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## The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development (GLSD) Programme

Inner Development for Accelerating Action Towards the Sustainable Development Goals.  
Evaluation Report written for the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) Initiative and the  
Templeton World Charity Foundation

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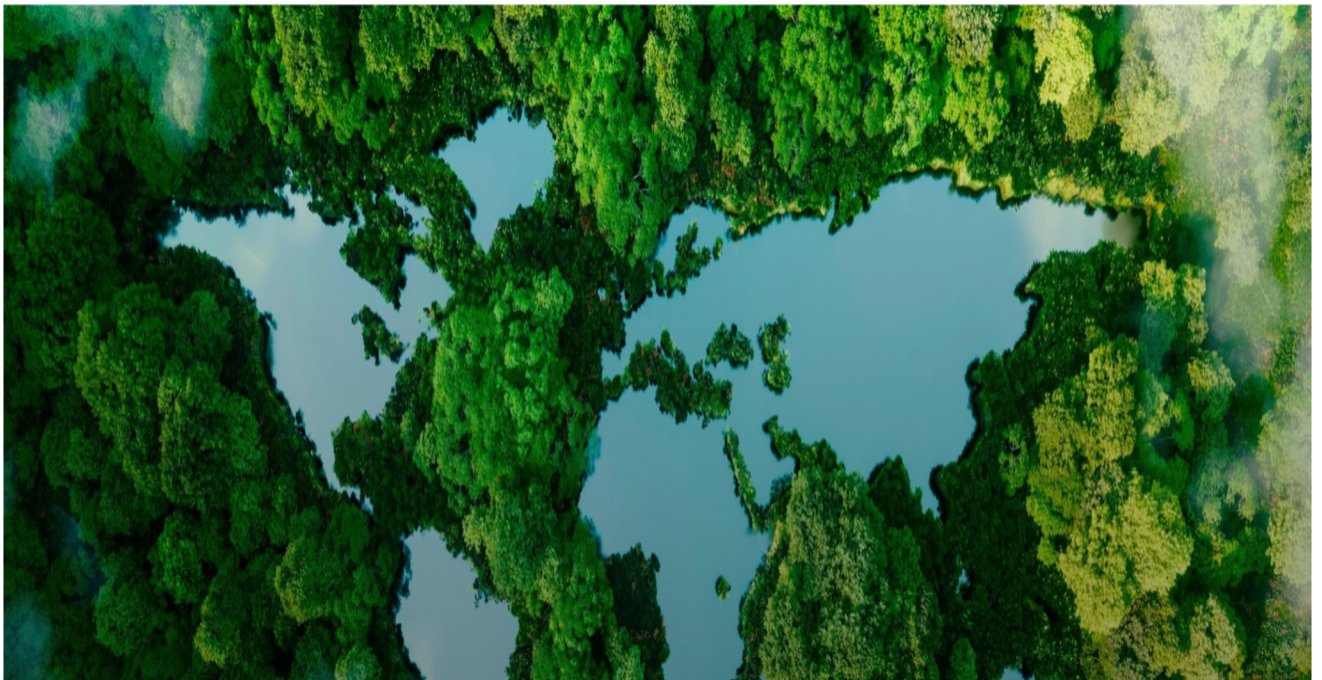
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# **The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme**

**Inner Development for Accelerating Action Towards the Sustainable Development Goals**



# **The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme:**

**Inner Development for  
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Published by the Inner Green Deal and Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS): Lund, Sweden.

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# Executive Summary

The **Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme (GLSD)** was the first capacity-building programme designed on the basis of the **Inner Development Goals (IDGs) framework** with the aim to accelerate action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The target group for this pilot study included decision-makers involved in the implementation of SDGs in: Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Rwanda, and Zambia. The Programme was funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

The Programme's evaluation was designed building on the IDGs framework. Its relevance and impact were assessed using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through extensive pre- and post-programme surveys. Additionally, qualitative data were collected through post-module surveys, observation during online sessions, and participants' entries in the online course platform. The surveys were scientifically grounded and developed based on the inner-outer transformation model, climate mainstreaming theory, and diverse psychological constructs (e.g., inner human capacities and traits).<sup>1</sup>

**RESULTS: Overall, the qualitative and quantitative results show the relevance of inner development, the IDG framework and associated methods to support human flourishing and accelerate change towards sustainability in the focus countries.** More specifically, the qualitative and quantitative analyses showed the following key programme outcomes:

- The overall structure, safe space and methods provided were highly appreciated by the participants, and participants' engagement was high: About 90 out of 100 people attended three or more modules, 95% of post-survey participants regularly engaged in contemplative practices and **97% would recommend the Programme.**
- In the qualitative feedback, **all learning activities and methods were reported as impactful** by some participants indicating that learning is highly individual and context-specific, and inner-outer transformation requires a diversity in the learning activities and methods offered.
- Participants noticed a significant number of changes in inner skills and capacities as a result of the Programme. On average **nine out of 23 IDGs were strengthened (40%).** Most changes occurred in the IDGs' Being and Relating dimensions, but all skills and capacities were mentioned by some participants.
- These outcomes were complemented by the qualitative data, which showed that the Programme influenced how participants connect to themselves, others and nature in ways that have been shown to support shifts towards more sustainable, relational narratives. Because the roots of sustainability crises lie in a culturally entrenched story of *separation*, fostering such fundamental aspects of connection to self, others and nature are key to support action-taking for sustainability.
- More specifically, participants highlighted that the Programme nurtured inner capacities, such as self-awareness, inner compass, feelings of connection, hope and collective agency—even though many of these inner skills and capacities were already well-developed pre-training. Consequently, due to ceiling effects the quantitative pre-post analyses showed no programme effect in this respect.
- Importantly, both the qualitative and quantitative data showed that the Programme considerably increased action-taking for sustainability across individual, organisational and system levels. **95% of participants agree that they actively engage in new SDGs and related actions** as a result of participating in the GLSD. Particularly, increases of 22% in engagement were

<sup>1</sup> For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).

observed in the SDGs on Partnership, Good Health and Wellbeing, and on Building Sustainable Cities and Communities.

- In addition, the qualitative data showed that **increased action-taking involved integrating and mainstreaming measures that link inner and outer dimensions of sustainability into participants' institutions** and field of work, a key factor for accelerating transformation. Overall, at the end of the Programme **63% had already initiated some or substantial changes in their work**. The highest programme impact was seen on integrating the inner dimension at work on strategic priorities, in learning and development activities, followed by cooperation with stakeholder and project management approaches. This included concrete changes and modification of diverse working approaches and processes, including cooperation, networking, financing, policies, and project development.

**PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT:** The results also indicate ways to further improve follow-up programmes. Whilst the overall structure and approach of the Programme was appreciated and showed certain impacts, several participants struggled with linking their learnings and insights from the different modules and methods and translating them to their working context. In addition, the level of engagement and project impacts also varied across the participating countries (with Costa Rica the highest and Rwanda the lowest). To address this, follow-up programmes should:

- Create a clearer 'red thread' throughout participants' learning journey, by weaving modules and methods more tightly together. This is crucial to help participants understand that the IDG clusters and skills are highly interrelated and how they relate to the SDGs.
- Ensure equal opportunities and consideration of participants' different needs in terms of the offered content and methods (e.g., considering simplification of operations due to logistical and technical challenges, reducing group sizes, decolonising and diversifying methodological approaches).
- Put more emphasis on translating participants' learnings to their everyday work, and helping them understand how to link individual, collective and systemic change to challenge current unsustainable approaches, norms and paradigms. The latter requires systematic mainstreaming and consideration of all aspects of the mind-sustainability nexus and in all sector work.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition, continuous inner development practice and institutionalisation of integrated measures need to be better supported, both throughout and after the Programme (e.g., through communities of practice) to ensure sustainable engagement and transformation across individual, collective and system levels.
- Finally, it is important to better balance participants' learning about inner and outer transformation processes and accelerating their SDG-related work (versus instrumentalising the Programme for establishing IDG hubs). Explicitly stated intended learning outcomes would help in this context and would provide better guidance for related impact assessments.

<sup>2</sup> For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).



# 1. Context and Methodology

The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme (GLSD) was the first capacity-building programme designed around the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) framework with the aim to accelerate action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The target group included decision-makers in: Albania, Costa Rica, Colombia, India, Rwanda, and Zambia (see Annex for selection criteria). The Programme was funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

The Programme’s relevance and impact were assessed using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses. Data were collected through extensive pre- and post-programme surveys. Additional qualitative data were collected through post-module surveys, observation during online sessions, and participants' entries in the online course platform. The surveys used psychometrically validated scales and were based on the inner-outer transformation model, climate mainstreaming theory, and diverse psychological constructs (e.g., inner human capacities and traits).

## Sample Description

152 participants completed the pre-survey. Of those, ≤59% identified as female, ≤ 41% as male and ≤ 1% as other. There was considerable diversity in age, as shown in Figure 1. 37% of participants worked in NGOs, 21% in the private sector, 26% in the public sector and 14% in academia. 42% of participants worked mainly at national level, 28% at local level, 16% at global level, and 15% across a geographic region, e.g., Africa. The participants included a large percentage of leaders (57%), followed by entrepreneurs (15%) and academics (12%).

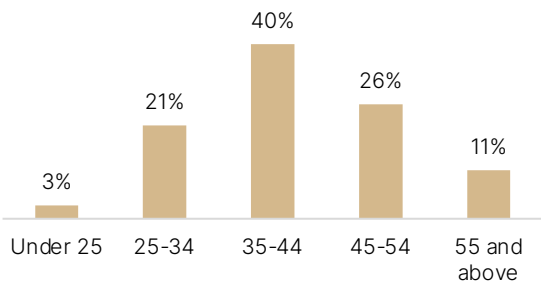


Figure 1. Age distribution of participants

## Focus Country Participation and Engagement

95% of participants live in the focus countries (Figure 2). Interestingly, participation rates in the post- compared to the pre-survey differed substantially between country areas. The highest return rates were observed in the Americas (pre N=66, post N=33, 50%), with substantially lower return rates in Asian (pre N=24, post N=9, 38%), European (pre N=24, post N=9, 38%) and African countries (pre N=24, post N=9, 33%). However, these numbers are slightly misleading. A recruitment push prior to the Programme inflated t1 participation. Taking regular participation as a reference point, the overall return rate was on average 71% and as such much higher.

