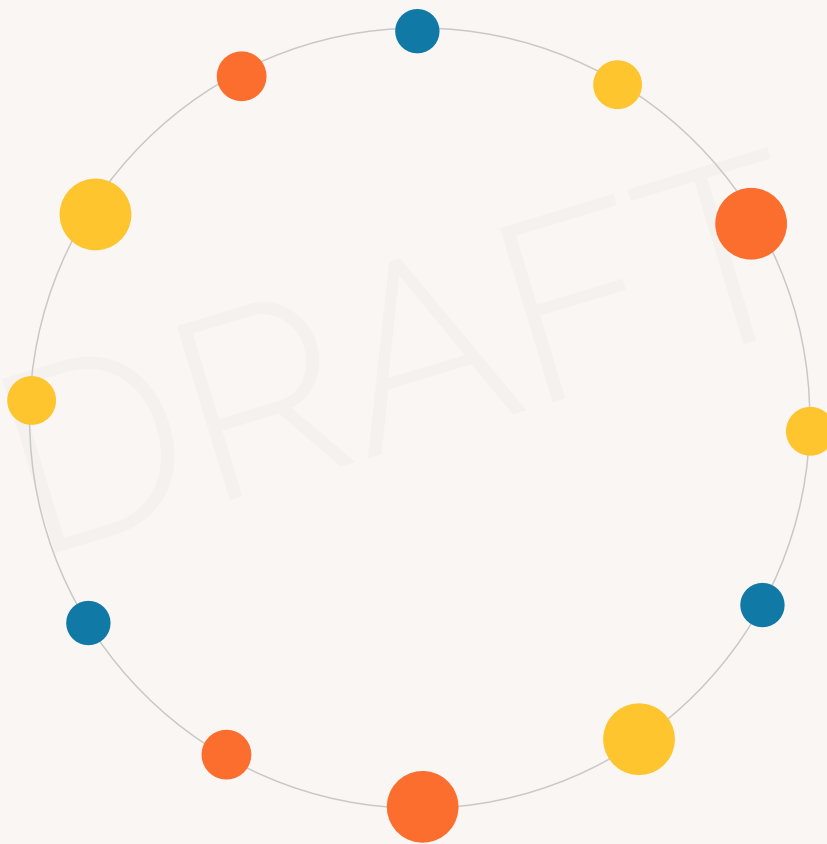


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# IDG Phase 2 Research Report

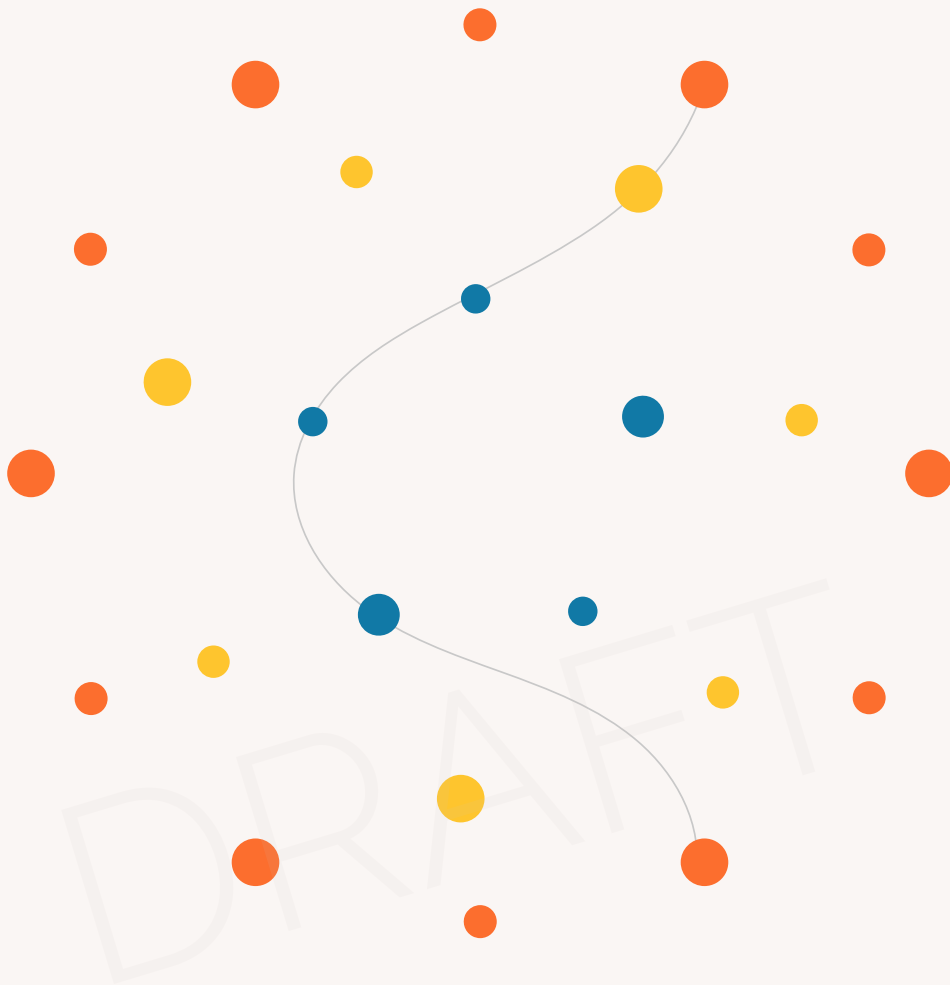
## The Long Version

Kristian Stålne Stefanie Greca



**DRAFT VERSION** with reflections by the authors and the wider conversations around the study.  
A publication enabled by the CADRA project: Cognitive Adult Development - from Research to  
Application with support of the European Union through its Erasmus+ programme.





### **What is CADRA?**

The CADRA project is a three year Erasmus+ co-funded initiative, running from December 2020 until August 2023. It explores leadership needs leadership development and focusses on delivering working tools and methodologies to help leaders navigating the challenges of our times.

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## Introduction by the editors

This document is the extended and reflective version of the study into inner development practices for leaders in their work towards sustainability that we undertook as part of the CADRA project: Cognitive adult development - from research to application, supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. The lead partner for this in this project was the Ekskäret foundation with its Inner Development Goals initiative. They published a shorter report from this study, intended and presented for a wider global audience. We retained an earlier draft here for practitioners and other interested readers, as we found the reflections and considerations expressed here reflect well the conversations and considerations throughout the CADRA project.

We wish to thank the authors for their agreement to publish this draft version as a document of its own and wish you inspiration and food for thought when reading and working with it.

The contents of this document reflect the views of the authors. The CADRA partners or the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

### **For the CADRA project:**

Rainer von Leoprechting and kaa Faensen

## Preface

*"If you want to know who is speaking here, which I, it is mine and also not again, from whom only one's own I would always speak".*

*Marie Luise Kaschnitz*

Before we get into this publication, please allow us a few personal remarks.

This publication has emerged from the collaboration of the IDG Initiative and the CADRA project, each of which – with its own approach – addresses the issues of inner development and sustainability in a broader sense. More information on both projects can be found in this report.

The main authors of this publication are Kristian Stålne and Stefanie Greca. Kristian Stålne is a senior lecturer with research interests ranging from structural mechanics to adult developmental psychology, linking inner and outer development. Stefanie Greca is an economist who has worked in very different fields (e.g. politics, social and cultural sectors) and in many different roles and functions (e.g. ghost writer, strategic consultant, curator). Her interest is primarily directed towards exploring the conditions of possibility for certain phenomena to occur and deriving design possibilities from them.

We have been supported by a large number of people in the preparation of this publication. Our thanks go to each and every one of you. Without your contributions, this document would not be what it is. We have therefore marked the contributions of all collaborators as such. This also applies to the names of those people who inspired us with their questions and comments, even if they themselves did not make a written contribution to this publication.

It was important to us to include the perspectives of as many people and stakeholders as possible here, to fulfil our project mandates and at the same time to make our own voices heard. Maintaining this balance was not always easy. Especially as we had also set ourselves the goal of bringing out a publication that is easy to read and, in the best case, even inspiring.

Our approach to also making our own voice heard may seem unusual to some. However, since we do not see this publication primarily as a scientific report (although such elements are included), but rather see it as an invitation to reflect on inner development and sustainability each as independent topics, but especially in their interplay – to be precise, we wish: to really get involved in these topics together – the chosen approach seemed compelling to us: How else could the decision be made to deal with such existential topics more intensively

and together without at least having an idea of what the respective counterpart is actually driven by and what goals they are pursuing through their actions?

This is the first time that we, Kristian and Stefanie, have worked together. We didn't know each other before this project. Different people had asked us to collaborate together on this. In Kristian's case it was Jan Artem Henriksson, the executive director of the IDG Initiative, and in Stefanie's case it was Rainer von Leoprechting, the main person responsible for the CADRA project, which is funded by the EU through the Erasmus+ programme (As already written: you can read more about both projects on the following pages).

Based on the few key data you know about our professional background, you can probably already guess: The different perspectives and knowledge backgrounds with which we both approached the task assigned to us were not always easy to reconcile. Not to mention the complexity of the task as such, the specific interests of our respective clients and the multitude of other perspectives, whose respective representatives have an equally justified interest in having their contribution and the possible gain in knowledge thereby shown in the context of this publication.

As the saying goes, there is magic in every beginning. Sometimes, however, frustration is not long in coming. Not infrequently, this moment is accompanied by the realisation: We can't please everyone. Even if we would like to. And so, as everyone else should have done, we venture this publication with a handicap: because we, that's just the two of us, our project assignments that set the content and time frame, and everyone we worked with on this publication in the time in between. That's it. And what this "we" came up with, what it was possible for it to write down here, that's what you can read below. No more and no less.

From the first sketches of the project and how we would approach it, to the preparation and evaluation of the study on which this publication is based, to the realisation of the publication itself, it took a little over a year. If we had been allotted ten times as much time, it would still not have been possible to fully address the issues addressed. Therefore, please consider everything you read in the following as a draft or a way of getting started to deal with the issues of inner development and sustainability - also in their interplay.

We can only say two things with certainty: we have put the best we could into this publication within our limitations. And we are grateful that, looking back on this year, we can say: It was worth all the effort for both of us. We grew with the task, learned new things and were able to overcome hurdles that initially stood in our way, sometimes alone,

sometimes together. In short: we have developed in the process and become aware of new limits by this, which – with a little distance – we will tackle with renewed curiosity.

We hope that you will have a similar experience when reading the following pages. May the magic of the beginning remain with you as long as possible. And if you come across a statement on one or the other page that causes you some resistance, then you would be doing us a favour if you would allow yourself a moment of pause, perhaps even, if necessary, a moment of frustration, in order to then – once again with joy – turn to the question of how this observation might expand your personal space of knowledge and action: for this is precisely where, in our experience, inner development starts.

With this in mind, we hope you enjoy reading this publication and welcome the unknown.

**Kristian Stålne**

**Stefanie Greca**

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## What this publication is about

With this publication, we shed light on the topic of inner development. When we use the term inner development, we mean the expansion of individual and collective capacity to respond to perceived challenges that arise or could arise from insufficiently regenerative practices. In particular, we are interested in the potential solutions inner development can open up with regard to addressing the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other sustainability concepts.

The aim of this publication is to provide an overview of those methods that – according to the knowledge of all those involved in this publication – best contribute to developing the skills and qualities that help us to lead purposeful, sustainable and productive lives. In this publication, we will also look at the relationship between sustainability and inner development and show how these two topics can be examined in isolation and in interaction with each other.

This publication is primarily based on a survey that we prepared last year and in which over 3000 people participated until today. In addition, we subsequently discussed the results of the survey with researchers around the world for several months before summarising the insights of these conversations and discussions here.

## How to read this publication

We see this publication less as a scientific report (although elements of it are included here), than an invitation to deal with inner development and sustainability, on the one hand as independent topics, but especially in their interplay.

With this in mind, we have decided to make this publication more free in its content and structure than a strictly scientific publication would require. For example, we only work with references in certain sections. We have also deliberately not produced a classic executive summary. Instead, we would like to give you a brief overview of the topics covered in each chapter so that you can find your way around the publication more quickly, depending on your individual reading interests.

### **Reading interest: inner development, sustainability and their interplay**

In the section: "Inner development and the Sustainable Development Goals - A few observations, assumptions and considerations derived from them" we deal with the interplay between inner development and sustainability by means of a concrete example. On the one hand, this

example serves to introduce different, from our point of view relevant motives into the discussion, on the other hand, we want to convey a sense of the 'corridor' we have to deal with in order to better grasp the interplay of inner development and sustainability and thus to be able to handle it better. How broad, we could also say complex, and how deep, we could also say interwoven or complicated, is the space defined by this corridor? We can anticipate at this point: without a clear commitment to it, a common definition of what we actually want to achieve with 'more sustainability' in the respective context, inner development and sustainability in their mutual relationships cannot be observed - especially on a collective level - and thus cannot be determined. We also assume that progress in the implementation of the SDGs can probably be achieved if we examine inner development with regard to individual goals of the SDGs, but that the systemic change that is necessary in our view right now can only be achieved if the SDGs are addressed in their context, i.e. holistically.

In this section, you will also learn - although the IDG Initiative is deliberately not affiliated with any particular academic school - what the basic elements of the theory of change are that underpin this work. For without these assumptions, it would have been pointless - in the truest sense of the word - to write this publication. Furthermore, we have dealt in this section with individual aspects that we would have been more than happy to include in this publication because we consider them to be elementary in the context of inner development and sustainability, but could not do so because it would have gone far beyond the scope of what is possible here and for the moment for various reasons.

### **Reading interest: The IDG initiative**

In the section "The IDG initiative" you will find more information about the genesis and the (so far) planned progress of the IDG project.

### **Reading interest: The IDG framework**

In the section "The IDG framework" we present the 23 skills and five categories that make up the framework. If you are not yet familiar with the framework, we recommend that you read this section before moving on to its application, which is discussed in the chapter "The Field-kit". The section is rounded off by a small self-reflection. It should help you to identify a possible starting point for concrete work with the field-kit for you personally.



**Reading interest: Contributors and the collection and handling of data**

The section "Collection of data and development of the field-kit" is particularly interesting for researchers and for anyone who wants to know exactly what is going on: Here you will not only learn more about how we dealt with the collection and processing of data and how we came to the selection of those methods that we present in more detail in the section "the field-kit". You can also read the names of those we worked with to produce this publication.

**Reading interest: Application – The methods and how to work to with the IDG framework**

In "the field-kit" section, we present a total of xy methods that we believe are well suited for learning or deepening the 23 skills that currently make up the IDG framework. For each method, we have provided a quick overview, a more detailed description and references to help you find out more or get in touch with people and organisations practising the method.

**Reading interest: Limits and outlook**

The Discussion section addresses limitations and blind spots of the content and approach presented here. This section was important for us to make clear: we cannot offer more than an introduction to inner development and sustainability in this framework. One should always be aware of this. The section also addresses where future work is needed to build further knowledge on how IDGs and SDGs are or could be intertwined.

**For whom this publication is written**

This publication is aimed in particular at change agents. By change agents we mean people who are interested in inner development and/or sustainability and who are committed to harnessing the potential of these issues for themselves and others. Thus, that can be trainers, people who work in the area of Human Resources, Sustainability, leadership development, policy making or other representatives of any form of organisation. We also want to address individuals who are interested in inner development. However, our main focus is on working with organisations. These can be political, private or non-profit organisations, to name a few, as well as their stakeholders (in the context of this publication we use the term ecosystem in this context). In our view, working with organisations is a very efficient way to reach many people and bring about systemic change.

## Who initiated this publication

The publication is part of the Inner Development Goals (IDG)-Initiative, which was initiated in 2020 by the Ekskåret Foundation, 29k Foundation and The New Division. More than 50 academic institutions, organisations and (so far) one government (of Costa Rica) have officially joined the journey of co-creation and integration of the IDG framework. The Inner Development Goals (IDGs) is a non-profit, open source organisation working to accelerate the work toward achieving United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the power of inner development. The IDG Initiatives researches, collects, and communicates evidence-based personal skills and qualities that help to live purposeful, sustainable, and productive lives. The purpose of IDGs is to bring the power of inner development to all global challenges faced by humanity. More information about the initiative can be found here: <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>

This report was produced in cooperation between the IDG Initiative and CADRA (CADRA = Cognitive Adult development from Research to application). CADRA is a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The project involves six organisations working together over a period of three years to bring adult development to a wider audience. All partner organisations cooperating within CADRA will use the insights and content presented here to develop innovative learning methods and build online resources to promote – as this is the specific focus of CADRA – cognitive development. More information on CADRA can be found here: <https://cadra.li/>

It is important to both the IDG Initiative and CADRA that the generated content and data are publicly accessible. The survey itself as well as all data generated so far (which are, of course, completely anonymised) can therefore be viewed on the IDG Initiative website and used for one's own research purposes.

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# 1 Inner development and the Sustainable Development Goals – A few Observations, Assumptions and Considerations derived from them

## 1.1 Mind the gap – From SDGs to IDGs

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) agreed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Half of the time to the set deadline to achieve the SDGs has passed this year (2022). However, the implementation of the goals is progressing too slowly. According to the latest Sustainable Development Report (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards), published annually by several academics led by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by 193 nations, with their 169 targets, has even been stagnating for the last two years

The SDGs combine social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainability. They serve the purpose of making a decisive contribution to reconciling the fight against poverty, hunger or inequalities with the protection of our environment and its natural resources. The UN's overarching goal is to pave the way for a more peaceful world in which future generations can live according to their needs.

More and more people are already experiencing how important the implementation of the SDGs and a significantly more regenerative lifestyle would be for their everyday lives: inflation, food shortages and supply chain bottlenecks are just a few examples that can be cited here. In addition, the global political conflict panorama for 2021 published by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research was characterised by a persistently high number of highly violent conflicts. And since 2022 war is also back in Europe again.

In order to achieve the overarching goal of a more peaceful world, it is important to follow the 17 SDGs in their context. For the three dimensions of the SDGs – the social, the ecological and the economic – are interwoven and interdependent. Especially and in a specific way through the influence of the so-called industrialised nations. We would like to take a closer look at this aspect using one example: Biodiversity.

Why is the conservation of biodiversity so important for us humans?

Plants convert the sun's energy and make it usable for other life forms. Organic matter is broken down into nutrients by bacteria and other living organisms. They provide plants with healthy soil. Pollinators, in turn, are essential for our food production. This is

because pollinators enable plants to reproduce. The water cycle also depends on living organisms, and forests and oceans reduce carbon emissions by storing carbon. The healthier they are, the more they fulfil this task. Intact ecosystems provide vital services that we – still – too often take for granted.

Things as important to us as clean water, good air and nutrient-rich soils depend on the biodiversity of our planet. Biodiversity also helps to combat climate change and mitigates the effects of natural hazards. Most of the planet's biodiversity is protected by Indigenous people.

Because the interconnections of living creatures in ever-changing ecosystems are so diverse, we often cannot accurately predict the consequences of the extinction of individual species – be they animals, plants, genetic traits within species or different habitats.

However, we know that biodiversity is essential for our survival. Diversity is the opposite of monotony. We can perhaps best translate diversity as variety. Variety creates more opportunities to make connections, so it becomes possible – depending on the circumstances – to find more appropriate responses, i.e. those that generate new life and are thus more sustainable.

But the diversity of our ecosystems is at stake and its stewards at risk. More and more scientists are convinced that we are on the threshold of the sixth mass extinction. This is because the rate of species extinction is currently already a hundred times higher than the average rate of the last ten million years. This finding was published by IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), the so-called World Council on Biological Diversity, a UN organisation with 136 member-states. On behalf of the IPBES, 150 scientists with the support of more than 300 other experts had evaluated almost 15,000 studies and reports over a period of three years to come to this conclusion.

Incidentally, the fifth mass extinction occurred about 66 million years ago, when a kilometer-sized asteroid hit the Earth. The main causes of biodiversity loss in what is likely to be the sixth mass extinction are: land conversion – e.g. through urbanisation or intensive monocultures – resource exploitation, e.g. through overfishing or hunting, climate change and pollution. And pandemics like Corona are also very likely connected to human-induced loss of biodiversity, IPBES further suspects.

The Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is considered a zoonosis, i.e. an infectious disease that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Consumer behaviour as well as changes in land use and the resulting loss of healthy ecosystems can lead to an increasing transfer of pathogens from animals to humans. Once in contact with a suitable

host, the pathogens can then spread extremely quickly – as in the case of Corona. The massive use of antibiotics in animal husbandry also promotes the spread of multi-resistant germs.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the disease caused by the Coronavirus, is by far not the only zoonosis we know of: Malaria, HIV, SARS, swine flu, Hanta, avian flu, Ebola and MERS – to name but a few – are also among them. The IPBES argues that human interference with nature could increase the incidence of zoonotic diseases.

