



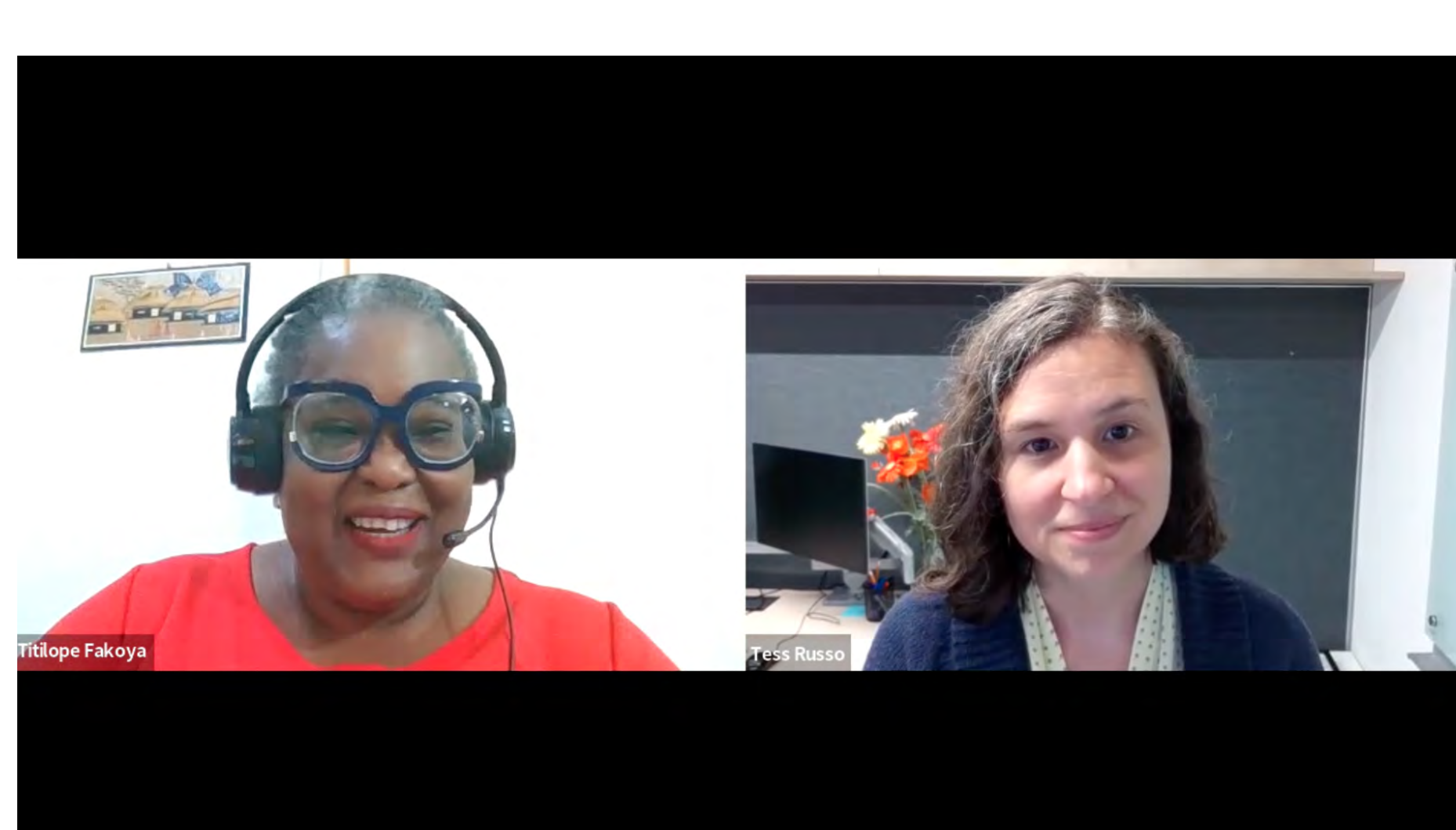
WELCOME TO THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION'S CONVENING FOR SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPACT TOOLKIT

This toolkit offers actionable tools and practical guidance to enable the inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement needed to achieve system-level change.