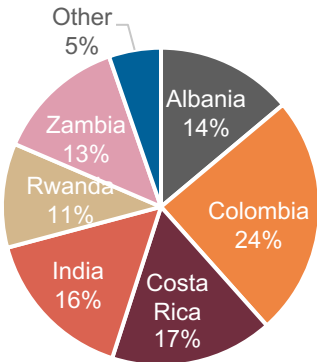


Figure 2. Distribution of participating countries

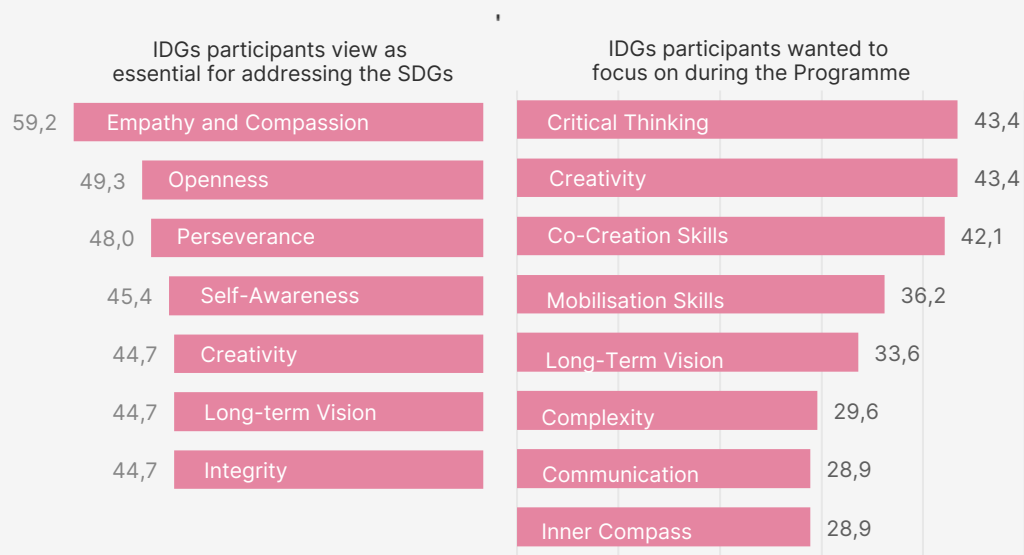


## 2 Results

### 2.1 Inner Qualities: Importance and Programme Impact

#### Inner Development Goals (IDGs)

Prior to the training, we asked participants which IDGs they view as most essential for accelerating impact on sustainability goals. Empathy and compassion was mentioned as the most important inner quality followed by openness and perseverance (Figure 3). We then asked which goals they would like to focus on during the Programme. Here participants mentioned critical thinking, creativity and co-creation skills as the top objectives. Participants differ in their view as to which IDGs are essential and which they would like to work on. The differences are biggest for collaboration and action skills such as co-creation, creativity and mobilisation. Possibly, participants had already worked on some inner quality areas, e.g., the sample scored very high on self-compassion (mean score 78% out of 100%), self-awareness (75%) and other compassion (83%) prior to the training, which may explain why they indicated a preference for developing collaboration and action skills.



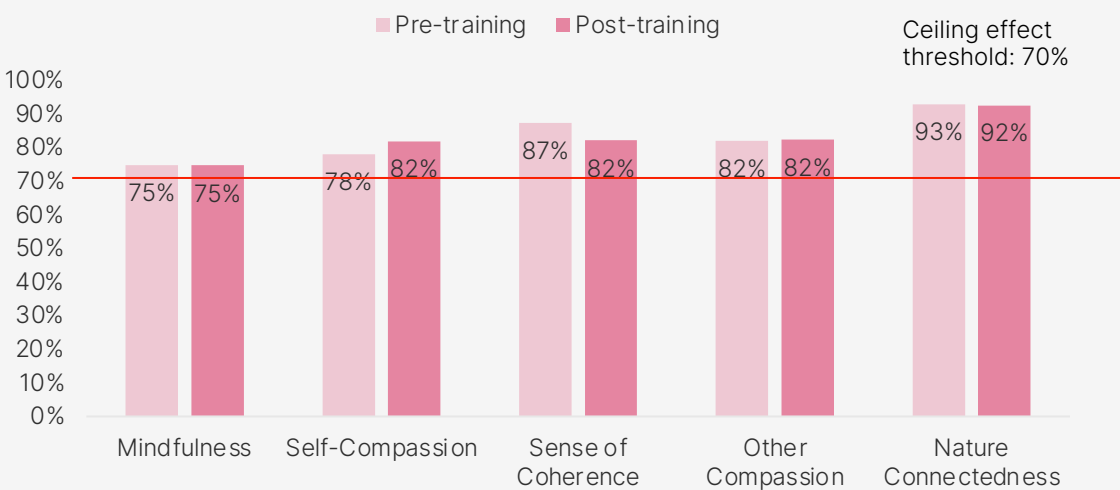
**Figure 3:** IDGs that participants view as essential and want to focus on in the GLSD

This result also has potential implications for future programme design and objectives given that we intentionally recruited participants in the SDG field that already have an interest in inner development and related practices.

**Participant sample scores very high in inner skills pre-training.**

In addition to our measurement of IDGs using self-reported methods, we employed a number of validated psychological scales to measure changes in particular inner skills and qualities that could be attributed to the Programme. The pre-programme scores in Figure 4 indicate that this sample was highly skilled in these areas prior to the Programme (100%=all participants chose the highest score, 0%=lowest score).

**Ceiling effect:** Average scores were substantially higher compared to norm data and skewed towards a very positive self-rating on inner skills (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Pre- and post-scores of scales measuring core inner skills and qualities

As a result, these measurements were unlikely to detect potential changes because of increased likelihood of regressions to the population mean scores. This is a statistical phenomenon where if one measurement is extreme, the subsequent measurement is more likely to be closer to the actual sample mean. Consequently, when pre-training scores are higher than 75%, it becomes nearly impossible to show improvement.

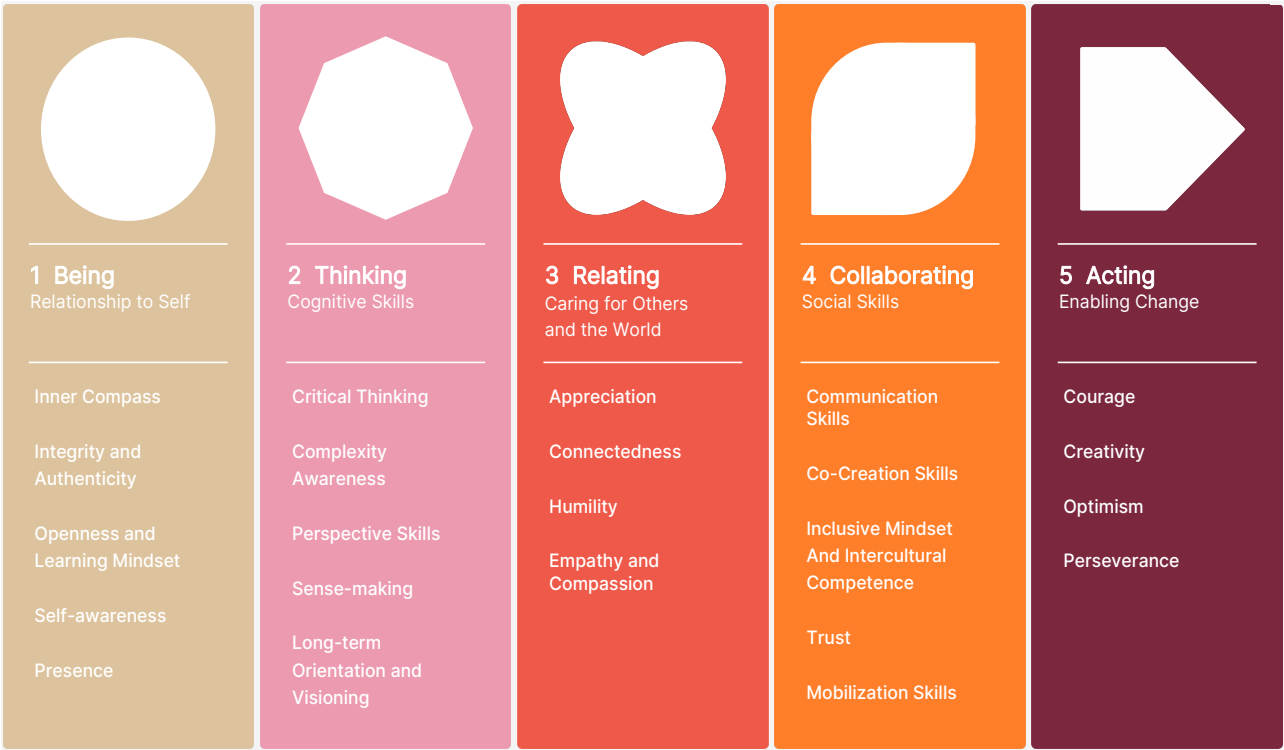
These results emphasise the unique sample of participants drawn to this Programme. Unlike a research study, where participants with a range of previous experiences would be sought to avoid statistical artifacts like these, the objective of this Programme was to attract individuals who already possessed interest in working on inner skills and were eager to apply and develop their capacities strategically to achieve sustainability goals.

## 2.2 Impact on Inner Development Goals (IDGs)

The IDG framework is comprised of five dimensions and 23 inner skills and qualities needed to work successfully with societal issues, in particular those identified in UN's Agenda 2030 and the 17 SDGs. It is related to academic frameworks, such as the inner-outer transformation model, and others that define skills and qualities important for general well-being or life satisfaction.

The IDG project's initiators were motivated by a belief that what is missing from current sustainability approaches is insight into the inner abilities, skills and qualities we need to foster among the individuals, groups and organisations working towards sustainability.

### The IDG framework



The Programme helped strengthen and deepen the development of IDGs.

Participants reported a large number of changes in IDGs as a result of the Programme (Figure 5). On average nine out of the 23 (40%) skills and qualities that form the IDG framework were strengthened. All of the 23 skills and qualities were reported as strengthened by some participants. Changes in IDGs were highly intercorrelated, suggesting that changes in one skill lead to uplifts in other skills.

The most significant enhancements were observed in the **Being dimension**, particularly in self-awareness (64%) and inner compass (53%). In the **Relating dimension**, participants noted the most substantial improvements in empathy and compassion (58%) and connectedness (50%). In the **Collaborating dimension**, the most significant changes were observed in co-creation skills (48%).

**The results highlight the inter-relatedness of inner skills and qualities.** Participants reported strengthening skills across multiple dimensions and rarely described capacities in isolation from one another. Quantitative data likewise supported this interrelation. Please see the Annex for a comprehensive overview of the participants’ experience and in-depth qualitative analysis of programme impact.

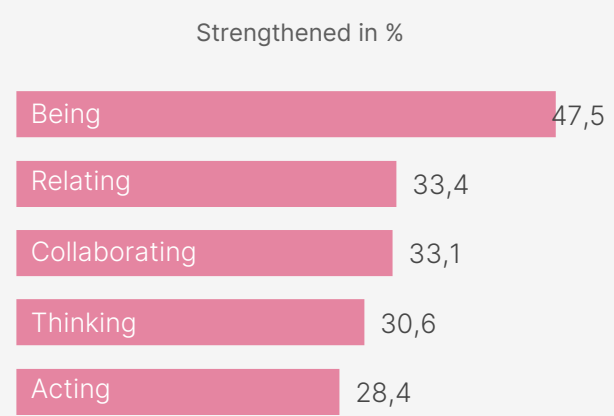


Figure 5: Which IDG dimensions were strengthened most as a result of the programme?

“ I realised that we share so much as individuals despite coming from different regions. We can learn so much from each other.

“ Thanks to the programme and the meditations I realised I needed to make some changes long overdue and did them.”

“ I feel more connected to my emotions and feelings. I am more aware of what I am thinking and there is more space between the thought, feeling and action.

Figure 6: Participant quotes on the skills and qualities strengthened during the programme

## 2.3 Impact on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### Which SDGs do participants focus on in their work?

At the beginning of the Programme, participants reported focussing on (average) three SDGs in their work, ranging from No Poverty to Gender Equality and Quality Education. The SDGs that most participants focused on were Partnerships and Climate Actions (Figures 7-8).

### The Programme helped to strengthen and extend the work on SDGs.

**95% of participants agreed that they actively engaged in new sustainability-related actions as a result of participating in the Programme.** On average, they engaged

more in two out of three areas:

- In their professional lives (83%)
- In their private lives (75%)
- In their community (80%)

They also started to increase their work on specific SDGs (Figure 8). While about 40% already engaged in the SDG goal **Partnerships** at the start of the Programme, there was a 22% increase after the Programme. A total of 61% of the post-survey sample focused on that goal.