As you read this, be aware: The range of animals and plants is limited, often only a few metres depending on the species; for birds, insects or pollen it can be several thousand kilometres. But "...who actually bears the responsibility in a high-risk society for the long-distance effects of the inventive homo faber?" asks the artist Brigitte Burgmer in a text published on the website of the Munich-based Institute for Independent Impact Assessment in Biotechnology.

COVID-19, at the latest, has challenged us to take a closer look at Burgmer's question.

Will the inventive homo faber save us? In other words, the human type, with its ability to produce tools and technical aids to master nature? Or do we first have to concentrate on our inner development in order to become more in tune with nature again to come up with more sustainable solutions? *Similibus similia curentur* or *contraria contrariis curentur*? Healing similar things with similar things or using opposites to heal? What do you believe in?

From inflation to food shortages to COVID-19: for all we know today, these are all consequences of choices we as humans – especially in the West – made in the past and in the present. They are consequences of a global interconnectedness that has been characterised by a striving for effectiveness and efficiency since industrialisation at the latest. In such a world, ecology, economy and social concerns can no longer be grasped through linear relationships (if they ever were), which is why such a world cannot be made more sustainable with tools and methods whose coding follows a linear logic.

Instead, we need to learn how to trigger reciprocal effects through relating and being related, which in turn maintain or initiate processes whose results can be observed and thus changed at the level of phenomena. This is precisely what the events of the recent past have challenged us to do. With the SDGs, signed by 193 countries, the UN is making its contribution. Responsibility and risk-taking must be renegotiated in this context. Above all, this must be done together. Otherwise it cannot work. This is not an assertion, but a statement whose validity derives from the very skill we have to learn.

In the roughly 200 years of industrialization, efforts to achieve effectiveness and efficiency have improved the living conditions of many people through the growth achieved. Others, however, have always suffered as a result. And it is becoming increasingly clear that we cannot – or not yet – deal sustainably with the interactions of a highly interconnected world. Or do we not want to? In Asia, America, Australia, Europe and Oceania, average life expectancy is currently well over 70 years. In Africa, there are regions where life expectancy is well below 60 years. What does that tell you?

One thing we can already state with certainty: The quest for ever more effectiveness and efficiency goes hand in hand with the phenomenon that there is less and less room for interaction. Or to put it another way: we deprive ourselves of the possibility to inform each other about the effects of decisions made and to find alternative solutions together if they seem necessary. The spaces that we would need for this are what we call in the context of this publication: buffer zones.

By the term buffer zone we mean the space that arises when we interrupt our routines, our daily practice, which is automated, in order to develop a sense of it and also consciously turn to the question: Do we really want to contribute further and in this way to what our practice – alone and in togetherness – leads to? Buffer zones are therefore an expression for us for impulse interruption. Within buffer zones, we can become aware of whether or not we want to connect to what is going on and what phenomena it leads to. And if we decide to do the latter, then within buffer zones we can practice which impulses and which interplay would be more helpful to come to more desirable phenomena or results.

The SDGs can also be interpreted as the establishment of such buffer zones – conveyed through the 17 goals and 169 targets – in order to (re)establish more resilient networks and systems at the ecological, economic and social level. And it is in this sense that the IDGs also want to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. And we are not the only ones who believe and are concerned with these questions (cf. <https://sdgintegration.undp.org>).

By developing the skills and capacities described in the IDGs framework, the ability of individuals, but also of collectives such as organised entities like organisations or cultures, to respond to crises or, even better, to anticipate them and take timely action to prevent them from occurring in the first place can be improved. Potentials that point the way to more sustainability can be identified and implemented more easily.



In this context, the development of the skills and capacities described in the IDGs itself presupposes that buffer zones are created. Buffer zones in which we give ourselves and in connection with others together the space to approach the unknown, i.e. that which we do not yet know, that which could help to leave chosen paths in order to arrive together at more sustainable solutions.

Let us also look at this a little more closely together.

This publication deals with the topic of inner development and its as yet, mostly untapped potentials. When we use the term inner development, we mean the expansion of individual and collective capacity to respond to perceived challenges that arise or could arise from insufficiently regenerative practices. It might be helpful in this context to shed the narrative of scarcity that drives the West in particular and replace it with a narrative of the greatest possible abundance within given limits. But that is only mentioned in passing here.

More important to us for the moment is to emphasise something else: The responsibility to address the issue of inner development and harnessing the potential that arises from it not being evenly distributed. Some of us have more resources at our disposal, others significantly less. Moreover, some of us have contributed more to current developments, others less.

But no matter how we twist or turn it and who feels addressed here or not, inner development always presupposes a buffer zone in which the new, the unknown, the transforming can be dared. A buffer zone whose boundaries are marked by trust and non-trust. These buffer zones are vulnerable by definition. After all, trust cannot simply be restored when it has been abused or disappointed. This is true even for the most resilient among us. Those who want to lead not only themselves but also others should always keep this in mind.

And there is one more note we would like you to take with you on your journey through this publication: In the time you are reading this publication, you could be doing something else. What we are trying to point at here: be aware of how you use your energy. This applies not only to this publication, of course, but also to everything else in life. With the energy you invest, you contribute to making things visible. Without energy, nothing can develop, i.e. manifest itself as a phenomenon in one way or another.

It does not matter whether you invest your energy in answering the question of whether you want to make an investment for the company in which you work. Or whether you are helping to prepare a team meeting. Even if you participate in a discussion: to constantly disagree, will keep the discussion alive. This can make sense against the

background of your individual prerequisites or values. But it does not have to. Once again, this is true when we put sustainability at the top of the list of how we invest our energy best.

At the same time, the topic of inner development is far too complex for us to even try to point you in the one right direction - apart from the fact, of course, that what you do in connection with inner development should always be checked to see whether it contributes to greater sustainability for all those involved in their respective contexts. The IDG field-kit presented here cannot do that either. It is nothing more and nothing less than an offer to start engaging more with the topic of inner development and provide some preliminary ideas as to how to tap into its potential to enable more sustainability. We have prepared this offer as mindfully and consciously as we could.

We are aware, for example, that we are rooted in Western culture in the way we think and act. In the course of preparing this publication, we therefore made a special effort to get to know other points of view and to make them visible here. The IDGs' scientific advisory board, which is made up of researchers from very different nations – you will find a list of members in the section “collection of data and development of the field-kit” – as well as a large number of other collaborators have helped us a great deal in this. Our thanks go to each and every one of them. We have marked third party contributions to this publication as such.

However, the IDG initiative was founded in Sweden and the first author of this report is also from there. The second author was socialised in Germany. We cannot and do not want to completely abstract from this imprint, because our imprint and socialisation has also created knowledge that can help us solve the challenges we face. At the same time, we are convinced that this also applies to all other cultures. And not only that. Every individual carries not only general but also specific knowledge. That is why we practise every day to remain open to the other, to what is still unknown to us, in order to also contribute to making more sustainability possible. In short, we are curious about learning itself.

This attitude presupposes that we do not immediately fall into the right-or-wrong trap. And of course, we also fail regularly with this attempt. In fact, we can sing more than one full-length song about it: While the first author of this study, as a scientist, loves the most precise possible description of arbitrarily complex content, the second author, actually an economist, has a much more pronounced penchant for the lovingly captured and equally depicted blur, as is common in the cultural and literary scene. There are different ways of exploring the world.

Not immediately understanding the other person's point of view is the most likely (intermediate) result. And then the only thing that helps is to try again.

We do not want to leave it unmentioned here: There are limits to this too. Sometimes you have to distance yourself from ideas, from contexts and thus possibly also from other people. Even if it is only for a moment, in order to find a new starting point for a possible togetherness.

Distance also creates a buffer zone. And it too has its justification. At the same time, it has a different quality than buffer zones that one consciously enters together in order to develop within them. Because distance is always associated with separation. This can be felt as a relief by all involved. But often at least one side feels hurt by it. Depending on the depth of the hurt felt, it can take some time for this hurt to heal and for a rapprochement between the parties to become possible again. If different parties have hurt each other very deeply, for example because they were opponents in a war, the healing process can take several generations. Separations are thus a much more delicate matter than meeting in – mutual! – trust.

At the same time, it is not always easy to answer the question of which situation one is in at the moment. Is it worth enduring the tensions in order to trigger processes of inner development? Or is it more healing and thus more sustainable to leave a certain context – even temporarily? If you are dealing with the topic of inner development – consciously or unconsciously – you have probably encountered these or similar questions at some point.

Working with the field-kit we present here can help you to learn to distinguish such situations better and to adjust your own behaviour accordingly. Above all, however, the field-kit and the methods presented in it serve to make additional spaces for action and options for action perceptible and – in the best case – to make it possible to experience their difference. Sometimes we can then pick up on knowledge that was almost thought lost, but sometimes completely new possibilities open up for us.

All this cannot be achieved without effort. So, if you are expecting a guide to inner development that you simply have to put into practice and, voilà, that's it, peace, joy and happiness, you will quickly feel lost on the following pages. Because from a position in which one permanently sees oneself as a consumer, one does not really get very far in the context of inner development. Those who want to develop consciously are always challenged to recognise themselves as consumers and producers of circumstances simultaneously.

Before you start hanging your wings because you really don't want to make any more effort in your life: In connection with inner

development, what children know intuitively and without mediation also applies: Development succeeds best when we have fun with it and are playful. Brain research confirms this. And as we have known since the discovery of neuroplasticity: We can learn and develop until the moment when we all have to step down.

Here's a little food for thought for our readers. Please ask yourself:

In the contexts in which you work, how can you help maintain the joy of being together while still addressing uncomfortable issues?

Unfortunately, we cannot give you the answer here. Because the answer will most likely depend on the respective circumstances and therefore turn out differently.

We therefore invite you to take our little food for thought with you into your everyday life from now on. So that you don't lose the fun of it, please stay playful.

By the way, 'play' is a very interesting term. It encompasses everything from 'Hide and Seek' to 'Axis & Allies' and 'Monopoly'. Yet no one has yet managed to deliver a clear definition of the term. Some even claim that the term itself defies definition. What is clear, however, is that the "game" is characterised by the fact that it can be repeated over and over again. Play knows no end. And what could be more sustainable, and thus more conducive to an inner development that wants to enable more sustainability, than to adopt an attitude of play in this sense?

At the end of this chapter, let us once again summarise the most important ideas that we would like to suggest to you here:

There is exactly one lever with which we can change things to make more sustainability possible: How we use and direct our energy. Therefore, be mindful with your energy and create buffer zones within which you can become aware – preferably together with others:

What context are we in right now? What is our relationship to ourselves, to each other and the natural world? What forces and dynamics are affecting us? How could we relate to each other and the natural world differently? What still unused possibilities for action do we have – together and individually? And what are the current limits to this? Who has an influence on the boundaries we perceive and should they therefore be informed about them in order to be able to work on the boundaries for their part?

From our point of view, there is not much more to know about inner development as a starting point. We hope that we have been able to convey to you a little of what we mean when we talk about inner development, how it can be worked with in everyday life – even without any outside help to start with – and especially how the SDGs and IDGs

might be connected. Our answer to the latter: mind the gap! Or, to put it in our word: Use your energy wisely and create buffer zones for this.

The good thing is that we all have this one lever in our hands: how we invest our energies. Each and every one of us. And it is only this one lever with which we can make more or less sustainability possible. This applies to people acting on behalf of organisations or governments as well as to individuals who are part of more informal networks.

## 1.2 Excursion: Is a Theory of Change underlying the IDGs?

At this point we would like to refer to a question that we are asked again and again. And rightly so, because it suggests itself.

### Is there a theory of change underlying the IDGs?

We would like to answer this question as follows:

Although sustainability is often addressed from many different perspectives, the inner dimension, as we have described it in this text, is usually underrepresented. Becoming aware of this dimension, acknowledging it, is thus the first assumption, the *conditio sine qua non* – the essential prerequisite –, from which we start.

The second assumption is that our inner worlds are not static. We have evolved to get here, and we can evolve (further) to deal differently with our environment. In doing so, we can, with the aim of enabling more sustainability, intentionally bring about a development in this direction.

This does not mean, according to our third assumption, that we would be able to make all the connections between inner development and enabling more sustainability immediately and adequately for every context right away.

Inner development and sustainability are two major discourses that we want to see in context: For within the framework of the main features of our theory of change, according to our fourth assumption, these two discourses must be brought together, since the discourses can only hope for an answer in their mutual reference. In our opinion, initiating the dialogue between the representatives of the different development directions that we present here in the field-kit section is therefore a good start. This is especially true if individual ideas of sustainability are also addressed.

The fifth assumption of our theory of change is that the focus on the unity of ecosystems seems to us to be particularly suitable for achieving more sustainability and thereby also contributing to the implementation of the SDGs. By ecosystems in the context of inner development, we mean the association of different actors who are in or enter into regular exchange about the concrete and possible effects of

their decisions to be taken or already taken against the background of different perspectives.

However, all this can only lead to different results, we would like to emphasise this once again here, if the exchange takes place under the overarching guideline of implementing more sustainability. This presupposes in particular that it is clear within the ecosystem what is actually meant by the term sustainability – what exactly is it that we want to achieve through inner development? Indigenous peoples have an answer here that is as simple as it is clear: We are here on earth as human beings to keep this one planet we all live on as our home and the home of other beings as well, with each individual's responsibility limited to their own habitat (which does not exclude getting involved beyond that).

How do you define the term sustainability in the context, culture and ecosystems you participate in?

Implications for the topic of inner development and the field-kit presented here arise from these assumption, which are central from our point of view, which is why we also want to summarise and explain them in a little more depth in individual cases in the following section.

### **1.3 Presenting the Diversity of Development Directions and Methods**

In many respects, diversity is both a key to sustainable development and a sign of functioning ecosystems. The latter are defined precisely by the fact that they strive for relative stability with simultaneous dependence on factors provided externally to the ecosystem (such as, in the case of biological ecosystems, light from the sun). In biology, the end point of this development is called the climax stage, the phases before are called succession (from Latin *successio*).

Diversity can therefore be opposed to uniformity and rationalisation for certain purposes – especially sustainability, which needs to be improved. In the work around inner development and the field-kit, we see diversity both in the number of different directions of development, reflecting different views of what it means to develop, and in the cultivation of our inner life in different directions. Since – as emphasised several times – we do not (yet) know the reciprocal effects of 'being' and 'being in relationship', we have endeavoured to map the different views of what it means to develop and the methods already developed against this background within the framework of the field-kit (according to certain criteria explained in the field-kit-section of this publication). Perhaps we may be a little flippant at this point: For who knows what it may be good for.

We would like to make one more comment at this point: Have you ever thought about the difference and similarities between the terms 'sustainability' and 'regeneration'?

Our answer for you is: If we take the terms of climax stage and succession, which we have just introduced, as an analogy, the connection could be as follows: Regeneration refers to the ability of an ecosystem to maintain the process towards greater sustainability. Sustainability itself, would then be a translation for the term climax stage. What do you think of this?

#### **1.4 The Conscious Design of Things or having a clear Intention**

A central concern in our survey was to find out what people do to develop consciously, i.e. in terms of a clear intention. If you participated in the survey, you may remember the question:

*"What do you do to intentionally develop?"*

Even without being aware of it, we are constantly developing. We cannot not evolve. Because to live means everything but rigidity. In our context here, it is about achieving more sustainability. So, we are concerned with what we consciously do to achieve a goal – our intention, that is, our idea of what sustainability actually means. This difference between what we do consciously and what we do not do consciously is important to us, because only on the basis of what we do consciously can we learn about processes of inner development and make them useful for ourselves and others. In this way, we can help ourselves to commit to practices of development and to create buffer zones for it: because we believe in or hope for the effectiveness of what we do.

Perhaps this is also another difference, at least in western societies, which distinguish us from biological ecosystems. We are not (any longer) intuitively conditioned by our socialisation to understand regeneration and sustainability as the centre of our lives.

At the same time, inner development means something different for each person, especially when it comes to sustainability. The Kogi, for example, an Indian tribe native to Colombia, descendants of the Taormina, an ancient South American culture, have made it their mission to show their "little brothers", as we who are native to Western culture, how we should treat the earth. To make their message tangible, they have launched the "Café Kogi" project. Using coffee cultivation as an example, they want to show how sustainable agriculture works for them. The Kogi have always seen themselves as the guardians of the earth. In rituals and prayers, they have ensured a balance between give

and take. For them, the Kogi, there is no such thing as sustainability without a spiritual level. A central element for the Kogi is thus the care of places that are sacred to them, such as river springs, mountain lakes or estuaries. The arrival of Columbus in Colombia forced the Kogi tribe to take refuge in the mountains. Many sacred places were no longer accessible to the Kogi from that moment on. They could no longer protect them through their rituals and spiritual practices. Diseases set in, the average age dropped, or so the Kogi report today. Through their project 'Café Kogi', they want to pass on their knowledge to their little brothers, who still have to learn - or perhaps learn again - how to maintain the balance of give and take.

Maintaining the balance of give and take: Could this be what inner development is all about?

But that is only our (meaning Kristian and Stefanie here) idea and preliminary understanding, as readers you do not have to share it. We would be curious, however, if others here have more or different things to contribute to this topic. We would be grateful to learn from you, because then we could enter into dialogue and thus establish a connection: to create a buffer zone in mutual trust hopefully not too long from now.

One more remark also in this context here: As a rule, indigenous peoples organise themselves through informal systems rather than through systems with which we who have been socialised in industrialised nations are more familiar: organisations.

Do you know what characterises organisations?

Ronald Coase thought about this and was awarded a Nobel Prize for it. As an economist, he focused primarily on one form of organisation: firms. Two essays, in particular, are associated with his name today. The first is called 'The Nature of the Firm', the second 'The Problem of Social Cost'.

In the first essay, Coase characterises firms as being able to transact within their boundaries at lower cost than through markets. According to Coase, this is especially true for recurring transactions. The essay was first published in 1937 in the journal *Economica*. The second essay followed in 1960. In it, Coase deals with the question of what difficulties are triggered by the external effects of economic activity if the ownership rights are not clearly defined. External effects are the effects of an economic decision that cannot be attributed to the decision-maker because there is no relationship between the decision-maker and those affected by the decision that is mediated by a price or market mechanism. This brings us to the topic of responsibility or – as lawyers would probably rather put it – liability. Because liability means nothing



other than taking responsibility for the damage that one's own actions have caused to a third person. And with regard to this, the following applies to most companies today: Their liability is limited.

The right of companies to assume limited liability for decisions taken on their behalf was first granted by royal decree in England in 1600 to the shareholders of the British East India Company, and in 1602 in the Netherlands, where the Dutch East India Company benefited from it. In 1855, Great Britain finally introduced the generally accessible company form of the Limited (Ltd.) by law. Germany followed the example of the island nation and made limited liability companies possible for the first time in 1892. Austria (1906), Portugal (1907), Brazil (1919), Slovakia (1920), Chile (1923), France (1925), Belgium (1935) and other countries followed suit by creating comparable legal forms. The idea of the limited liability company was, and still is, a triumphant success when viewed from the perspective of its worldwide spread. Yuval Noah Harari, the author of bestsellers such as "A Brief History of Mankind" and "Homo Deus - A History of Tomorrow", points out in his first-mentioned book the rapid growth of entrepreneurship that occurred as a result of the invention of this legal form.

Max Frisch published his novel entitled 'Homo Faber' in 1957. The protagonist of the novel, Walter Faber, is an engineer with a strictly rational, technically oriented worldview into whose orderly life chance and the repressed past break in during the course of the novel. Today, the term 'homo faber' is used prototypically for people whose aspiration is to cultivate nature. We had already used the term here.

Referring to Immanuel Kant, we ask ourselves: would it have been possible for Frisch to write a novel like Homo Faber without the legal form of the limited liability company having been invented first? Or to put it another way: Would Max Frisch have been able to observe phenomena like those of his homo faber, which is now regarded as a prototype (and then make him the protagonist of his novel on the basis of his observations), if he had lived in a society in which people were held fully responsible for their decisions, even if they acted on behalf of companies?

Is it even possible to establish or maintain a balance of give and take in the context of organisations that are constituted in this way? Or are organisations constituted like this per se so far decoupled from any form of the spiritual that the condition for establishing or maintaining this balance has been excluded from the outset?

You might now ask: Why do we refer to Kant, of all people, for this consideration? Quite simply: because Kant coined the expression – perhaps we should rather say the thought figure – of 'conditions of

possibility'. And this figure of thought is the basis of the question we have just posed. And there is one more reason why we refer to Kant: because he is considered one of the originators of the ideas for the founding of the United Nations. It was he who wrote the essay *On Perpetual Peace*. In this essay, Kant dealt with the question of the conditions on which the possibility of perpetual peace depends. He seems to have chosen the title of his book not without irony in mind. For *On Perpetual Peace*, as the reader of the book learns right at the beginning, is the name of an inn located next to a cemetery. Do you have any idea why he gave his essay this title of all things?

A central statement of the essay is - Kant will again have meant very seriously: "*No peace agreement should be valid for one that has been made with the secret reservation of the material for a future war.*" Otherwise, according to Kant, peace would only be provisional, i.e. it would contradict the idea of perpetual peace. In other words, where external effects have not yet been balanced, one may at best - to remain in Kant's chosen context - expect a truce.

