

# Are the SDGs enough?

Strategies for Change and Transformations

Martin Welp

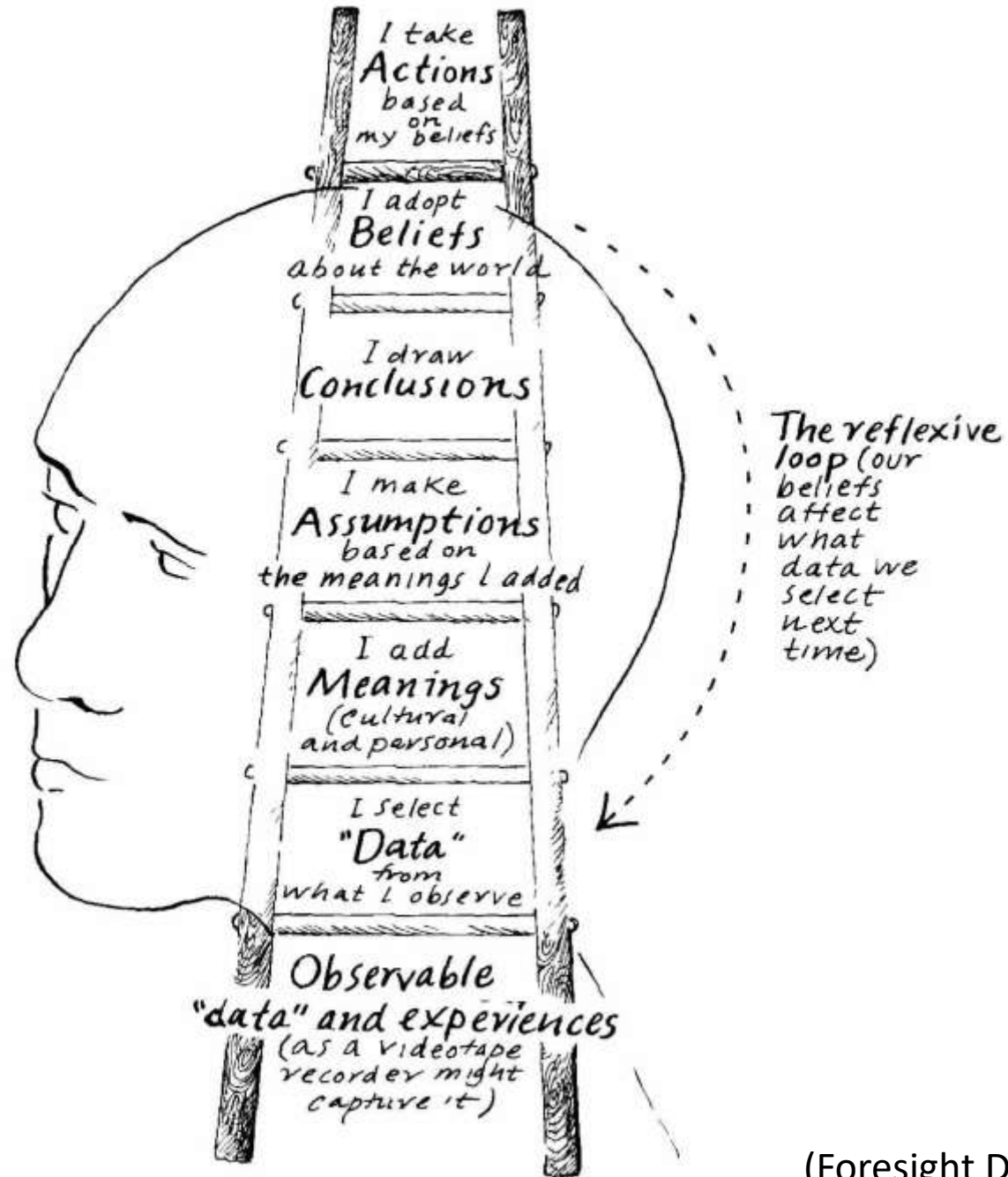
18.3.2025

Eberswalde

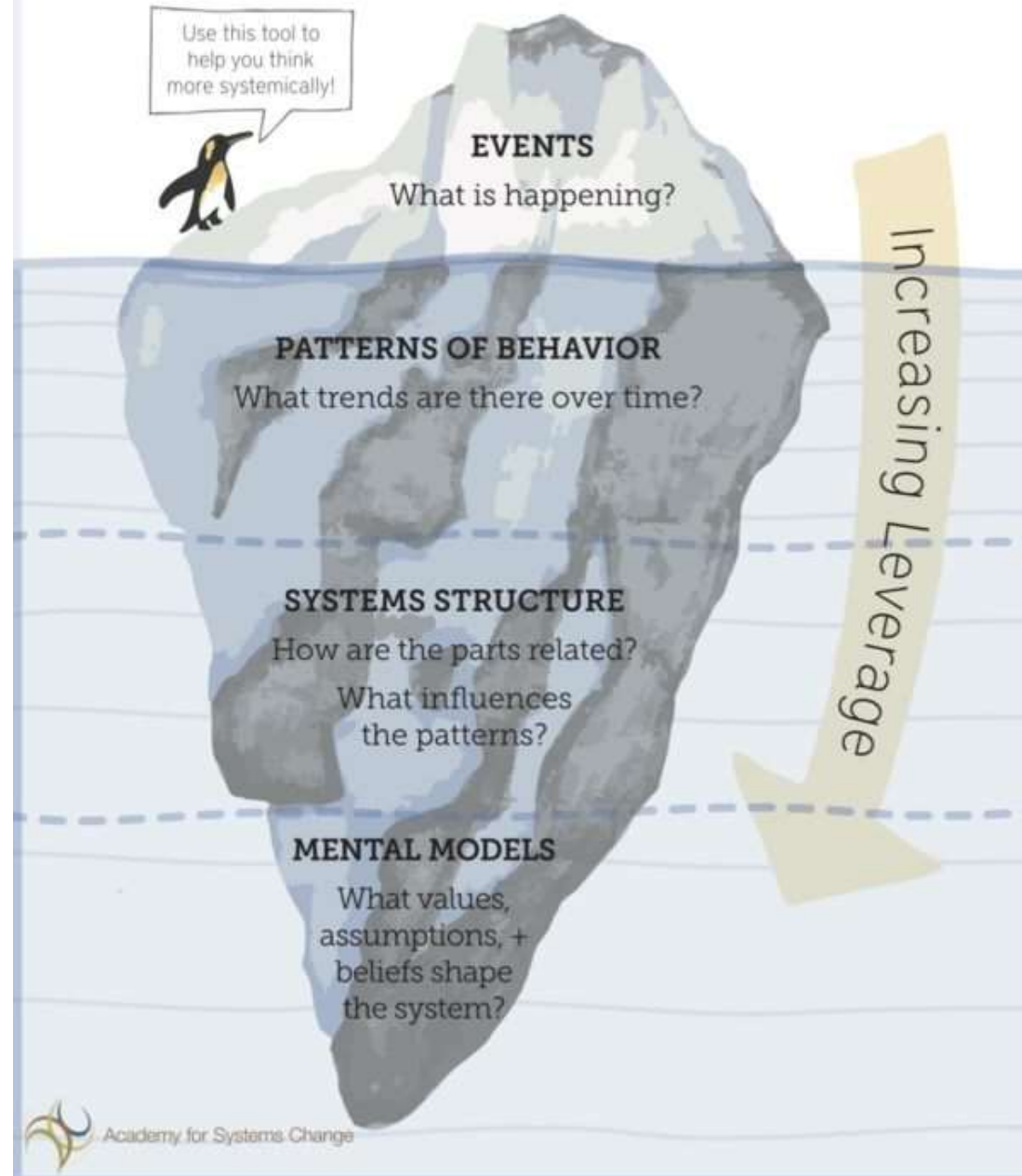
Inner Development Goals, Flourishing Goals