- I oversee the promotion of **Sustainable Agriculture** in my area
- I support a **reforestation** startup
- I teach a **community engagement** and sustainable development class to university students
- I structure **an impact investment** fund
- I run **socioecological research** to rewild forests and farmlands
- I work in sea turtle conservation, **watershed management**
- I work in **fundraising** for scholarships focused in gender or environmental issues
- I work on creating **networks with indigenous people** and afro knowledge leaders
- I design **educational programmes** for vulnerable populations
- I work for the **development nations programme** to address poverty, education, gender and other SDGs

Figure 7: Examples of what participants do



Figure 8: SDG focal points pre- and post-programme

A stark increase of 22% was also observed in the goals **Good Health and Wellbeing** and **Building Sustainable Cities and Communities**. Overall, participants widened their areas of action on average by +1.3 additional SDGs. In addition, the results show that the Programme was particularly impactful on the cross-cutting theme of **Partnerships** which has a relevance for all SDGs.

## 2.4 Impact on integrating inner and outer change for sustainability across scales

Large increase in consideration of the inner dimension in sustainability-related work.

The GLSD is designed on the premise that inner change accelerates outer change. To assess this key programme objective, we also investigated after the Programme whether participants had begun to **integrate inner qualities more into their daily work processes** (Figure 9).

Interestingly, **at the end of the Programme 63% had already initiated some or substantial changes**. The highest programme impact concerned the integration of the inner dimension in the organisation’s strategic priorities, learning and development activities, cooperation with stakeholders, and project management approaches (Figure 9). These outcomes were complemented by the qualitative analyses that demonstrates the richness of related measures (see Annex).

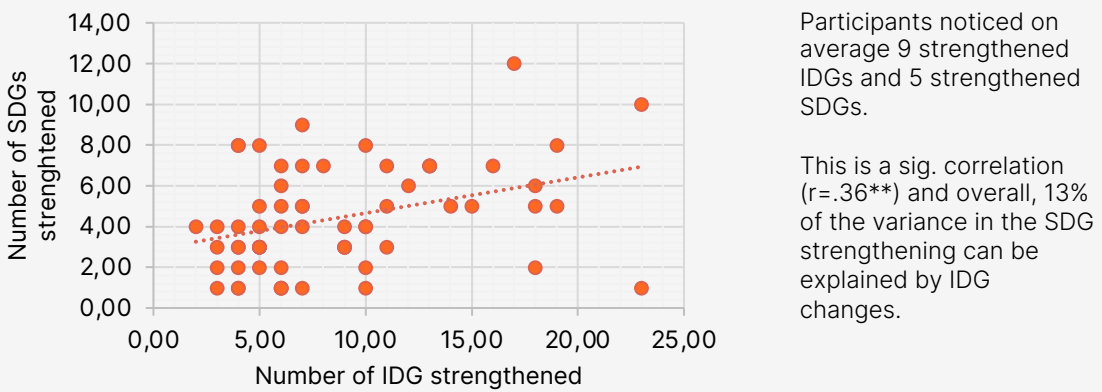


Figure 9: Changes in integrating inner dimensions into work processes

Outcomes support previous research that shows that inner qualities and outer changes influence each other.<sup>3</sup>

**Strengthening IDGs is related to strengthening SDGs.**

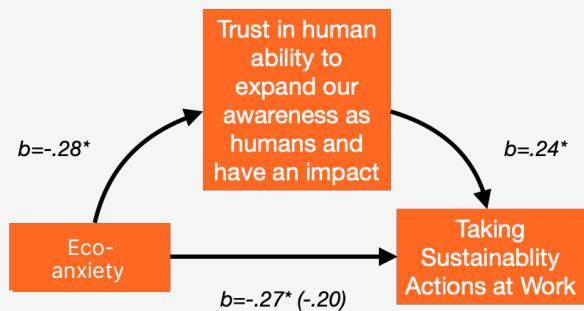
People who have strengthened IDGs as a result of the Programme are also more likely to broaden their work on SDGs. While more is not necessarily better, we interpret these findings as representing in part a deepening in participants’ understanding of the interrelation of IDGs and SDGs. This is also supported by the qualitative analyses (see Annex).



**Figure 10:** Correlation of changes in IDGs and changes in SDGs

**Lowering anxiety mediated by building trust contributes to taking actions.**

**Building trust in humanity seems to be an inner lever for taking sustainability action and lowering anxiety.** Anxiety regarding humanity’s abilities to deal with crises is on the rise. In our sample, **53% agreed that they worry** about mankind’s ability to respond appropriately to current challenges—and 15% agreed that their concerns about sustainability crises undermine their ability to work to their potential. Interestingly, our mediation analysis showed that trust in humanity post-training lowers the likelihood of experiencing this undermining effect of eco-anxiety, while in turn a lower anxiety was related to taking increased action at work. The results show that managing anxiety by building trust internally can have some impact on the likelihood of taking sustainability action.



**Figure 11:** Standardised regression coefficients for the relationship between anxiety and the likelihood of taking actions as mediated by trust in humanity. The coefficient controlling for trust in humanity is in parentheses, N=63

3 For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).



## 2.5 Participants' Programme Feedback

Kick-off in Rwanda was highly valued by participants.

The GLSD was launched in Rwanda in November 2022, where 2 to 3 representatives of each participating country (Albania, Costa Rica, Colombia, India, Rwanda, and Zambia) met for two days to get to know each other and **start discussing how to best engage with and involve participants in each of the countries.**

**100% agree that the kick-off has helped them deepen their motivation to contribute to the IDGs.**

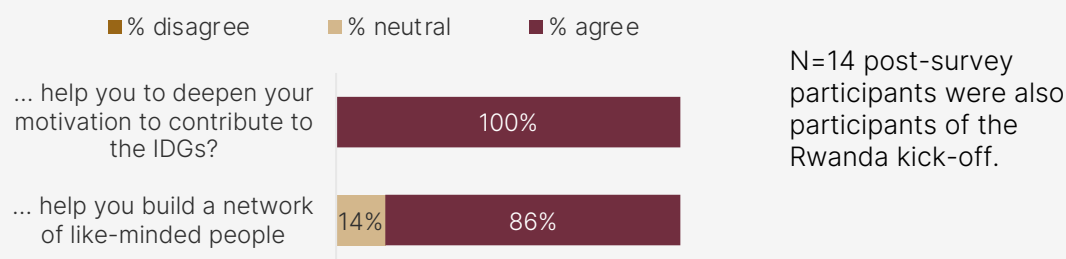


Figure 12: Feedback from Kick-Off participants

### Participants anchored new practices as a result of the Programme

Anchoring new practices for inner development is crucial for nurturing the IDGs and for addressing sustainability crises. They provide a solid foundation for individuals striving to lead the efforts for meaningful and lasting impact on the SDGs.

95% of participants of the post-survey stated that they regularly practiced the methods shared in the Programme. More specifically, 78% engaged regularly in meditation or contemplation practices, 79% in mindful nature walks, and 14% in other practices.

The majority of participants practiced at least three times per week (42%) and another 40% practiced about once per week. **Thus, a total of 82% were very engaged in the practices that the Programme offered, indicating its importance and relevance for the participants.**

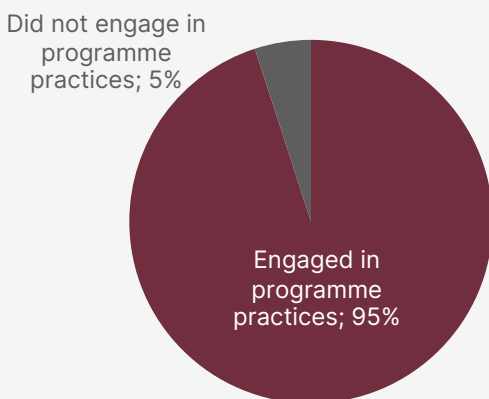


Figure 13: Programme engagement

Satisfaction with other key programme elements

Participants were highly satisfied with the Programme and specific aspects. A key programme objective, to extend people’s networks for sustainable action, was met, and the overall learning activities and trainers were very highly valued (Figure 14).

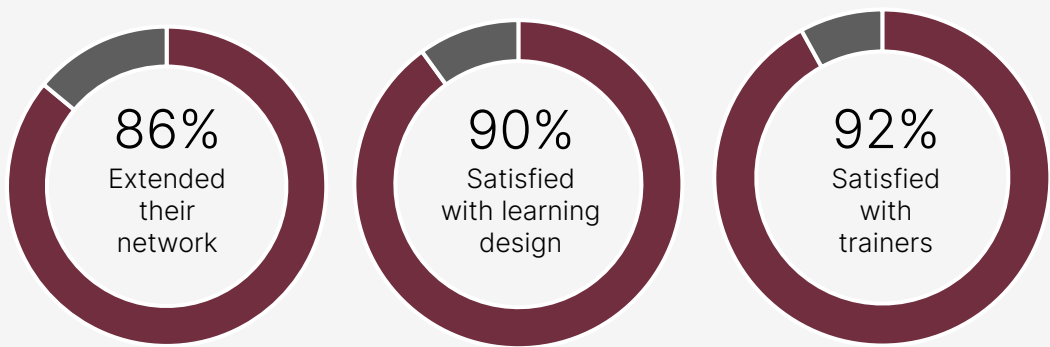


Figure 14: Percent agreement to key programme elements

Recommendation of the Programme

Finally, we measured the recommendation rate of the Programme using the Net Promoter Score, which asks how likely participants are to recommend a programme to others on a scale from 0 to 10. The results show that the recommendation rate was extremely high with **97% recommending the Programme** and a Net Promoter Score of 69%.

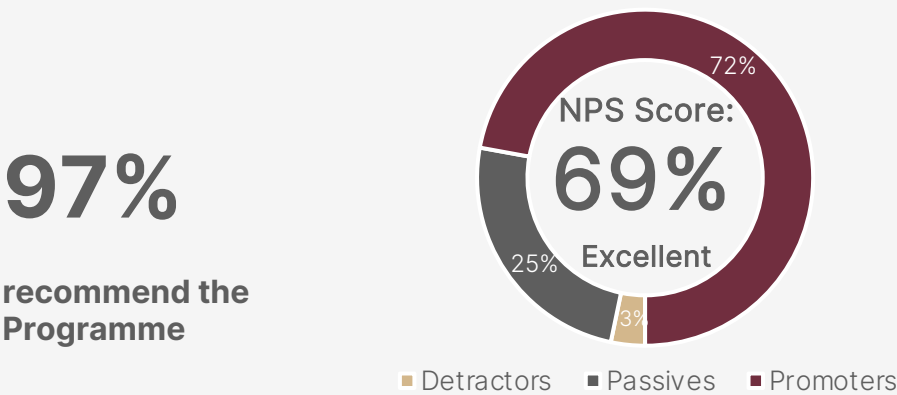


Figure 15: Net Promoter Scores (The Net Promoter Score NPS of 69% is calculated by taking the % of promoters (those scoring at 9 or 10) and subtracting the % of detractors (those scoring 0 to 5).