Elinor Ostrom, the first woman ever to receive the Nobel Prize in Economics, which is doubly remarkable as she was a professor of political science, also worked on external effects (as Coase did): She looked at how humans can interact sustainably in and with ecosystems. In her book 'Governing the Commons', published in 1990, she states that for appropriate and sustainable management of local commons resources (commons are a form of common property, such as grazing land or forest), in many cases institutionalised local cooperation among those concerned is superior to both state control and privatisation. Ostrom had observed the communal land management of Swiss mountain farmers and (other) indigenous peoples for many years.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), also a (specialised) agency of the UN, Covid-19 has disproportionately burdened Indigenous communities and compounded ongoing challenges including food insecurity. The ILO and International Working Group on Indigenous Issues (WGIA) associates the increased burden with issues including: reduced access to natural resources, loss of livelihood, and limited access to health care. These conditions have also worsened political and economic tensions affecting protected lands. Is Soyent Green people?

The UN comments on its website:

"Businesses face the challenge of carrying out profitable activities with significant material, social or cultural impacts without undermining the rights of indigenous peoples. When companies operate in countries where legal protections for

indigenous peoples are inadequate, conflicts over indigenous land rights often arise, adding to the challenge for companies. In such cases, companies may be associated with violations of indigenous rights because, for example, they have not adequately consulted and consulted in advance as stipulated in national laws, or operate in indigenous territories that have not been recognised by the state or local governments."

This chapter is entitled "The conscious design of things or having a clear intention". It seems that this is not always so easy to implement. Especially in the context of communities that have made different intentions their top priority.

The word 'intention', by the way, is a translation of various Greek words, all of which are derivatives of 'teinein', which means to stretch. In the context of the word intention, to stretch in the sense of being directed towards a certain goal, a certain idea, is meant. Today, we tend to associate it with phrases like to want something. In the Middle Ages it was different, the word intention was used in the sense of to realise something, so in the meaning of to create awareness.

Inner development could be useful for this purpose as well, and thus contribute to finding sustainable answers to challenges such as the one formulated by the UN above.

Contrary to what the title of Adam McKay's recent film *Don't look up* suggests, we invite you to do just the opposite (for those of our readers who have not yet seen the film, the movie may explain why in a more powerful way. And although we did not speak with Adam McKay personally we strongly believe that he would agree to this).

## 1.5 Paying Attention to Context and Communities

Of course, you can use the IDG framework and methods we present in the field-kit as individuals. But we are mainly concerned with how groups and collectives can facilitate inner development. This is because we also want to emphasise in particular the role that relationships and communities play in supporting or hindering our development. In the context of inner development, we are always consumers as well as producers at the same time. This also applies equally to those we call trainers, or for instance the organisational contexts and concrete, local environments in which we find ourselves.

In this context, let us allow ourselves a short excursion into our belief systems: Christians, Jews (with the exception of the Hasidists) and also Muslims believe in salvation only in the hereafter. We are not familiar enough with Hinduism and Buddhism (which does not mean that we would not like to know more about them) and other belief

systems. Does this mean that the home for people who adhere to Christianity, for example, is also in the hereafter? And if so, would that make a difference in how sustainability issues are dealt with within these communities compared to communities that locate their home on our planet and thus in this world? Would this perhaps be a good starting point to discuss implications and different approaches to inner development?

### **1.6 Experimenting and Playing with an open Outcome**

When we talk about inner development, we do so in the context of addressing sustainability challenges. However, we are careful not to be too restrictive about where development should lead. What we do know is that inner development should be approached with an attitude of open-ended experimentation and play and needs to provide safe spaces for this to happen. We cannot predict in all cases what will happen when we engage in a method or practice. It may lead to greater effects than we expect, or to no effect at all, possibly even showing effects in directions we actually wanted to avoid. The latter also explains why the approach of experimentation and play is so important from our point of view. Do you remember the characteristic that distinguishes play? It is open-endedness, variation and repetition. And through these repetitions we can develop.

### **1.7 The Reaction or the Ability to respond to Challenges and the Unexpected**

When we engage in a development process that has greater implications than we expect, both in our own development and in supporting others, the question is how we deal with that situation in each case. Let's look at a concrete example: You offer a trip with the intention of strengthening the connection with nature. However, the trip triggers trauma in one participant or reactivates an already experienced trauma. What do you do then?

The aspect we want to draw attention to here is that inner development is never without risk, potential pain or hardship and requires a responsible approach. This is especially true for those who consciously want to initiate, facilitate and support inner development in others – for example, because they have made the subject their profession or they are using their life experience of self-realisation and insight to guide others on similar paths. Dealing with unforeseen events requires practice, ergo: repetition. And a good knowledge of where the limits of one's own abilities lie and when it is better to call in support from third parties.

What does this say in terms of what you should do as a tour operator, now that you know a (re-)traumatised customer is among your tour group?

Our answer may come as a surprise: Maybe not so much, because who should expect that a trip to nature, which you yourself find so invigorating, can trigger trauma in another person? But it does say something: How important it is to pay attention to the boundaries of others. And at the same time, how valuable it is to know your own boundaries and to have ideas about who can now contribute helpfully: because the problem that has arisen – in our example, the trauma – can be dealt with within that person's boundaries for the benefit of the member of your travel group.

Do you see the connection to the ideas of ecosystems and buffer zones we have presented here?

## **1.8 We are the (Eco)System**

This publication is not meant for you to sit back comfortably in your armchair. Is that what you are doing right now? Then please sit up straight, we want your full attention when you read the next paragraph.

Because we are now politely asking you to do the following: If you don't have it on your phone or in your CD cabinet anyway: please get access to Adele's album entitled '21.' Don't know the artist? Just ask your neighbour, or look it up on the internet if it's accessible to you. We are sure: the album and you will find each other one way or another, if that's what you want.

You have the album ready to play near you? Good. Then please sit down now in an armchair – or return to it. Adopt a comfortable sitting posture and ensure that you are not disturbed for the next quarter of an hour, if possible.

When you are ready, please imagine our earth, the blue planet, as you see it from space. If you can perceive the image clearly in your inner eye, zoom in closer to the earth. Close your eyes, if you want. Let images, feelings, smells, sounds or whatever else is important to you come alive in you and try to feel the heartbeat, the pulse of the earth. Zoom back into space and repeat the experiment a few times.

You can feel the pulse of the earth? Good. Then now the album comes into play.

Keep the remote control, your mobile phone or whatever you can use to play the album at hand. Return to sensing the pulse of the earth. You have it? Stay with it.

Let's listen to the first song of the album together. But before we start: Imagine that it is not Adele who is singing, but that our Earth

herself is addressing her voice to you. After you will have started the album – not yet –, let images appear again (or further) in your inner eye. After you have finished the exercise, that is, at the end of the first track, please turn to the next page of this publication. Everything clear? Ok.

Then lean back in your chair, close your eyes and press the "play" button. What does the exercise do to you? What images did occur? How did you feel?

Take a sheet of paper and write down what is alive for you right now. It is best to repeat this exercise every day. You may also want to try this exercise standing and dancing, feeling the earth through your feet and space around you permeating through you.

We have produced the publication to start a dialogue with you. Or, if you don't want to do that with us, to enter into dialogue with others on the topics of inner development and sustainability. We do not want to lecture you, but to invite you: to get involved and, in the best case, to commit to making more sustainability via inner development happen. It would be in the interest of all of us to preserve our common homeland. With this in mind, we would be pleased if the following pages become an inspiring and inviting read for you.

### **1.9 Excursion: Individual Skills, Collective Capacities and possible Limits with regard to the IDG Framework**

In addition to the question of whether the IDG framework is actually based on a concrete theory of change, we are often asked another question: Is the intention of the IDG framework to develop individual capacities or collective capacities? We consider this question to be equally central, which is why we would like to comment on it below.

Thomas Jordan of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, author of the IDG Initiative Phase 1 report, writes:

„It is also worth pointing out that the skills and qualities described below to a considerable extent refer to individuals, rather than collectives. We believe that the framework is highly relevant to explore collective skills and qualities (and how they can be supported) as well, but we have not been in a position to do this in a serious way at this stage of the initiative.“

This statement is still valid today. The third phase of the IDG initiative will focus, among other things, on the link between IDGs and SDGs and will then also look more at the interplay between individual skills and collective capacities. However, we would like to point out some aspects in this context already now, because we consider them important for the work with the field kit presented in this publication.

Perhaps you have already noticed it or will notice it while reading this publication: We deal with the topic of inner development in the context of this publication on two levels. On the one hand, it is about inner development that takes place through the application of certain methods or simply through life as such. This form of inner development is not purpose-bound, as it is not tied to the achievement of a specific goal. On the other hand, this report is about inner development in the context of implementing the SDGs and other sustainability concepts. Here, then, the coupling of inner development to a specific goal is given. And whenever inner development is pursued with a view to specific goals, the respective context and thus collective capacities gain in importance. The latter is the case with regard to the IDG initiative, as the focus here is on the context of inner development with regard to the implementation of the SDGs.

So if you as an organisation (which is the primary target group of the IDG initiative) decide to use inner development as a driver in relation to the SDGs or other sustainability concepts, then you should be aware of the following:

1. situational circumstances (such as political frameworks, your corporate culture or other market mechanisms) and collective capacities become more important.
2. the interaction of the levels just mentioned, especially with regard to the implementation of the SDGs, has not yet been sufficiently researched to identify clear impact mechanisms (as written: this is one of the goals of the third phase of the IDG initiative).

This in mind, we would be pleased if the following pages become an inspiring and inviting read for you.

### **1.10 Excursion: The Hidden, the Wounded and Mental Health**

It is not uncommon that certain framework conditions that hinder a project's progress can be hidden. In such situations, the desired individual or collective skills can only be learned and thus the desired project progress be achieved if the hidden problem, i.e. the actual reason that hinders the project progress, has been dealt with. In this context, we (Kristian and Stefanie) had several for us very enlightening conversations with Benjamin Casteillo, founder and managing director of New World Together, and Rosa Strasser, lecturer at Bertha von Suttner University. We would like to quote Rosa Strasser in this context:

"Whenever projects are not progressing as one might expect, it might be helpful to consider that there is unprocessed and unhealed pain somewhere, be it in personal biographies, in

families and their ancestral heritage, or be it in larger collectives. This pain is often covered by several layers of protection and therefore not easily accessible. Being alert to such phenomena, and being able to offer a safe context that is sensitive to what often cannot be directly uncovered but can be respected and acknowledged with dignity, is an important competence to be acquired, especially by leaders, in order to create a peaceful and sustainable future."

Referring to Rosa Strasser's comments, it is important for us to add with regard to the IDG initiative: The term inner development is mostly used in reference to ideas of positive psychology. The term positive psychology was first used by the US psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1954 and came to great attention in the 1990s through the US psychologist Martin Seligman. And sometimes 'positive' is also added to the field of adult development psychology, a perspective that is present in this work. Before that, psychology mainly dealt with deficits. Positive psychology, on the other hand, focuses on the formation of - mostly - individual strengths and adult development focuses on the development and expansion of skills and meaning making. Rosa Strasser's comments, on the other hand, can be better understood in the context of mental health, a term that is much broader than inner development. Today, mental health not only refers to the absence of mental disorders and impairments but also to a state of pleasant well-being. One could say: Mental Health also invites the - at first sight - less beautiful sides of our human beings to be considered and treated with dignity.

In the context of this publication, an adequate treatment of the topic of mental health would be desirable. However, we consider the area of mental health outside the scope of this initiative. Nevertheless, we are aware of the importance of mental injuries, which is why we would like to introduce the term mental health here, at least to promote mindfulness in this regard, especially when, as Rosa Strasser points out, despite intensive efforts, corresponding progress in the context of individual or collective development projects directed towards a concrete goal does not want to 'materialise'.

Especially against this background, we recommend an experimental or playful approach when working with the field-kit - what we mean by playful is discussed in more detail in the chapter 'Mind the gap - From SDGs to IDGs'. Always keep in mind whether the methods you use contribute to the jointly defined goal. The jointly defined goal should always be your guide.



## 2 The IDG Initiative

The IDG Initiative was established two years ago by Ekskäret Foundation, 29k Foundation and The New Division. Meanwhile, the initiative is supported by Inner Development Goals, a non-profit organisation for inner development: We research, collect and teach science-based skills and qualities that help us lead purposeful, sustainable and productive lives.

The following lines are intended to give you a brief overview of what we have done and achieved within the past two years or what will drive us further in the future. In particular, we ask you to familiarise yourself with the IDG framework if you are not yet familiar with it. This is because it is the central element to which all further explanations in this publication refer. For more information on the IDG initiative, please visit our website: <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org>.

### 2.1 Phase 1 – The IDG Framework

The first phase, which lasted from autumn 2020 to late summer 2021, identified what skills we need to develop to meet the challenges of our time. Through two surveys in which over 1000 people participated, 23 skills were identified. Common interests of all participants were and are the topics of sustainability, inner development and leadership. In the survey, deliberate care was taken to ensure that the respondents came from very different areas of society: representatives from politics, NGOs, businesses, researchers but also individuals. The 23 skills were then grouped into five categories in a co-creative process led by Thomas Jordan of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. A variety of notable institutions, organisations and individuals also participated in this process. If you like to know more about phase 1, we invite you again to have a look at our website. There you will find the report and other valuable information.

At the latest since the country of Costa Rica took the decision in December 2021 to integrate the IDG framework into their entire public sector, the IDG initiative has received a lot of attention worldwide. Currently, activities on how to use the IDG framework are taking place in at least 40 different locations worldwide, which we internally call 'hubs'.

### 2.2 Phase 2 – The Field-kit

This publication is about the presentation of the results of this second phase of the IDG initiative. After we have dealt with the 'what' in the first phase, the question of the 'how' now follows. So how can the skills presented in the IDG framework be learned? Everything you need to know about this can be found here in this publication. In the run-up to

this publication, we have already published a research report that focuses less on the application and primarily on the analysis of the data we obtained via the survey. If you would like to learn more about this, you can find this publication here (<https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/resources>).

### 2.3 Phase 3 – Widening and Integrating

Phase three of the initiative aims for more global prototyping, input and adjustment of the IDG framework and field-kit. The IDG framework and field-kit will be published online to make it more accessible.

Prototyping deals with applying the IDG framework and field-kit in programmes for inner development that are targeted to decision-makers and change agents around the world working with SDGs. Input and adjustment of the IDG framework and field-kit deals with addressing the initiative's different biases, e.g. being based on a Western perspective in terms of survey respondents and research perspective. However, views on what inner development is needed and how to support it likely vary depending on cultural and regional context. Therefore there is a need to a greater extent to include diverse perspectives to complement the existing IDG framework and field-kit.

In phase three, IDG will in the first year deliver

- A pilot of the first global IDG's Capacity Development Programme in five countries with a research study showing that IDGs accelerate work towards the SDGs: <https://global-leadership-programme.confetti.events/>
- A prototype for a global research study that will initiate a second iteration of the IDG framework and field-kit. The aim here is to widen the scope of the IDG framework to include perspectives from different parts of the world.
- An annual IDG Summit and eight IDG Gatherings will be arranged.

In the second year, the IDG initiative will deliver

- An extended research study in 100+ countries resulting in an updated IDG Framework.
- A co-created updated version of the IDG Field-kit.
- Establish and develop 100+ local IDG Hubs and five national IDG Nodes in five countries.

### 3 The IDG Framework

In the following chapter we will introduce the IDG framework. If you are not yet familiar with it, we recommend that you read this chapter before you start with the field-kit section, as the field-kit is based on the IDG framework.

Furthermore, you will find in this chapter a self-reflection tool that will help you - both from the perspective of an individual and from the perspective of an organisation - to ease the transition into working with the field-kit.

#### 3.1 Status Quo of the IDG framework

Below is the summary of the IDG framework. It is the core of the work we refer to hereafter. After the overview, you will find descriptions that describe the individual categories and skills. So please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the framework if you are not already. Please, note: The IDGs and therefore also the framework are a work-in-progress and may continue to change as the project develops and new information and input comes in. The current IDG framework is set out in the following table:

<b>Being</b>	Inner compass / Integrity and Authenticity / Openness and Learning mindset / Self-awareness / Presence
<b>Thinking</b>	Critical thinking / Complexity awareness / Perspective skills / Sense-making / Long-term orientation and Visioning
<b>Relating</b>	Appreciation / Connectedness / Humility / Empathy and Compassion
<b>Collaborating</b>	Communication skills / Co-creation skills / Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence / Trust / Mobilization skills
<b>Acting</b>	Courage / Creativity / Optimism / Perseverance

#### Being – Relationship to Self

Cultivating our inner life and developing and deepening our relationship to our thoughts, feelings and body help us be present, intentional and non-reactive when we face complexity.

**Inner compass**

Having a deeply felt sense of responsibility and commitment to values and purposes relating to the good of the whole.

**Integrity and Authenticity**

A commitment and ability to act with sincerity, honesty and integrity.

**Openness and Learning mindset**

Having a basic mindset of curiosity and a willingness to be vulnerable and embrace change and grow.

**Self-awareness**

Ability to be in reflective contact with own thoughts, feelings and desires; having a realistic self-image and ability to regulate oneself.

**Presence**

Ability to be in the here and now, without judgement and in a state of open-ended presence.

**Thinking — Cognitive Skills**

Developing our cognitive skills by taking different perspectives, evaluating information and making sense of the world as an interconnected whole is essential for wise decision-making.

**Critical thinking**

Skills in critically reviewing the validity of views, evidence and plans.

**Complexity awareness**

Understanding of and skills in working with complex and systemic conditions and causalities.

**Perspective skills**

Skills in seeking, understanding and actively making use of insights from contrasting perspectives.

**Sense-making**

Skills in seeing patterns, structuring the unknown and being able to consciously create stories.

**Long-term orientation and Visioning**

Long-term orientation and ability to formulate and sustain commitment to visions relating to the larger context.

**Relating — Caring for Others and the World**

Appreciating, caring for and feeling connected to others, such as neighbours, future generations or the biosphere, helps us create more just and sustainable systems and societies for everyone.

**Appreciation**

Relating to others and to the world with a basic sense of appreciation, gratitude and joy.

**Connectedness**

Having a keen sense of being connected with and/or being a part of a larger whole, such as a community, humanity or global ecosystem.

**Humility**

Being able to act in accordance with the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.

**Empathy and Compassion**

Ability to relate to others, oneself and nature with kindness, empathy and compassion and address related suffering.

**Collaborating — Social Skills**

To make progress on shared concerns, we need to develop our abilities to include, hold space and communicate with stakeholders with different values, skills and competencies.

**Communication skills**

Ability to really listen to others, to foster genuine dialogue, to advocate own views skillfully, to manage conflicts constructively and to adapt communication to diverse groups.

**Co-creation skills**

Skills and motivation to build, develop and facilitate collaborative relationships with diverse stake-holders, characterised by psychological safety and genuine co-creation.

**Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence**

Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and collectives with different views and backgrounds.

**Trust**

Ability to show trust and to create and maintain trusting relationships.

**Mobilisation skills**

Skills in inspiring and mobilising others to engage in shared purposes.

**Acting — Driving change**

Qualities such as courage and optimism help us acquire true agency, break old patterns, generate original ideas and act with persistence in uncertain times.

**Courage**

Ability to stand up for values, make decisions, take decisive action and, if need be, challenge and disrupt existing structures and views.

### Creativity

Ability to generate and develop original ideas, innovate and being willing to disrupt conventional patterns.

### Optimism

Ability to sustain and communicate a sense of hope, positive attitude and confidence in the possibility of meaningful change.

### Perseverance

Ability to sustain engagement and remain determined and patient even when efforts take a long time to bear fruit.

## 3.2 A tool for self-reflection

There are many ways to work with the IDG framework. One simple way would be to ask some of your friends, colleagues or children:

*"If I were to develop one more skill from the IDG framework, which one would probably make the biggest difference in my life?"*

With the help of Thomas Jordan from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, we would like to present below a somewhat more comprehensive tool for self-reflection. You can use the tool both as an individual and as an organisation. However, the questions are basically formulated with a work context in mind and are intended to help you discover interesting aspects that you can address as an individual or organisation on your development journey.

You do not have to address all the questions. We see the self-reflection tool more as a kind of register that you can open to rummage through.

Have you asked your friends, colleagues or children about a skill that could make a difference in your life? Then you could, for example, look specifically at this skill in the self-reflection tool and deal with the questions stored there.

### Being

#### Inner Compass:

**Individual:** What are your three most important values?

In what ways do you want to serve the good of the world?

**Organisation:** What are the three most important values of the organization you work for?

In what way does the organization you work for serve the good of the world?

### Integrity and Authenticity

**Individual:** In what situations and why do you stop being yourself?

In what situations do you feel challenged to be true to your values and who you want to be?

**Organisation:** In what situations and why does your organisation stop to act in line with its values?

In what situations do you feel challenged to act in line with the values of the organization you work for?