# Agenda

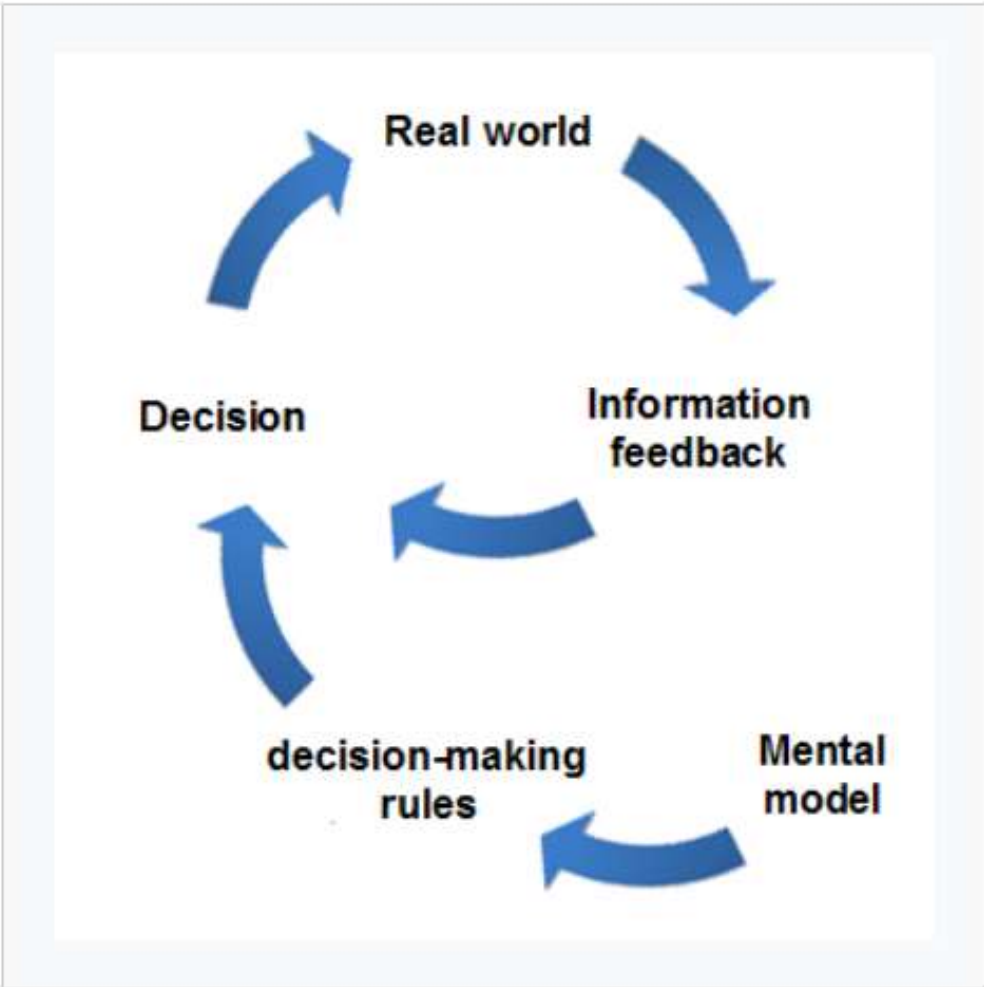
- Mental models
- Inner Development Goals
- Case studies:
  - IDG implementation in companies
  - Historic context of inner development
- Group works on inner development
- Regenerative Development & Flourishing Goals
- Feedback and reflection