### 3. Conclusions and Way Forward

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative results show the **relevance of inner development, the IDG framework and associated methods** to support human flourishing and accelerate change towards sustainability in the focus countries. Most importantly, both the qualitative and quantitative data showed that **the Programme considerably increased action-taking for sustainability across individual, organisational and system levels**: 95% of participants agree that they actively engage in new SDGs and related actions as a result of participating in the GLSD. In addition, the qualitative data showed that increased action-taking involved integrating and mainstreaming measures that link inner and outer dimensions of sustainability into participants' institutions and field of work, which is key for accelerating transformation. Overall, **at the end of the Programme 63% had already initiated some or substantial changes in their work**. This is in line with previous research showing that inner development and outer change influence each other.<sup>4</sup>

While the Programme recommendation was extremely high with 97%, the qualitative results also indicated ways to further improve follow-up programmes. Despite appreciation of the overall structure and approach of the Programme, several **participants struggled with linking their learnings from the different modules and translating them to their working context**. In addition, **the level of engagement varied** across the participating countries (with Costa Rica highest and Rwanda lowest). To address this, follow-up programmes should:

- Create a **clearer 'red thread'** throughout participants' learning journey, by weaving modules and methods more tightly together. This is crucial to help participants understand that the IDG clusters and skills are highly interrelated and how they relate to the SDGs.
- Ensure **equal opportunities** and consideration of participants' different needs in terms of the offered content and methods (e.g., simplification of operations, reduction of group sizes, and diversifying methodological approaches).
- Put more emphasis on **translating participants' learnings to their everyday work**, and helping them understand how to link individual, collective and systemic change to challenge current unsustainable approaches, norms and paradigms.
- In addition, **continuous inner development practice** and institutionalisation of integrated measures need to be better supported, both throughout and after the Programme (e.g., through communities of practice) to ensure sustainable engagement and transformation across individual, collective and system levels.
- Finally, it is important to **better balance participants' learning** about inner and outer transformation processes and accelerating their SDG-related work (versus instrumentalising the Programme for establishing IDG hubs). Explicitly stated intended learning outcomes would help in this context and would provide better guidance for related impacts assessments.

<sup>4</sup> For related studies, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS)

**Further research is needed to:**

1. Better understand **context- and region-specific differences and needs** related to inner skills and methods required to support SDGs.
2. Improve the **methods** that support the development of inner skills needed to support flourishing and wellbeing **across individual, collective and system levels**. In this context it is relevant to note that **contemplative (mindfulness and compassion-informed) approaches** were shown to be important ingredients for supporting all levels and IDG clusters—Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting. How they can be best adapted to the context of sustainability and be combined with other methods requires further enquiry.
3. Improve approaches to assess the **link between IDGs and SDGs** through innovative, mixed-methods approaches, particularly if target groups are highly experienced experts that score high on conventional inner development scales. Importantly, the **inner-outer transformation model and associated mainstreaming theory** that guided our qualitative and some quantitative **assessments** was shown to be highly relevant to identify impact. Further research is needed to explore how they could guide further assessments, such as the development of quantitative scales, AI-supported and narrative-based approaches.
4. Better understand the **underlying processes for supporting organisational and cultural narrative shifts** and mobilising change for sustainability, and the potential of the IDG framework in this regard.
5. Further explore the measures that can be taken to **mainstream and institutionalise inner development and inner-outer transformation** to rattle unsustainable norms, cultures and systems.

In conclusion, our results indicate that inner development is relevant for supporting human flourishing and accelerating action towards the SDGs. Whilst such inner-outer transformation processes are highly complex, the results highlight the importance of inner skills and qualities for individual, collective and planetary wellbeing. Importantly, they also indicate that the IDGs provide a useful and feasible communication framework that can support related endeavours.

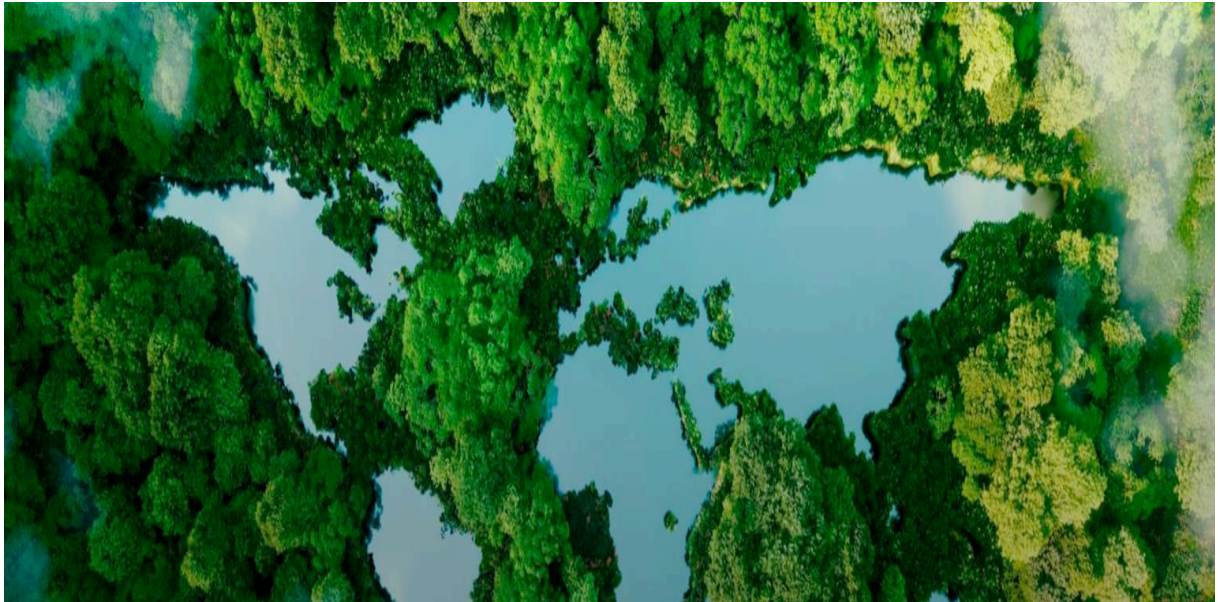


# **Annex: Qualitative Evaluation Report**

**Prof. Dr. Christine Wamsler**

**Lund University Centre for  
Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS)**  
**Lund, Sweden.**

# The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme



## Inner Development for Accelerating Action Towards the Sustainable Development Goals

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Qualitative Evaluation Report by Prof. Dr. Christine Wamsler

August 2023

Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund, Sweden

# Extended Abstract

**The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme** was the first programme designed on the basis of the **Inner Development Goals (IDGs) framework** and associated methods with the aim to accelerate action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The target group for this pilot study included high-level decision makers in middle- or low-income countries involved in the implementation of SDGs in: i) Albania, ii) Costa Rica, iii) Colombia, iv) India, v) Rwanda, and vi) Zambia. The Programme was funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

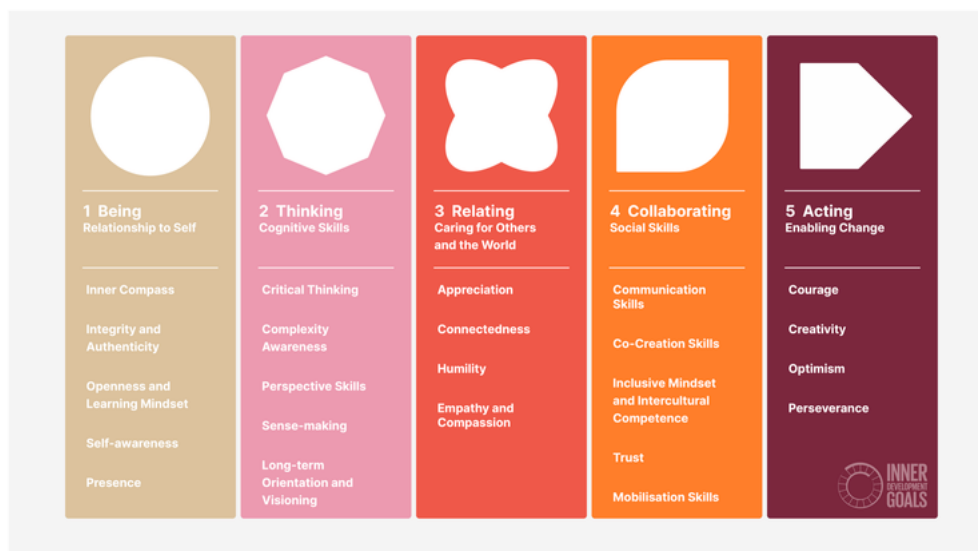


Figure 1: The Inner Development Goals framework

The Programme's relevance and impacts were assessed using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through extensive pre- and post-programme surveys. In addition, qualitative data were collected through post-module surveys, observation during online sessions, and participants' entries in the online course platform. The surveys were scientifically grounded and developed based on the inner-outer transformation model, climate mainstreaming theory, and diverse psychological constructs (e.g., of inner human capacities and traits).<sup>1</sup>

**Overall, the qualitative results show the relevance of inner development, the IDG framework and associated methods to support human flourishing and accelerate change towards sustainability in the focus countries.** More specifically, the qualitative analyses showed the following key programme outcomes:

- Participants' engagement and satisfaction were high. The overall structure, safe space and methods provided were highly appreciated by the participants and were said to have nurtured participants' inner capacities, such as self-awareness, inner compass, feelings of connection, hope and collective agency. All learning activities and methods were mentioned by some participants. This indicates that learning is highly individual and context-specific, and inner-outer transformation lies in the combination and diversity of learning activities and methods offered.

<sup>1</sup> For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).



- The Programme influenced how participants relate to themselves, others and nature in ways that have been shown to support shifts towards more sustainable, relational narratives. Because the roots of sustainability crises lie in a culturally entrenched story of *separation*, fostering such fundamental aspects of connection to self, others and nature are key to support action-taking for sustainability.
- Importantly, the Programme also considerably **increased action-taking for sustainability across individual, organisational and system levels. The latter involved an increased engagement in integrating/ mainstreaming measures** that link inner and outer dimensions of sustainability into participants' organisations and field of work, a key factor for accelerating transformation. It included concrete changes and modification of organisations' working approaches and processes (including regulations and policies, financing, cooperation, networking, and project management).

The results also indicate ways to further improve follow-up programmes. Whilst the overall structure and approach of the Programme was appreciated and showed certain impacts, several participants struggled with linking their learnings and insights from the different modules and methods and translating them to their working context. In addition, the level of engagement and project impacts also varied strongly across the participating countries (with Costa Rica being the highest and Rwanda the lowest). To address this, follow-up programmes should:

- Create a clearer 'red thread' throughout participants' learning journey, by weaving modules and methods more tightly together. This is crucial to help participants better understand that the IDG clusters and skills are highly interrelated and why and how they relate to the SDGs.
- Ensure equal opportunities and consideration of participants' different needs in terms of the offered content and methods (e.g., considering simplification of operations due to logistical and technical challenges, reduction of group sizes, decolonizing and diversifying methodological approaches).
- Put more emphasis on translating participants' learnings to their everyday work, and helping them understand how to link individual, collective, and systemic change to challenge current unsustainable approaches, norms and paradigms. The latter requires systematic mainstreaming and consideration of all aspects of the mind-sustainability nexus in all sector work.
- In addition, continuous inner development practice and institutionalisation of integrated measures need to be better supported, both throughout and after the Programme (e.g., through communities of practice) to ensure sustainable engagement and transformation across individual, collective and system levels.
- Finally, it is crucial to better balance participants' learning and accelerating their SDG-related work (versus instrumentalizing the Programme for establishing IDG hubs). Explicitly stated intended learning outcomes would help in this context and would provide better guidance for follow-up impacts assessments.