### Openness and Learning mindset

**Individual:** How do you stay open when you have a different opinion?

Are you serious about having an inquiring mindset when you encounter views that are very different from your own?

**Organisation:** How does your organisation deal with difficulties that arise in the implementation of work routines or with regard to the adopted strategy?

Is your organisation serious about adopting an enquiring stance, even if views emerge that are very different from those that are common in your organisation?

### Self-awareness

**Individual:** What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Are you nurturing your capacity for being aware of the nature of your own thoughts, judgments, reactions and emotions as they happen?

**Organisation:** What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation you work for?

Has your organisation developed practices to promote the ability to become aware of judgements, reactions and emotional states as they happen?

### Presence

**Individual:** What is most alive in you right now?

Can you remember moments when you were able to make yourself available to someone else in a non-judging way, even when feeling provoked?

**Organisation:** From your point of view, what is currently most alive in the organisation you work for?

Can you recall moments when the organisational context in which you work has allowed you to express yourself freely without fear of consequences?

### Thinking

#### Critical thinking

**Individual:** How do you identify the blind spots in your own beliefs?

Are you nurturing your habit of asking inquiring and critical questions in relation to significant assertions?

**Organisation:** Do you know the blind spots in your organisation?

Does your organisation maintain a culture where it is possible to ask critical questions in relation to significant assertions?

### Complexity awareness

**Individual:** What helps you think in terms of "both and"?

Do you look for how issues you are concerned about may be understood in a deeper way: causes, potential consequences, dependencies on other issues?

**Organisation:** Does your organisation invite you to think in terms of "both and"?

Has your organisation developed practices on how to understand issues in a deeper sense: causes, possible consequences, interdependencies with other issues?

### Perspective skills

**Individual:** Who has perspectives that challenge you deeply?

Are you strongly motivated to make use of contrasting perspectives when navigating challenging issues?

**Organisation:** Do you know organisations that take very different perspectives from the ones you work for?

Has your organisation developed practices to use contrasting perspectives to deal with challenging issues?

### Sense making

**Individual:** What kind of stories help you feel meaning?

Do you reflect on how you yourself make up stories about the issues that engage you?

**Organisation:** What kind of stories have meaning in the context of the organisation you work for?

Has the organisation you work for developed practices for thinking about how stories are made up that engage the organisation?

### Long-term orientation and Visioning

**Individual:** What three things are most important in a 5, 10 and 100 years perspective?

Do you feel motivated to engage in work that addresses issues that will take a long time to resolve?

**Organisation:** What three things are most important from the perspective of the organisation you work for in 5, 10 or 100 years?

Has your organisation developed practices to deal with issues that will take a long time to resolve?

### Relating Appreciation

**Individual:** Who has contributed to your success?



Do you consciously turn your attention to that which is worthy of appreciation, such as people's efforts and the beauty of the world?

**Organisation:** What and who has contributed to the success of your organization?

Has your organisation developed practices to appreciate the things that are worth appreciating, such as people's achievements and the beauty of the world?

### Connectedness

**Individual:** Who and what would you like to be more involved with?

Do you nurture and sustain a keen and deeply felt sense of belonging to and being a part of a much larger whole such as humanity and the global ecosystem?

**Organisation:** Who and what could the organisation you work for be more committed to?

Has the organisation you work for developed practices to establish and maintain a deeply felt sense of belonging to a much larger whole such as humanity and the global ecosystem?

### Humility

**Individual:** What helps you put the "we" over the "I" when the situation calls for it?

Do you sometimes feel more concerned about looking good than you would like to?

**Organisation:** Has your organisation developed practices for putting the common good above the needs of the organisation as such when the situation demands it?

Is the organisation you work for sometimes more concerned with looking good to the outside world than you would like?

### Empathy and compassion

**Individual:** Who and what helps you move into action when you perceive the suffering of others?

Are you working on your ability to feel empathy and compassion even towards people who are very different from yourself and who may act in ways you disapprove of?

**Organisation:** Has your organisation developed practices for noticing and responding to the suffering of others?

Does the organisation you work for give you the opportunity to develop skills of empathy and compassion towards people who are very different from you and who may even act in ways you disapprove of?

### Collaborating – Communication skills

**Individual:** What helps you contribute to a real dialogue?

What communication skills would you like to develop further?

**Organisation:** Has your organisation developed practices to contribute to genuine dialogue between employees and other stakeholders?  
What communication skills do you think should be promoted in your organisation?

#### Co-creation skills

**Individual:** How can you hold the tension between shaping and being shaped? How can you become even more creative and constructive in collaborative efforts?

**Organisation:** Is your organisation flexible and robust enough to perceive and respond adequately to change?  
What could your organisation improve to make cooperation even more creative and constructive?

#### Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence

**Individual:** What helps you include those who think differently? Do you feel that you are willing to make an effort to understand and include people and mentalities that are very different from what you are used to?

**Organisation:** Has your organisation developed practices to include dissenters? Do you have the impression that your organisation makes a serious effort to be inclusive of those who think differently?

#### Trust

**Individual:** How do you consciously build trust?  
Are you working on your skills in building and maintaining trust in relation to different people?

**Organisation:** Do you feel that your organisation has practices in place to build trust consciously?  
Do you work consciously within your organisation to build and maintain trust in relation to different people?

#### Mobilization skills

**Individual:** What is the best motivation for achieving common goals?  
Do you attend sufficiently to the task of inviting and energizing other people to work for shared visions?

**Organisation:** From your organisation's point of view, what is the best motivation to achieve common goals?  
Does your organisation have and use practices to invite and motivate other people to work for common goals?

#### Acting

##### Courage

**Individual:** When did you last do something daring?  
What are some situations where you would like to be able to act in a more courageous way?

**Organisation:** When was the last time your organisation did something daring?

What are situations in which you wish your organisation would act more boldly?

### Creativity

**Individual:** How can you foster more creativity?

What can be your specific contribution, considering your own personality, to more creativity in your field of work?

**Organisation:** How could your organisation promote more creativity?

How could your organisation promote more creativity in the context of your stakeholders in relation to common objectives?

### Optimism

**Individual:** What good do you think will happen this century?

Do you have the ability to draw your own and others' attention to hopeful signs and initiatives, something you want to continue to promote?

**Organisation:** Are there ideas within your organisations about what good will happen in this century?

Does your organisation have practices to draw the attention of others to hopeful signs and initiatives?

### Perseverance

**Individual:** What real challenge has helped you to grow?

What ideas do you have about how we can strengthen our individual and collective ability to sustain engagement and effort over time?

**Organisation:** What challenge has helped your organisation to grow?

Are there ideas in your organisation on how we can strengthen our individual and collective capacity to sustain our commitment and efforts over a longer period of time?

## 4 Collection of data and development of the field-kit

Here we share details about the research process leading to the compilation of the field-kit. The process was divided into two steps, first we gathered data and insights from practitioners around different methods they apply to develop themselves or support others' inner development. Then we made a selection of these methods and complemented them with proposals from contributing researchers.

### 4.1 The survey

As you will soon discover, the field-kit contains several methods that we think offer good examples of how to support inner development. But how did we find these methods, how did we overview the vast field comprising personal development and leadership development and how did we select methods for the field-kit?

First of all, there are a few things we didn't do. We didn't perform systematic literature research on all methods covered in scientific literature. And it would have been beyond the scope of this phase of the IDG initiative to test the methods that were collected.

What we did was to construct an online survey that we sent out to our network of people: change agents, consultants, professionals engaged in organisational development, activists, students, employees and any individual interested in sustainability issues or inner development. That means that the dissemination was not guided by scientific-based criteria.

The IDG initiative was founded in Sweden, so that is where our network's centre of gravity is. Therefore, it's not surprising that we can see a cultural bias in the responses, with 30 % coming from Sweden and 87 % coming from the Western world (EU, North America, Australia and New Zealand). This is a bias we are aware of. That is why we have tried – through some interviews – to capture other perspectives that reflect the views of people with a non-Western socialisation. We also intend to further address in the third phase of the IDG initiative, which is to focus more on skills and methods from non-Western countries.

In total, over 3000 individuals have participated in the survey so far and it is still online (insert link). Until February 22, that is when we started to work on this publication, over 1000 responses on what people do to develop themselves or support the development of others and their perspectives on sustainability were collected and thus became part of the analysis here. The survey was (and still is) anonymous to take, and the collected data is openly shared with researchers or anyone

interested in performing their own analyses. The survey and data are available at the IDG website ([www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/](http://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/))

To include more than the researchers' and experts' perspectives, we directed the questions toward three larger groups representing three different perspectives on the survey: individuals, organisational representatives and trainers.

Individuals are the respondents interested in and want to share their experiences on their own inner development. Their perspective is important since we want to treat them as subjects rather than objects that trainers, experts and organisations want to develop. If we want to promote deliberative and intentional inner development, the individuals we aim to support the development of need to be involved and engaged in this.

Organisational representatives included the perspective of the organisation that is of particular interest to the IDG-initiative. Here the respondents answer on behalf of his/her organisation and what the organisation does to support the employees' inner development. The respondent can be a manager, HR specialist, employee or anyone feeling they can answer from the organisation's perspective.

Trainers represent all who see themselves engaging in training or facilitation and have expertise on a particular method or intervention they wish to contribute. This could also entail experts and researchers from relevant fields. The selection of methods of the field-kit is primarily based on the roughly 400 responses from this group.

We also interviewed organisational representatives about the challenges they experience in their roles and how they support their employees' inner development.

In addition to the survey, which yielded over 100 different methods for inner development, we asked for input from the scientific advisory board associated with the IDG initiative and have had – as mentioned before – a variety of other conversations with third parties to capture other perspectives and knowledge. This will be introduced in the following.

## **4.2 Views on Sustainability**

Inner development is not the only broad field. The same applies to the topic of sustainability. What do we actually mean when we use the term? We would therefore like to share a few insights that we were able to derive from the data we obtained from the survey. Because some interesting results of the survey relate to questions we asked about people's ideas about sustainability. We wanted to know: Do the Sustainable Development Goals provide a good description of the challenges we face and to what extent are we sustainable?

The result of the first question is the following:

**Do you think the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, offer a good distillation of the challenges around sustainability? (2662 respondents)**

Yes	57%
I'm not sufficiently familiar with the SDGs to have an opinion on the matter	29%
No	11%

First, it should be noted that the SDG framework has relatively good support among the respondents interested in inner development. The respondents who answered ‘No’ were asked to elaborate on what they think is missing or inadequate with the SDGs. Common responses addressed opinions that the SDGs do not sufficiently consider the interconnectedness between the 17 sustainability goals nor do they relate to the inclusion of growth, which some argue is at the core of the problems of sustainability. Another frequent response on limitations related to not considering the inner dimension enough. This could entail both inner psychological aspects as well as collective and cultural. This is not unexpected since the framing of the survey was around inner development. Widening the scope of sustainability to include a psychological perspective also seems to be in line with the ambitions of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, IPCC, who in their report *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change* mentions:

“...meditation, yoga or other social practices that encourage lower carbon lifestyles”.

When we asked about outlooks on sustainability questions, we used a straightforward question rather than applying existing but more elaborate instruments.

**How sustainably do you think we are currently living as a global community?(2651 responses)**

Our current way of life is overall sustainable	<1%
We are currently not sustainable, but it is within our reach with available means	29%
A sustainable way of life is still possible, although it is not clear how we can reach it	59%
We are permanently beyond a sustainable path	11%

Again it should be noted that the respondents are biased in their interest in sustainability and inner development. One detail in this result is that those who reported being more knowledgeable about the SDGs had a more positive outlook. The younger respondents also responded to be more optimistic. It is still noteworthy that less than one percent considers our current way of life to be overall sustainable. A majority of the respondents think that we don't have within our reach to sustain our current ways of life. This can be interpreted as a call for transformative perspectives and approaches to our development where 'transformative' means something that we can't foresee from our current way of being and understanding ourselves and the world. Whether transformative would mean more holistic and integrative approaches such as larger technological breakthroughs, new forms of governing or changes in skills, values or perspective, it would likely affect our ways of seeing the world and our place in it.

### 4.3 The Individual Perspective

The central part of the survey addressed inner development. Before we dive into the field-kit, we will focus on the responses from the individual's perspective. We asked the respondents to describe what they do to develop themselves and received almost 600 descriptions. Here is an overview and insights on useful approaches and opportunities to inner development from the individual's perspective. If you want to dig deeper into the analysis, you can read more in the scientific report on the analysis of the survey responses. You can find this report here: (<https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/resources>).

The first example is to pick up a practice of some sort. This could be meditation, yoga or mindfulness-related practice. Both are included in the field-kit if you want to dig deeper. It also involves physical training such as work-out or running, or more creatively inclined activities such as engaging in arts, establishing a new habit or learning a new skill such as playing an instrument. Besides the positive health effects that often follow, having a practice of some sort is a good way of intentionally giving yourself recurrent time and space for your own inner development.

Self-reflection is another activity for inner development that deserves its own category. This means giving yourself time and space to stop, pay attention, reflect and question what you think and do instead of only responding habitually to what's around you. This can be done regularly but also after unexpected events. Self-reflection can focus on your own behaviours but also be deeper around how you understand our world or what you should strive for in life.

*“if you listen and reflect - reflection is soooooo important and that's also something I try to do regularly. Just stop and think - why did she trigger me, why did that hurt, why did I react like that etc.”*

Several other responses describe studying in organised courses or just reading books or listening to online lectures on various topics, for instance, sustainability. Acquiring knowledge is a prerequisite to perspective taking and critical and complex thinking. There is a lot you can do with only an internet connection and an appropriate device.

*“EDUCATION. I have spent the last 10 years, in my free time, trying to educate myself. Educate in the broadest sense. Reading, Listening, Watching, Talking with people. Sometimes we don't care about something only because we are ignorant about it.”*

We can also see relationships as a central source of development. Either with a more experienced person that supports as a coach or mentor or just by engaging with one's family, colleagues, network and peers. This can act as a reminder that we are always in some sort of social context when we grow and develop.

*“Having dialogues with people with different views and backgrounds than I . It helps understand the complexity of the world and the different realities people live in.”*

Another way of developing is by striving to align one's lifestyle with values. This includes frugality, reducing one's carbon footprint, recycling at home, reducing food waste, being conscious around and reducing travel and shopping, and more extreme measures such as dumpster diving. It also involves striving to live ethically according to one's ideals.

*“...I try to develop mindsight through insight by being very open and observant of myself and my interactions. I try to be a whole person.”*

Societal engagement can also be an activity for inner development. This could entail engaging in sustainability projects, supporting and taking care of others or nature, or engaging politically. Although inner development may not be the prime cause of engagement, it may follow as a positive side effect. This, together with the examples around lifestyle, may also remind us that you don't need to have developed enough before engaging in saving the world. You can just do it right away with whatever you have at your hands.

From this, we can conclude that although you may not have access to any expertise around inner development, such as coaching or expensive programs for inner development, there are plenty of opportunities for inner development in all aspects of our lives.



Here we also want to point out that we include this perspective since we don't want our own inner development to be solely something we leave to experts. We want to see individuals as subjects with the prime responsibility for their own development. But this is also something that needs to be optional. No one can be forced to develop. And we don't want this focus on individual inner development to take away focus from what we need to do on a collective and systems level. Before we turn over to the organisational perspective, we want to remind you of the aim of the IDG initiative: which skills and qualities we need to develop to better address the SDGs.

#### **4.4 Survey Results in short – the Organisational Perspective**

The organisational context is central to the IDG-initiative, so here we asked how the organisation can support the inner development of their employees. From the 141 survey responses, we can learn about opportunities aimed at both the individual, the group, and the organisational level.

The most common way of supporting individual employees' development is likely through leadership training programs and courses. They can range from developing specific technical skills to identifying strengths to personal development in a broader sense. Coaching is also brought up as a common measure. To approach inner development more systematically, it's appropriate to have a developmental plan that the employee updates regularly. Feedback was brought up from the individual perspective, which is just as central here. This could range from systematic performance appraisals to more casual conversations.

*"We support all our employees and freelancers in finding out what their core talents are. Next we aim to customise the role they play in our organisation to their strengths and talents as much as possible."*

You may think of the IDGs as skills for the individual to develop, but they may also be seen on a collective level. All measures towards the individual employee mentioned above may also be applied at the group level, where colleagues may support each other on tasks and inner development through buddy systems. Feedback can be directed to the individual or the group as a whole, for instance, by after action reviews. It should be pointed out that opening up for support and feedback between colleagues requires a safe and constructive atmosphere. This may be supported by activities aimed at promoting a culture with values such as curiosity, openness to learning and respect towards others.

*“As a proponent of self-compassion and mindfulness, we attempt to create a culture within our organisation that embodies what we teach to the world.”*

Approaches that can be directed towards the organisation as a whole involve focusing on having just and healthy working conditions. It may also address the purpose, structure and values of the organisation. Some responses mention moving towards more flexible and non-hierarchical organisational structures to allow for autonomy at work, which may give opportunities for inner development.

*“We encourage our (and all) workers, especially in the non-profit sector to unionise and demand better work conditions. E.g better pay, reasonable working hours, good working conditions, good healthcare, etc.”*

Finally, although the direction and way of working typically address the aim and tasks of the organisation, they can also function as developmental activities. For instance, if the organisation chooses to engage in projects addressing broader sustainability concerns rather than only making a profit that is not only relevant to the SDGs but they may also contribute to inner development. How we perform our work is also important. Good meeting facilitation, rituals such as check-ins and ways of collaborating and addressing complex problems may support our inner development, primarily in the Collaborate dimension. Here you will find several examples in the field-kit.

If inner development is to be approached intentionally and deliberately, the individual or the group should take the main part of the responsibility and initiative. Here we focus on the organisational support and context, but from the previously described individual perspective, we also learn that there are many opportunities for inner development in all parts of life. One should bear in mind that individuals differ in their need for support and interest in inner development. Typically, we need less external support the further we get in our development. Some are not at all interested in inner development, which is also fine as it is.

#### **4.5 Survey Results in short – the Trainer Perspective**

A question we sometimes get is which theory or framework we base our developmental perspective on besides the IDG-framework. What do we mean when we say inner development? Suppose we have a certain view of what development is, besides that it should lead to developing the IDG skills and addressing the SDGs. Aren't we optimising for something very narrow when we know that

development is typically organic, open-ended and unpredictable? Wouldn't it be hubris to claim that we understand inner development and promote such development for others?

One way of answering this question comes from the analysis of the survey responses from the trainer perspective which is the basis of the field-kit. This involved almost 400 descriptions of different methods they apply to promote the participants' inner development. We asked about what they are based on, the evidence that it works and the intended outcome.

The first question resulted in at least ten different clusters or development 'directions'. A developmental direction is based on certain assumptions around what it means to develop, how it can be supported and how we function. These will be briefly outlined in the following, after which we will address how we have taken these into consideration in our field-kit and on answering the questions above.

### **Mindfulness-based interventions and related methods and practices**

This developmental cluster includes methods or practices such as 'mindfulness-based' interventions and training that develops the capacity of mindfulness or presence as a primary outcome, 'mindfulness-informed' programmes like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) that use mindfulness as an important ingredient and compassion training, which generally develops mindfulness as a foundation for cultivating qualities of the heart (e.g empathy, compassion). These practices are well-established in psychological research and are widely practised. They involve regulating the attention, developing greater receptivity and awareness, and creating some distance to one's thoughts, emotions and impulses. In this way, one will be able to respond to the world more consciously or intentionally rather than reacting blindly or being stuck in habitual patterns.

### **Adult development-based approaches**

Several responses mention methods and assessment tools based on the research area of adult developmental psychology and include methods such as the Immunity to Change process, Lectica's Virtuous cycle of learning, Polarity management and dialectical thinking. The field has influenced these questions due to its strong focus on inner development and one of the field's significant areas of interest and application is how we address complex sustainability issues.

### **Leadership development and practice**

Leadership development is what we generally associate with inner development in organisational settings. Approaches that address sustainability include different strands of self-leadership and

approaches based on academic studies of leadership, such as transformative leadership, servant leadership, artful leadership, systemic leadership, sustainable leadership, regenerative leadership etc.

### **Group, team or family-based methods**

Most of the methods mentioned in the survey are performed in group settings but aim primarily at developing the individual. This cluster's methods aim to develop the group rather than the individual. This is performed using approaches towards collective intelligence, methods for building trust and safe spaces, negotiation methods, promoting listening, dialogue and communication, collaborative approaches and team development. Examples of methods mentioned here are systemic constellations, authentic relating and circling.

### **Organisational or values-based methods**

These approaches aim at developing the organisation as a whole or the culture on a larger scale. Organisational design is by some considered as a way of promoting inner development and, more specifically, new ways of self-organisation with approaches such as Holacracy, Sociocracy, Deliberately developmental organisations, and providing feedback by assessing the culture and values in the organisation or a country.

