuda	-2.4%	-2.3%	-3.6%	8.5	5.6	5.4	4.2	2.8
Bahamas	-5.6%	-3.4%	-1.7%	14.4	4.3	1.8	1.6	1.6
Barbados	-4.5%	-0.3%	3.7%	9.8	4.5	3.9	2.8	2.3
Belize	-1.3%	-1.2%	-4.6%	12.7	4	3	2.5	2.5
Dominica	-5.0%	-7.9%	-17.7%	5.7	4.6	4.6	4.2	2.9
Grenada	3.0%	4.9%	4.2%	6.4	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.2
Guyana	-4.5%	-3.3%	-3.5%	62.3	38.4	26.6	18.8	21.2
Jamaica	0.5%	1.2%	0.9%	5.2	2	1.8	1.7	1.6
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1.9%	3.2%	1.6%	8.8	4.9	3.8	3	2.7
Saint Lucia	-1.2%	-2.0%	-2.7%	15.7	3.2	2.3	2.3	1.8
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	-2.2%	-1.6%	-3.0%	5.5	6.2	5	3.9	2.8
Suriname	-9.7%	-11.7%	-10.3%	1	2.1	3	3	3
Trinidad and Tobago	-8.9%	-3.6%	-2.4%	1.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	1.8
CMCA Caribbean Average	-3.1%	-2.1%	-2.9%	-	-	-	-	-

Source: CMCA (2021) and IMF World Economic Outlook (October 2023)

This reality underscores the Region's limited capacity for financing or for additional borrowing to invest in advancing SD. This reality can be juxtaposed with a decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA), a lack of transparency, and corrupt practices (Latindadd, 2022). Collectively, such challenges limit the effectiveness of public spending on SD (Gupta et al., 2002; Transparency International, 2021). Furthermore, with a score of 10.91 on its 2020 World Risk Index (CMCA, 2021), the Caribbean faces one of the highest levels of climate and disaster risk compared to other regions. Social decline, corruption, and environmental vulnerabilities significantly hinder the achievement of SD goals (Minto-Coy & Berman, 2016).

Pursuing resilience and sustainable growth and development is a priority among Caribbean Heads of State (ILO, 2022). Ultimately, at societal, national, and organisational levels, there is a need for developmental or transformational change to build what (Pinheiro et al., 2022) refer to as absorptive (ability to return to original states), adaptive (adjusting to change) and transformative (environmentally interactive change to a beneficial state) resilience. That is individual, societal, organisational, and national ability or resource capability to address adversity and become stronger and better.

Addressing this demand within the Caribbean's complex web of challenges necessitates a redefined approach to Sustainable Development (SD), with Social Entrepreneurship (SE) emerging as a promising solution (Bansal et al., 2019; UN, 2023). As a still emerging concept in the general entrepreneurship and innovation literature, social entrepreneurship (SE) refers to entrepreneurship applied in the social or public context (Dees, 2001). By creating and managing ventures that address community-based, social, or environmental challenges, social enterprises embody SE concepts that focus on maintaining a balance between social impact and financial viability (Teasdale et al., 2023; Saebi et al., 2019).

1.2. SE – International Context

The UN Inter-Agency Task Force (2019) advocates the social and solidarity economy, which leverages and embodies the principles of SE as essential for SD and the realisation of the SDGs. Guided by sectoral needs, grounded in empirical research, and supported by associated policies and institutional support, the EU has, for instance, leveraged social enterprise (the organisational form of SE – the social business) to drive sustainable development across Europe (OECD/EU, 2017). The view here is that social enterprises have the "potential to reshape the economy post-COVID through inclusive and sustainable economic models leading to a fairer ecological, economic, and social transformation" (European Commission, 2021, 4). In the international context, social enterprise operationalised via social enterprises is recognised as essential for rural, community, and societal development, as well as for building more resilient nations (Bernardion Santos, 2018; Bansal et al., 2019).

1.3. SE – Caribbean Context

Jamaica has led the way in the Caribbean, leveraging the inclusive approach of SE and social enterprise in engaging at-risk youth (DPIL, 2009), as well as community safety and security (Knife et al., 2018). The measurement of the effectiveness of social enterprises in generating value and monetising social value creation (Knife & Haughton, 2013) led to required institutional support (ICNL, 2018), the creation of the Jamaican Social Stock Exchange as a supportive financial instrument, and the determination of SSOs contribution to that country's overall GDP. These are important steps towards transforming SSOs into social enterprises, which are both operational and socially sustainable (Wendt, 2020).

The above, however, is not common across the Caribbean. Caribbean SSOs' abilities to address societal ills are hindered by donor dependency, limiting their operational and staffing capabilities (numbers and skills) (Medine & Minto-Coy, 2023). The same staffing challenges affect the ability to pursue earned income ventures for operational survival, with such income sometimes being subjected to standard taxation. The latter can deter income-generating pursuits (Stephens et al., 2024). Within these limitations, Caribbean SSOs are subject to anti-money laundering laws, with financial penalties for non-adherence (AML/CFT, 2015) and increased scrutiny due to their location in a region flagged for heightened financial risks. Notwithstanding, Medine & Minto-Coy's (2023) research demonstrated that NPOs operating as social enterprises with SE strategies have a greater potential of being operationally and financially sustainable in addressing their social missions.