Why apply a system lens to convenings?

The Gates Foundation increasingly aims to ignite a system-level impact by working with government and other institutional stakeholders. Participatory and representative stakeholder engagement is particularly critical in agricultural development, water security and climate adaptation because of the multi-sector and interdisciplinary nature of these issues.

The challenges to achieving a system-level impact through inclusive engagement with multiple institutional stakeholders are numerous and varied. From deep structural, cultural and societal norms such as education, religion and infrastructure to more logistical challenges like timing, language and childcare. Each of these challenges can be navigated with planning, awareness, openness and through role modelling the collaborative behaviours you wish to foster in your own interactions with stakeholders.



Dr Tess Russo, the Project Sponsor, discusses her motivation for creating this toolkit with Titilope Fakoya, one of its authors.

These materials were created for grantees working with multiple institutional stakeholders to drive more sustainable and inclusive agricultural transformation in Ethiopia and Nigeria. We hope these resources will also be useful for a wider group of people driving systemic change.

Point of view on convenings

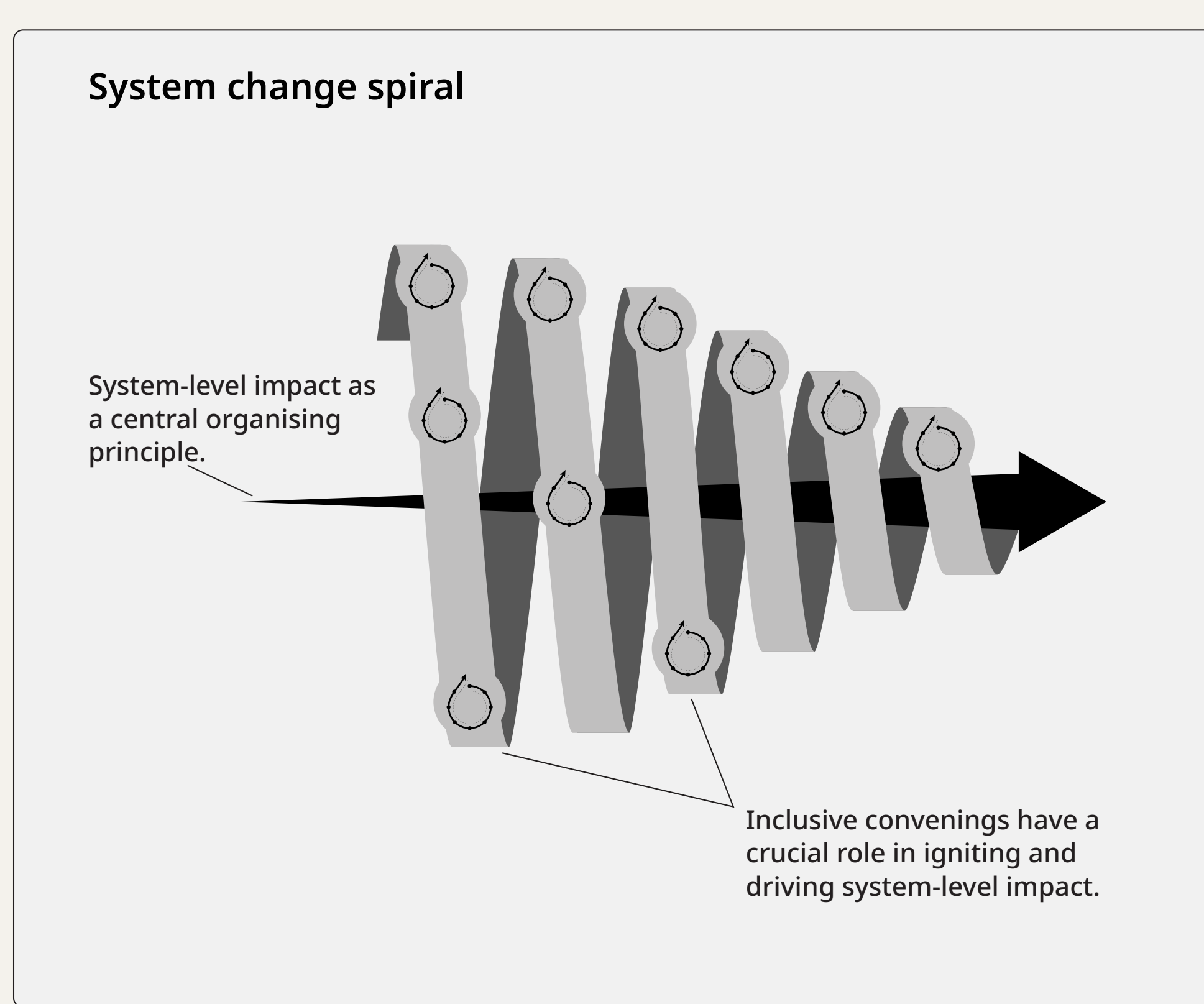
Convenings that lead to system-level change are the ones that address visible and invisible power imbalances by:

- › Being purpose-led
- › Including a range of system-wide voices, experiences and perspectives
- › Creating a partnering environment
- › Enabling equitable participation
- › Fostering relationship-building.

At the very heart of this approach is the understanding that actions will get you so far but to achieve change at scale and pace, relationships will get you further. When a diverse group of institutional stakeholders connect and collaborate in this way, they develop a shared understanding and a shared vision more powerful than before, resulting in concerted efforts that drive impactful outcomes and system-level change.

It is likely that multiple inclusive convenings will be necessary, with shifting perspectives, greater convergence and stronger relationships being formed with each gathering.

Inclusive convenings are often a key part of a wider strategy or programme for system-level change. The spiral shown here represents a typical system change journey. With each layer of the spiral there are new strategies, activities and alliances that move the system closer to the change being aimed for. On each layer of the spiral there will likely be one or more points at which institutional stakeholders need to be brought together through a purpose-led, inclusive convening cycle,



before they return to drive an impact or influence through their organisational systems and work.

The spiral represents the view that the process of change is iterative and achievable, growing system-level impact with each layer and every convening cycle.

About this toolkit

This toolkit is a collection of actionable tools alongside best practice guidance to help grantees and others plan, design and deliver inclusive and equitable convenings with government and other institutional stakeholders working towards system-level change.

Every convening is different, so the Toolkit is not designed to be a comprehensive, step-by-step guide to holding a convening. Rather it offers a journey through a convening cycle with an overview of the phases, strategies and interactions involved with planning, designing and delivering impactful convenings. We offer tools and thought guides to help address some key decision points.

Overall, the Toolkit has been designed to be easy to use, practical, actionable and adaptable to the needs of grantees whenever they bring people together.