On the basis of the described outcomes, further research is needed to:<sup>2</sup>

- Better understand context-specific differences and needs related to inner skills and methods needed to support the SDGs.
- Improve methods that support inner skills needed to support flourishing and wellbeing across individual, collective and system levels. In this context it is relevant to note that contemplative (mindfulness and compassion-informed) approaches were shown to be important ingredients for supporting all levels and IDG clusters—Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting. How they can be best adapted to the context of sustainability and be combined with other methods requires however further enquiry.

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<sup>2</sup> For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).

- Improve approaches to assess the link between IDGs and SDGs through innovative, mixed-methods approaches, particularly if target groups are highly experienced experts that score high on conventional inner development scales. Importantly, the inner-outer transformation model and associated mainstreaming theory that guided our qualitative and some quantitative assessments was shown to be highly relevant to identify impact. Further research is needed to explore how they could guide further assessments, such as the development of quantitative scales, AI-supported and narrative-based approaches.
- Better understand the underlying processes for supporting organisational and cultural narrative shifts and mobilizing change for sustainability, and the potential of the IDG framework in this regard.
- Further explore the design and impact of measures that can be taken to mainstream and institutionalize inner development and inner-outer transformation to rattle unsustainable norms, cultures, and systems.

To conclude, our results indicate that inner development is relevant for supporting human flourishing and accelerating action towards the SDGs. Whilst such inner-outer transformation processes are highly complex, the results highlight the importance of inner skills for individual, collective and planetary wellbeing. Importantly, they also indicate that the IDGs provide a communication framework that can support related endeavors.

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**Note:** This report is also included as an Annex to the Evaluation Report that includes a summary of the quantitative and qualitative assessment by Rupprecht, S. and Wamsler, C. (2023).

# 1 Introduction: Background and Report Outline

The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme was the first programme that was designed on the basis of the Inner Development Goals framework and associated methods to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>3</sup> Financed by the Templeton World Charity Foundation, the target group included high-level decision makers who work with SDG related issues in: i) Albania, ii) Colombia, iii) Costa Rica, iv) India, v) Rwanda, and vi) Zambia. The countries were chosen based on many factors. One criterion was the funders' wish to focus on human flourishing in low- and middle-income countries. Another criterion was the interest to engage more in countries that had few contributors to the IDG survey that led to the IDG framework, to assess its relevance and provide information on possible blind spots of the framework or associated methods. The selection started with 12 countries of interest and was then reduced to six with sufficiently qualified applications.<sup>4</sup>

The Programme's relevance and impacts were assessed using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through extensive pre- and post-programme surveys. In addition, qualitative data were collected through post-module surveys, observation during online sessions, and participants' entries in the online course platform. The surveys were scientifically grounded and developed based on the inner-outer transformation model, climate mainstreaming theory, and diverse psychological constructs (e.g. of inner human capacities and traits).

The following sections present the outcomes of the qualitative data analyses. After the description of all programme components and modules of the Programme and related analyses, the outcomes regarding the course online platform and the pre-and post-programme surveys are presented.

## 2 Module-Specific Assessment

### Programme Launch and Kick-Off

The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme was launched in Rwanda in November 2022, where 2-3 representatives of each participating country (Albania, Costa Rica, Colombia, India, Rwanda, and Zambia) met for two days to get to know each other and start discussing how to best engage with and involve participants in each of the countries. This gathering was followed by an online kick-off session with all participants in December 2022, during which the Programme and the IDG framework was introduced, and the participants were asked to fill in the pre-programme survey. No qualitative analyses were conducted in relation to the programme launch and kick-off event. For related quantitative analyses, please see the Rupprecht and Wamsler (2023).

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<sup>3</sup> The framework has been based on a co-creative process and emergent research in the field. For further information, please see <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/resources-2>.

<sup>4</sup> Alongside The Global Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme, a parallel feasibility study was conducted on how to adjust and update the IDG framework, involving 61 scientists from the same 6 selected countries. Related outcomes can be found here <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/resources-2>.

## Module 1- BEING

The first module took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 and had a total of **98 participants**. Before the module, the participants had to meet with their respective country hubs, get familiarized with the online learning platform and the app, and map their values with the help of a digital ranking tool that is based on Acceptance Commitment Training.

During module 1, the Programme's aim and some initial findings from the pre-programme survey were presented, followed by information from the IDG hub initiators from each country, and a general introduction to the SDGs. This led to the first exercise: A short meditative reflection that allowed participants to explore their feelings regarding the state of the planet, the SDGs, and related work in their respective countries. Short break-out groups (of 3 people) after the meditative reflection allowed the participants to discuss concrete examples, existing advancements, and related feelings. In the following, the participants also shared their feelings in the chat (1). After a short break, the participants conducted an exercise to explore their values in pairs through storytelling and listening, and with the help of the values exercise they had prepared before the online session. After this break-out session, the participants shared how they felt after the exercise in the chat (2), and different ideas were discussed as to how to use the exercise in the context of one's work. After this, the participants were asked to use Miro board to add their values from the value exercise to those SDGs they believe they are relevant for (3). Before the module ended with some practical information and an outlook regarding the following weeks, the participants were asked to provide feedback regarding their insights and learnings from the module, how these relate to their work on the SDGs, the relevance of the methods used, and any potential improvements of the module (4). In a follow-up email after module 1, the participants were also instructed as to how they can continue reflecting on their personal values and inner compass (linked to the value exercise) and take related actions. In addition, they were asked to use the programme-related app, which provided home practices for each module. For Module 1, the app included a breathing space meditation of 10min, and a guided nature walk.

### Summary of learnings, feedback, and impact

(1) After the first break-out session, the participants shared their feelings. Interestingly, positive emotions and particularly hope, optimism and connection dominated (Figure 2). In fact, many participants expressed hope and optimism for the future, despite challenges and frustrations. It was based on "a sense of we are together, we can do something". In this context, the importance of connection, collaboration, and not feeling alone in their efforts was emphasized, which were said to help facing negative feelings and use or transform them for action-taking. In the words of one participant: "I felt anger, but anger can also be turned into action." Joy, inspiration and gratitude were also mentioned. Participants felt energized and deeply moved by the shared experiences, were reminded of their inner motivation and call to action, whilst at the same time realizing the complexity of the issues at hand and the need for deeper understanding and approaches.

(2) After the second break-out session, the participants shared their feelings again. Positive emotions dominated, particularly feeling inspired and connected (Figure 3). Key learnings included an increased sense of one's core values and seeing our common humanity. Many participants expressed their gratitude for the exercise.

(3) Participants also noted that mapping their inner values in relation to the SDGs made their learning very tangible.



## Selected quotes

- “It can get exhausting and consuming to work towards the SDGs and it was nice to be reminded that I am more than the work itself; I am my values, and the values are driving both who I am and my work, .....
- “It helps to align better my core values and my personal goals with the global goals. And sparks my curiosity.”
- The module helped to see “The need to hold space for emotions to both build connections, trust and learn while working/thinking about the SDGs; articulating values providing clarity on vision.”
- “This programme should be for every human on the planet :)”

## Issues to be considered: reflections, open questions, and challenges

- Methods: Some participants wondered why a method (values tree) was selected that is not part of the IDG toolkit.
- Miro board: It was surprising to see that responsible consumption and production received little comments/post-its (i.e., post-its with participants’ own values from the value exercise), although it underlies many of the other SDGs and is closely linked with inner dimensions of sustainability. This might be related to the fact that the mind-sustainability nexus and particularly the inner (individual and collective) root causes of today’s sustainability crises have not been sufficiently discussed in the course. This aspect needs to be addressed in follow-up programmes.
- The reporting back of the IDG hub initiators during the module showed that there were some mismatches regarding the participants’ expectations and the Programme’s layout. One IDG hub initiator stated for instance that they would like to engage in a potential IDG hub after, but not necessarily during the training. The training was seen as an important input for first understanding the IDGs (and the need for it), before action can be taken, not the other way around.
- Some instructions relating to joining break-out sessions and taking notes on the Miro Board were confusing for some participants: “Logging off. Can't quite seem to follow what's going on....”

## Module 2- THINKING

At the beginning of the online session, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, there were **77 participants**, but 20 left during the module, leaving **57 participants** who followed the whole session. This can be explained by the difficulty some people had to join the multiple break-out sessions in specific pairs of 2 which proved difficult for those without consistent internet access. After some follow-up regarding the personal values exercise and some participants’ comments on the online learning platform and the practices on the app, there followed a short meditation, before the Module 2 was introduced. After this, the “Immunity to Change exercise” was presented, which aimed to help participants seeing and overcoming what is holding them back for realizing their values, goals and work towards the SDGs. The exercise included two break-out groups, and a group discussion (1). In the following exercise, the participants were asked to link the learnings to their SDG-related work, with the help of some prompts, such as “How can you lead the acceleration towards the SDGs in your organisation?”, and “How can the IDGs be of use in this process?”. Thematic, cross-country groups were created for discussing these issues in break-out groups with three to five participants. After the break-out session, the participants were asked to include related comments in the chat (2), before they were requested to fill in the post-module survey (3), and the module was closed with some information on practical matters (e.g. instructions to meet once more in their small group from the Immunity to Change exercise within the



coming two weeks to follow-up on discussions and related changes). The home practices from the app included a 10min open awareness practice and a mindful nature walk (nature walk 2).

### Summary of learnings, feedback, and impact

(1) Participants' goals mentioned during the Immunity to Change exercise were diverse, including broad aims, such as "More present, and connected living my purpose in every moment" to very specific aspects, such as "Keep my mind organized when many important and urgent subjects come at the same time", or "Be better at being patient and trust on people capacity, even if things go wrong in the process." Mentioned behaviors that go against the goals were, for instance "to be all over the place... to take over", and underlying worries included, for instance "fear of failure" or "I am incompetent". Key learnings included increased self-awareness of one's inner fears and their impact on one's engagement in the world. Some also made the connections to the learnings of the first module, as expressed by one participant: "I realized the relation between fears and your values...."

(2) Participants appreciated having time to discuss, exchange with people from other countries, and learn from other sector-specific challenges and advancements. Whilst the time seemed to be too short for the four questions that were posed, and open questions remained as to how the inner work can be translated to participants' work (see also below), the participants very much enjoyed the discussions. They were described with words, such as "Very insightful and mind provoking".

(3) A total of **49 participants (out of 77, and later during the module 57)** filled in the survey. Key outcomes:

- ☐ All but one participant found the methods offered during the online session relevant. This person answered to the question "Has there been any method, tool or exercise that has been of particular relevance?" the following "in today's session not really." Apart from this answer, all other responses were positive.
- ☐ All kinds of methods offered were mentioned by someone, including methods offered during the online session and related social learning processes (breakout groups, etc.) as well as the learning platform and app themselves (content and methods).
- ☐ Improvements that were asked for relate to: i) making things more applied (e.g. adding case studies, more examples, relate more to organisations as opposed to people's personal life, and more focus on connecting SDGs with IDGs and work with people from different social and economic backgrounds), ii) having more time to discuss and reflect in pairs and in groups, and iii) more on systems thinking.
- ☐ The answers to the other questions also made clear that participants would need more support to understand the link between IDGs and SDGs. Related comments include: "Starting to make the links between SDGs and IDGs is good, more support on making the links clearer can be helpful." Whilst many participants can see the relevance of the module for supporting SDG-related work, others struggle with seeing the linkages. One participant states: "Not sure yet. Because we really have not concretized any implementation plans on how to take it forward." Similar, another states: "I am still not sure. I need to reflect more on the systemic lens while taking my individual learnings to that level."
- ☐ Since the Immunity to Change exercise requires a lot of time and thus took most of the online session, most of the mentioned learnings related to it. Many participants reported important insights regarding: i) understanding themselves, including their fears and how they can overcome their immunity to change ("Healing from my own fears and hold backs"), ii) how this is relevant when engaging with others ("When we see our own immunity to change, then we can work with others to help them see/uncover their own immunity to change, competing priorities, etc."), iii) linkages

between how we show up and the organisations we work with (“realisation about how we as leaders influence also the “personality” of our organisation. The personality of the leader usually reflects on the organisation’s culture and operations. If we individually change through the IDGs, our organisation will most likely change for the better as well”), and iv) seeing the common humanity (“Everyone in the world seems to have similar challenges”).