1.4. Research Imperatives

This research builds on the achievements of social enterprises (Knife et al., 2018) in Jamaica, as well as Medine and Minto-Coy's (2023) findings on international best practices of SE for SSOs' sustainability and the UN Resolution A/77/L.60 of March 27, 2023. These streams of work reinforced social enterprise and social enterprises as a pathway for social transformation and the attainment of the SDGs. Importantly, they emphasise the importance of multisectoral collaboration. A direct outcome of Medine and Minto-Coy's work was the establishment of the first multisectoral committee in Trinidad and Tobago, the Social Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development Steering (SEEDS) Committee (SEEDS Committee, 2023), to drive transformational change and support the development of social enterprises and the social economy. Integral to this group is the inclusion of academics across the Region, with SEEDS activities demonstrating a direct link between research and practice (Banasiewicz, 2021).

Thus, accepting SE as essential in building community and national resilience and recognising the limitations that transformational change is not a simple one-step or one-sector responsibility, this paper posits a

Transformational Theory of Change [TToC] model that leverages SE, leading to a resilient, entrepreneurial, self-sustaining social sector that contributes to sustainable national and regional socioeconomic and environmental development. The focus of the application is those Caribbean countries that are full members of CARICOM.¹ All Caribbean countries share a similar history, experience similar social and cultural issues, and face similar challenges in transitioning to sustainable economies and societies (Minto-Coy, 2015). Being members of CARICOM, they also have similar national policies addressing these challenges. Despite possible socioeconomic differences, given the universality of the SD challenges faced, there is an expectation that this TToC will be applicable to all Caribbean countries and other developing contexts with similar SD needs, including Latin America.

In deriving the TToC, we addressed the following research questions:

1. *How does Social Entrepreneurship build social sector resilience and support national social development?*
2. *What concepts underpin the effectiveness of Social Entrepreneurship as a foundational tool in the Theory of Change to build resilience and sustainable development?*

Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, examining the dynamics and transformative potential of SE. It responds to the research questions while simultaneously ascertaining the conceptual foundation for this paper's proposed TToC model.

2. Materials and Methods

This conceptual paper synthesises theoretical and empirical insights to develop a novel framework integrating Social Entrepreneurship (SE), the Theory of Change (ToC), and Sustainable Development (SD). Given the interdisciplinary nature of our research, we employ an integrated literature review methodology (Jaakkola, 2020), which enables the synthesis of diverse theoretical perspectives while critically evaluating their applicability to our proposed Transformational Theory of Change (TToC) and Transformational Change Pathway (TCP). An integrated literature review is particularly suited to this study for three reasons. Firstly, this method facilitates the synthesis of interdisciplinary knowledge. Our research bridges SE, organisational change, and SD, requiring a methodology capable of consolidating insights from multiple domains (Snyder, 2019). Unlike systematic reviews that prioritise empirical uniformity, an integrated approach facilitates conceptual innovation by identifying intersections across disciplines (Snyder, 2019). Secondly, since our objective is to propose a new conceptual framework (the TToC and TCP), an integrated review enables us to "build on and extend existing theories rather than merely summarise them" (Jaakkola, 2020, p. 19). This method aligns with the theory-building purpose of our study, which facilitates theoretical development. Ultimately, the integrated literature review played a crucial role in helping us address gaps in developing contexts. Given the scarcity of Caribbean-specific entrepreneurship literature (Mack et al., 2025), an integrated review permits the inclusion of diverse sources (peer-reviewed studies, grey literature, case studies) to ensure contextual relevance while maintaining theoretical rigour (Bahaw et al., 2025c).

2.1. Literature Selection Process

To ensure robustness, we followed structured guidelines for literature selection (Podsakoff et al., 2005; Kraus et al., 2014) through:

Database Search: Source documents include peer-reviewed articles, books, white papers, and reports acquired from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, and Scopus, as well as from reputable organizations like the European Union and the United Nations. Institutional reports (e.g., UN, EU) were included to capture policy and practitioner perspectives often absent in traditional journals. Restricting search to these validated sources assured academic rigour and information integrity.

Keyword Strategy: Keywords included "social entrepreneurship," "Caribbean," "resilience," "social development," "Theory of Change," "sustainability," and other related terms. These were selected to cover the broad topics of SE in developing regions and to refine the focus on best practices. Boolean operators (AND/OR) refined searches to balance breadth and relevance.

Inclusion Criteria: Articles were included based on relevance to social entrepreneurship, developing countries (particularly the Caribbean), resilience, and sustainable development. Considering SE as a developing

¹ Formed in 1973 and comprising mainly English-speaking Caribbean countries, CARICOM is a regional intergovernmental organisation aimed at promoting cooperation and economic integration among Caribbean states. Full members are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

concept and limitation on Caribbean research, we included publications from the past 25 years, ensuring the review reflects both past and contemporary challenges and practices in the field and accounts for SE's evolving conceptualisation.

Screening and Quality Assessment: We screened/accepted literature using titles and abstracts to filter for relevance to SE, ToC, and SD (conceptual and in-action) in developing and developed contexts, prioritising peer-reviewed sources that were ethically considerate and provided theoretical concepts, empirical insights, or case studies of social entrepreneurship practices relevant to our Region of focus. The steps followed during identification, screening, and inclusion are illustrated in the PRISMA-like flowchart (see Figure 1).