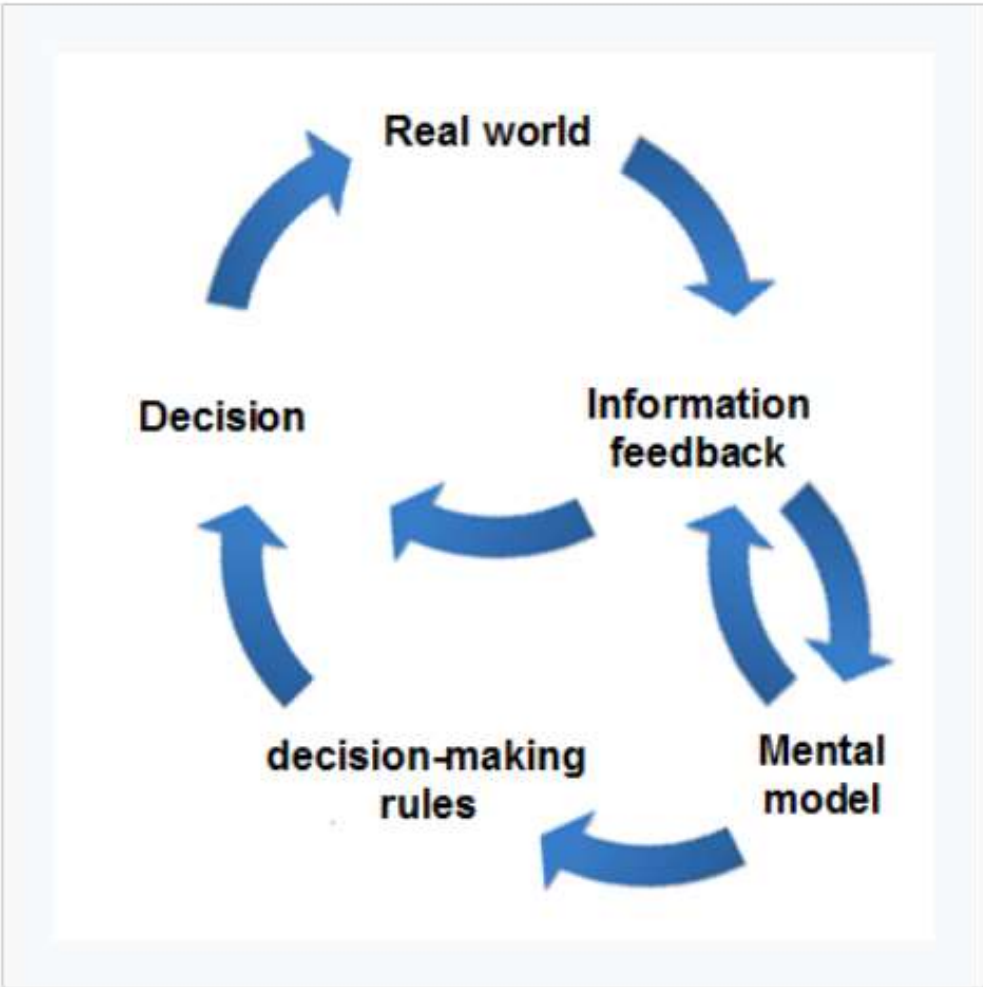
# THE ICEBERG MODEL



Reference models I and II



Single-loop learning



Double-loop learning



# **INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Transformational Skills for Sustainable Development



## 1 Being

Relationship to Self

Inner Compass

Integrity and  
Authenticity

Openness and  
Learning Mindset

Self-awareness

Presence



## 2 Thinking

Cognitive Skills

Critical Thinking

Complexity  
Awareness

Perspective Skills

Sense-making

Long-term  
Orientation and  
Visioning



## 3 Relating

Caring for Others  
and the World

Appreciation

Connectedness

Humility

Empathy and  
Compassion



## 4 Collaborating

Social Skills

Communication  
Skills

Co-creation Skills

Inclusive Mindset  
and Intercultural  
Competence

Trust

Mobilisation Skills



## 5 Acting

Enabling Change

Courage

Creativity

Optimism

Perseverance

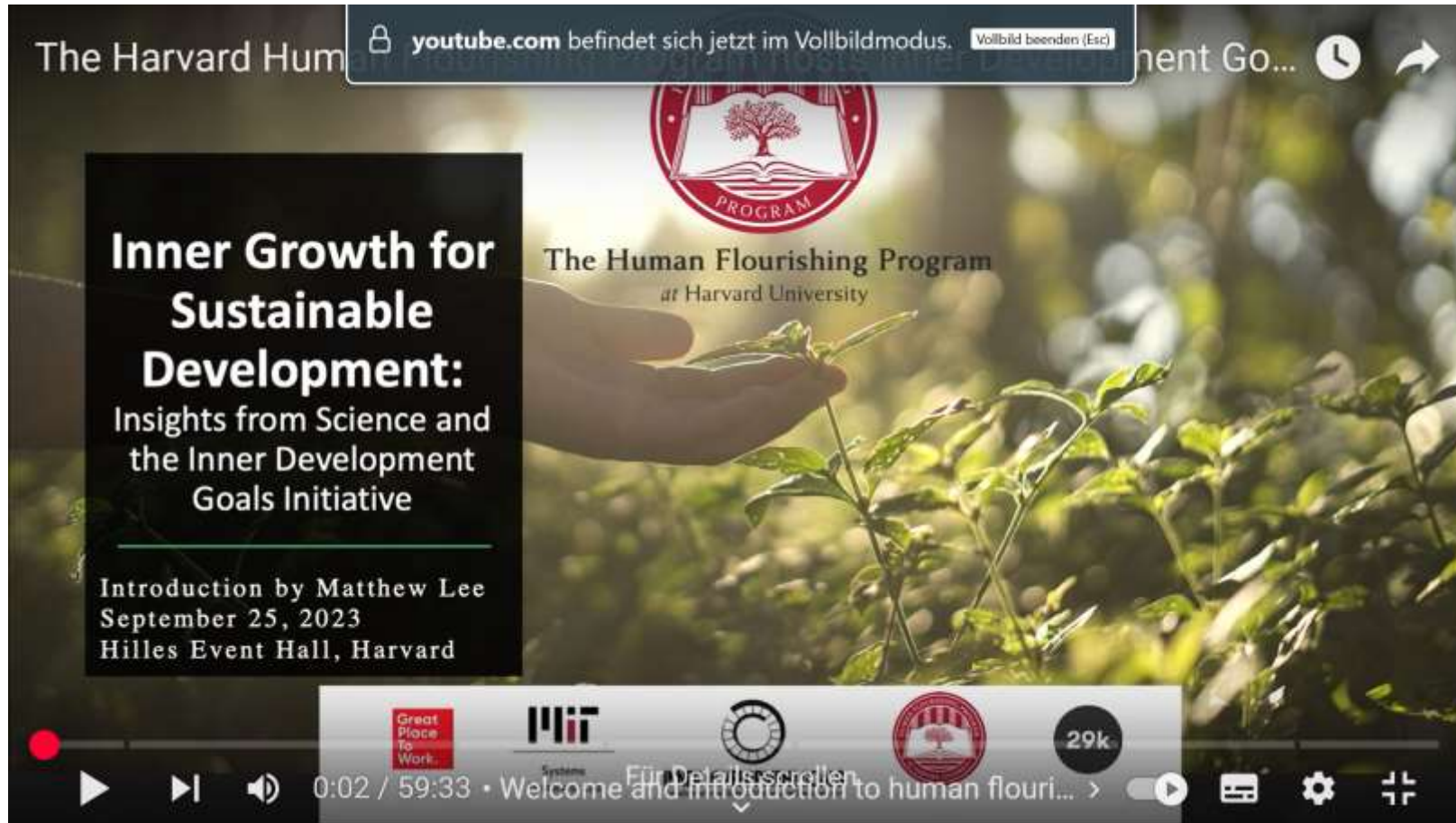
# History of the IDGs

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- Reaction to little or backward progress on development of the SDGs
- Development of skillset that leads to achieving the SDGs and can deal with the complexity of the current developments
- IDGs introduced at MindShift Digital Conference in April 2020 at the Stockholm School of Economics
- November 2023: the IDG Foundation was initiated by the 29k Foundation, Ekskaret Foundation, IMD Business School for Management, LUCSUS Center for Sustainability Studies/Lund University, Stockholm Resilience Center/Stockholm University, The New Division, The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).
- Awareness of mostly western researchers included – increased outreach of researchers of the global south regarding the skills and if there are any missing
- New global survey to get around 100.000 insights from at least 100 different countries until end of 2025



# Inner Development Goals



# Watch the intro and one the six sections – prepare a poster with main insights for you

00:00 - Welcome and introduction to human flourishing - Matthew T. Lee, Director, Flourishing Network of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard

1. 03:32 - The Inner Development Goals - **Jan Artem Henriksson** Executive Director, Inner Development Goals
2. 17:37 - How IDGs can be used in US gov agencies - **Haley Crim**, Climate Engagement and Capacity-building Coordinator, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
3. 24:00 - Reflections by **Donna Hicks, Tony Bond, and Anna Throne-Holst**
4. 32:00 - The Nordic Secret - **Tomas Björkman**
5. 45:58 - Final remarks **Peter Senge**

53:29 - One Question Survey and Q&A Jan and Matt

# Insights from Case Study of 5 (of 100) Companies that implemented the IDGs



(Jurisic et. al 2023)

# Icebug

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- employees encouraged to pick one skill to practice
- interested people were made "IDG ambassadors"
- They formed groups of 7-9 and met every 10 days to discuss their learnings
- Buddy System – 15-30 min per week to exchange learnings
- Providing learning resources like 29K App