### Selected quotes

Illustrative comments from the learning platform regarding the home practices (open awareness practice):

- “I enjoyed it a lot. It helped me appreciate every single thing that surrounds me.”
- “This is very relaxing and it gave me a lot of self-awareness and consciousness that I never thought I would explore. It inspired me to dig deeper than I normally do.”
- “I found it hard to make space and implement the required patience to fully and mindfully go through the exercise. There comes a point however, when you finally let go and fully embrace the darkness of your eyelids and the voice that guides you.”

Further quotes:

- “Deep fears can drive our undesired behaviors that makes us immune to change, unable to be successful in our desired change in our improvement goal. I was not aware of this and was trying to change superficially without understanding the root of it. Very clarifying. Also tough...”
- “Very insightful and mind provoking.”

### Issues to be considered: reflections, open questions, and challenges

- From the participants’ answers it becomes clear that they would like to get more guidance regarding the link between personal and system change. Related quotes: “But the challenge are organisational structures that the IDGs alone cannot break”; “... looking for more ways to embed the IDG's in the ecosystem for attaining the SDG's”; “Need to interrogate more how IDGs can influence SDGs.”
- Another issue that participants are unsure about is the number of methods that exist to link inner and system change and how to select and/or combine them: “All of the tools are relevant. And maybe that is a problem. Because there are so many of them, one does not know which ones to prioritize.”
- From the answers it also becomes clear that there is a lack of understanding regarding how dominant social paradigms relate to sustainability, and how social paradigms relate to one’s own values, organisational values, etc. These aspects have so far not explicitly been addressed in the Programme.

## Module 3- RELATING

During Module 3, there were **69 participants**. In the beginning of the session, there was a short recap regarding the bubble hopping exercise that the participants had been asked to do before the session. This exercise involves meeting and listening to people with an open mind and, being curious about others’ worldviews and values. After the recap, the third IDG cluster and its relationship to the issue of compassion (which was also the focus of the session and the following two exercises) was introduced. The first was a compassion/loving kindness meditation and related discussions on the need for self-compassion to sustain any kind of development work (1), followed by a time-travel compassion meditation. The latter was followed by break-out groups, during which the participants could explore

related feelings and how they would like to act upon them. After the break-out, some participants reported back to the big group (2). The rest of the module was dedicated to facilitating group discussions in each of the country teams with the aim to prepare their joint work and creation of the national IDG hubs/centers. This work also formed part of the Programme's action lab. The action lab involves regular meetings between the modules and the participants were asked to report on related outcomes during the last session (Module 5). During the group discussions in the country teams, the participants were asked to discuss the current status of the national IDG center, selected themes, how the center can serve its members and vice versa, as well as practical matters regarding their joint work and engagement. After the discussions in the break-out groups, there was some reporting back in the big group and in the chat, before the post-module survey was filled in (3), and practical matters regarding the Programme were clarified in the end. The home exercises on the app included an environmental compassion exercise and a mindful nature walk (nature walk 3).

### Summary of learnings, feedback, and impact

(1) Many participants commented on the first compassion/loving kindness meditation, expressing their feelings of connection and gratitude.

(2) There were also interesting comments after the time-travel compassion meditation, that showed how the exercises supported connection and seeing our common humanity: "I was just talking to somebody at the other parts of the world and getting good vibes. This is the magic of this, I believe, (...).I could have never imagined that talking to somebody on the zoom at the other part of the world would give me the smile that was missing for me today. (...) We were two souls together, nothing else is important / It is a kind of magic". One group reported back that the common feature of what the participants experienced was: "the connection and reconnection with nature." Other comments related to participants' making connections between different methods, e.g. "Connecting self-compassion with Kegan's insights from last module."

(3) A total of 42 (out of 69) participants answered the survey.

- Overall, the participants were all very positive, stating that they learned about: i) the importance of how we relate for the way we act (including the importance of self-compassion, compassion for others and nature), ii) the difference between empathy and compassion, and iii) how one can intentionally cultivate compassion. There were many good quotes that illustrate these learnings:
  - "My main learnings from this module are that our relationship with ourselves and the world around us can have a significant impact on our attitude and behavior towards sustainability. If we have a deep connection with nature and understand the impact of our actions on the environment, we are more likely to prioritize sustainability and work towards protecting the planet."
  - "I really enjoyed this module. Some insights are: - Take care of yourself so you can support others. - Recognize your own vulnerability and take steps to deal with it constructively. - Relationships are at the core of who we are and how we engage with the planet."
  - "Connectedness is the core of sustainability and empathy and compassion are transformative."
  - "Loved the intergenerational activity to experience how compassion needs to be intentionally worked on."
  - "I found this module very relevant. I could connect to the content on the portal and also to the session exercises. My main insights are around self-compassion and its importance. Another insight is how crucial Relating is before we actively jump on collaborating."

- The answers indicate the importance of meditation (mindfulness/compassion) for creating a basis for other methods. As expressed by one participant: “The first part was great, meditating really set the mood for the rest of the session and to learn about what others are doing in the other countries.”
- Some participants manage to link the methods and associated learnings of this module’s exercises (meditations and bubble hopping): “Relating is all about caring for the others and the world. Compassion is beyond empathy. We all belong to multiple groups, not only one social group... so not one bubble. We should relate to each other to build resilient communities.”
- Being asked about how the learnings support participants’ work on the SDGs, the participants reported that they i) provide tools for self-care to sustain their work, ii) increase intrinsic motivation and a sense of responsibility to act, and iii) improve the way they show up at work and engage with others in a more effective and equitable way (more empathic, deep listening). Related relevant quotes:
  - “We work with people from vulnerable communities with the purpose of helping them get out of poverty. There is no better way of this than relating or putting ourselves in their shoes to understand their pain points/ challenges.”
  - “In my perspective, when we are promoting a change in society and we have to constantly work with other people, other groups of unknown, empathetic and generative listening can be amazing tools to complete our other SDG goals”
  - “Working on SDGs 5 and 16, dealing with violence and conflict can be overwhelming. I am glad to have a space to re-center with myself to be able to reconnect with people in an emphatic way and try to act to support them.”
  - “We use the IDGs framework in my company in Colombia (...). I love the IDGs framework to reach the goals of the SGDs”
  - “Understanding how we all are connected to each other and to the nature and all living beings - creates an automatic empathy and sense of responsibility to act for sustainable development.”
  - “Caring (aspirations) for myself, others, the biosphere and future generations is perhaps the most powerful energy to engage (more) towards the SDGs”
  - “Integrating these skills in my work on gender equality. I'm including the IDG video in all my conferences. In relation to how to approach leadership thar support Gender Equality.”
  - “For me the SDGs framework is a rather complex topic. But the work we have been doing today and during the past sessions is helping understand that every major change starts with little pieces of change. Being conscious and constant with small, step-by-step changes will get us to more impactful actions.”
- A person asked for more critical reflections about the link between personal and system change, particularly in relation to compassion and self-compassion: “I don't know yet – it's hard to tell putting yourself first OR the globe - seems like selfishness creates so many of the problems in the world - but then we're told to be self-compassionate - where does that end? I'm being self-compassionate at a cost to the planet or others - where does that end? More learning and thinking is needed here.”
- When asked about the method, tool or exercise that has been of particular relevance, again all methods and learning processes and activities were mentioned by some, including the compassion exercises from the online session, the group works, the nature walk, the 90 year-old exercise, bubble hopping, and the Miro tool. No method has been mentioned as not helpful. Some explicitly mentioned all methods: “All the tools we have used, I have really liked”. At the same time, the two compassion exercises were mentioned most often. In addition, several mentioned that the mindfulness exercises at the beginning of each module are important.
- Regarding possible ways of improving the module, most comments relate to wanting more of what has been offered (i.e. more exercises, time, exchange, content). At the same time there are demands for: i) supporting more guidance and engagement (in online sessions and between them), ii)

reconsidering the role of the country representatives and hub-related work as part of the course, and  
iii) offering more applied methods that can help to translate the learnings to participants' work context. Related quotes:

- "Have more practical exercises"
  - Support more engagement on the platform, "By giving more emphasis on spending time on Awaris portal. Maybe you can encourage participants to meet in pods and learn together."
  - Need to apply the learning: "apply the tools in what we work daily"
  - "Explaining more about how to become better at relating and the outcome of it."
  - "Provide written instructions before the exercises."
  - "I need to have a more clear understanding of what is happening within the Colombia hub. I am not finding a way to collaborate."
  - "The IDG country groups need more guidance, I'm not sure if the country leads were sure of what they were signing up to but our lead in Rwanda has been quite inactive."
  - "More guidance needed for the hubs."
  - "Maybe give recommended direction instead of totally empowering groups to lead themselves"
- ☐ The question came up why again another exercise was included in the Programme that is not part of the toolkit?

#### Selected quotes

- ☐ See above

#### Issues to be considered: reflections, open questions, and challenges

- ☐ See previous modules. Previously mentioned aspects got confirmed.

## Module 4- COLLABORATING

A total of **70 participants** were present, despite the fact that the session took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April during the Easter week. After the introduction to the fourth IDG cluster and associated inner capacities, updates were given from the national IDG centres, followed by a meditation exercise called "Just like me". Similar to the environmental compassion exercise, it is a mindfulness-informed practice that was adapted to the context of sustainability. After the exercise, participants were asked how they feel by writing into the chat (1). In the following, the participants were asked to engage in the action lab that has been focused on the establishment of national IDG centres. With the help of established rules for collaboration (shown on a slide), a method called WOOP was introduced, as well as a related Miro board. On this basis, the country teams were asked to work on capturing ideas, define expected outcomes, themes and initiatives for their national IDG centres. Finally, the participants were asked to fill in the post-module survey (2), before the session was closed with the presentation of some practical matters and next steps. The home practices during module 4 (on the app), included a compassion practice and a mindful nature walk (nature walk 4).



Figure 4: Participants' emotions shared during Module 4 as a result of the second learning activity.

### Summary of learnings, feedback, and impact

(1) The most dominant feelings after the exercise were connection and support (Figure 4). In the words of one participant: "Feeling of being together, walking a path of meaning and impact."

(2) A total of **34 (out of 70) participants answered** the survey.