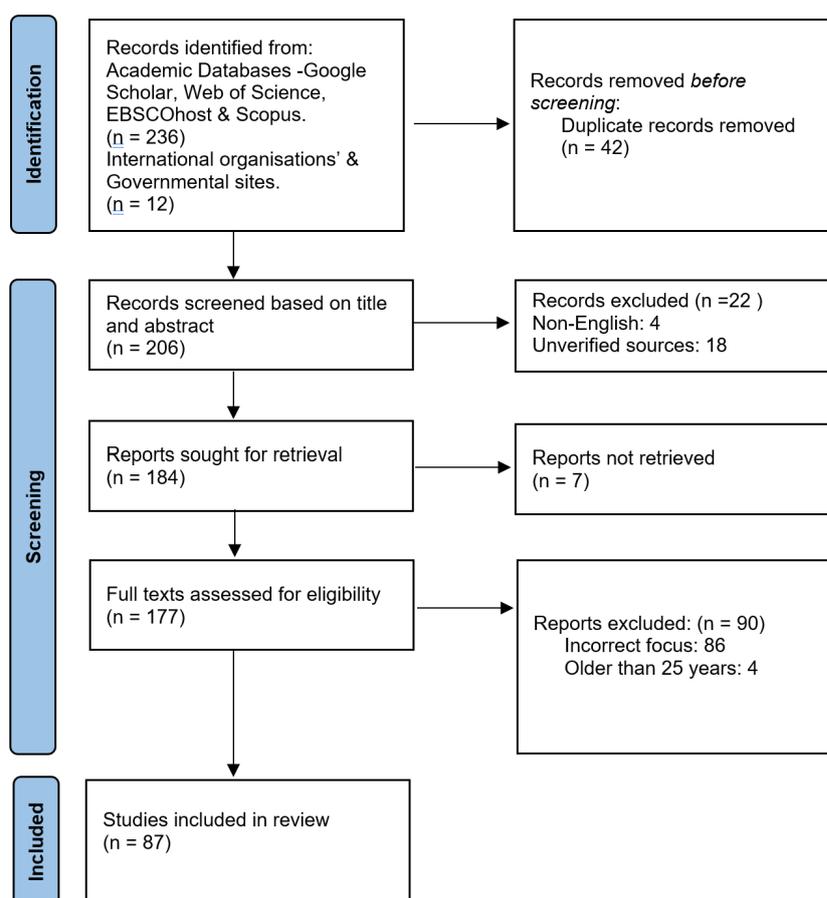


Figure 1. Modified PRISMA flowchart illustrating the literature selection process for the integrated review. Source: Adapted from PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

2.2. Literature Analysis and Synthesis

To derive our conceptual framework, we employed:

Thematic Analysis for Framework Development: This involved categorising literature into themes (e.g., SE models, ToC operationalisation, collaboration barriers) to identify patterns and theoretical alignments (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Cross-Referencing and Validation: We compared findings across developed and developing contexts to assess the applicability of existing theories and justify modifications (e.g., TCP and CRE components).

Critical Reflection: We noted limitations in current SE and ToC applications to underscore the need for our proposed TToC.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Social Entrepreneurship – Pathway to Development and Resilience

Entrepreneurship is not simply about starting a new business, but involves creative and innovative actions that generate value (Bacigalupo et al., 2016; Mack et al., 2024), particularly in the context of innovation management along the value chain of public, social, and business sector organisations (Bahaw, 2017; Drucker,

1993). Social entrepreneurship (SE) is a genre of entrepreneurship applied in the social or public context, operationalized via the social enterprise (Dees, 2001; Alter, 2007). It involves the application of business principles and innovative methods to address societal and environmental issues, thereby creating social value (Dees, 2007; Alter, 2007). As a developing concept and because social enterprises operate in nonprofit and for-profit sectors, there is often confusion between SE and the traditional NPOs, social activists, and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Social enterprises differ from traditional nonprofits (NPOs), which rely on grants and donations (Alter, 2003). Social enterprises operate with dual financial and social missions, creatively leveraging resources, business tools, and techniques to create sustained social value (Alter, 2007). This is particularly relevant in resource-constrained environments, such as the Caribbean, where NPOs often face resource limitations (Medine & Minto-Coy, 2023). Furthermore, SE is not social activism, typically addressed without consideration of innovation or business principles (Medine & Minto-Coy, 2023). SE emphasises sustainable, transformative social change.

While CSR can create social value, the business's primary goal remains shareholder value, not social impact. CSR activities often align with business strategies or societal pressures rather than long-term social change (Gaither et al., 2018; Beg et al., 2023), for example. In the Caribbean, CSR actions are largely philanthropic (Arjoon & Ron Sookram, 2010), lacking a sustainable and systemic impact (Knife et al., 2018). Social value creation is not peripheral but central to SE (Dees, 2001; UN, 2016).

SE, the utilisation of business principles and innovation, i.e., SE strategies (Medine & Minto-Coy, 2023), can transform traditional NPOs and other SSOs into social enterprises, building organisational absorptive and adaptive resilience, enabling transformative resilience (Pinheiro et al., 2022) and achieving widespread social development from poverty and social justice to climate change, thereby creating lasting social value (Dees, 2001; Kim & Lim, 2017; Ito, 2017; Lubberink, 2019; Bansal et al., 2019). Hence, our focus is on the role of SE transformational value creation in addressing the socioeconomic ills noted in many Caribbean and other developing countries.