**ICEBUG®**  
SWEDISH TRACTION FOOTWEAR

(Jurisic et. al 2023)

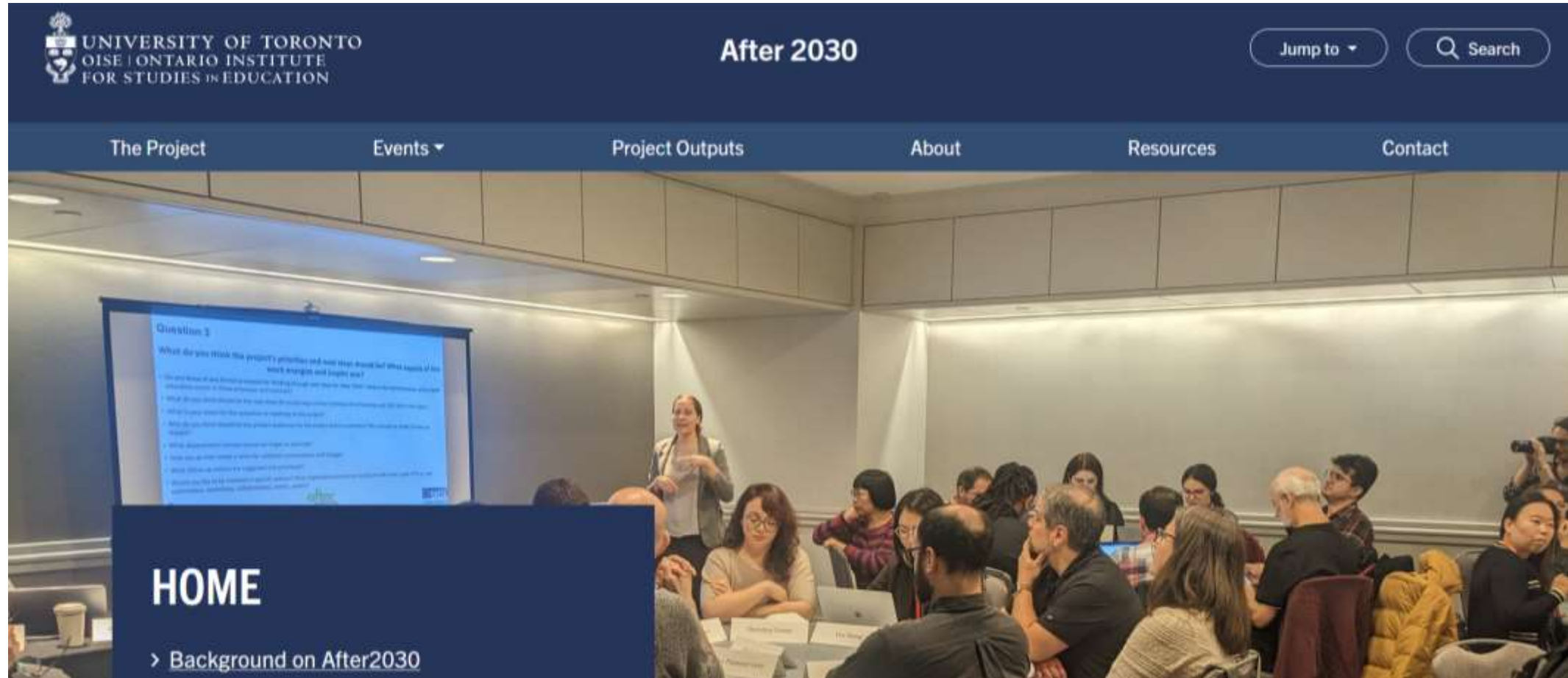
# Stena

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- Invitation of CEOs of different businesses – open for Idea?
- Sharing Idea of IDGs with Management
- On a finance conference with 70 employees – workshop with IDGs
- Workshops in other departments
- Decision: IDGs are right framework for Stena
- 2023: Companywide implementation – with a co-creative approach
- Open for sharing insides with other companies

# After 2030?



<https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/after2030>

# After 2030?



In 2015, member states of the United Nations, including Canada and the UK, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that seek to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve wellbeing for all. The SDGs represented a major shift from the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Where the MDGs were a development agenda for the Global South that focused on poverty alleviation, the SDGs apply to all countries and include an encompassing view on development. Moreover, the MDGs were driven primarily by the United Nations with little role for civil society.

Yet at the halfway mark of the SDG period, it is now apparent that the SDGs also have limitations. One of the major critiques of the current agenda is their lack of appreciation or incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and explicit links to decolonization, both of which have important contributions to how development is understood and pursued. Another widespread concern is that the SDGs have little explicit engagement with culture of any sort, missing out on important contributions of the arts, humanities and social science scholarship that could enhance individual-level engagements with the SDGs. These are areas where our universities have deep expertise and have much to bring to the conversation about future possibilities for the post-SDG agenda.

Over the next few years, the global development community will be laying the groundwork for what comes after the SDGs. There is a need for higher education stakeholders from around the world to discuss what has been accomplished by universities working on higher education and the SDGs and the limitations with current approaches and practices. This is where the After2030 project comes in.



<https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/after2030>



# Global Flourishing Goals – an Invitation

" The Global Flourishing Goals are an attempt to deepen and take forward the mission of the SDGs. They may be framed as a collection of at least five sets of goals:

(1) Life Satisfaction including through a comfortable standard of living

(2) Holistic health and well-being;

(3) Fulfilling social, political and economic relationships;

(4) Meaning and purpose; and

(5) Contributing to the flourishing of all lifeforms (including plants and animals). "



## **The Global Flourishing Goals: An invitation**

by

*Karthikeya, R.; Antonacopoulou, E.; Keating, B.; Mountbatten-O'Malley, E.; Nevin, A; Neill, E.;  
Ritchie-Dunham, J.; Lee M.T.<sup>1</sup>*

### **1.The Opportunity**

Humankind stands at a crossroads today, confronted by environmental, social, and political challenges of existential proportions. **Flourishing** offers a robust response to these challenges.

Flourishing is envisioned as the next step for human progress. It takes the vision of the SDGs, ESGs, IDGs and the Human Development Index forward and advances the global commitments of governments by providing a framework that not only makes societies richer/healthier/more sustainable/ more peaceful, but also strengthens the ties: between each of us as individuals; between the individual and the community; and between the individual and the planet.