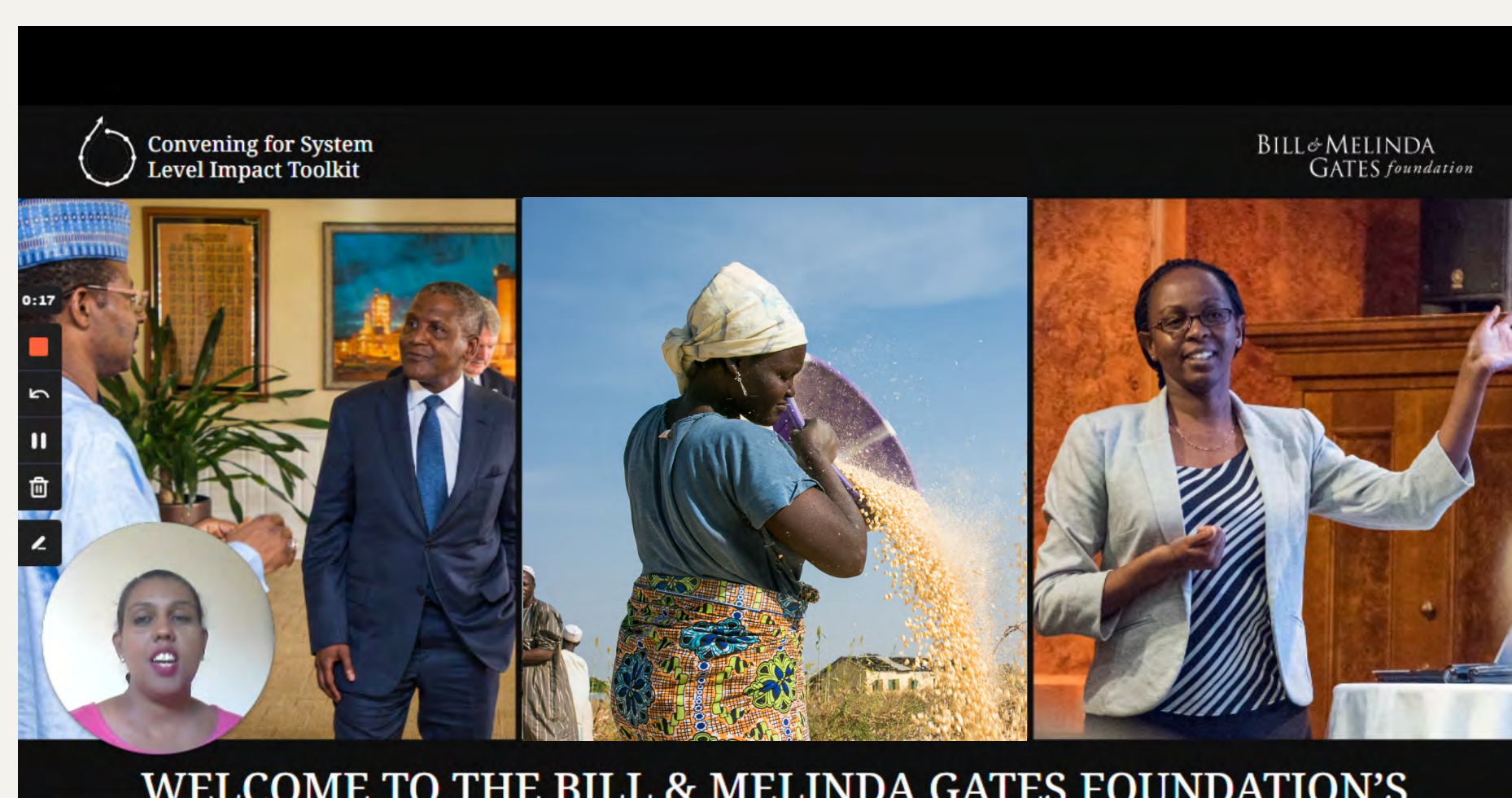
We anticipate that the Convening for System-Level Impact Toolkit will be updated from time to time to reflect new learnings and results. If you have comments or feedback to contribute please contact the [project team](#) at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