3.2. Social Entrepreneurship and Its Transformative Power

Globally, SE and social enterprises have been recognised as drivers of environmental and socioeconomic transformation (Anastasiadis & Mayr, 2009; Naderi et al., 2019), catalysing social development (Matei & Matei, 2012; Sharma, 2014). Such transformation involves addressing the root causes of social inequalities and problems rather than merely treating symptoms (Utting, 2018). Transformation is a collaborative process that engages stakeholders to achieve long-term, systemic cultural, social, and economic change (Crosby & Bryson, 2005). Such a collaborative approach to systematic transformational change begins with the social enterprise at the community or grassroots level, bringing about change to all levels of society (Rae, 2017). This SE's transformational foundation aligns with the UN Research Institute for Social Development's position on SE as being relevant and important to the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and achieving the SDGs (Utting, 2018). Social enterprises invigorate communities by promoting inclusive and sustainable development through technological, social, and institutional innovations (Utting, 2015). With relevant institutional support, social enterprises are better equipped to withstand socioeconomic shocks and foster long-term resilience and SD (Haarich et al., 2020).

3.2.1 Supportive Institutional Support

Institutional support is crucial to SE's contribution to value creation and transformation. In countries like the United States, sectoral networks and supportive policies enhance the capacity of SSOs, enabling them to make significant contributions to the economy (Salamon, 2003). Similarly, an enabling ecosystem with skills development, policies, and legal frameworks in the EU has resulted in the transition of NPOs to social enterprises, contributing to national GDP, and making them leading job providers (OECD/EU, 2017). In the Caribbean, Jamaica provided appropriate institutional support, such as Social Impact Bonds (Mulgán et al., 2011) and the Social Stock Exchange, which enabled social enterprises to contribute to the national GDP (Knife et al., 2018). However, despite this positive move, institutional support in the Caribbean is still in its infancy, requiring more comprehensive multisectoral collaboration and limiting the operational sustainability of SSOs (CANARI, 2005; Comissiong, 2020).

3.2.2 Challenges in Collaboration and Support – Caribbean Context

Multisectoral collaboration for sustainable development (SD) in the Caribbean faces significant barriers. Although the Region has adopted SD policies with requirements for multisectoral collaboration, such as the OAS SD policies (General Assembly of OAS, 2012), implementation remains weak (CANARI, 2005; Comissiong, 2020). Governments view SSOs' contributions as tangential to central public sector goals, seemingly reluctant to fully embrace public-civil society partnerships, which hampers progress and Sustainable Development (Civil

Society Consultative Working Group, 2014). For example, although the Trinidad and Tobago government's post-COVID recovery strategy calls for increased SSO engagement (Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, 2022), much of the focus remains on incentivising the private sector and increasing donations to SSO rather than on genuine collaboration for SD. Similarly, ineffective collaboration exists between businesses and SSOs, whereby philanthropic actions and donations, not necessarily aligned to national developmental issues, are the primary forms of cooperation. Multisectoral, multidisciplinary collaboration with strategic information-sharing to inform decision-making ensures accountability and is essential for building national resilience; however, these elements are lacking in the Caribbean context (Zivkovic, 2011; ILO, 2020).

3.3 Building Resilience via Social Entrepreneurship

SE operationalised through social enterprises has the potential to strengthen social sector resilience and address SD challenges in the Caribbean (Betts et al., 2018; Diaz-Sarachaga & Ariza-Montes, 2022). However, sustained transformational change requires systematic transformational leadership and an enabling ecosystem (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018; UN General Assembly, 2023). Transformational leadership, which involves collective stakeholder efforts and engagement, is key to driving sustainable entrepreneurial change. Sectoral or national resilience is not about replicating a single innovation, but rather the systematic management and synchronisation of context-specific innovations. By focusing on context-specific challenges and needs, transformational leadership can facilitate national resilience and sustainable change (O'Flynn & Wanna, 2008). This approach is particularly suited for developing countries, such as those in the Caribbean, where localised solutions are essential. International best practices suggest that policymakers play a central role in initiating and leading transformational processes, ensuring alignment with national Sustainable Development (SD) goals (OECD/EU, 2017). Their involvement in the Caribbean context is essential, given its size compared to other sectors (Minto-Coy & Berman, 2016). Irrespective, real change results from collaborative entrepreneurship in action (Bhutiani et al., 2012), which enables understanding of context-specific challenges, facilitates commitment, and leverages resources effectively (O'Flynn & Wanna, 2008). Leveraging the moral ethos of social entrepreneurship, transformational leaders with a forward-thinking vision and a holistic approach to sustainable development (SD) create scalable, sustainable solutions to global challenges (Marmer, 2012). Through the systematic, co-creational application of entrepreneurial activities, these leaders address environmental, societal, and economic issues, contributing to sustainable SD (Yoruk et al., 2022; Marchese et al., 2018).

Given SE's institutional nature (Popoviciu & Popoviciu, 2011), its solutions are context-specific, addressing the unique challenges of developing regions, such as the Caribbean (Bahaw et al., 2025a). The derived entrepreneurial solutions offer a more relevant approach to addressing development challenges than large-scale models, which may not adequately address local needs (Popoviciu & Popoviciu, 2011). While Caribbean nations have aligned their development plans with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), collaboration remains insufficient (Gaither et al., 2018). Fragmented policies and reliance on donations cannot drive sustainable development or meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Utting, 2015). Meaningful, transformational change requires multisectoral input at all levels, i.e., context-driven change models or, as advocated in this paper, a Transformational Theory of Change [TToC] leveraging SE strategies to achieve SD.