Flourishing as a human being is to live in a state of dignity. Flourishing is thus a state in which individuals contribute to the community, and in which communities foster and reinforce

*The question to think about:*

**Do we accept the invitation?**

*...we will come back to this on Friday*

# Historic context of inner development

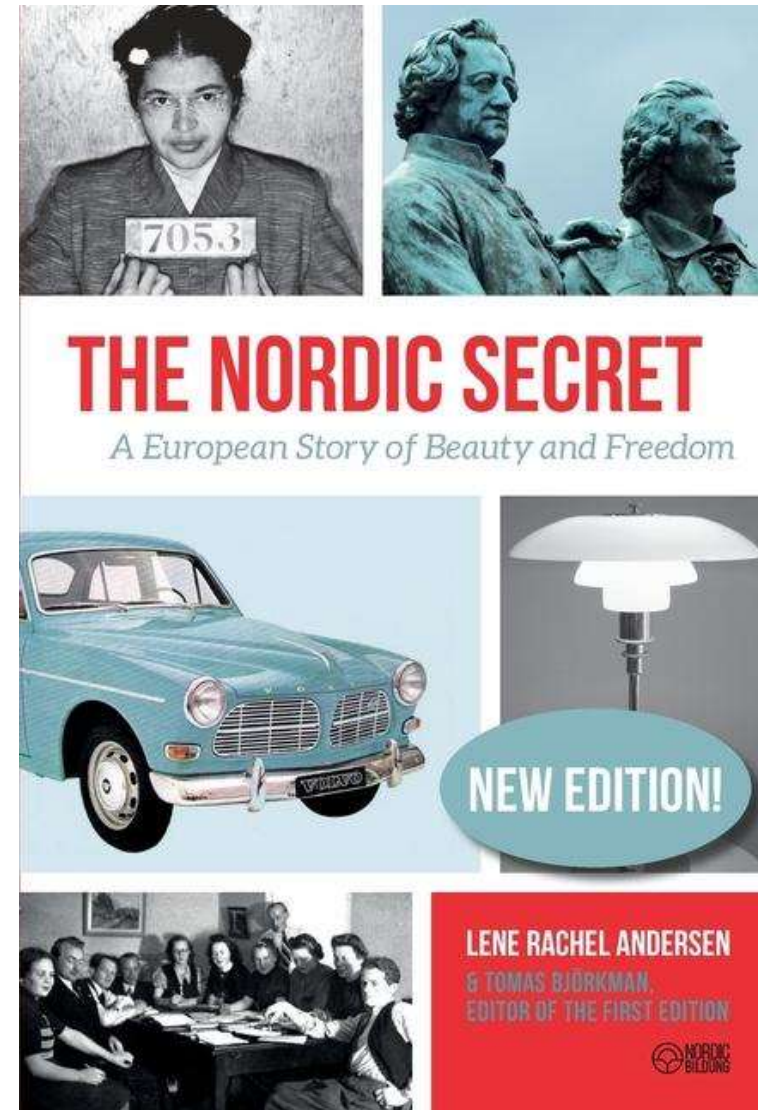
## Case study: Nordic countries

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# Transition of Nordic countries to modernity

- Inner development played important role in Nordic countries
- 150 years ago:
  - Agrarian
  - Non-democratic
  - Poor (e.g. 30% of population immigrated to USA)
- 1950th Nordic countries:
  - Stable industrial democracies
  - Richer
  - Happier

Andersen (2024)



# Transition of Nordic countries to modernity

Many reasons...

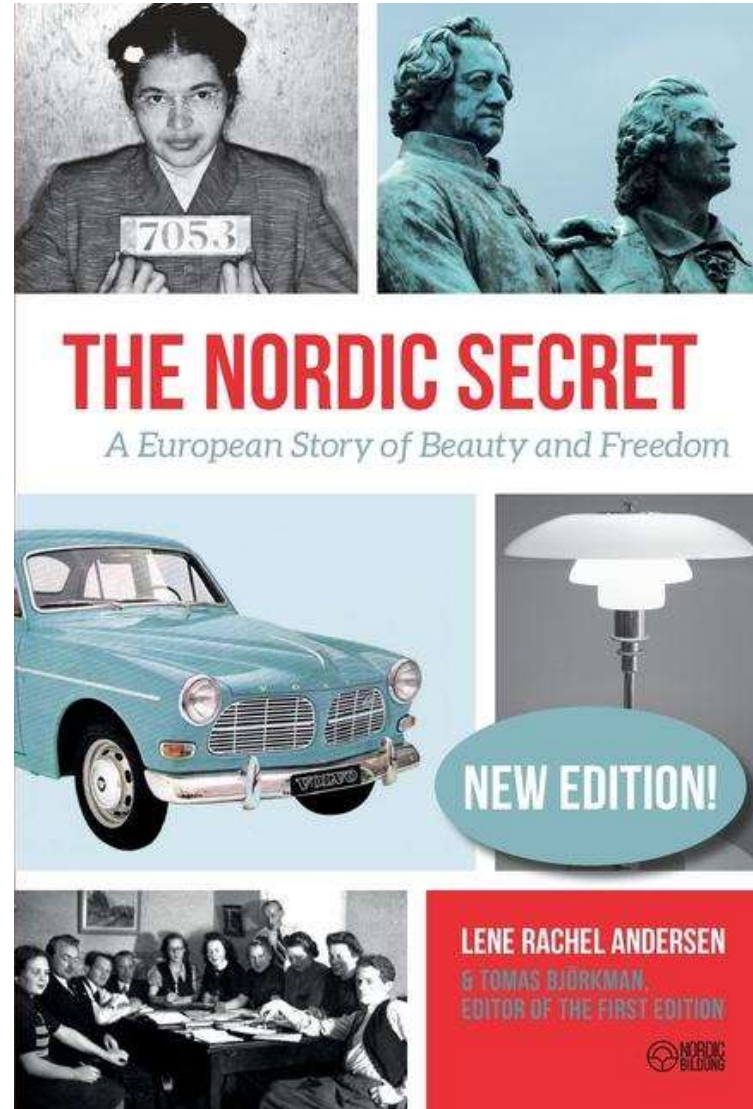
- Visionary politicians and intellectuals:
  - Rapid society change: external strong leader is preferred
  - Build a stable democracy: bottom-up
  - 1860th
    - Created centers in nature
    - Young adults
    - Full state subsidized
    - Aim: inner development (from auto-directed to inner directed: self-authoring capacity)
  - By 1900th Denmark, Norway, Sweden 10% youth from different background make up critical mass

Andersen (2024)

# Transition of Nordic countries to modernity

- Idea originated from ideas of German philosophers;
- "Bildung" consciousness development
- But this was never given to society
  - Fear of revolution
- Conscious co-creators of the new society
- "Bildung" word with "Folks": "Folksbildung" education for people
- Conceived by Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig
- Today 400 folk schools in Nordic countries
- Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King were part of retreat centers: civil rights movement

