Delivering quality analysis of transformation requires the guidance of those with hands-on reform experience. Through its Transformation Thinkers network, the BTI team has benefited from the fruitful exchange of ideas and experience with 120 agents of reform in 72 developing and transformation countries. By combining evidence-based practices with a forum for shared reflection on the complexity of policymaking and how best to influence it, the BTI can deliver feasible recommendations for those committed to socially and economically inclusive democratic change.

Bringing about effective change requires a differentiated analysis of transformation processes, evidence-based comparisons that allow reformers to learn from each other and continual monitoring that tracks advances and failures. Successful transformation relies most crucially, however, on individuals committed to change who develop strategies to build alliances, overcome obstacles and get reforms implemented. Reflecting on strategies together with reform-committed individuals from around the world fosters a rich understanding of the complexity inherent to these processes and helps inspire many to carry on. The mutually fruitful combination of analysis and experienced know-how also allows for a holistic appreciation of transformation processes that yields benefits for all stakeholders.

With these goals in mind, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) have worked together over the last ten years building a forum for dialogue in which young leaders from developing and transformation countries exchange their experiences in shaping politics and social change. The forum was designed to bring together those representing all facets of society from as many different countries as possible. Leaders from areas as diverse as politics, administration, academics, the media, civil society and business use the forum and its interactive discussion-based format, involving strategy games and trainings, to discuss problems and how to best solve them. In combination, these factors have created a conference environment in which creativity, flexibility and mutual trust are cultivated.

The Transformation Thinkers network now boasts more than 120 members from 72 countries, each of whom are committed to advancing change in their society and drawing inspiration from the network. As is often the case, some of the most important exchange takes place beyond the formal organizational framework and between committed individuals who enjoy mutual respect and trust.

Over the years, the Transformation Thinkers forum has become a safe home of sorts for those committed to reform. Many contacts made through the network have grown into friendships as discussions continue beyond the conference. The BTI team is proud to belong to a network of this caliber and is thankful for the opportunity to draw on such inspiring cooperation on a variety of initiatives and projects.