3.4. Towards a Transformational Theory of Change Framework for Caribbean Resilience and Sustainability through Social Entrepreneurship

The ToC framework applies to all organisational or sectoral initiatives and interventions, customised by context and informed by evidence-based and best-practice research (Stein & Valters, 2012), elucidating a stepwise process of how a given intervention leads to specific developmental changes (UN, 2017). It helps define how interventions lead to outcomes and impact, mapping out the necessary steps and resources needed to achieve the desired change goal or impact. The process involves understanding the problem and desired outcomes, making assumptions, then defining the interventions, identifying the inputs (both tangible and intangible resources), and measuring the outputs, allowing for a direct measure of the effect or outcome. Measurement indicators with monitoring instruments enable stakeholders to track progress, measure outcomes, and determine the impact of processes and interventions. (Bacq, 2017; Goldsworthy, 2021; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020)

Despite conditional limitations, the ToC's systematic and structured processes facilitate understanding and acceptance of transformational change. The evidence-based feedback loops guide adjustments and reapplication, ensuring alignment with strategic intent and integrating multiple change levels, making the ToC an accepted planning and evaluation method for addressing and managing complex development problems, ideally suited to each Caribbean country's Sustainable Development (SD) initiatives. (Arensman et al, 2018; Stein & Valters, 2012b; Valters, 2014; Abercrombie et al, 2018). Notwithstanding, transformational change has transitional

challenges (Söderholm, 2020), which can be managed and synchronised with a defined transformational change pathway.

3.4.1. The Transformational Change Pathway

Achieving transformational change for social sector resilience and sustainable development is complex, requiring multilevel, context-specific changes tailored to that context and implemented through interlinked or interdependent Theories of Change (ToCs) and corresponding interventions. Regardless of the context, transformational leadership employs a co-creative process to thoroughly understand the problem, its underlying conditions, assumptions, and the desired change goals or outcomes. From this, leaders work backwards, identifying long-term, medium-term, and short-term outcomes or preconditions necessary for success, with measurable indicators to track progress. These outcomes determine the necessary intervention actions, resources, and measurable outcomes. Leveraging these ToC principles and Reinholz and Andrews' (2020) logic model, Figure 2 illustrates a multilevel, synchronised ToC Transformation Change Pathway (TCP) for building a resilient social sector and achieving national SD. (Stein & Valters, 2012; Abercrombie et al., 2018; Arensman et al., 2018).

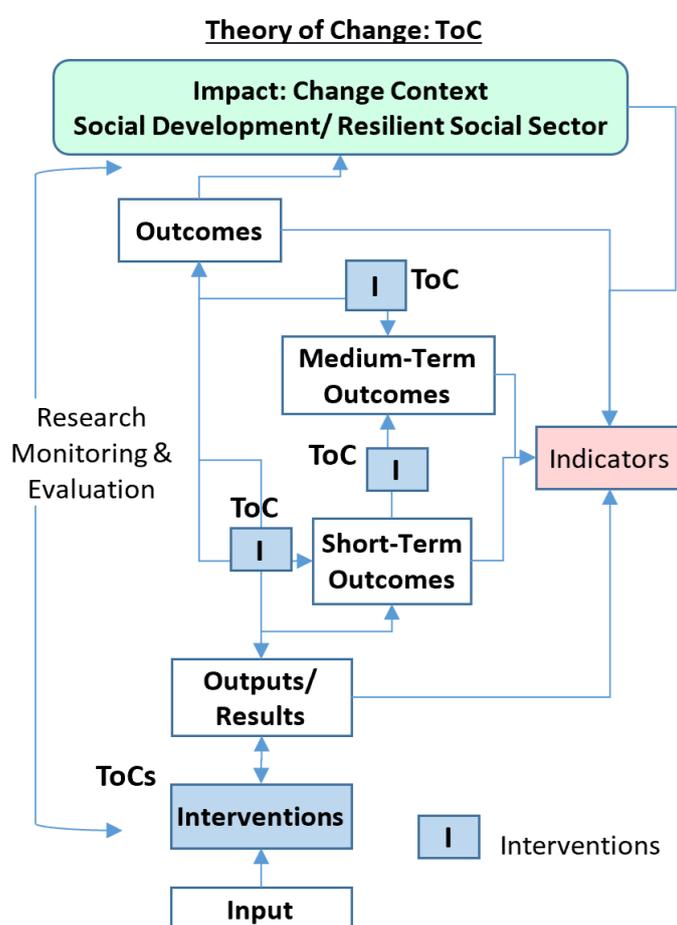


Figure 2: Transformation Change Pathway (TCP). Source: Adapted Model, Reinholz & Andrews (2020). Authors Developed, Sep 2023

Navigating this pathway toward building a resilient social sector and achieving the SDGs' triple bottom line (social, economic, and environmental) requires synchronisation and collaboration among the government, private, and social sectors. This co-creational process is essential. While academic research provides evidence-based guidance for SD, implementing a collaborative approach in the Caribbean context presents challenges, particularly in building trust and managing relationships.