- For most participants, the key learning and insight from the module related to: i) seeing the importance of collaborating for achieving change, ii) understanding that the previous clusters (and associated capacities) are a precondition for collaborating, and iii) identifying important processes and ways that support collaboration (e.g. listening, exchanging expectations, trusting the process, horizontal leadership, defining and planning the process, defining priorities, accepting other perspectives, testing and prototyping, need for time and patience). Some of the learnings were directly related to WOOP, which was considered a relevant planning tool. Related quotes:
  - "I think that this tool and most of the others from this training, have been tools that help you realize processes to promote the development of the SDG, in a closer time, to take action within ourselves and rapidly with the communities and people that surround us."
  - "Finding a way to facilitate collaborations/coalitions between organisations for action at scale, without dominating a goal-setting agenda."
  - "It will allow me to do a better planning of my collaboration initiatives."
  - "A good alignment tool for the group and a good framework to focus on goals, issues and getting things done."
- Few participants note that their learnings should involve the implementation of broader, institutional and system changes. One participant highlighted for instance that his/her insights regarding the importance of the IDGs would require revisions regarding the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.
- Overall, collaboration was seen as crucial for achieving the SDGs. In this context, qualities like listening, and an open mind were highlighted as key for collaborating. In addition, the relevance of bringing together people from within the same country and connecting them was seen as very valuable. Related quotes:



- “Collaboration first of all is about the attitude and mindset the collaboration partners meet and interact with. Any partnership for the SDGs (or particular SDGs) coming from a conscious and compassionate place helps. The relating goal category is probably key.”
- “The SDGs framework is a multilayer, complex structure that involves actors from a huge amount of sectors and interests. Communication and collaboration are key elements for the transdisciplinary work that needs to be done around sustainability.”
- Being asked about the method, tool or exercise that has been of particular relevance, both the Just Like Me meditation and the WOOP process were mentioned to the same extent, together with the individual and group reflection exercises, the action lab, the exercises from the app, and particular aspects of the online learning platform (e.g. design thinking ted talk). This also shows the power of combining meditation with more cognitive approaches (e.g. mindfulness with the WOOP process, for instance). In addition, also the importance of the teachers was highlighted. Some related quotes:
  - “Meditation exercise - it gives a moment of reflection, uniting with self, and reflecting on how we relate with our environment and people around us - this leads to the right mindset towards collaboration for success”
  - “The WOOP process was very helpful to structure the collective thought process and discussions”
  - “WOOP. It is almost too simple but that is the beauty of it. Gets you right to the point on how to advance”
  - “All methods are relevant”
  - “I really liked the humility, honesty and vulnerability with which Asa and Jeroen provide answers to the difficult questions all of us are raising. Thank you so much for being the way you are!”
- Overall, the participants are very happy about the module. Being asked about how the module or the methods, tools or exercises could be further improved, the following aspects were mentioned: i) to work more across personal, country and global levels, ii) be clearer/ more transparent from the beginning regarding the hidden objective to wanting to make people create country hubs, iii) the need to get more input/ understanding regarding the why and how regarding the IDGs before being instrumentalized for creating related hubs, iv) reconsidering the balance regarding learning about IDGs and its linkages to SDGs and planning for a country hub, v) need for more in-depth learning and continuous practice and exchange during and after the course, and vi) more/better guidance regarding applying the learnings to their everyday work. Related quotes:
  - “Making use of the feedback given.”
  - “I think the concepts of country and global can be integrated more.”
  - “It will be good if, from the beginning, we were informed that one of the major outcomes was building a center hub.”
  - “Would have been nice to have more reflexive moments about collaboration itself: why is collaboration so crucial? what are the different types of collaborations? what does it mean to be a good collaborator? What are some good practices? Am I a good collaborator and where can I improve? Etc. (theoretical and practical reflections on the topic itself)”
  - “Personalisation perhaps in concrete examples according to module locations. Each country has different cultural approaches, conception, realisation.”
  - “Cross country [instead of country-specific] action labs.”
  - “I think it would have been a bit better if we could focus on the core training of the five modules first and then talk about the setting up the center part later. So far, I have observed that we spent almost 50% of the time (last 2.5 sessions; 3rd, 4th and probably also 5th) in talking about 'setting up the country centers'.”
  - “We noticed a different understanding of the method online from the onsite, it needs a bit more interaction and connection between stakeholders something that can be initiated by you as a



homework. Also providing a programme on how we can share IDG method, providing guidelines on sharing IDG in our organisations and communities.”

- “There needs to be more ground on each of the IDGs aspects to develop skills internally before planning to expand to the outside.”
- “We need to practice them more often.. with IDG cohort and the non IDG cohort.”
- “I think it can have more time for tools and methods, the gathering groups could be done as a homework.”
- “Related homework before the session.”
- “Applicability of what we hear and read into what we do for living.”

### Selected quotes

- ☐ See above

### Issues to be considered: reflections, open questions, and challenges

- ☐ See previous modules. Previously mentioned aspects were confirmed by the points raised during this module (particularly regarding possible improvements of the Programme).
- ☐ For some, the idea of a country hub was not necessarily what they wanted/ needed or expected from the Programme. One person in this modules stated: “Honestly, today was the first time I felt connected to the idea of having a country center. I think it is a worthy endeavor, and I would like to become a part of it. So far, I have been quite silently participating in the sessions.”
- ☐ It seems as if those participants who engaged most in the online course platform were the ones who were most happy with the Programme, because they got a lot of input from there, which created a better balance between own learning, development and work versus the creation of IDG country hubs.

## Module 5- ACTING

The fifth and last module took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. During the online session the number of participants varied strongly. At the very beginning, there were only 38 participants, around 15 minutes later the number increased to **72 participants** for some time, and around **67 participants** who then stayed most of the time. The session started with an introduction to the fifth cluster and associated capacities. (In this context, also a Ted-Talk from the online course platform was recommended.) A short appreciative enquiry exercise followed – helping the participants to seeing the importance of appreciation and focusing on strengths, advantages, and/or opportunities to balance negativity bias that is natural in all humans. The participants were then asked to include in the chat what came up (1). After the exercise, the country representatives reported back on their respective IDG hubs/centres. After a short break, a group discussion followed to reflect about the participants’ learnings so far, as being a leader, and regarding one’s organisation and IDG community (local, national, international) (2). Finally, the post-programme survey was conducted (3), before the session was closed with some information regarding future activities (e.g. community of practice, Global IDG Summit). The home practices during module 5 (on the app) included a gratitude practice, a waking up the body practice, and a final nature walk (nature walk 5).

### Summary of learnings, feedback, and impact

- (1) All reactions were positive, expressing mostly a sense of calmness and/or being energized from the appreciative enquiry exercise.

(2) During the group discussion, one person shared that other people have seen a change in her, i.e. that she is now more calm and present compared to the beginning of the Programme. Another person mentioned that he did not feel fully comfortable in the beginning of the Programme as he lacked arguments regarding the relevance of linking IDGs and SDGs, and that related learning is not easy as it requires personal work on specific capacities (like on hope through e.g. the appreciative enquiry exercise) and discussions on how they connect/are relevant for the SDGs. Another person noted that the institutionalisation of the IDGs in governmental structures and policies is important, but that this also depends on the context, as the integration into social movements and the private sector might even be more important under certain circumstances.

(3) When the post-programme survey started, 86 participants were present, and 61 stayed until the end of the session. A total of 155 participants answered the pre-survey, and 66 participants answered the post-survey, including 47 matches. For details regarding outcomes, please see below.

#### **Selected quotes**

□ See quotes included in pre- and post-programme survey below.

#### **Issues to be considered: reflections, open questions, and challenges**

□ See previous modules. Previously mentioned aspects got confirmed.

## **3 Pre-Survey Assessment**

### **Number of participants in pre-survey: 155**

□ Question: “Which personal actions do you currently take that have an impact on sustainability? If possible please provide concrete examples.” Outcomes:

- Around 40% did not answer the question, i.e. they say what they do in their professional life in relation to individuals, or mention community level work. But there are also many great and in-depth answers, which cut across all areas of possible engagement (e.g. mobility, consumption, energy, water, food, biodiversity, communication and collaboration). The answers show that for most participants sustainability is a kind of calling, and therefore it is also an existing part of their actions across all levels. The mentioned actions focus on outer dimensions of sustainability. Some inner aspects/ measures are mentioned, but generally as being separate from people’s outer engagement. Some illustrative quotes:
  - “Saving water and energy, taking short and cold showers, being responsible with consumption, not one use plastic, plant, grow and take care of trees, I’m building a sustainable house right now with clean energies, I buy second hand clothes and buy what is necessary, I cook and use healthy food, exercise and meditate.”
  - “Separate my waste (organics - composting, recyclable and regular waste), reusing paper, bags, jars, etc., reuse greywater for plants, apply the if its yellow let it mellow... rule for toilets, ride my bike instead of driving as much as possible, using public transport, planting native species in our yard to support pollinators, using LED lights and efficient appliances, consuming mostly organic fruits and veggies, reducing my meat consumption, short showers and washing my hair only a couple of times a week, working from home, no air conditioning at home, shopping second hand as much as possible and donating things I don’t use, providing tips and advice to people who want to be more sustainable.”

- “My personal actions that have an impact on sustainability have mostly become a part of me and that includes not wasting food, walking instead using any other means of transportation, ensuring I reuse some tools/materials instead of buying new ones and also taking care of them so they can last long.”
  - “Practice gratitude, forgiveness and mindfulness, empathy and compassion. Utilizing resources mindfully and economically. Reach out to a lot of people to practice compassion”
  - “I started a personal blog on consciousness/mindfulness during Covid 19 because I saw the negative impact the fear was having on people at work. This blog has allowed me to make many connections with people, exchanging different tools to manage stress and I have learned and grow a lot also due to this interaction.”
  - “Democratic Innovation - support initiatives that promote the renewing of social contracts by expanding access, representation, and innovation in mechanisms for citizen participation. Support social movements for climate action, feminist movements for women participation in political decisions.”
  - “One of my greatest passions is diving with a purpose and raising awareness about the care of the marine ecosystem. I am training as a divemaster to be able to have more tools. One of my life decisions was to set up a company with a social focus, (...) the company where I work today and with which I have been working with my partners for eight years; our job is developing capacities oriented towards sustainability. I was a volunteer for more than ten years in social programmes, and today I continue giving my time to contribute with my knowledge in the places where people need me.”
  - “I have founded a social project in Milan - Italy to teach sustainability to kids through the creation of SDG games within Global Shapers Community. I moved to San José 6 months ago but I keep leading the project and supporting the team to activate new activities. In my daily life I try to orient my personal behavior based on the principles of sustainability. I work as SDG focal point at the United Nations.”
  - “In Rwanda we do Umuganda every last Saturday of the month.” (Umuganda = mandatory nationwide community work )
- Question: “Which other actions do you currently take in your wider community/ social life that have an impact on sustainability? If possible please provide concrete examples.” Outcomes:
- It is impressive to see how active the group of participants is, also at community level. Whilst some have misunderstood the question and, therefore, answered what they do in their private live context/family level, and others describe what they do in their work context at community level, most answered correctly and brought up many important examples. There is everything from lobbying for policy change, volunteering, to doing practical work on site (e.g. cleaning). The answers to this question confirm that it is a highly engaged group.
- Question: “Which actions do you currently take that have an impact on sustainability in the context of your professional life? If possible, please provide concrete examples.” Outcomes:
- Most people report on general sustainability-related engagement, from education, training, technological and financial intervention to policy-level work. Overall, hardly anybody explicitly works on integrating inner and/or addressing inner aspects in the sustainability work (at least not in how they presented their work). Out of these exceptions, most were related to education.
- Question: “What is your personal motivation for working on sustainability related issues?” Outcomes:
- It is impressive to see the deep motivation the participants have. The answers clearly show that the participants are a group of highly committed people who are strongly driven by intrinsic values, ethical concerns and a wish to contribute to flourishing for all generations to come.