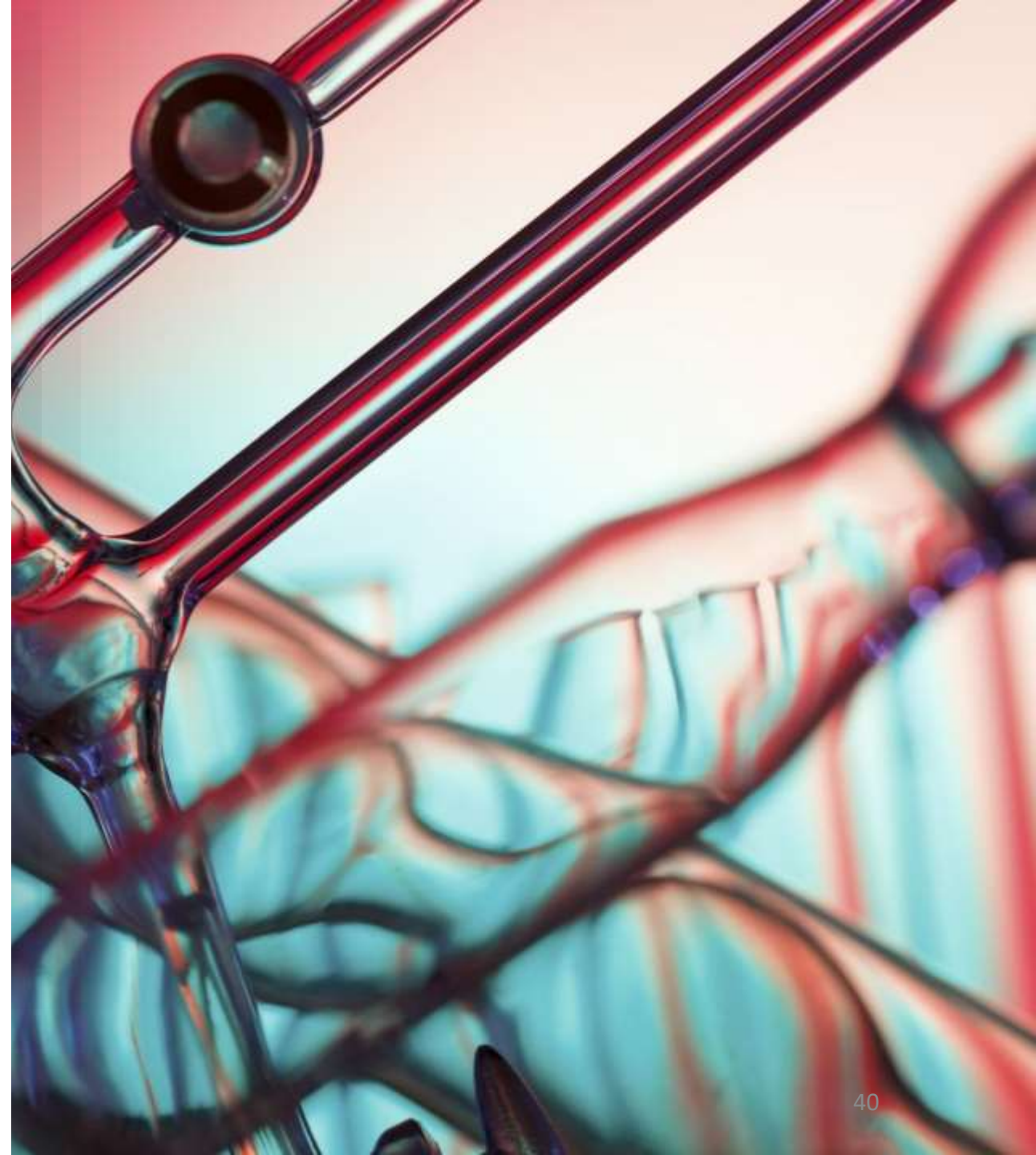
Andersen (2024); Scandinavian Seminar



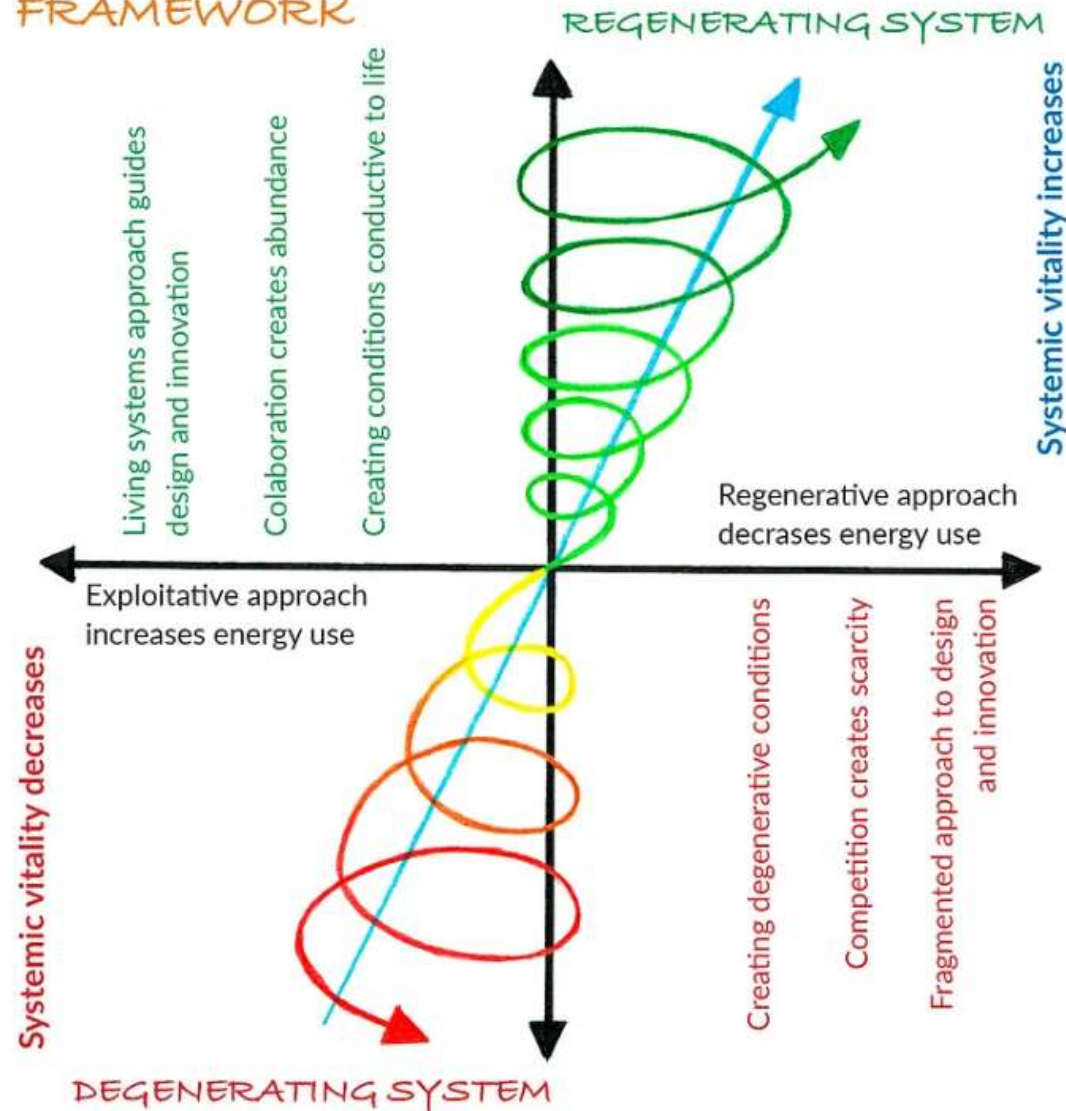
# Regenerative Development

"A social-ecological or socio-technical system with the capacity to continuously regain its needed energies and resources to vitalize and sustain. Regenerative design actively restores degraded systems. It creates regenerative cultures, which are rooted in cooperation, not in competition." (Systemic Design Labs 2023)

Regenerative design is about co-creating a win-win-win future where the individual, the community and the planet win; and social, ecological and economic benefits mutually reinforce each other through integrative whole systems design. (Daniel C. Wahl 2017)



# THE REGENERATIVE DESIGN FRAMEWORK



Source: Designing Regenerative Cultures, 2016 - [www.danielchristianwahl.com](http://www.danielchristianwahl.com); Graphics: [www.flavlagarglulo.com](http://www.flavlagarglulo.com)

## Regenerative

Appropriate participation and design as nature.