Transformational change in achieving the desired impact of social sector resilience and Sustainable Development (SD) is complex, requiring multilevel, multi-contextual changes with each process of entrepreneurial action for transformational change customised to the context and achieved through interlinked or

interdependent Transformational Change (ToCs) and associated intervention actions. Irrespective of the contextual level, transformational leadership employs a co-creative process to gain a comprehensive understanding of the contextual problem, situational context, underlying conditions and assumptions, and a definition of the desired change goal (s) or outcome/impact. With that end goal, one works backwards, identifying the long-term and associated medium- and short-term outcomes or preconditions for impact success, using quantifiable outcome indicators. Outcomes dictate the required intervention actions, associated input resources, and related measurable outputs. Leveraging these ToC concepts and Reinholz and Andrews's (2020) logic model, Figure 2 demonstrates a multilevel synchronised ToC Transformation Change Pathway [TCP] for building a resilient social sector and national SD. (Stein & Valters 2012; Abercrombie et al, 2018; Arensman et al., 2018).

3.4.2. Social Development - Collaborative/Co-creation Approach

Cross-sectoral collaboration is crucial for building resilience and driving social development (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015; Lane, 2013; Sakarya et al., 2012). By bringing together stakeholders with diverse knowledge and perspectives, collaboration fosters well-informed and innovative solutions, enabling resource sharing and reducing costs, risks, and uncertainties (Sørensen, 2012; Sdunzik et al., 2022). However, despite the many benefits, cross-sector collaboration faces several challenges; the first is recognising the need for collaboration. Once formed, managing relationships involves navigating issues of trust, cultural norms, authority, policies, and conflicting goals, interests, and priorities (Gardner, 2005; Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Di Domenico et al., 2009). For effective collaboration within the ToC/TCP framework, it is essential to understand and synthesise diverse stakeholder perspectives, biases, values, expectations, and assumptions. This ensures the development, integration, and implementation of multifaceted solutions that go beyond the vision of any single sector or stakeholder (Agustin et al., 2016; Gardner, 2005).

To facilitate effective collaboration, Sdunzik et al. (2022) identified key relationship enablers for each stage of the change process, with monitoring, management, and measurement indicators to ensure alignment and success (see Table 2). The stages include:

Stage 1 – Collaboration/Partnership Formation

Stage 2A – Operations/Implementation of Strategies/Actions

Stage 2B – Monitoring of SD Actions/Maintenance of Collaborative Efforts

Table 2: Collaboration Relationship Management

Relationship Enablers	Definitions	Indicators
Stage 1: Collaboration & Co-creation Formation		
Mutuality	Gains for all partners for shared benefits	Interdependence; Cooperation; Alignment; Synergy; Outcomes
Positionality	Structural and systemic balance/ imbalance between partners	Balance; Influence; Hierarchy; Redistribution; Power
Risk Allocation	Assignment of risks between partners	Reduce; Negotiate; Define; Control; Manage
Roles and Responsibilities	Identification and allocation of tasks within a partnership	Activities; Targets; Funds; Involvement; Exchange
Shared Authority and Decision-making	Shared and integrative leadership and representation	Decentralization; Coherence; Consistency; Participation; Inclusion
Stage 2A: Operations/Implementations of SD Strategies		
Communication	Conveyance of information in an open, regular, accurate manner	Negotiate; Identify; Align; Problem-solving; Check-in

Flexibility and Compromise	Willingness to accommodate emerging needs and trends	Balance; Negotiate; Conflict handling; Responsiveness
Managerial Efforts	Alignment and coordination of partnering activities and processes	Adjustment; Optimization; Coordination; Performance management
Performance Enhancing Strategies	Procedural and processual mechanisms to support partnership activities	Boundary spanning; Interaction; Integration; Learning; Coordination

Stage 2B: Monitoring of SD actions/ Maintenance of Collaborative Efforts

Accountability	Assurance of partnership goal pursuit despite individual interests	Reporting standards; Enforceability; Answerability; Bidirectionality
Commitment	Investment of time and resources and willingness to engage	Dedication; Resource allocation; Long-term involvement; Buy-in
Transparency	Degree of disclosure of intentions, process, and progress	Honesty; Candor; Assurance; Joint Learning
Trust	Assurance of obligation to expectations and insurance against corresponding shortcomings	Benevolence; Competence; Credibility; Integrity; Deterrence

Source: Sdunzik J, Bampoh D, Sinfield J, McDavid L, Burgess D, Burgess W (2022); An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Private Sector Engagement in Cross-Sector Partnerships: The Why, Where, and How

Each step of this collaborative and co-creative approach, with supportive relationship enablers, provides transparency of actions, thereby winning legitimacy for SD actions. A detailed description of each relationship enabler is beyond the scope of this paper. However, there is the expectation of customisation to reflect the ToC context.

Having addressed the anticipated startup and transitional challenges associated with transformational change (Figure 2) and the formation and relationship management challenges at each stage of the change process (Table 2), the following section introduces the first known national/sectoral Transformational Theory of Change (ToC).

3.5 Transformational Theory of Change – Resilient Social Sector

This section presents a Transformational Theory of Change (TToC), shown in Figure 3, to build absorptive, adaptive, and transformative resilience within the social sector and simultaneously addresses how a co-creational approach between the social, business, and governmental sectors can meet the SDGs while pursuing SD.