### **Sustainability science-based approaches**

This cluster can be found in university courses or other ways of disseminating research from the sustainability sciences, which is largely based on systems thinking. Traditional learning approaches focus primarily on transmitting knowledge and perspectives around scientific approaches to sustainability, typically expressed with the SDGs. University courses or whole programs are the most articulated in the survey responses, and they are increasingly combined with transformative learning approaches and include methods from the other clusters such as coaching, leadership or mindfulness-based approaches.

### **Systems thinking and complexity theory**

This development cluster is based on systems thinking and complexity theory. Complexity theory is often applied in sustainability issues and for sense-making. The works by Dave Snowden, Nora Bateson, Peter Senge, Gregory Bateson and Chris Argyris were mentioned in the survey as facilitating and spreading the understanding of sustainability issues as complex systems. These perspectives are informed by and contribute to several of the other directions.

### **Spiritual and transpersonal approaches**

Some respondents propose approaches with historical roots in religious or mystical traditions focusing on achieving self-realisation,

transcendence or the Eastern conception of enlightenment. These influences can also be found in the mentioned mindfulness cluster and related methods, and there are similarities in their emphasis on developing openness, self-awareness and presence. Here we find examples in meditation or contemplative practices, engaging in Buddhist philosophy or more contemporary approaches such as Big Mind, A Course in Miracles or Circles of Wisdom.

### **Embodiment-based approaches**

These methods and approaches focus on developing the body by physical exercise, with e.g. some forms of Yoga related to body postures, or using the body as an instrument, e.g. systems awareness. Body psychotherapy, Drama Therapy, various approaches for enhancing body awareness and implicit and tacit knowledge are mentioned here. Embodiment is often used as a component in other approaches and methods, such as systems thinking in Social Presencing Theatre or different forms of embodied leadership.

### **Trauma-work**

This final developmental cluster contains trauma work and practices to address trauma at the individual and collective levels. It was the least represented in terms of the number of responses. Development from this perspective means healing and reintegrating those parts of oneself that have been disassociated from a traumatic experience. This was included in responses with examples of applying simple practices such as havening or having sessions in trauma therapy.

### **Discussion of the results from the trainer perspective**

These ten clusters represent different views and assumptions on how we develop. Several clusters overlap and several methods can be categorised in or are relevant to more than one cluster. The clusters are a way of making sense of the richness and variety of the survey responses and the proposed methods for inner development. However, in addition to the methods proposed in these ten clusters we should hold space for the unknown or for methods and practices that don't, and shouldn't, have any underlying framework (e.g development through facing different life challenges etc). This could also be a reminder of existing practices and methods that haven't been mentioned in the survey responses, for instance, due to cultural bias, coming from a perspective that is not yet widely recognised or discovered by anyone.

When overviewing these clusters or developmental directions we see that they all represent fundamentally different views on what inner development should lead to and what it is. So our answer to the

question of which theoretical framework we use to describe how development takes place is that there are at least ten different categories of methods, where we have aimed to include as many as possible to give a rich and diverse picture of what inner development might look like. Development can accordingly be described in many ways: building a healthy and stable sense of self, integrating wounded, fragmented or dissociated parts of oneself, stage-based development of skills, perspectives, insights and capacities, and deepening one's connection with other humans, nature, or the divine. Thus, development could imply either uncovering new aspects of oneself as well as reconnecting with aspects we previously lost contact with.

When we take the step from the survey to the field-kit, our intention is to preserve the diversity of approaches and developmental directions. In our attempts to bridge different IDG skills and methods from the survey, we also see that with some exceptions it's difficult to demonstrate clear relations between a method and a certain SDG.

So with this, we argue that we are treating inner development as something open-ended and organic rather than something that we can control and optimise towards a single goal.

#### **4.6 The Scientific Advisory Board**

During the autumn of 2021, as the IDG initiative grew in interest, several researchers reached out to us and asked if they could contribute to the initiative. In December, the first meeting was held and thereafter, roughly one meeting per month was held. The scientific advisory board consists of 39 researchers whose role has been to support and advise the research process concerning the construction of the survey, analysis of data, compilation of the field-kit and the writing process. Several members have contributed with texts introducing different methods of the field-kit. The scientific advisory board has generously provided wisdom and insights around blindspots, biases and pitfalls in relation to the initiative we have aimed to include in this publication. They have also given support and holding space for the demanding process of developing the field-kit, which we want to acknowledge here. You can find the names of the contributing researchers of the scientific advisory board in the appendix.

#### **4.7 Selecting Methods for the Field-kit**

The online survey resulted in more than 1000 responses on methods people use to develop themselves and support others' inner development. From these, we selected around ten methods to be included in our first edition of the field-kit. In addition to the survey responses, we included some methods based on recommendations from

our scientific advisory board. But how did we come to the selection? On which ground and according to which criteria did we choose methods?

This question may also be relevant for anyone interested in their own inner development or maybe for an organisation searching for appropriate support for their staff's development. Leadership development is a multi-billion-dollar market but far from everything is of good quality. But what do we mean by good quality and how do we assess that? Which questions should you ask when selecting which method to engage in?

The first answer is that this is not that easy. Some skills may be measured and developed in fairly straightforward ways, whereas other areas are much harder to evaluate. Some should not be scrutinised from the perspective of western psychological research. So when we introduce our field-kit it should not be seen as we have actively rejected any other methods or practices. Rather, we aimed at collecting a number of methods that we consider to be good conversation starters around how to further explore the role of inner development in relation to sustainability and the SDGs. In addition, it was important to present in the field-kit a diversity of methods by representing as many of the development directions from the trainer analysis as possible.

The method for making this selection is by applying a number of criteria or questions that the methods should be able to answer. The criteria or questions are a way of, as transparently we can, selecting methods and interventions to be included in the field-kit. It also communicates why a certain method could be regarded as working better than others. They should not be regarded as requirements on methods in order to apply them. Some methods are likely to be favoured by certain criteria.

The five criteria or questions can be summarised as follows:

### **Empirical support**

This means that there is some sort of evaluation, for instance, an assessment before and after the intervention, investigating whether the method leads to the desired result. Sometimes this may be difficult to evaluate, for instance, when developing presence which is one of the skills of the IDG framework. In more general terms, this criterion may point to a discussion that a certain method should lead to a specific outcome, which is arguably better than engaging in a practice without knowing what it should lead to. Methods that are considered good examples here are compassion training, where there are various scales that measure compassion and examples of interventions that result in a significant increase in the participants' compassion that has been published in scientific literature.

### Underlying theory

If empirical support is the way, we answer if inner development happens, underlying theory points to why it happens and describes the underlying mechanisms and assumptions around development. An underlying theory can be a scientific theory such as those offered by the constructivist adult development stage theories (Subject object theory or Fischer skill theory) that are based on clear frameworks describing what development is and the process leading from one stage to the next. In some other cases, this is not as clear. Some meditation traditions do not provide an underlying theory or description of the inner landscape, but only offer a method of examining the inner self through one's own direct experience. These first two criteria may also contribute to a discussion around possible outcomes of a method in a similar way as education may be evaluated in terms of intended learning outcomes.

### Connection to the IDGs and the SDGs

This criterion points to the method's relevance in the context of the IDG-framework. The framework, in turn, needs to be relevant in relation to the SDGs. Therefore, a method that contributes to making these connections and that helps strengthen the case of the IDG-framework and its relation to reaching the SDGs should be viewed as favourable in the evaluation. For instance, systems theory-based methods that are intended to promote the participants' ability for systems thinking should be favoured due to their connection to the thinking category or dimension and the complexity awareness in particular. It may also be argued that systems thinking is relevant in addressing the SDGs since it is often argued that sustainability is caused by a lack of awareness of the larger ecological and social contexts we are situated in.

### Community of practice

A method, practice or intervention always starts somewhere and with someone. It is also possible that the best and most effective method has not yet been invented. The criterion of having a community of practice should therefore not exclude brilliant individuals and pioneers coming up with original ideas and practices but is rather a way of promoting more mature methods where there is a community where discussions and learning happen at this early stage of the IDG process. This could entail training and even conferences around a certain method but could, in a smaller context, be limited to someone to discuss and share experiences with. Again, the research fields around ACT and compassion training are considered as well established with a vast body of published studies.



## Context

Although this should not be considered as a criterion for assessing the viability of a particular method, we consider it a relevant question to ask with regard to the application of any method to determine when and under what circumstances it works. This is meant to promote a critical discussion around the contextual validity of different methods. Some practices, such as mindfulness, may be argued to work in most contexts, whereas others, such as trauma therapy or transpersonal approaches, could be ill-suited in organisational settings, although they may offer valuable insights.

## Concluding thoughts

Finally, although it should not be considered a criterion, every method should be discussed in the light of prerequisites. This means if you need any training or expertise or if you can try the method yourself.

The purpose of the criteria is primarily to facilitate a selection of methods in a structured and transparent way. As of now, we have a number of proposed methods and interventions for inner development that have helped formulate the criteria. If we, by context, refer to the organisations, we should include methods that are suitable there and also exercises and hints for individuals as well. It should also be open for additional methods to be added even though they are not included in the survey results.

The descriptions of the methods should then be very introductory without references (may be added later in the text), but they should be included if and how they respond to the criteria to be transparent and thus contribute to raising the critical awareness of the methods.

Finally, there needs to be a lot of framing and discussion of what development is and contextual factors such as the role of the facilitator and relations between participants in the intervention. But more on that later.

*“The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.”*

*- Bill O'Brien*

## 5 The Field-kit

In this section we want to introduce you to the methods that we think are particularly useful for learning the skills that can help you live a more purposeful, productive and sustainable life. We call this part field-kit because we hope you will use it not only as a pilot, but also as a companion. In Latin there is a word for this that is still used today: *vademecum*. The expression was created by contracting the Latin injunction *vade mecum!* (= 'go with me!'). The term refers to a handy book that is carried in a pocket as a useful companion when working, travelling or in other situations in life.

We do not mean to imply that no other methods can be used to learn the skills of the IDG framework, but we have chosen the methods presented here very carefully. We have been assisted by many researchers and other experts in the field on our way. You will find the names of these people in the chapter 'The Scientific Advisory Board'. We have marked the specific contributions of third parties as such here as well. If you are interested in the criteria we used to select the methods presented in the field-kit, you will find information on this in the chapter 'Selection of methods for the field-kit'. Please note that the field-kit contains a mixture of methods from well-established research fields that require facilitation by a trained expert along with simpler exercises you can engage in by yourself. Although the amount of scientific support and descriptions may vary in style, all methods have been given a similar amount of space.

If you are particularly interested in the question of which methods are suitable for learning the skills we advocate, where you can find further information on this and how you can – quite concretely and thus practically – get started working with the methods, then this part of the publication is the decisive one for you. If you want to go deeper into the topic of inner development, however, we recommend that you take the time to read the other parts of this publication as well.

Whatever your personal focus or where your personal interest lies, there are a few things we would like to point out to you before we delve into the methods.

We see inner development as something organic. In particular, we are concerned with opening up new worlds, possibilities and potentials for who we are and what we do as human beings. We have therefore tried to make the selection of methods presented here as broad as possible and to include several scientific fields, approaches and traditions. In this way, we consciously try to avoid optimization of inner development with regard to a specific perspective and thus narrow inner development itself down. At the same time, inner development is

addressed in the context of the IDG initiative with regard to the implementation of the SDGs and other sustainability concepts, which limits or could limit the notion of inner development that is entirely free. We will address this tension in the following chapter "How to engage with the field-kit". However, we would like to point out this aspect at this point.

Although many of the methods are scientifically underpinned in various ways, there is never a guarantee that they will bring the desired result. Sometimes – at least outwardly – nothing tangible seems to happen after practising a method for a certain amount of time, and sometimes even completely unexpected results can occur. It is important to be aware of this and to have patience with oneself and the process. One should also know that more subtle changes may happen over time that build up to a momentum of real and noticeable change later on. Due to the effort and discipline that is often needed to bring about inner development and change, we encourage you to form groups with colleagues or friends with whom you embark on the journey together. Such a learning context or community is very valuable. Those communities may help to make sense of the experiences that arise. Especially in the case of unexpected events, this can be of great benefit to those who are part of the journey.

This publication is particularly aimed at people we call change agents. These can be any type of individuals, such as trainers or employees or any other person that engages in the topic of sustainability. But above all, we have leaders in organisations in both the public and private sectors in mind. In our opinion, organisations have a particularly large lever not only to initiate processes of change but also to make them tangible, i.e. to implement them. It is also precisely those people who have a special responsibility in these contexts, especially when they themselves initiate these processes and get them underway. Because in the context of inner development, tensions can always arise that need to be dealt with – as mindfully and appreciatively as possible. It is important to be aware of this when putting together trainers and people who want to develop (or who should develop in the context of an organisation): Because ultimately, the space created between the learners decides which path the inner development takes. Inner development is always reciprocal, so it also includes trainers, coaches or leaders themselves.

Certainly, we can say, even if we cannot and do not want to make any concrete findings with regard to your personal inner development: Inner development best takes place playfully and in spaces characterised by mutual trust. What we do want, however, is for you to maintain joy in inner development without disregarding the seriousness

and discipline that is necessary for it. In the case of inner development, the latter is documented in particular by the fact that you understand inner development as a journey and handle it as such: For inner development is a lifelong task whose potential can only be realised and thus experienced through repetition.

In order to enable inner development, one must therefore do one thing above all: create spaces for it. We call these spaces buffer zones. We have outlined what we mean by the concept of buffer zones and how we understand the connection between inner development and sustainability in the chapter "Mind the Gap - from the SDGs to the IDGs". Anyone interested in these questions should therefore also take a look at this chapter.

### 5.1 How to engage with the Field-kit

If we are honest, we would actually prefer it if you answered this question for yourself. Because that is always the best way if you want to promote inner development – no matter if you do it for yourself or in the context of the organisation you work for. At the same time, however, we also want to give people who are just beginning to deal with this topic suggestions to find a possible starting point.

So here is what you could do, for example (we refer to a group as a starting point here, as the IDG initiative is primarily aimed at organisations, but you could also use the approach as an individual):

1. define in advance a common goal that you want to achieve as a group. This goal should relate to the implementation of the SDGs or other sustainable concepts that serve the greater good.
2. try to become aware of the situational contexts in which you are working: What are the underlying assumptions? What are the opportunities and limitations? Where might the limits of the sphere lie that you can - for the moment - influence? In short, try to get clarity about the conditions of possibilities - in view of the goal you want to achieve together (we touch on the topic 'conditions of possibilities' in the chapter: Mind the Gap - From SDGs to IDGs).
3. stay playful. Experiment with the methods presented in the field kit, repeat them and check together if you are making progress as a group towards the common goal.
4. If you do not achieve the desired results, try to develop a sense of whether hidden aspects might be playing a role. Talking to an expert in that field might be of help here.

In short, we invite you to become a researcher yourselves to find out under which conditions you can achieve a collectively desired outcome

in a given situation. The "collectively desired" should always be the guiding star on your way.

To help you get started with the field-kit, you will also find a tool for self-reflection developed with the support of Thomas Jordan from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, in the chapter "The IDG-framework".

Before you begin, allow us to make a few concluding remarks: There is no shortcut to inner development - whether it is on an individual or collective level. What we can do, however, is focus our energies on exploring the space of possibilities that inner development opens up for us. Anyone who engages with different methods or practices in this process should do so of their own choice. Although we relate skills and methods to the SDGs and other sustainability concepts, no one should be used as a means to achieve the greater good of another. Earlier in the publication, we discuss, among other things, the potential conflicts between the individual and the organisation in this respect. To enable inner development, trust is a key factor. Therefore, share your experiences with the people you trust because like any other framework, the IDG framework can be abused. And always remember: this field kit is not primarily an answer to the question of how to develop, but an invitation to find out!

## 5.2 Being

*Cultivating our inner life and developing and deepening our relationship to our thoughts, feelings and body help us be present, intentional and non-reactive when we face complexity.*

The Being dimension, consisting of the skills: Inner compass, Integrity and authenticity, Openness and learning mindset, Self-awareness and Presence, captures how we cultivate our inner life with attention and direction. Here we are not only interested in establishing a direction in our lives and what we chose to engage in, but also how we show up in life and approach different issues, both in our personal life and our work life. It regards the quality of our presence and if we are grounded in ourselves, our values and direction when we engage.

As with all other IDG dimensions, the Being and Thinking dimensions are to a great extent intertwined and it is hard to draw any clear line between them. For instance, articulating your inner compass requires thinking about it and defusion, which is an element of Acceptance Commitment Therapy, involves how we can differentiate ourselves from certain thought patterns that doesn't serve us. This also exemplifies how some, if not most, methods address more than one of the IDG skills and span several dimensions.

The methods presented here come from contemplative practice traditions involving mindfulness and meditation, but also from modern psychological practices and research. Other common methods or practices not included in this field-kit are different forms of coaching, therapy and self-reflection.


### Mindfulness-based interventions and practices

## Being – Relationship to Self

### Mindfulness practices

**Mindfulness is about *being* in and observing the present moment as it is.**

**It can help the practitioner establish a more conscious way of living, as well as improve focus and productivity, mental health and well-being, and emotional processing, among others.**



DIY Facilitated

**Primarily builds the following skills:**  
Inner compass, self-awareness

**Also develops these dimensions:**

Thinking
Acting

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#### Overview

Mindfulness is not about emptying one's mind or trying to control one's thoughts or emotions. It is about *being* in and observing the present moment as it is.

**In personal life:** A regular mindfulness practice helps increase one's awareness of oneself and one's inner life, as well as the way one interacts with the surroundings and other people. This way it may help the practitioner establish a more conscious way of living on a day-to-day basis.

**In the professional life:** For leaders and employee, the evidence-based effects of practising mindfulness on a regular basis include improved focus and productivity, mental health and well-being, emotional processing, communication and connection with others, among others.

#### How to get started

When starting a mindfulness practice for the first time, try the following:

1. Begin with focusing one's attention towards a specific external object for a shorter period of time. As the mind starts to wander, one simply redirects one's attention back to observing the object.
2. Observe the breath and whatever comes to one's attention (including one's thoughts, emotions or surroundings) - without judgement of what is observed or felt, or without trying to change anything. This might be quite difficult in the beginning, as it is easy to get entangled in or annoyed by the different distractions we have in our lives/environment or to react to pain or other unpleasant sensations in our bodies. However, it becomes easier with practice.

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#### Research references

- [Trends and developments in mindfulness research over 55 years](#)
- [Effects of Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A Review of Empirical Studies](#)
- [Publication from the Mindfulness Initiative \(2022\)](#)

Mindfulness-based practices and interventions. Mindfulness is an inherent human capacity that can be developed through practice. The term 'mindfulness' has its roots in Buddhism, although developing 'mindful presence' or just 'presence' has also been a central practice in many spiritual and religious traditions for millennia. During the last decades, the practice has been brought to the Western world at a bigger scale through the fields of clinical psychology, psychiatry and medicine in the form of standardised procedures and techniques called

mindfulness-based interventions. These are now an integrated part of some Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approaches and personal development programs and courses. These interventions and techniques may include mindful breathing, mindful observations of one's thoughts and emotions, mindful body scan exercises, mindful pausing, mindful responding, mindful moving, and mindfulness meditation. Such mindfulness practices have been well-researched during the last decades, and have a growing evidence-base behind them. Mindfulness courses are also often taught in educational and organisational settings, and typically include weekly sessions over 6-12 weeks. These courses combine formal practices, informal practice instructions, psychoeducation and teacher-led inquiry.

Mindfulness is not about emptying one's mind or trying to control one's thoughts or emotions. It is about being in and observing the present moment as it is. This involves an intention to pay attention in a particular way, so that one becomes more in conscious control of one's attentional faculties. When starting a mindfulness practice for the first time, it can be helpful to begin with focusing one's attention towards a specific external or internal object for a shorter period of time. As the mind starts to wander, one simply redirects one's attention back to observing the object. As one continues to practice mindfulness, the next step can be to observe the breath and whatever comes to one's attention (including one's thoughts, emotions or surroundings) - without judgement of what is observed or felt, or without trying to change anything. This might be quite difficult in the beginning, as it is easy to get entangled in or annoyed by the different distractions we have in our lives/environment or to react to pain or other unpleasant sensations in our bodies. However, it becomes easier with practice and as it becomes a more natural and integrated part of our life and way of being. As the practice develops, kindness and compassion related exercises may also be included. A regular mindfulness practice helps increase one's awareness of oneself and one's inner life, as well as the way one interacts with the surroundings and other people. This way it may help the practitioner establish a more conscious way of living on a day-to-day basis.

In an organisational context, mindfulness-based interventions and practices can support both leaders and employees in their personal and professional development, as well as in their daily work tasks and operations. Among the evidence-based effects of practising mindfulness on a regular basis are improved focus and productivity, mental health and well-being, emotional processing, communication and connection with others, and connection with nature. Mindfulness practices have

also been shown to increase and support transformative qualities and capacities (related to the five IDG-related clusters of awareness, insight, connection, purpose, and agency) as well as sustainability activities and outcomes (particularly related to SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being) on an individual, organisational, societal and system level.