## Reconciliatory

Reintegrating humans as integral parts of nature.

## Restorative

Humans doing things to nature.

## Sustainable

Neutral point of not doing any more damage.

## Green

Relative improvements.

## Conventional practice

Compliant to avoid legal actions.

The Regenerative Design Framework (adapted from Bill Reed, 2007)

(Daniel C. Wahl 2017)



## REFLEXIVITY

Continued evaluation (including of values and assumptions), experimentation, learning and adaptation; collaborative exploration of desired futures; mindfulness of all regenerative qualities

Adaptive management, futures methods, reflexive evaluation, developmental evaluation...



## ECOLOGICAL REGENERATION

Maximising ability of Earth's biosphere to build, maintain, repair and reproduce itself, as well as adapt and evolve



## AGENCY

People and wider nature have freedom and resources to act regeneratively

## EXTERNAL REGENERATION

Ecosystem services

## MUTUALISM

Preponderance of positive relations overall in the system, and a high proportion of interactions (amongst people and between people and wider nature) that benefit all parties

Cooperation, reciprocity, caring, reconnection with locale/nature/heritage/food production, experiential learning, resource-sharing, commoning...



## HUMAN REGENERATION

Meeting all people's full suite of needs; enabling ongoing human cultural and intellectual evolution

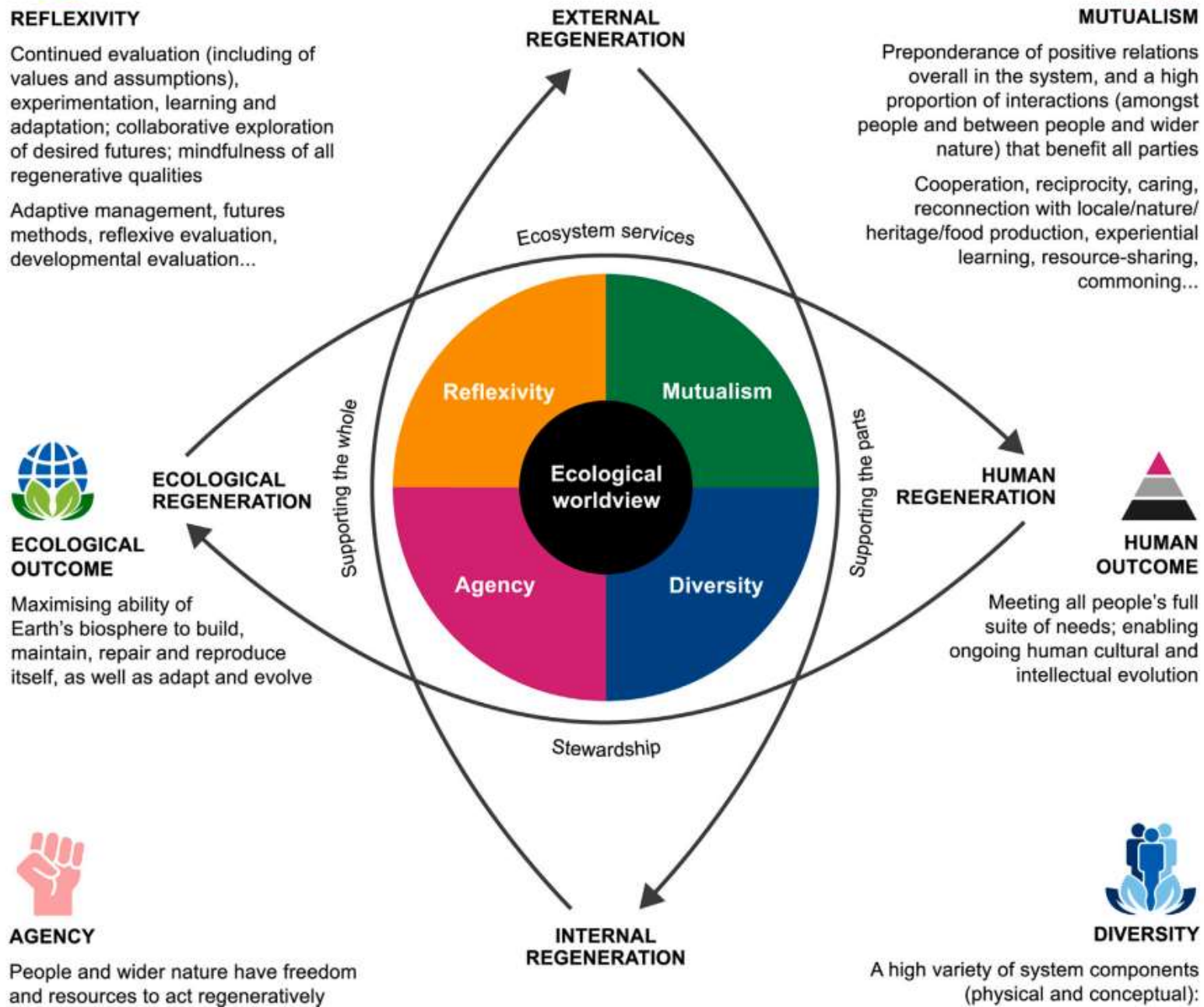


## DIVERSITY

A high variety of system components (physical and conceptual):

## INTERNAL REGENERATION

Stewardship





## ECOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

People deeply embody an understanding that they are part of the web of life and existence, not separate from it

System-mapping, boundary objects, circular economy, agroecology, learning from Indigenous philosophies...



## REFLEXIVITY

Continued evaluation (including of values and assumptions), experimentation, learning and adaptation; collaborative exploration of desired futures; mindfulness of all regenerative qualities

Adaptive management, futures methods, reflexive evaluation, developmental evaluation...