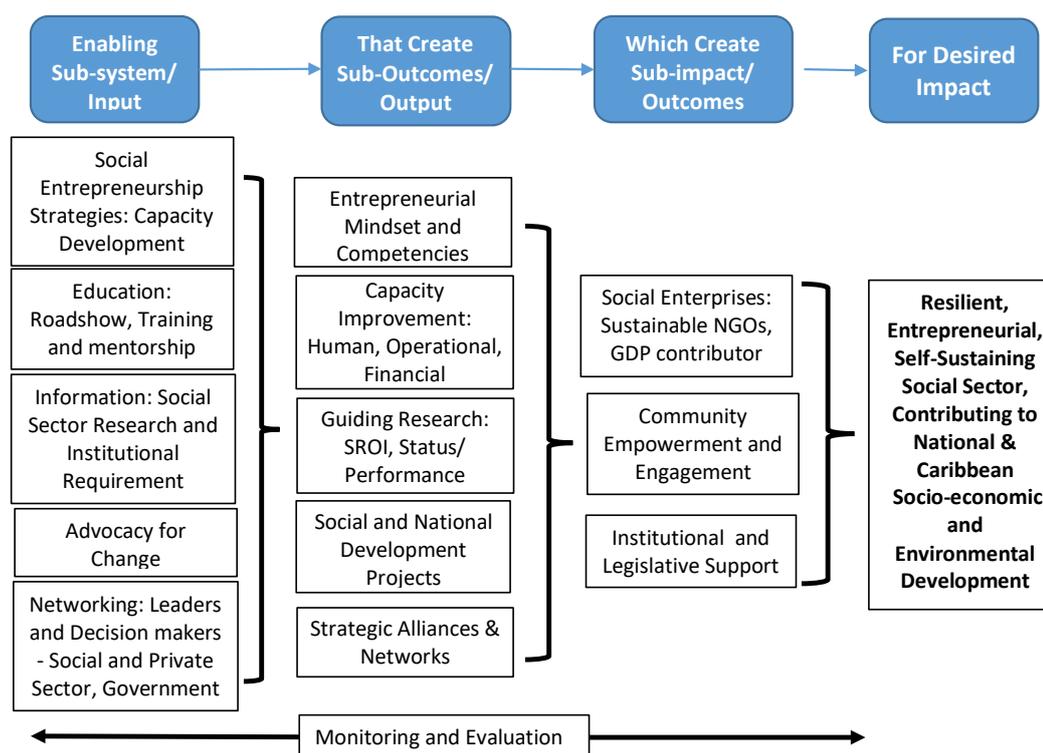


Figure 3: Transformational Theory of Change [TToC]

Source Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Development Steering (SEEDS) Committee, (2023)

The change context is the Caribbean Region's SD and social sector resilience, with the transformational change or social impact being: *"Resilient, Entrepreneurial, Self-Sustaining Social Sector, Contributing to National & Caribbean Socioeconomic and Environmental Development"*.

The TToC critical assumptions are (1) acceptance of SE concepts and collective functional SE (Zivkovic, 2011) as drivers for building social sector resilience and SD transformational change, (2) business, social and public entrepreneurs are the SD transformational leaders (3) active participation and collaboration from government, private, and social sectors, and (4) a collaborative and co-creational approach in the transformational process, with a core leadership team and a network of cross-sectoral and sector-specific groups, including academia for monitoring and evaluation evidence-based research.

3.5.1. The Transformational Process

Baseline studies on the Caribbean social sector, such as those by Medine and Minto-Coy (2023) on SE strategies and social enterprises, serve as a foundation for this strategic intervention, providing input on SSO's use of SE strategies, their performance (operational, financial, and social), and institutional support and gaps. Those datasets and best practices information on SE and its application for SSOs' sustainability guide change interventions and assist in determining monitoring and evaluation indicators (Bamberger, 2010).

The Enabling Subsystems address Caribbean collaboration limitations, building sectoral and societal support for the desired impact. Leveraging and sharing best practices in SE and SD through informal (e.g., roadshows) and formal (conferences, workshops, and training) channels builds awareness and sectoral leadership support. These forums identify sector-specific issues, the desired impact of change, and the required interventions, while fostering networks and partnerships for intervention efforts. Operationalising the change context to achieve short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes involves identifying context-specific assumptions, required interventions, resource needs, expected outputs, and performance indicators. Systematic collaboration, coordination, management strategies, and accountability and assurance measures ensure stakeholder transparency and coordination. Continuous monitoring, evidence-based research, and situational learning enable the updating and realignment of indicators, informing intervention adjustments, building trust, and ensuring alignment with the SD vision (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

3.6. Model Limitations

The TToC assumptions for a co-creational/collaborative approach are also the limitations. While Stage 1 of Table 2 addresses formation challenges, a significant challenge in the Caribbean context is the apparent unwillingness of governmental and private sectors to genuinely collaborate with SSOs, negatively impacting the posited TToC. This is a major limitation, especially since the model highlights the need for institutional support and multisectoral networks as key enabling inputs to the TToC.

While ToC concepts are not new, this is the first known TToC model at a national level within the context of the Caribbean and developing countries, and thus, it should be tested. Considering the collaboration limitations, testing would be conducted at level 1 of the TCP (Figure 2), simultaneously testing that model and feeding it into the "Advocacy" sub-input of the TToC to build multisectoral support. This includes verifying the applicability of the "borrowed" Collaboration Relationship Enablers (Table 2)

Notwithstanding, what remains clear is the timeliness and relevance of the TToC model for the Caribbean and wider Latin American and other developing contexts contending with similar resilience-building and SD challenges. The contextual nature of the TToC allows for its application at organisational and sectoral levels.