### References and resources

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Contributors: Lene Søvold, Christine Wamsler, Jamie Bristow

### Acceptance and Commitment Therapy/Training (ACT)

The skill named Inner Compass means having a deeply felt sense of responsibility and commitment to values and purposes relating to the good of the whole. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is an evidence-based psychotherapeutic intervention coming out of the cognitive-behavioural tradition. A core concern in ACT is to increase individuals' psychological flexibility.

Psychological flexibility consists of six core processes: acceptance, cognitive defusion, being present, self as context, values and committed action. Being present is very much an act of mindfulness, but to put it simply, we can also see psychological flexibility as increasing your inner space. Cognitive defusion means how we can differentiate ourselves from our thoughts. There is a big difference between thinking “I don't matter to anyone” and “I am having the thought that I don't matter”. Self as context means that ACT assumes that you have a self that is able to do this defusion and accept your thoughts as objects and accept them rather than being stuck in them or trying to fight them or get rid of



them. Presence helps us in this process but is also a result of it. In this term, we can see ACT as a psychological intervention that applies mindfulness and acceptance.

The other aspect of ACT is the part being directed outwards and that is committed action, which comes from working with identifying one's values. ACT uses different exercises to help a client choose life directions in different domains, such as having a family, career or environment. Then the diffusion can be directed towards thoughts that are in contrast to those: “no one wants to be with me”, “I’m a failure at my work” or “I really don’t matter when it comes to sustainability”. These values can then guide our new behaviour towards goals that are aligned with these values.

Effects of working with ACT in e.g. coaching sessions are to increase psychological flexibility and have a more stable identity and sense of self. This has been demonstrated to have a number of positive effects, such as higher performance at cognitive tasks, increased quality in relations, decreased levels of stress and depression and decreased tendencies to get caught up in conspiracy theories. There are also exercises for developing the ability for perspective taking and long-term orientation, such as imagining what your guests might say about you at your 90-year birthday party.

There is a large and growing research interest alongside a large community of practitioners. ACT has been shown to contribute to human flourishing in a general sense, although the connection to individuals' engagement in sustainability issues is not that direct since ACT hasn't been developed in and primarily for this context. Nothing in the practice says that the values you identify should align with e.g. the planetary boundaries. Nevertheless, ACT offers valuable insights and tools that are relevant for sustainability in a broader sense, and which may also facilitate more sustainable perspectives and actions.

ACT is here seen as primarily addressing the Being category with particular focus on the skills inner compass, self-awareness and presence. However, it also targets skills in other categories, such as perspective-skills, sense-making, long-term orientation and visioning, empathy and compassion, courage and perseverance.

### References and resources

ACT is a non-profit, co-created open source initiative dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering and the advancement of human well-being through research and practice grounded. There are several ACT self-help-books, courses and trainings for professionals available. A quick search on the Internet will take you far. The official site for

resources and more information and ACT can be found here: <https://contextualscience.org/>

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Contributor: Fredrik Livheim

### 5.3 Thinking

*Developing our cognitive skills by taking different perspectives, evaluating information and making sense of the world as an interconnected whole is essential for wise decision-making.*

The Thinking dimension, consisting of the skills: critical thinking, complexity awareness, perspective skills, sense-making and long-term orientation and visioning, relates to how we take in and process information, primarily from our surroundings but also to some extent from our inner world. Most sustainability issues are complex as they are interconnected with each other and require taking in and coordinating several perspectives, interests and stake-holders. Before engaging in them, we need not only to recognise the complexity but also (or 'to be able' if you wish) to ask the right questions.

The skills in this dimension can be seen as the most apparent outputs from academy and studies in general. Engaging in theories, methods and frameworks, such as the IDG framework, doesn't only convey useful facts about the world, they may also help us think and open up new perspectives to us.

Most methods included here originate from the field of adult developmental psychology where theories describe how we may develop abilities beyond linear and formal logical thinking. Several methods build on theories that give a clear description on how, for instance, complexity-awareness is built up in distinct steps. Others are more directed towards recognising that several problems and phenomena cannot be fully understood.

A separate section placed after the five dimensions gives examples of university courses, which are likely the most common ways of building skills such as complexity awareness, perspective-skills and critical thinking, in addition to their purpose of conveying appropriate knowledge around topics such as sustainability.

### Dialectical thought form framework

Maybe you react against how the IDG framework seems to categorise things into different boxes, being and relating etc, when these aspects are in reality intertwined. Can we really differentiate our thoughts from who we are, and see ourselves as individuals rather than relational aspects? Do certain schools of leadership or coaching really fit into a certain category or shouldn't they be illustrated by bubbles stretching over several categories and in the interaction between trainer, individual and organisation?

Categorising skills and methods as mentioned in the former paragraph is commonly associated with formal logical and linear thinking. It is commonly and traditionally used in the natural sciences, organising academic research into fields and faculties, organisations into departments and the challenges of sustainable development into the 17 SDGs. It's not wrong to do this, but we may delude ourselves that things are neatly dealt with one at a time.

The dialectical thought form framework, DTF, developed by Otto Laske building on Michael Basseches' work, offers insights on how we can loosen our habits of grasping at phenomena as separate to see reality's complexity and phenomena's interdependence. From a dialectical standpoint, we look for what is excluded by our concepts and systems and use those excluded aspects to find the commonalities between things thus forming more inclusive thoughts. If you think of reality as static and individual, what happens if you apply the dialectical framework? You might begin to see reality more as a process of evolving and developing. You would also likely see phenomena in a larger, integral, interdependent context. And rather than seeing phenomena as discrete things, you might begin to see that all things fit together. You might start to see how things depend on each other for their existence rather than being isolated

From a dialectical perspective, the IDG framework could be seen as something temporary that may be updated, a framework with permeable boundaries, that exists in the context of challenges of sustainability and because of these challenges. The IDG categories may from this mindset work as windows or perspectives to dive deeper into inner development.

There is a strong theoretical foundation to the DTF framework and through an interview, a person's ability for dialectical thinking can be assessed. During the assessments, the person's patterns of thought are identified and mind-opening exercises can support the development where needed. It is then often used in coaching and

counselling so the participant or client may, hopefully, improve their ability for dialectical thinking.

### References and resources

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Laske, O. (2015). *Dialectical thinking for integral leaders: A primer*. Tucson Arizona: Integral Publishers.

Shannon, N. and Frischhertz, B. (2020). *Metathinking: the art and practice of transformational thinking*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

### The immunity to change process

One theory that addresses how we may differentiate ourselves from what we are stuck and embedded in, be it our emotional responses, our thoughts, our relations or on ourselves, is the Subject object theory, developed by Robert Kegan. Development according to Kegan takes place as we step out of embeddedness so that we can take our previous self as an object. The Subject object theory describes development in stages, but here the mechanisms around development and what happens inside of us as we transform are of most interest. This is where our assumptions and ways of seeing the world become visible for us. This gave rise to a method called the Immunity to change process (ITC).

The ITC process is performed by individuals or in group sessions and starts with the participants setting an individual developmental goal, which could be to exercise more or set boundaries and say no to others' expectations and wishes. When we try to pursue these goals and try to make a significant change in our lives, often something in us seems to resist the change. There seems to be some sort of emotional reaction, some sort of immune system that gets triggered, that prevents us from changing our behaviour to something that is unfamiliar to us. We may even start self-sabotaging our own development. According to the process, this happens since this new behaviour challenges assumptions we have about ourselves that we may not be aware of. If I want to be better at saying no to others' wishes, it may challenge my assumption that I see myself as someone that is needed by others.

The intended outcome of the ITC process is not primarily to reach the developmental goal we set in the beginning, but rather to get an insight into our emotional reactions and assumptions about this. When we can put this assumption into words and take it as an object, we are no longer owned by it and it loses control over us. That will then give us greater freedom and allow us to harbour more complexity in our inner space.

The ITC process addresses the foundation of how we make sense of the world and our place in it. But it also facilitates our ability for complex thinking around our own emotions and meaning-making by using language as a tool to access what was previously hidden from us. This demonstrates how language and being are intertwined and how hard it is to place a method in a certain category.

The Subject-object theory has a measurement instrument called Subject-object interview, where you can assess a participant’s stage of development in how they make meaning. The more you are able to see yourself and what you previously took for granted, the more complex your meaning making becomes.

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**Personal Growth through a Polarity Lens (DIY)**



On a blank piece of paper, please draw the Polarity Map® below with just the numbers (1-8) in the spaces without any of the print.

The Polarity Map, above, is a wisdom organizer. The wisdom is in you. At the top of the map is your GPS – Greater Purpose Statement. In this case I have entered: Personal Growth. This answers the question, “Why bother to leverage this map?” At the bottom is the Deeper Fear of what will happen if you do not leverage this polarity well. I have entered the word “Stuck” to indicate a lack of personal growth. The rest is for you to fill out in 8 steps with my personal example to help you fill out your map.

We often experience personal growth as going from something about ourselves that we would like to change: 1) Sometimes I think I am too Ambiguous (put your word(s) in your map. 2) At those times, I would like to be more Clear. 3) While holding on to a historical value or strength which when used to the neglect of being Clear resulted in me being Ambiguous. My historical value/strength is: Being Flexible. 4) A fear I have of what would happen if I over-focused on being Clear to the neglect of being Flexible is that I would be experienced as Rigid. It is the fear of being seen as Rigid and losing my Flexibility that was keeping me from being as Clear as I wanted to be in my personal development. We can now fill in the two poles names (5 & 6) by taking a word or words from the two upsides of the polarity map. In this case, I have taken Flexible from 3 and put it in 5 and taken Clear from 2 and put it in 6. You can do the same from your map.

The question becomes, “How do I hold on to my value of Flexibility And pursue my personal development desire to become more Clear?” The answer is to: 7) Identify Action Steps first to hold on to my Flexibility: Listen to others’ ideas and be open to altering my thinking and 8) Action Steps to gain the benefits of being Clear. Be clear with others about my ideas, values and fears. Paradoxically effectively holding on to whatever you have in “3” will help you get to “2.”

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**Contributor:** Barry Johnsson

## 5.4 Relating

*Appreciating, caring for and feeling connected to others, such as neighbours, future generations or the biosphere, helps us create more just and sustainable systems and societies for everyone.*

If Thinking regards how we understand different challenges, the Relating dimension addresses why we should care. We care if we feel connected to and identify with a larger context, with people of other families, organisations and cultures, those who have passed away as well as those not yet born, and with other species and nature. The Relating dimension involves appreciation, connectedness, humility and empathy and compassion.

Methods involved here focus to a great extent on supporting connectedness, by training our ability for compassion and empathy towards other people and by spending time in close contact with

nature. It's also about cultivating listening, not only to words and texts but also to more subtle messages from what's behind the words and trying to uncover the deeper mechanisms of our surrounding social context and nature. Therefore a good portion of intellectual humility is a good starting point when listening. To allocate space or a buffer zone for the unknown.

This dimension intersects with Being since you need to have a relationship to yourself and also with Collaborating since it's hard to do just that without first being in a relationship. We imagine the distinction between Relating and Collaborating by asking if something is to be achieved.

### Compassion training

One of the 23 skills is Empathy and Compassion, which we describe as an ability to relate to others, oneself and nature with kindness, empathy and compassion and the intention to address related suffering. We define empathy as the capacity to understand and feel what other people feel and compassion adds the wish to ease that suffering. But why is it needed and how can you train it?

We are generally considered to be born with an inherent ability for empathy and compassion towards those we are in close contact with, which we see in studies on small children and primates. Adult developmental perspectives also demonstrate that this ability may be expanded from close relations to wider circles, such as organisations, cultures and wider. We may also experience that our ability for compassion temporarily decreases, such as in stressful or hostile situations or if we get stuck in our own judgements, unhealthy self-criticisms or even shame. Then the ability for compassion and self-compassion is an asset, and fortunately, it can be trained and developed.

Compassion training that we will focus on here can be performed by different exercises such as meditation training. A common way of doing this exercise is to start with mindful awareness - connecting to oneself, one's body and breath. Then the attention and compassion can be directed and related to oneself without judgement and self-criticism. Striving not to be judgemental means that we are not attached to our thoughts or feelings in this situation. We do the best we can with our available means. Compassion training often aims to address one's own suffering, which is self-compassion, but here we will address relations and others' suffering.

After grounding oneself, the compassion can be directed towards another person that is close and relate to him or her the same way without judgement. After this, one can direct the same compassion to someone not that close, and then someone one has a conflict with and wish that they are well, happy and in peace. The compassion can then

be extended further to all living beings. Training is also practised in courses or classes, for instance, in Compassion mind training that is commonly used in leadership development. Here exercises can be added where one engages in alleviating others from suffering by practising generosity, hospitality or kindness towards the ones of one's concern, close ones, people not that close and someone with whom one has a conflict.

From our survey results, we can see several examples of supporting and connecting with other people and nature to develop themselves. For instance, this can occur through voluntary work and helping disadvantaged people, hosting a refugee family, having a vegetarian diet and being conscious about one's consumption of different resources. Although one's own development may not be the prime motive for engaging this way, the ability for compassion is likely to follow as an outcome.

What does different forms of compassion-training lead to and how can you measure its effect to make sure that a course or practice gives the intended results? Compassion is generally measured using different self-report scales where the individuals rate themselves in relation to different statements such as "Sometimes when people talk about their problems, I feel like I don't care." or other questions that focus on practical aspects such as what you actually do when someone else suffers. Several studies demonstrate that practices and interventions such as those described above increase the self-reported compassion of the participants.

Then, why would we be interested in developing our ability for compassion? First, several studies point towards increased well-being and higher quality of relations of the individual who engages in compassion training. Another argument for increasing our ability for compassion is that our leadership qualities improve if we understand the suffering of our colleagues and work towards alleviating it so that they can do their job properly.

Recently, compassion has been shown to support transformative qualities and capacities (related all five clusters of awareness, insight, connection, purpose, and agency) as well as sustainability outcomes across individual, collective and system levels.

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### Nature quest

As disconnection is one of the main root-causes of the social-ecological crisis we are in, reconnection is one of the key processes required to make our world more sustainable. We need to reconnect both to ourselves as well as to the natural world. Research shows that we mainly protect and restore the natural world for the sake of relational values: due to attachment to a special place in nature and in general due to the feeling of being connected with nature. The assumption is that if we feel connected to nature, we will be less likely to harm it because harming the natural world would then be experienced like self-destruction. Accordingly, one way of fostering pro-environmental behaviour would be through expanding our sense of self, so that it includes the natural world. Furthermore, nature connectedness supports us in listening to ourselves and tuning into what we actually want from our lives.

But how can we get there? What can we do to strengthen our inner connections to the natural world? As research shows, our level of connection to nature increases with time spent outdoors, especially with time spent in wild nature. Studies have shown that the more time children spend outdoors, the more environmentally responsible young adults they become later in life. However, access and interaction with nature do not only have a significant impact during childhood but also later in life. People across time and of all ages have gone into nature to seek guidance and wisdom.

One approach to doing that nowadays is a so-called nature quest. With the purpose of slowing down and cultivating qualities such as awareness and oneness, you go to a special place in nature where you can be completely by yourself. The power of solitude in nature arises from the balanced harmony which is inherent in wild nature.

The decision of actively wanting to reconnect with ourselves and nature is the start of the process of a nature quest. Then what follows is

the preparation of the nature quest time: taking care of practical questions, addressing our worries concerning the time in nature and creating inner space for new transformative experiences. Once we get to the step of leaving our everyday life behind and going into solitude in nature, we connect with our non-distracted self and the mutual interconnectedness of all living beings. Guiding teachings with regard to reconnection as well as practices such as meditation and Tai Chi can support this process. The so-called re-entry phase is directed towards cultivating a post-nature quest process to internalise the new awareness in everyday life.

You can do a nature quest by participating in an organised retreat or by organising your own trip into nature. Wherever you go, in the end, it is always about reconnecting with the web of life, with our sense of belonging and oneness. We experience that nature is not only around us but that we are nature inside and recognize that we as humans are inseparable from the natural world.

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**Contributor:** Alina Stöver

## Listening to Pause

Pausing is key to consider what we just heard. It is an inner skill that enables connecting to “what the person just said” and “how those words landed on oneself”. Allowing the time to pause is as important as the quality of the space created for that pause to happen. The importance of this quality had been highlighted without methodological steps in ancient wisdom and the western literature describing the listening process for discernment.

The invitation to pause lies in evidence-based sources to understand the awareness gained in pausing.

Indigenous knowledge, Dadirri for example, is to listen deeply and connect, said Aboriginal Elder Miriam Rose Ungunmerr from the Northern Territory in Australia. It means contemplation, and it is a way of life. It is about living versus conceptualising. Miriam pauses in Nature to listen to the other living systems and relate with them and within. For Judy Atkinson, Dadirri means the state in which one gathers information in quiet observation and deep listening, building knowledge by becoming aware. In this space of contemplation, the invisible inner qualities are working, which informs action. The inner movement gives the quality of the action. In Dadirri, learning is an embodied experience, Ungunmerr reminds us that “listening and waiting is key”, and enables us to act. With this action, we give a different quality to the relationship.

Deep listening can also be viewed as a process. In the three key elements used in Theory U to open the mind, open the heart and open the will –to risk, Otto Scharmer, highlights listening as the most important and underrated skill. The 4 levels of listening are: “downloading” (reconfirming what we know), “factual” (what is different from what we know), “empathic” (allows us to connect with the experience of the other), and “generative” (connects us with who we are and whom we want to be). It is doable to be with others and inwardly, pausing in order to notice from which level of listening we are operating –downloading, factual, empathic, or generative. For example, in groups, each person can be given the same amount of time for communicating, followed by one (or more) minute of pausing, then the next person can speak for the same amount of time, and so on. In that pause, before it is the next person’s turn to talk, is when the magic happened. It shifts from reaction to being able to respond.

Pausing to reflect is being conscious of the embodiment of what we just heard, and that inner quality has the capability during the process to change the outcome.

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Contributor: Vivianna Rodriguez Carreon

### **Moral imagination - The Symbiosis Meditation (DIY)**

Moral Imagination is an evidence-based psychotherapeutic intervention and spiritual-political praxis coming out of the cognitive behavioural tradition that uses imagination, creative methods and visioning to expand empathy, cultivate a stronger sense of self and connection to values, and promote new perspectives, sense-making and cognitive flexibility. Moral Imagination primarily addresses the Relating category with particular focus on the skills Inner compass, Empathy and Compassion, Perspective-skills and Long-term orientation and Visioning. It also targets skills in other categories such as Self-awareness, Presence, Sense-making, Courage and Perseverance.

The Symbiosis Meditation is a short (8 minute) meditation that invites you to explore your experience being live through the vibrant material, energy, atoms, living beings and connections your experience of being a “human being” is made up of.

You are guided through the process of visualising and feeling experientially all parts of your body that are made up of elements of solid material, or “Earth element” - bones, skin, teeth, hair, and the physical sensation of their weight. Then you are guided to visualise all

of the solidity and Earth element present in the world and Universe externally to you, and to visualise and imagine the connections between the two.

The same is done for water and all of the liquid elements in your body, and then again visualising the rivers, storms, waterfalls and oceans of the world outside - and the continuum that exists between the two. Then the same is done with air and the breath, focusing on the air and oxygen bubbles inside the body and projecting out to the air and its sounds and sensations out in the world. Lastly, the meditation focuses on the “fire element” of heat and energy which also guides listeners to imagine the mitochondria in the body that were once bacteria, but now live in our bodies through the process of endosymbiosis. The listener finishes by imagining the chain of unbroken relationships and cooperation, embodied through the chain of heartbeats that have supported them to be alive at this time.

The meditation mixes using cognitive ideas, concepts and visualisations from the sciences which are then brought alive by experiential practice, breath, contemplation, and embodied cognition to create a rigorous, feeling-based experience and intelligence of our interdependency with all Life.

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A recording of the symbiosis meditation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUIrEecXcHg&ab\\_channel=PhoebeTickell](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUIrEecXcHg&ab_channel=PhoebeTickell)

**Contributor:** Phoebe Tickell

## 5.5 Collaborating

*To make progress on shared concerns, we need to develop our abilities to include, hold space and communicate with stakeholders with different values, skills and competencies.*

Collaborating involves communication skills, co-creating skills, inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, trust and skills of mobilisation. This dimension is a good reminder that we need to develop skills on a collective level as well as the individual. SDG goal no 17 regards partnerships for the goals and stresses how we need to cooperate over boundaries to address the sustainable development goals.

There is a vast number of methods for supporting groups in addressing complex issues. Some will be addressed here. This involves both cognitive focus, how to support and scaffold collective understanding of complexity, and how to build trust and safe spaces where different seemingly opposing views can coexist. The starting point in this dimension of the field-kit is to focus on how we communicate in a way that is mindful of reducing violence and unnecessary conflicts.

The dimension and the methods presented in them intersect with most others and, also with the Acting dimension, since most methods aim at producing some sort of action towards addressing the issues at hand.