How to use the toolkit

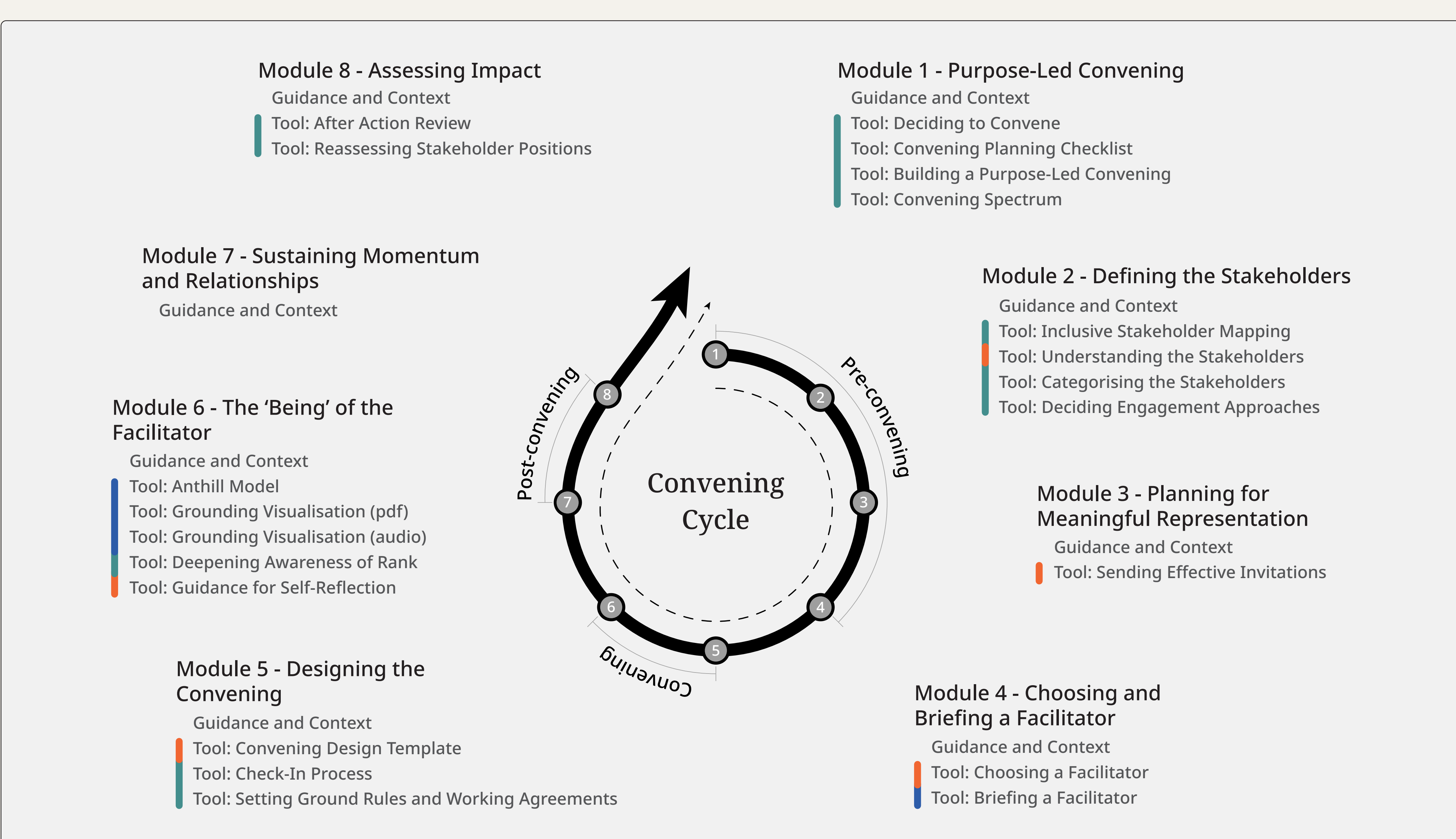
The tools and guidance are organised in eight modules that mirror the eight phases of a convening cycle. In total there are twenty tools, colour coded to indicate their usefulness in achieving the purpose of the convening.

- GREEN – these tools are powerful in all situations.
- ORANGE – these tools are highly recommended in all situations.
- BLUE – these tools are highly recommended depending on the situation.

The Toolkit is divided into 'grazeable' modules. Click on each stage of the convening cycle below to explore overall guidance, context and supporting tools.



Soyome Alemayehu, one of the authors, gives a tour around the Toolkit and its main features.



All modules can be downloaded as a single document [here](#), and a companion document containing all of the tools can be accessed [here](#).

Consolidated insights from the modules through different perspectives are provided below:

Insights on gender equity in convenings

Insights on holding a convening in Ethiopia

Insights on holding a convening in Nigeria

Other supporting information:

Glossary

Sources of Inspiration

Acknowledgements

Case studies



A Transformational Agricultural Bill in Nigeria: Success at the Third Attempt

Demonstrating the importance of assessing outcomes and adapting engagement approaches to achieve a system-level impact. Shared by AGRA.



Prioritisation of Climate-Smart Water Management Practices in Ethiopia

Demonstrating how purpose-led inclusive convening supports multi-stakeholder decision making, with pleasant unintended consequences. Shared by IWMI.



A Roadmap for Advancing Gender Equality in Kenya

Demonstrating the use of stakeholder engagement strategies to target different stakeholders in different ways to ignite system-level change. Shared by the Gates Foundation.