4. Future Implications for Policy and Practice

International experiences, reinforced by UN Resolution A/77/L.60, confirmed the transformative potential of SE and a social enterprise with a co-creative/collaborative approach in driving SD and realising the SDGs, supporting the TToC conceptual principles. In the context of the Caribbean and other developing countries. The successful transition of traditional SSOs into social enterprises requires comprehensive changes in institutional support encompassing financial options, capacity-building training, research, knowledge transfer, and supportive legal and regulatory frameworks.

However, genuine collaboration and collective actions between social, business, and governmental sectors with such supportive systems are relatively absent in the Caribbean context, reinforcing the relevance of the TToC conceptual principle for multisectoral management leadership and co-creation action needed for SD.

4.1 Multisectoral/Co-creational Actions

The successful transition of traditional SSOs into social enterprises is a multisectoral collaborative effort with a supportive institutional environment. However, most such support systems are lacking in the Caribbean and other developing countries. The TToC advocated collaboration between the social, business, and governmental sectors to address all sectoral interests. Such collaborative efforts, with resultant co-creative actions, ensure relevant interventions aligned with the SD agenda.

However, acknowledging potential limitations in collaboration and co-creation, we introduce the multilevel TCP with accountability measures. This will guide interventions at an organisational, sectoral, and national level, assuring a whole-system synchronisation approach toward SD. The CRE addresses potential and anticipated cross-sectoral and co-creational collaboration issues. Both the TCP and CRE serve as foundational support for pioneering our national-level TToC.

4.2 Managerial Implications

The successful transition of traditional SSOs into social enterprises requires entrepreneurial managers with some business management training or experience. These entrepreneurial SSO managers leverage business-like and earned income strategies, resulting in SSO operational and financial sustainability as they address their social mission with the necessary operational capability to tackle pressing societal issues and contribute to national Sustainable Development (SD).

Most Caribbean SSOs operate like traditional NPOs with financial donor dependencies, often managed by people with a passion for social change but not necessarily management skills. The successful transition of traditional SSOs into social enterprises requires managers with some management training or experience, as SSOs must operate as social enterprises and achieve dual financial and social sustainability objectives. However, the necessary institutional support, encompassing capacity-building training, financial options beyond donations, and supportive legal and regulatory frameworks, is often lacking in the Caribbean and developing countries contexts.

Comprehensive changes to institutional support and genuine collaborative and collective actions between the social, business, and governmental sectors are necessary prerequisites for realising the SDGs and achieving SD. The importance of the TToC-advocated multisectoral collaboration and coreational efforts needed for SD is emphasised, reiterating the call for multisectoral management leadership and co-creation action.

5. Conclusions

Supported by empirical evidence from developed and developing countries, this paper proposes the TToC and the transformational power of SE, with multisectoral and co-creative efforts, as viable developmental alternatives for building social sector resilience, leading to national and Caribbean Sustainable Development (SD). The core theoretical contribution of this study lies in the introduction of the TToC. The multilevel use of the ToC concepts, typically used at the social programmes level, to synchronised applications at the organisation, sectoral, and national levels, with communication and collaboration strategies facilitating that synchronisation, and the marriage of conceptual principles associated with the developing field of SE, applied in the developing Caribbean countries context, which suffers from a lack of pertinent research information, simultaneously introduce new conceptual principles into the literature and bridge that research gap. Future research will provide proof of concept and opportunities to bridge current research gaps. Furthermore, such an amalgamation of conceptual principles that outline a pathway and mechanism capable of driving systemic change for sustainable development, particularly in contexts marked by entrenched social and environmental challenges, offers a lens for future research that explores the role of SE in sustainable development.

By embracing our TToC conceptual principles, we can overcome the limitations of single-sector efforts and pave the way for sustainable socioeconomic progress. This will prompt a long-overdue conversation on best practices for collaborative social and environmental development, as well as national and Caribbean sustainability. Academic researchers and decision-makers from governmental organisations, civil society, and the business sector must come together to foster multisectoral collaboration and the formation of Transformational Leadership teams. These efforts can lay the groundwork for collective functional SE and transformational entrepreneurship, which are the foundational principles of our TToC.

The advocated multisectoral collaborative relationships can result in enhanced business models, improved logistics for SSOs, and a more favourable public image and reputation for businesses. Shared best practices and multisectoral alliances hold the promise of identifying innovative SD projects at organisational and national levels, effectively addressing national and regional social development. Sharing stories of transition and intervention can elevate sector awareness and garner vital support.

However, it is essential to recognise that any change process is inherently multifaceted. It hinges on shared information and tangible stakeholder value, driving behaviour and action within all sectors. Therefore, we recommend developing a comprehensive data instrument to capture the performance of SSOs. This would enable the determination of their operational, financial, and social outcomes, both pre- and post-interventions, facilitating evidence-based reporting and accountability.

Ultimately, our research underscored the potential for a transformative path in the Caribbean through sustainable energy (SE) and collaborative strategies. These findings provide a roadmap for addressing the Region's socioeconomic and environmental challenges. By embracing the power of SE and fostering multisectoral collaboration, we can work collectively toward sustainable development and the realisation of SDGs, surmounting limitations and forging a more resilient and sustainable future for the Caribbean and beyond. Ultimately, the conceptual TToC model is relevant for all economies where similar SD challenges exist and requires testing in the Caribbean, the wider Latin American Region, and beyond, where similar developmental challenges persist.

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