### Nonviolent communication

After the relating category, we will turn our focus to the interaction between individuals and different actors, where communication is at the core. In the IDG framework, we define communication skills as the ability to really listen to others, foster genuine dialogue, advocate own views skillfully, manage conflicts constructively and adapt communication to diverse groups. What do we mean by “really listen to others” in this context?

When we listen to another person, there is always a risk that we draw conclusions about what the person is expressing that are not accurate and lead to misunderstandings. We may think that he or she may be misinformed, have unreasonable demands or is just plain wrong. But these are often just our own interpretations, which are coloured by our

own thoughts, emotions and assumptions around this person as well as by our own (unfulfilled) needs in the situation.

Nonviolent communication, NVC, is a method that is suitable here since it aims at going beyond what people are saying and doing to make explicit people's interiors in terms of feelings and needs. Not only the interior of the one you are communicating with but also of yourself. As individuals, an NVC approach asks us to go beyond our first interpretation of what is being expressed and try to listen deeper. We can do this by, instead of instinctually responding as we were being attacked, asking further questions on how this person feels and about needs that are not being met.

Opening ourselves up like this to welcome the perspective, and possibly suffering, of the other person or group may be more demanding for us than just reacting and defending ourselves. It requires that we can hold space within ourselves for the other person's view and emotions without subsuming our own needs and emotions. But practising doing this in different situations may also contribute to the development of our inner space and capacity to harbour different emotions and perspectives. NVC opens a room for shared understanding and a deep sense of connectedness.

Applying tools such as NVC in a situation may help us establish contact and conversation between all parties in cooperation or a conflict by identifying and expressing everyone's needs to then, as a next step, develop a shared strategy that leads to a solution to the tension. The basic assumption of NVC is that all human behaviour is motivated by needs. Accordingly, anger and reproaches can be seen as unhappy expressions of unfulfilled needs. It makes it easier to solve a conflict if we acknowledge that there are different needs and no strategy has yet been found to meet them amicably. NVC supports us to express what we want and ask for things in a way that is more transparent with our needs and feelings and in line with the needs of the other people in the situation. It may also help us discover needs that we previously weren't aware of, such as a need for freedom or respect.

*Clear the Air Team Meetings (CTA)* is one approach for implementing NVC in everyday life. It is a process for any group of people. The contribution to cooperation arises from providing a space for cultivating connection and clearing relational tensions. The aim is that whatever tensions arise can be promptly clarified. In this sense, CTA meetings are a kind of safety net for tensions: Here, issues that one may not have managed to address in everyday life can be clarified. The format invites teams to address and clarify conflicts by providing a clear structured space that starts with a deep check-in. Each person reflects

for themselves: How am I feeling right now? What is on my mind these days? The second round is focused on clarifying tensions and conflicts. What follows after is a so-called appreciation round. The participants consider: What has someone in this round done that has met my needs? What have I come to appreciate in general over the past few weeks? Finally, there is a checkout round where participants are given the opportunity to share how they are doing compared to the beginning of the meeting and how they personally benefited from it.

The positive-appreciative attitude that is inherent in NVC, the safe space which is created by the facilitator who leads through the process, and the needs-oriented attitude inherent in NVC are enabling conditions with a significant impact on the development of IDGs. CTA is structured so that the participants first develop IDGs such as presence and self-awareness, which need to be cultivated individually. Then the process leads over to the development of IDGs, which only emerge from the interaction of the participants in the group: such as compassion and communication skills. Overall, CTA is not only an end in itself but a means for cultivating cooperative relationships and collective action.

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### Methods for scaffolding collaboration on complex issues

When issues are very complex, no single actor possesses the knowledge and competences that have to be weighed in and used when developing action plans. In particular when stakeholders with quite different interests, perspectives, roles and knowledge base are involved, there is also a considerable potential for miscommunication, lack of trust, lack of shared focus and outright conflict. Over the last five decades or so, a very large number of methods have been developed in order to scaffold productive collaboration and overcome interest conflicts among diverse stakeholders. Some examples (of very many) of such methods are: *TIP, The Integral Process for Working on Complex Issues; Soft Systems Methodology; Open Space; Future Search; the Strategic Choice Approach, WorkOut, the Consensus-Based Approach, the Inquiry-Based Approach, Deep Democracy and Future Workshops*. Picking one method from the diverse field of methods is problematic, since different methods have been developed for different purposes and have different profiles regarding what functions they perform (see Jordan, 2014). Some of these methods are specifically designed to support participants to develop



more complexity awareness; to creatively make use of tensions between different perspectives; to be able to collaborate even when there is a considerable conflict potential; to facilitate trust and creativity, and so on. Using structured facilitation (either using an established method, or a bespoke design by a skilled facilitator) might be necessary in order to find consensus on purpose and delimitation, create trust and openness, mobilize creativity, explore complex conditions and causal relationships, make use of different perspectives, defuse conflicts, and other functions. These methods do not only facilitate collaboration, problem-solving and strategy development in relation to specific issues, but also support long-term learning among participants regarding awareness of complexity, openness to explore diverging perspectives and concrete co-creation skills.

There is a very large literature on methods for collaborating on complex issues and also a large community of experienced facilitators. Much of the literature is practically oriented, such as methods and facilitation manuals and textbooks. However, there is also a body of research on methods, not least among British scholars in the field of operational research and systems engineering, and in the field of deliberative democracy.

One argument for including references to this family of methods is that the IDG framework really needs to evolve from a focus on individual skills and qualities toward collective capacities. Methods for complex issues are designed to build collective capacities for enabling strategy development and implementation that go far beyond what an individual can hope to accomplish.

In order to fully realize the potential of using methods for complex issues, it might be necessary to involve a trained and experienced facilitator. Such a facilitator can adapt the design of a group process to the specific conditions in the particular case, and can facilitate each phase of the process in order to mobilize the competences of the participants and ensure productive collaboration.

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**Contributor:** Thomas Jordan

### Training in intercultural competence

IDG: Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence

When working with people with different cultural backgrounds, cultural differences may constitute a considerable conflict potential. The relevance of this challenge is particularly large in relation to issues that require international collaboration, such as the SDGs. Awareness of common cultural differences that may influence collaboration and communication can reduce the risk of misunderstandings, friction and outright conflict. There are several frameworks describing and explaining typical cultural differences, such as those developed by Geert Hofstede and colleagues, Fons Trompenaars and colleagues and Erin Meyer (see references below).

The most well-known and relevant dimensions for cultural differences are (following Hofstede) power distance, individualism/collectivism, femininity/masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Such differences (and others) can influence communication and collaboration practices, relationship building, leadership and followership and attitudes toward gender roles. Training in intercultural competence can include learning about common dimensions for cultural differences through lectures and reading, reflecting on others' or own experiences with intercultural conflict, and conducting group simulations and communication exercises. It should be recognized, though, that some scholars and practitioners caution against the risks of stereotyping when using frameworks like Hofstede's and advocate a more open-ended approach to training in intercultural awareness. Intercultural training should be designed to minimize the risk of stereotyping, while offering clear examples of how cultural differences potentially can be problematic,

and providing guidance on insights and skills that increase the capacity for creative collaboration across cultural differences.

Training in intercultural awareness can be crucially important in endeavours involving participants with different cultural backgrounds, by reducing the risk of misunderstandings, frictions and outright conflict, as well as by facilitating personal and collective development through a broader repertoire of values and behaviours.

The volume of empirical research on intercultural differences is very large. There are also many books and articles written for the general public with the purpose of strengthening skills in intercultural collaboration. Training in intercultural competence has been around for a very long time, there is a large community of skilled trainers using different approaches.

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**Contributor:** Thomas Jordan

### Psychological safety

Psychological safety refers to the experience of being able to be oneself in a group without fear of being rejected or ridiculed by other group members. Or, in the words of Amy Edmondson, professor at Harvard and very much associated with this concept, “a team-climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect”. Teams with a high degree of psychological safety are open about their mistakes and are encouraged to talk about and learn from them. The concept of psychological safety applies to groups/teams and organizational settings where individuals are highly dependent on each other and are working towards a common goal. Without help from all individuals in the group, the goal is hard to reach.

The concept of psychological safety has been around since the 1960's and grew again in popularity in the 1990's. It recently got a lot of attention with the famous Aristotle study done by Google, in which the company collected data from over 180 teams within their organisation to gain knowledge on what is at the core of successful teamwork. The one factor that stood out and had the most impact on team effectiveness was Psychological safety. Other factors also contributed, such as dependability, structure and clarity, meaning, and impact, but to a lesser extent.

There has been a lot of research on psychological safety at the individual, group and organizational levels showing that a high degree of psychological safety can lead to increased performance, increased learning, and higher work satisfaction. And that psychological safety is best conceptualized as a group phenomenon.

Even though psychological safety is a group concept and cannot be achieved without engagement from all team members, there are lots of things an individual can do to increase the psychological safety in a group they are a part of. Small behaviours such as asking questions, being interested in and respectful to other group members, accepting differences in personality, making sure everyone is included in conversations and decisions, asking for the opinion of others, speaking up about your own mistakes and trying new behaviours in the group.

Psychological safety addresses the Collaboration dimension and can be a powerful tool to increase the possibility of better functioning teams and higher work satisfaction. It has a clear connection to SDG 3, 8, and 17, but can also be considered to influence all the SDGs since how we work together will have a profound impact on how fast we can reach the global goals and create a better future.

There is an urgent need to find innovative pathways toward a more sustainable world. As humans, we are all part of this struggle in one way or another, whether we like it or not. Together our actions determine whether we are to succeed or fail our future generations. But breaking old habits is hard, we all know that. And only talking about change is not enough. We need to actually walk the talk. If we do not have the support or tools to achieve sustainable changes on a broader scale, we will likely end up not much further than where we are right now. A better understanding of human behaviour and our motivation to participate in the largest challenge of our time is the foundation of any progress. We need to apply the psychology of sustainability to everything we are trying to achieve. And we need citizen-driven innovation and co-creation to get there. This is where the IDGs can provide a much-

needed framework for successful behaviour change, starting with ourselves and moving further towards the UN 17 global goals.

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Rework with google: Understanding team effectiveness - Tool: Foster psychological safety <https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/foster-psychological-safety/>

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The fearless organization: <https://fearlessorganization.com/>

**Contributor:** Kristofer Vernmark

### The shield (DIY)

This is an exercise with many purposes but mainly to get the participants to talk about and share themselves, as well as getting to know each other. The aim may also be to create a climate of trust. The exercise is for three participants or more and takes 30 min to 4 hours to do. Material needed is paper (preferably flip-chart size) and pen (preferably whiteboard variety).

This exercise can have different outcomes depending on the group, what is shared and how met. You may have to take a little height because the rendering may take a little extra time depending on what emerges.

Approach:

1. Hand out paper and pencil to the participants, one for each. Instruct on a blackboard or whiteboard (or own paper) how the exercise is carried out before the participants are allowed to start.
2. Participants are asked to draw a shield on the paper, which is then divided into four parts. The shield should cover as much of the paper as possible.
3. In each quarter, participants are asked to describe themselves based on four different themes. It is essential that participants use pictures and not words.
4. The themes can be varied, but suggestions can be, for example: This describes me...; A difficulty I got over...; I am proud of this...; This is what you didn't know about me...; Then I made myself disappear...; My dream is to... ; In twenty years...
5. The participants then show their presentations one by one and give an oral presentation for about a minute.
6. When the participants present their creations, those listening are invited to take notes and provide positive feedback on the presentations. Inform that this is to be saved for later.

7. When everyone has given their speech, the group leader can either continue with the exercise immediately or ask to come back with the next step later. Both options have their pros and cons.

8. Feedback. Arrange the group's chairs in a circle formation. Ask the participants to produce the feedback that was recorded. The participants must now, one by one, turn away outward from the group when feedback is given. When feedback is given, the person receiving feedback must only listen and not comment. Feedback is then given in a round; the person sitting to the left of it starts receiving feedback, and then goes clockwise.

9. When everyone has given their feedback, the person who received feedback turns back to the group and says thanks to the group.

10. When everyone has gone around the group, the group gets to tell what they experienced and reflect on what this aroused.

### References and resources

Stefan Dahlberg, Competenscompagniet

**Contributor:** Kristofer Vernmark

## 5.6 Acting

*Qualities such as courage and optimism help us acquire true agency, break old patterns, generate original ideas and act with persistence in uncertain times.*

Finally, the Acting dimension involves courage, creativity, optimism and perseverance. We are still involving skills and inner qualities but these are the ones closest to taking action on different issues.

The methods here aim at building hope and agency for taking action, but also cultivating creativity and imagination. As before the methods here and the dimension in itself intersect with the other dimensions. Some methods aim at collaborative problem-solving and could be placed in the Thinking or Collaborating dimensions as well.

Although many leadership programs aim at covering most of the IDG dimensions, at least this is an ambition of the IDG initiative, this is likely the dimension where their centre of gravity is. Leadership development will be discussed separately as an application along with education.

### Personal agency and personal initiative trainings

Personal agency, defined as the ability to make and act upon important decisions in one's life, is central in the promotion of overall well-being (Bandura, 1989;2006). Recent research studies from psychology, cognitive science, economics, and public health have demonstrated that personal agency can be nurtured, even within populations faced with significant resource constraints and environmental threats. In the past

decade, there has been an increase in personal agency interventions designed to catalyse and support the following sustainable development goals: Goal 1) no poverty, Goal 3) enhancing health and well-being, Goal 5) gender equality and Goal 8) decent work and economic growth. Personal-agency interventions take the form of behavioural and/or digital interventions designed to catalyse actions towards specific goals and to support behavioural change. Three specific examples of tested interventions in low resource settings are described below:

The Empowered Employee and Empowered Entrepreneur training (EET) programs, both of which are personal agency-based trainings, grew from a public health perspective and were developed by Dr. Shankar and colleagues through the SEE Change Initiative (Shankar, et al 2019), and adapted and tested within numerous settings and sectors in resource poor environments. This behavioural training was designed through a gender and socio-cultural lens, to foster personal agency by having individuals undergo a personal journey to examine what is important for their lives and utilize mental tools and processes to get there. The EET program allows the individual to understand their own belief systems, identify their goals and outline the path to these goals, and equips participants with the ability to understand and implement the actions they need to take to achieve their goals. Specific skills in action planning include goal setting, improved communications, systematic planning, and active problem solving. All these practical and psychological skills support proactivity while enabling meaningful action towards the participant's goals -- unprompted by others or outside forces -- to reach their vision. These deliberate actions lead to cyclical, resilient habits that the individual can maintain throughout their life and enable a growth mindset alongside a sense of power and voice. Early research trials show that personal agency training provided to Kenyan energy micro-entrepreneurs doubled business longevity and nearly tripled sales, while enhancing confidence, self-esteem, and improved interpersonal relations (Shankar, et al, 2015). The EET program has been used to improve livelihoods for micro and small entrepreneurs, strengthen confidence and agency of women in male dominated sectors such as energy and agriculture, to improve interpersonal relationships and reduce gender-based violence.

Personal initiative training, developed by psychologists Dr. Frese and colleagues (Frese & Gielnik, 2014) and tested in collaboration with economists (McKenzie & Woodruff, 2014), was designed to focus on motivational skills, proactive behaviours, goal setting, planning and innovation and overcoming obstacles. This training was developed to support economic interventions focused on entrepreneurship and

business improvements. Personal initiative training strives to coach small business owners on how to be self-starting, future-oriented and persistent. It also teaches participants how to anticipate problems, look for new opportunities, and plan ways to overcome obstacles. A large-scale randomized trial of 1500 entrepreneurs in Togo (Campos et al, 2017) showed that over the course of two years the personal initiative training increased firm profits by 30%, compared with a statistically insignificant 11% for traditional business training, making it a cost-effective intervention. Modifications and enhancements continue to be explored to improve outcomes based on recent results from research and trials.

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- Shankar A, Sundar S, Smith G. Agency-Based Empowerment Interventions: Efforts to Enhance Decision-Making and Action in Health and Development. *J Behav Health Serv Res*. 2019. 46(1): 164-176.
- The SEE Change curriculum is available as open-source documents through the SEE change website.

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/international-health/research-and-practice/centers-and-research-groups/research->



[groups/the-self-empowerment-and-equity-for-change-initiative-see-change](#)

Contributor: Anita Shankar

### Arts, creativity & imagination

Many people engage with creative activities as a hobby, and when asked they will readily affirm that creative activities bring them relaxation, as well as enjoyment and fun. Beyond providing personal entertainment and relief from the stresses of everyday life, creative practices have demonstrated health and wellbeing benefits which in turn lead to greater courage, optimism and perseverance. In many countries around the world arts practices are now woven into healthcare and social care. A summary of the latest literature from the UK, including clinical and community research studies, can be found here: [Creative Health](#)

The arts are also beginning to play a larger role in the training of medical professionals, revolutionising the bio-medical approach in an attempt to make medicine more compassionate, appreciative and holistic, enabling doctors and nurses to care better for their patients. Around the world hospitals and surgeries are being re-envisioned with innovative arts designs that are said to enhance patient experience and speed up recovery. An example of interdisciplinary practice and research involving the arts in medicine can be found here: [Institute for Medical Humanities](#)

Critically, there is a growing recognition that arts, culture and creativity lead to more active citizenship and enhance social skills, as well as empathy and compassion (e.g., Rathje, Hackel & Zaki, 2021), empowering people to care more for others. Many creative activities engender states of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), leading to a greater sense of interconnectedness with other people and the world. Multi-disciplinary arts practices are now widely used in education, community development, restorative justice, and peace-building, enabling self-exploration, dialogue and healing. Researchers working in arts and social change highlight the value and power of creative methods in projects envisioning change (e.g., Pereira, Hichert, Hamann, Preiser & Biggs, 2018). Creative methods can help generate visionary narratives and pilot initiatives that help seed more benign futures in the present. Underpinning these visions is the understanding that the imagination – through images, metaphors and language – has generative power. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert,

“Metaphors have the power to create a new reality. This can begin to happen when we start to comprehend our experience in

terms of a metaphor, and it becomes a deeper reality when we begin to act in terms of it. [...] Much of cultural change arises from the introduction of new metaphorical concepts and the loss of old ones.” (p. 145)

Creativity and the arts enable people to liberate themselves from normative identities and structures and follow imagination’s wild and spontaneous flow, increasing their potential to care for the world and drive change.

### References and resources

Collective Encounters, UK: A leading arts organisation specialising in theatre for social change <https://collective-encounters.org.uk/>

Cardboard Citizens, UK: An innovative arts organisation dedicated to addressing social inequities and injustices through creative practice <https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/>

Creativity & Transformation: A 10-week online learning course, exploring how creativity engenders inner development and social change <https://www.aleftrust.org/open-learning-list/creativity-transformation/>

**Contributor:** Jessica Bockler

### Theory U for group work

Theory U, also known as ‘Presencing’, offers a framework for collaboration and engagement using awareness-based and contemplative practices. Theory U offers insights and processes that enable working in a group to sense more deeply into team dynamics and conscious leadership relationships, helping organisations engage in purposeful planning and prototyping of projects and initiatives. For example, Scharmer said one of the key principles in teams is a common intention. How does a core team align to create a common intention? Initial framing is important, so a group has a shared sense of purpose and direction. Then as a group process is convened, group members are called upon to show up with authenticity and transparency, enabling the greatest attunement in the group. There is both an inward and an outward orientation of awareness, sensing into what wants to unfold in the group and what is happening in each individual. It is this awareness, directed to inner experience as well as to relational dynamics, that fosters organic emergence.

Another core concept in Scharmer’s work comes from his interview with Bill O’Brien “the success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor.” Presencing practitioners sense

into the interior conditions, asking organisations to consider the quality of spaces they create for deep inner and relational inquiry. For example, how to see, sense and feel the inner quality of team dynamics. The u-school offers a set of tools and practices to support holding spaces for transformation: Sensing Journeys, Dialogue Interview, Stakeholder Interview, Guided Journaling, Case Clinic Coaching Circles, Prototyping, and more. These practices are freely accessible and can be used independently and adapted to other transformative processes. Indeed, some of these practices have become a language, literacy in itself, a way to express and to know, to develop the U process, such as Scribing and SPT (Social Presencing Theater), encapsulated as the social arts. U Theory has become a distinct practice in leadership, management and coaching, and many practitioners join the U journey each year, , individually and in groups, taking part in the so-called u-lab 1x and u-lab 2x, in which members go through the process of co-initiating, co-sensing, co-inspiring, co-creating, and co-evolving emerging projects and initiatives.