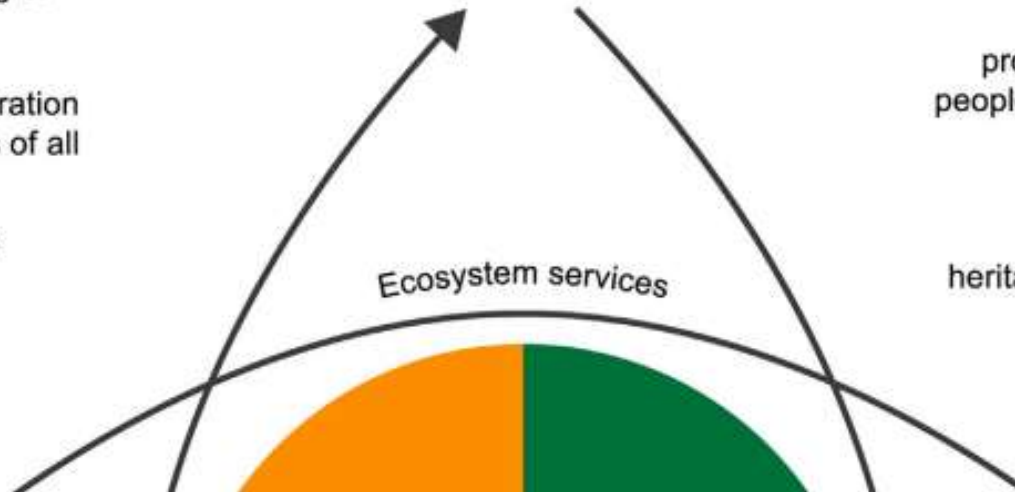
## MUTUALISM

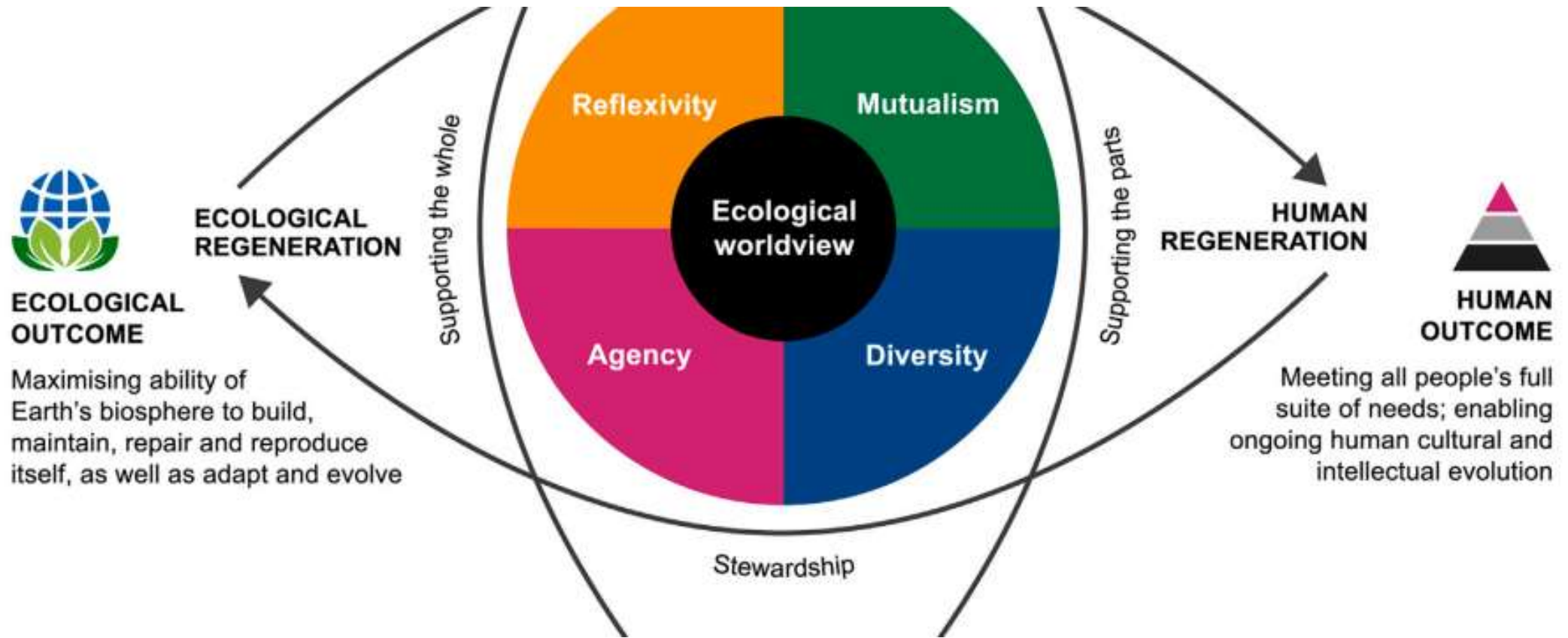
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## EXTERNAL REGENERATION

Ecosystem services



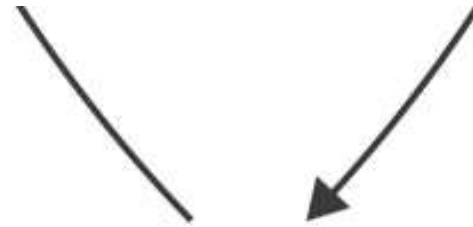




### **AGENCY**

People and wider nature have freedom and resources to act regeneratively

Ground-up organisation/emergence, self-organisation, participatory/co-creative decision-making, cooperative ownership, commoning, unionisation, holacracies, sociocracies...



### **INTERNAL REGENERATION**



### **INTERDEPENDENT OUTCOMES**

Mutual reinforcement between internal and external regeneration (supporting the parts/whole), notably between humans and wider ecological regeneration (ecosystem services / stewardship)



### **DIVERSITY**

A high variety of system components (physical and conceptual): biodiversity, agrobiodiversity, cultural diversity, biocultural diversity...

Resilience, creativity, innovation, transdisciplinarity, celebrating local pluralism, multi-cropping, crop rotation, silvopasture...

	Internally degenerative	Internally regenerative
Externally regenerative	<p><b>SELF-SACRIFICING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A social enterprise that burns out its employees</li> <li>• A regenerative farm forced to sell its land because its affordably priced produce brings in insufficient revenue</li> <li>• A martyr for a regenerative cause</li> </ul>	<p><b>FULLY REGENERATIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A country that becomes carbon-negative through ecosystem restoration and regenerative agriculture</li> <li>• A city that meets the needs of its citizens by restoring its hinterlands</li> <li>• A thriving farm that boosts biodiversity in the wider landscape and acts as a hub for community interaction</li> <li>• A social enterprise that nourishes society and (therefore) its employees</li> </ul>
Externally degenerative	<p><b>FULLY DEGENERATIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A society that extracts and burns fossil fuels, causing climate change and extreme weather that is increasingly deadly to the society's citizens</li> <li>• A country that starts a war with another country, killing people and crippling the economy on both sides</li> <li>• A predatory company merger or acquisition that reduces the value of both companies and leads to redundancies</li> <li>• A person whose addiction to a harmful drug also damages the person's social relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>SELF-CENTERED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A country that invests in social infrastructure using profits from activities driving climate change and biodiversity loss</li> <li>• A business that pays and treats its employees well but pollutes the environment</li> <li>• Humanity prioritizing its own reproduction and population growth at the expense of millions of other species' reproduction</li> </ul>

**Figure 2. Examples of internally/externally regenerative/degenerative systems**  
 Hypothetical examples of social-ecological systems that are internally and/or externally regenerative and/or degenerative.

(Sam J. Buckton et. al 2023)

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# Links

- <https://worldflourishing.org/>
- <https://global-flourishing.org/>