### References and resources

Presencing institute: <https://www.u-school.org/>

Sensing Journeys: <https://www.u-school.org/sensing-journeys>

Dialogue Interview: <https://www.u-school.org/dialogue-interview>

Stakeholder Interview: <https://www.u-school.org/stakeholder-interview>

Guided Journaling: <https://www.u-school.org/journaling>

Case Clinic Coaching Circles: <https://www.u-school.org/case-clinic>

Prototyping: <https://www.u-school.org/prototyping>

Scribing: <https://www.u-school.org/visual-practice>

Social Presencing Theater: <https://www.u-school.org/spt>

**Contributors:** Vivianna Rodriguez Carreon and Jessica Bockler

### WOOP (DIY)

WOOP is short for wish, objectives, obstacles and plans and is a simple and research-based method for setting goals with something you want to achieve or experience and increasing the probability that you will actually be able to achieve this. WOOP is like taken from an instruction book for how to work on strengthening one's hope, the first

characteristic of our psychological capital. You can do a WOOP pretty much as often as you want. It only takes a few minutes and only requires and put these minutes in and that you then wholeheartedly try to focus on the task.

You can do WOOP individually or with someone (for example, a coach, a colleague, a teammate, a leader, etc.). Doing it individually can be beneficial to have a paper and pen and write down your thoughts while you WOOP. In short, a WOOP works like this if you do it yourself:

1. Sit down and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose while counting to four and then hold your breath while counting to four again. Release the air through your mouth without pushing it out. Think of yourself as a balloon that you release the air from. Count to eight as you exhale and then count to four before doing it all over again the same way. Do this five to ten times and feel how you relax.

2. Think of something you would like to achieve or experience in a given time, such as an upcoming meeting or the day ahead. For example, it could be something new that you would like to learn or an achievement of some kind that you would like to perform. Something that feels challenging but certainly not impossible. Write this down on a piece of paper.

3. Think about the positive feelings and consequences that would result from achieving what you would like to achieve, big or small. Write these down and then focus for a little while on the two or three things that would be the single best in achieving this. Feel free to say these out loud and circle them on your paper.

4. Next, think about all the possible obstacles and problems that you can come up with that can make it difficult or prevent you from achieving what you want. Obstacles may lie with you (e.g. motivation problems, concentration difficulties, fatigue, illness, etc.). They can also lie outside of yourself (eg being misinformed, a colleague getting sick, bad weather, etc.) Write down all the obstacles you can think of, big or small.

5. For each obstacle, think through what you can do to prevent it from happening and what you can do to deal with it should it happen. Write down each such plan on the paper as follows: “For \_\_\_\_\_ not to happen, I will \_\_\_\_\_ and if \_\_\_\_\_ happens, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

6. Read through what you have written and feel free to tell someone else about what you have written.

### References and resources

Wang G, Wang Y, Gai X. A (2021). Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Mental Contrasting With Implementation Intentions on Goal Attainment. *Front Psychol.*

Cross, A. and Sheffield, D. (2019). Mental contrasting for health behaviour change: a systematic review and meta-analysis of effects and moderator variables, *Health Psychology Review*, 13:2, 209-225.

**Contributor:** Stefan Söderfjäll

## 5.7 Applying the IDG framework in leadership and education

Beyond these examples of methods and practices that aim at developing the skills of the IDG framework, we also want to share a few examples on how these may be integrated in larger programs. These involve leadership programs as well as educational courses and programs, starting with the former.

Previously in the publication we described results from our survey indicating that a transformational approach is needed to address sustainability issues. But how can this be approached in a leadership setting?

### Leadership programs

To act is in itself an act of leadership. Anything and everything we do has an impact. Thus it is important to be intentional about the purpose of our actions, align our actions with that purpose, and develop skillful means for accomplishing the purpose.

Leadership is thus essential to reaching any goals, whether inner development or the SDGs. Organizations spend hundreds of billions of dollars training people in it. There has been rapid growth in academic degree programs focused on it. Yet we are often still left frustrated by the leadership we experience.

Theoretical diversity around what leadership is has contributed to this frustration. Yet it is also because our expectations of others who are in positions to lead are idealistic and unrealistic projections of our own unfulfilled hopes. We neglect to include our own work, the need to develop ourselves to make progress on commonly held goals. Thus leadership is a two way street. It is not simply the job of people in positions of leadership to tell others what to do. Leadership is a team sport, where everyone needs to contribute.

In order to approach acting in this manner, the IDGs aim to include references to a number of programs that are implementing what is a key principle of leadership. This principle focuses on leadership as an act of creating a space for people who have direct ownership of the issues to enable them to develop their own capacity to act. This includes transformative leadership approaches, building on the work of James MacGregor Burns, Bernard Bass and others, that focus on raising the moral level of action by stakeholders. It also includes Heifetz's

adaptive leadership approach, where leadership is about going beyond management and authority and creating a holding environment that enables people to face their own work of questioning traditions, loyalties, values and mental models that have contributed to existing challenges. Enabling these inner changes is essential to making progress on difficult societal issues.

While the programs described below could be categorised under the Acting dimension, they are in fact engaging all five major Inner Development Goal categories.

Qualities of Being, such as cultivating self-awareness, being able to have a clear presence, integrity and authenticity, an internal moral compass and a learning mindset are all well established as essential for leadership. Self leadership is often the most difficult to do, yet has the most impact for others if we can model how to change.

Cognitive skills are also essential for leadership. In our knowledge driven economy, thinking tools are the main skills we need to succeed. Research has found that cognitive ability is the single most successful predictor of success when hiring. Research has also found that transformational change requires a complexity and maturity of cognitive skills that go beyond the complexity of the challenges facing organizations and society.

Yet being clever in itself is insufficient. Research on what leaders say about good leaders has shown that subject knowledge and task accomplishment by themselves are not what marks good leadership. It is the quality of relating, how leaders care for others and the world that distinguishes leadership. The five skills listed here are all found in the leadership literature.

At the same time, it is clear that all of these qualities are never found fully developed in one individual. Collaboration is absolutely essential to bringing together a diverse and robust set of qualities that are necessary for leading change. This is based on trust and relies on the ability to communicate, co-create and mobilize. As globalization has increased, it has also become more important to include intercultural competence so that our collaboration skills extend beyond our local social circles.

All of this is implicitly necessary in acting. What distinguishes acting as an energy to drive change are the skills required to apply all of the above; courage, creativity, optimism and perseverance. While the programs described below do not explicitly describe this synthesis, they implicitly rely on how leadership develops and applies all of the Inner Development Goal dimensions and skills.

*Radical transformational leadership approach:* The conscious full-spectrum framework is a theory of change that aims to connect personal and societal transformation. The goal is to generate lasting results by: i) sourcing internal human capacities for strategic action (within oneself and others); and ii) increasing integrity through blending internal and external dimensions in policymaking, planning and implementation. Its development was based on more than twenty years of work for the UN, particularly UNDP and other organisations, and it has been applied to many projects in fields such as HIV/ Aids, disaster recovery and food security.” “The approach involves a three-step pedagogy. The latter involves operational tools and exercises that are aimed at: i) sourcing interior capacities; ii) designing to make a difference; and iii) practicing/ implementing new processes.

*Climate leadership program:* BEYOND is a Climate & Environmental Leadership Programme, from the Awaris Inner Green Deal Initiative. It aims to drive sustainability from within by supporting decision makers to cultivate mindfulness and compassion, develop new habits and collaborate with a common purpose. 100 leaders from the EU - including 40 from the European Parliament, Council and Commission - took part in the pilot programme, exploring both the inner dimension of sustainability qua mindfulness, compassion, values and beliefs, and outer aspects such as behaviour change, collaboration and workplace initiatives. A pilot study was conducted in 2021/22. According to preliminary findings, participants demonstrated:

- significant increase in nature connectedness;
- significant increase in climate agency (e.g. voting for environmental parties, signing petitions) and adaptation behaviour (taking measures to prepare for climate impacts);
- clear links between compassion and pro-environmental behaviour;
- increased integration of sustainability concerns into work, such as budget allocations, human resource allocation, internal working structures and stakeholder relationships;
- significant increase in well-being; and
- significant reduction in climate anxiety. The programme has received widespread recognition. The EU’s training Institute EUSA funded the development and launch of a new series of programmes for management across EU Institutions.

*The Work That Reconnects:* “Mainstream sustainability discourse has only recently begun to recognise the inner dimension of the climate crisis, underpinned by disconnection. However, some practitioners and pioneers have spent decades exploring this issue and developing interventions that can help participants develop a sense of

interconnection. Chief amongst these is Joanna Macy, a scholar of systems theory, who in the 1970's began to develop a visionary approach to social change based upon deep understanding of interdependencies. According to Macy, experiencing our interconnection allows us to develop awareness of our 'deep ecology' and realise the potential we have to make a difference in the world, which in turn engages us in appropriate behavioural response to the realities we face. She developed these ideas into a programme called The Work That Reconnects, popularised through books including *Coming Back to Life* and *Active Hope*. Based on this work, experiential workshops and courses have been delivered to many thousands of people for several decades. The programme's four stages resonate with many of the principles in this report. Participants engage in practices to resource themselves before turning towards the fear and pain associated with global realities, developing the ability to 'see with new eyes' the interconnection of all phenomena before mobilising practical applications through relevant action. Empirical testing of the programme is still in its early stages, but pilot studies have shown it to be engaging and popular. More recently the meditation-based six week programme Integrated Action has further integrated mindfulness and compassion-based approaches with Macy's frameworks."

Quoted from Bristow, J., Bell, R., Wamsler, C. (2022). *Reconnection: Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out*. Research and policy report.' The Mindfulness Initiative and LUCSUS. [www.themindfulnessinitiative.org/reconnection](http://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org/reconnection)

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Ramstetter, L., Rupperecht, S., Mundaca, L., Klackl, J., Osika, W., Stenfors, C., Wamsler, C. (2022) *Fostering collective climate action and leadership: Insights from a pilot experiment with a 10-week behavioral intervention involving mindfulness and compassion*, forthcoming.

**Contributor:** Christine Wamsler

### Educational programs and courses

Similarly as with leadership, we now turn our eyes towards educational settings.

Transformational learning steps beyond the bounds of traditional education which teaches skills and transmits knowledge. Transformational learning invites whole-person engagement through intellectual as well as experiential and applied work, fostering the expansion of awareness and the transformation of worldviews and perspectives. Transformational learning programmes engage



students in multi-disciplinary inquiry, providing opportunities for personal, embodied, emotional, relational and spiritual self-search. A transformational learning process can fundamentally alter our self-image and our values, as well as how we perceive the world and others around us.

Transformational learning programmes tend to be informed by participatory forms of pedagogy and curriculum development. Students are learning partners and help shape the learning journey through their ongoing experiential engagement with programme content. Educators work as facilitators, creating safe spaces for reflection and discernment, thereby fostering critical engagement with theory and practice.

At the heart of transformational learning processes is a revolution of our personal meaning structures (or predispositions) which shape the horizons of our expectations (Mezirow, 1991). Transformational learning programmes enable questioning of personal beliefs and value systems by offering transdisciplinary perspectives as well as expanded, integrative epistemologies which enable new forms of meaning-making.

“The ‘Sustainability and Inner Transformation’ course is part of a Master’s Program on ‘Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science’ (LUMES) offered by Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS) in Sweden. It was formally launched in 2018, and runs annually over a period of three months. It was developed in the context of the Contemplative Sustainable Futures Program at LUCSUS. Scientific studies have shown the course’s relevance for nurturing transformative qualities/ capacities (or so-called inner development goals), inner-outer transformation and the achievement of the sustainable development goals.” “The course includes a series of lectures, seminars and a practice lab that are intended to explore the role of inner dimensions (i.e. individual and collective values, beliefs, worldviews and associated cognitive, emotional and relational qualities/ capacities) and their transformation to support sustainability. Issues such as environmental leadership, activism, social justice, and human–nature connections are addressed. Knowledge, tools and practices from sustainability science, social neuroscience, psychology, behavioral economics, contemplative studies and transformation theories are systematically integrated.

Websites: Related Master Program ([LUMES](#)), [Course webpage](#), [Syllabus](#), related information on [education activities](#) of the Contemplative Sustainable Futures Program. Scientific and popular science publications about the course [here](#).

Course on ‘The inner dimension of sustainability: the role of values, emotions and world views’ In this short course at the University of

Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (Austria), interested students can explore the inner dimension of sustainability both on the theoretical and practical level. During two theory lessons they examine various concepts at the interface of inner development and sustainability (e.g. values, ecological mindfulness, subjective wellbeing, human-nature-connection, etc.) and critically reflect on their contribution to sustainable development. In the experimental week, which they design a transformative learning process, they use various methods and exercises aiming at reflecting one's own values, emotions and worldviews.

*Decolonial Systems Thinking & Resilience Courses - University of Waterloo, Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR).* The Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR) offers a series of senior undergraduate / graduate seminar and professional development courses that help to foster the capacities for inner / depth work and cross-cultural capabilities for broad, systemic change. Through decolonial practices and methodologies, these courses support the cultivation of new skills and capacities required for sustainability transformations. These courses, as well as those offered in partnership between the University of Waterloo and the Haida Gwaii Institute (University of British Columbia), are either co-taught with an Indigenous Knowledge Holder (Elder) or with direct support from members of local Indigenous communities.

Indigenous knowledge holders offer their teachings to help students unlearn colonial mindsets and explore new ways of seeing and being in the world. Through these traditional practices and teachings, students foster inner capacities that support their development as sustainable change agents. These unique courses are profoundly different yet complementary to conventional university programs. By promoting cross-cultural understandings of challenges to systems transformation, these hybridized pedagogies help elucidate and ground complexity in real world applications and interrupt patterns of unsustainability. Drawing from theories including resilience, complexity, social innovation, transsystemics, and systems change, these courses support sustainability progress by bridging the inner and outer dimension of systems transformations.

### References and resources

Revolutionizing sustainability education: Stories and tools of mindset transformation, Ivanova E., Rimanoczy (Eds.)

Walsh, Z., Böhme, J., Lavelle, B. D and Wamsler, C. (2020) Transformative education: towards a relational, justice-oriented approach to

sustainability, *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 21(7):1587-1606. Online.

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## 6 Discussion

We would like to conclude this publication with a discussion of the boundaries of our scope and how the field-kit and this whole publication can contribute to more sustainable pathways into the future.

The fields of inner development and sustainability are both extremely broad and complex, and we attempt here to provide an overview of the evolution of one, describe it and link it to the other. This is a task that we can only describe as challenging. And it entails that we are – inevitably – prone to various simplifications and different forms of prejudice about what we do. In the following, we would like to discuss the simplifications and blind spots that we are aware of. It may well be that as you read this section you think: but there is another blind spot that has been overlooked. If that is the case, we would be pleased.

A first blind spot is the focus on the Western world. The majority of survey participants, contributing scientists and both authors of this report are from Western countries. To some extent, we have tried to include perspectives from the so-called Global South and from independent cultures. In the context of the IDG perspective, this will be further addressed in the third phase of the project. Our bias is evident in the choice of methods included in the field-kit, but also in the way the field-kit is organised and presented. Even though the main target audience of this publication is change agents in organisations, who again probably represent mainly a Western audience, we hope that the publication can also be read in other cultures and contexts and serve as a source of inspiration.

Another bias lies in the IDG framework itself, which has its own blind spots. One criterion for selecting practices is that they should be relevant to IDG skills and dimensions. As a result, we have probably overlooked many practices that target other aspects of inner development or sustainability. For obvious reasons, there are individual needs and preferences that you as readers and practitioners should take into account. In any case, we believe that there is no single method that works for everyone.

It should also be noted that the methods selected have been developed and discussed primarily by researchers rather than practitioners with experience in the field. As researchers, we tend to focus on what has been proven to work, rather than what has been proven successful and useful in practice. After all, if a method has been proven to work, how can it be that practice leads to different results? We would like to point out that proof is only as good as the way that made it possible to derive a certain result. Researchers are trained to produce evidence, so they are good at it. And they too have blind spots. To get to the bottom of at least some of our own blind spots in this

context, we talked to several practitioners who have decades of experience in what works in practice in developing leaders for sustainability in different sectors. Although this publication aims at bringing research around inner development into practice, there is still a need to inform research about practice in a similar manner.

In this context, we would also like to point out that the choice of methods is also not the result of a systematic literature review in the field of inner development. The survey was our main source of data, followed by suggestions and proposals from the scientific advisory board. The interviews with practitioners served primarily to prepare the survey as well as to deepen individual aspects on the way from the evaluation of the data to this publication. The review of the entire field of inner development methods has so far been outside the scope of this project and this initiative.

We see this publication primarily as a way to generate interest in exploring our inner world and how it relates to sustainability and to enter into a dialogue about it. What we do not want to do here is to give clear answers to the question of how we can promote inner development in order to better address specific issues of sustainability yet. Because there is still a long way to go. We are not there yet, and we also question whether it would even be desirable to narrow down the issue of inner development to the achievement of a specific goal. In the introduction to this publication, we outlined a theory of change that can be summarised as follows:

We want to raise awareness of the inner dimension in relation to addressing sustainability issues. We also take a developmental perspective on our inner worlds, individually and collectively, which means that inner capacities and qualities can be developed. We assume that if we apply these methods, interventions and practices, we will be better able to deal with the challenges ahead. What challenges these are in detail and concretely remains open for us. This question could only be answered if it were clarified what the term sustainability actually means and what the respective individual or collective relationship to it is or could be. The latter, in turn, cannot be answered in general terms, but is part of our individual and collective journey. That is the basic idea, and we hope that this field-kit and this publication can offer some steps in that direction.

As we said, we do not yet have sufficient evidence of how we get from the inner to the outer, thus how we get from the IDGs to the SDGs. Whereas for some of the methods described in the field-kit, we do indeed already have such evidence, both for developing certain IDG skills and qualities and for promoting the implementation of the SDGs.

But there are still many gaps to be bridged. So, although some methodologies show this linkage, the broad areas of internal development and sustainability are far from being connected. This is the main reason why this task will be further explored in the coming phases of the IDG project. We wish that all those dealing with these or similar issues would proceed mindfully, in fact, perhaps we should not make this chain too strong in the first place (although we do not mean to say that it would not be desirable to explore the connections. On the contrary, it is about time, otherwise we would not have engaged in the IDG initiative). However: both inner development and sustainability are still far from being well understood and mapped.

In terms of future work, we are now looking forward to implementing, testing and getting feedback on this field-kit in different contexts and environments. Here we aim to approach the IDG framework from a psychometric perspective to explore which skills that allow themselves to be measured so that methods and interventions can be evaluated. We therefore hope that you will be inspired by the publication and the field-kit, find interest in it and engage in your own inner development and that of others. We wish you an interesting journey and would like to ask you for a favour in conclusion: If you are on this journey with us, please share your insights and experiences in various forms and forums. We invite you to do this even if you don't agree with everything we write here, although it is important to us that we treat each other with respect always.

We hope that our paths will cross even if we find ourselves growing in different directions.

## 7 Appendix

Here follows a list of partner organisations, contributors and collaborators, whose support and input we gratefully acknowledge.

### 7.1 List of partner organisations of the IDG-Initiative

#### Contributing partners (companies)

Baker & Mckenzie, Burren College of Art, Cati och Sven Hagströmers stiftelse, Close, Doings, Electrolux, Ericsson, Explayn, Fundación Melior, Google, Granitor, Haufe Akademie, Howspace, Husqvarna, Icebug, IKEA, Institut für Praktische Emergenz, Jung Relations, Linden Gruppen, Mannaz, OX2, Society Beyond, Spotify, Stena, Telia Company, Tenant & Partner, V3VO / Growloop

#### Supporting partners

ASHOKA, AWARIS / Inner Green Deal, Berghs School of Communication, CADRA, Houdini, Howspace, Inner Foundation, MindShift Sweden, Motivation.se, Presencing Institute, Region Stockholm, The Inner Foundation, UNDP - CoFSA, World Human Forum, Shomei

#### Academic Partners

DTU/Technical University of Denmark, Göteborg University, Harvard University, Human Flourishing Program, CSS at Karolinska Institutet, Learning Planet Institut, Lund University - LUCSUS, Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm School of Economics - Executive Education, Stockholm University

#### Initiating Partners

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### 7.2 The Scientific advisory board and other contributors

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### 7.3 The IDG Initiative is collaborating with the CADRA Project

CADRA is a project co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ education programme. The project focuses on the theme of adult education. The programme started in December 2020 and will end on 31 August 2023. The acronym CADRA stands for: Cognitive Adult Development from Research to Application. Within the framework of the project, six organisations have joined forces over the three-year period to jointly make the topics of inner development and adult development accessible to a wider circle audience.

**These organisations are (listed in alphabetical order)**

Ekskäret Foundation ([www.ekskaretfoundation.com](http://www.ekskaretfoundation.com)), Sweden

Permakulturpark Steyerberg GmbH ([www.permakulturpark.de](http://www.permakulturpark.de)), Germany

Possert KG ([www.possert.at](http://www.possert.at)), Austria

pro action learning Ltd (now named Fraendi, [www.fraendi.org](http://www.fraendi.org)), Liechtenstein, lead partner of the CADRA project

Tripl bv, Netherlands

World changers & co, UK

**The specific goal of CADRA is to equip political and business leaders as well as non-profit organisations with development practices that enable them to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world and thus also accelerate the transformation towards a more sustainable world and peaceful coexistence.**

Find out more about CADRA here: <https://cadra.li>