Participants' motivation is very little about/ based on negative feelings or driven by negative experiences, instead it is rather driven by positive emotions and a wish to contribute to sustainability/ happiness/ contentment/ flourishing. Only two participants mention negative experiences/ impacts as a key driver (e.g. when being young/ dependence of African countries/ children on street). Only two participants mention their inner circle of loved ones as reason as opposed to wider circles and future generation / motivation. Also many mention a sense of connection with the environment. It is thus clear from the qualitative data that we will get a ceiling effect in the quantitative data analyses.

- Question: "What kinds of inner human qualities do you perceive as essential for addressing the sustainability-related challenges?" Outcomes:
  - The answers are very broad and overall quite different. For further outcomes regarding this aspect, see preliminary findings of the pre-programme survey presented in Module 1 as well as the full evaluation report by Rupprecht and Wamsler (2023).
- Question: "Comments - Do you have any comments or feedback about this survey (e.g. regarding the duration, the kind of questions)." Outcomes:
  - Interestingly, all participants liked the survey. Only one participant mentioned that it was a bit too long. Most other comments were positive, highlighting that the survey itself was helpful to reflect about oneself, one's work, one's engagement, and that it set a basis for the Programme. Related quotes: "The survey has helped me to reflect back things that I should be doing and haven't done in a while. Also, I think it kinda gave me a hint of what the Programme will be about and what it intends to develop in the participants." With the survey being scientifically grounded and developed based on the inner-outer transformation model and climate mainstreaming theory, this approach proved relevant both to capture important programme impacts and as a tool for reflection and supporting inner-outer transformation in itself.

## 4 Online Learning Platform Assessment

In the Being module, the online learning platform included a total of 934 entries, the Thinking module 470, the Relating module 430, the Collaborating module 371, and the Acting module 193. Whilst the numbers indicate a continuous decrease in participants' engagement in conversations and exchanging information on the learning platform, the decrease might also be related to the fact that the in-person conversations increased at the same time through the participation in the online sessions and joint preparatory work in-between the modules.

Overall, the entries were very positive and confirm the outcomes of the previous results (see module-specific outcomes above and the pre- and post-survey outcomes below). They also provide additional quotes that show the importance and relevance of different methods.

Illustrative quotes from the learning platform for module 3 – regarding the meditative/contemplative practices, value tree and Miro board: "Establishing connectedness to our focal SDG through the IDGs - what a powerful linkage. I feel, relating through compassion, empathy, gratitude and appreciation can be the key to unlock our apathy towards the SDGs and all living beings."

Illustrative quotes from the learning platform for module 4 – regarding meditative/contemplative practices on the app: "Thank you so much for sharing this practice through App that helped me to broaden and expand my perspective about other's need and wellbeing. It can be defined as sharing,

developing, and sustaining of meaningful relationships with others. This allows me to feel authentic, valued, and provides a sense of connectedness as well as belonging in various situations.”

## 5 Post-Survey Assessment

**Number of participants post-survey:** We received a total of 66 answers.

□ Question: “If possible please provide concrete examples of new sustainability-related actions in your private life.” Outcomes:

- Overall, **42 (out of 66) participants report on new activities.** In addition, their responses show that several participants started to: i) add to the many practical measures that they were already taking at the beginning of the course also more inner work, ii) engage more in sustainability actions that are good at a personal level for wellbeing and link them more actively to broader sustainability, iii) connect more with like-minded people, iv) focus more on relationships, v) show more systematic and conscious integration of sustainability-related actions in their private life, and vi) engage more in practices aimed to connect with nature. The answers also indicate that the meditation exercises have in this context been key for many (note: related answers were included without being asked about this topic). Illustrative quotes:
  - “I include mindfulness practices, and look more actively to secure a balance in my personal life.”
  - “I returned to my mindfulness practices and enjoying even my walks and conversations. I am connecting with SDGs in my life, at home and at work... sharing thoughts with the ecosystem ... inspiring as much as I can the people around me. I am paying attention to what is happening related to SDGs and the way I can connect and contribute I am generating conversations to co-create and move to action starting with my family and friends.”
  - “I am eating healthier, walking more instead of using private transportation.”
  - “I feel more and more conscious of acting in a way that is committed to building transparent, open, committed and caring relationships; and of creating environments that protect the environment (recycling, consuming less for example) and promote sustainability.”
  - “Taking into account that sustainability encompasses three dimensions (social, economic and environmental) I have been able to implement specific sustainable actions in my private life, especially related to the social and environmental areas. My family and I are now part of a recycling programme in our community and also attend discussion panels about effective social and emotional practices at our local public library.”
  - “Every single meditation and exercise of the App has been important for my daily life, I use them to take a break or when i feel so tired, or when I feel stress. The readings of the platform have helped me to calm, bring ideas to work with my team, they have seen changes in me, we are breathing together, we are sharing, listening to each other and I’m planning more actions to work with them. I’m appreciating more every member of my team, being conscious of their competences and skills. I’m also more conscious about nature, love it, observing it”
  - “Being present is one of my incomes from this programme, I enjoy the present with my body, mindset, and soul. Each week could include meditation practices and walks in nature.”
  - “I do more walks in nature and appreciate more my surroundings. I live in Costa Rica and sometimes, I think we take things for granted!”
  - “I am trying to realize about my own vulnerability. Feeling compassion for others.”
  - “Meditation, empathy walks and journaling.”

- Question: “Which new actions do you currently take in your wider community/ social life? If possible please provide concrete examples.” Outcomes:
  - This question did not function in the survey. However, some participants reported on related measures under individual changes, and it was also clear from the pre-survey that all participants have been extremely active in this field already before the programme. Moreover, the survey included numeric questions regarding community engagement, which should an increased engagement. See Rupprecht and Wamsler (2023).
- Question: “If possible please provide concrete examples of new sustainability-related actions in your professional life.” Outcomes:
  - A total of **52 (out of 66) participants report on concrete, new sustainability-related actions in their professional life.** The answers show that both people with long-lasting experience and people with lower levels of experience gain equally from engaging in IDGs and the related leadership programme. The reported changes/actions include: i) being better at prioritizing work, ii) connecting to and engaging in new networks and communities of practice (including having increased engagement in IDG centers), iii) creating new lines of action, including giving increased attention to communication, and integrating IDGs into one’s work context. The latter is mostly related to education (all levels) and communication, but also to the modification of working approaches and processes, policies and project development. Note: It is clear from the answers that many participants had an interest in working with the IDGs/ being part of the Programme in order to apply the framework in their teaching and coaching work. Illustrative quotes:
    - “I have been able to bring in some of the IDG into my coaching practice. I have also started a listeners club.”
    - “Participation in the development of integrated development plans and local area plans. Participating in drafting policies and policy briefs”.
    - “My mission in life has been to serve... I have been consciously dedicated to that for more than 25 years... now I support my own company dedicated to social inclusion and making it a strategy for big companies. I feel more empowered and supported to do that since I have the knowledge and connect the dots with IDGs in my daily challenges. I love this community of co-creation and feel the power to go on... in every conversation, conference, pitch that I am leading IDGs is imperative and every time I feel more comfortable and clear of the way INNER is first. Working on sustainability under conscious capitalism and triple impact... I have to be coherent to inspire ... learning every day.”
    - “When I give lessons to my students, previously I spoke about Renewable energy resources technically, now I am focusing to their attitude, to their critical thinking about the issue, to their creativity to their openness for the new means of learning.”
    - “In my work as a psychologist/psychotherapist and as a university professor I have incorporated the dimensions of sustainability and inner development in my teaching and emotional accompaniment.”
    - “Developed new corporate responsibility policy more aligned to the IDGs.”
    - “I have been working with the Office for Sustainability at my university to find the best possible ways of adopting and implementing the IDGs framework within the institution and the community it serves.”
    - “New proposals for community leaders that incorporate IDGs.”
    - “Making stronger connections in my workplace, promoting sustainability related programmes with more enthusiasm.”
    - “We in San José de las Vegas, were working on the SDG’s before, we had a manifesto and decided the actions, but with the IDGs I have started a pathway to transform inside and learn



how to do it, before I knew we had to do things, but with the skills is different because it gives clarity about how to behave and act in small to impact big. Children at my school are talking now about themselves related to nature, are aware of what they do daily and are having openings everyday with teachers to train their minds. Families are also reacting and talking about eating healthier and taking care of nature...”

- “Starting meeting asking my colleagues how they are doing/ feeling.”
- Check-in activities about how we do feel and breath exercises.”
- “We started to integrate the IDG framework to our portfolio of services so that since the course started all proposals in this period of time (approximately 5) have the content of the five dimensions.”
- “I am using the IDGS in my work place with colleagues and stakeholders to improve our well-being reflecting in our performance and projects. I had included the IDGs in the course of innovation and sustainability for the Engineering Masters (...) as a way to foster soft skills in order to innovate from human centered. We are including in the training and education programmes the IDGs for rural and indigenous communities.”
- “Include the IDGs as part of our methodological approach to facilitate partnerships on climate action, and youth employability. We are planning to dedicate one episode of our podcast on Climate Action and inner development. Also, we are looking to incorporate the IDGs in our national training programme on Effective Partnerships for Sustainable Development, where participants develop a partnership proposal based on an SDG.”

□ Question: “If possible, please provide concrete examples as to how the programme has helped you to strengthen SDG-related work.” Outcomes:

- A total of **64 (out of 66) participants report concrete examples as to how the programme has helped to strengthen their SDG-related work.** Note: There is overlap between this and the previous answers, which does however make sense when they work on the SDGs in general. In sum, many advancements related to: i) increasing collaboration locally, nationally and internationally, ii) better quality interactions, iii) institutionalizing the IDGs (e.g. integration into HR monitoring, development of action plans, funding structures, collaboration applying certain methods (or other learnings) from the course in the context of one’s own work, mainly related to education, iv) increased understanding of the needs of different stakeholder groups for better decision-taking, and v) increasing on one’s own resilience to be able to sustain sustainability work. At the same time, several participants also note that they have not yet upscaled their learnings from the individual to the organisational level, as they are still trying to understand and digest the learnings from the Programme. From the answers it also becomes clear that many of the participants have roles of educators/coaches, both for professionals working in sustainability and for local stakeholders etc. (which has limited measures in other fields). Illustrative quotes:

- “Include the IDGs as part of our methodological approach to facilitate partnerships on climate action, and youth employability. We are planning to dedicate one episode of our podcast on Climate Action and inner development. Also, we are looking to incorporate the IDGs in our national training programme on Effective Partnerships for Sustainable Development, where participants develop a partnership proposal based on an SDG.”
- “Implementing the IDGs - capacity building for our stakeholders to empower them and strengthen their own contribution on national level as this helps us all work together and collaborate between diff sectors; Suggesting its implementation as a sustainable practice that impacts positively and contributes to increase the resilience of our national programmes of Road Safety and work with Youth; of organisations and also SMEs that I consult. The IDGs have given me a better vision to sustainable growth over time for the teams I work with; have given



- me a vision on how to connect our programmes goals to a greater good; for our SDG related work is a strategic advantage for now and the future.”
- “Reducing inequality by caring for others and the environment. Climate action by enhancing the power of nature through nature walks and talks.”
  - “As an organisation we are collaborating more and focusing on specific SDGs and identifying stakeholders to work with. We have also realized the need to work more with communities who are impacted more with the identified SDGs.”
  - “We do work in Education/Gender/Employment and putting together an IDG training that addresses this. We will be doing the same for climate.”
  - “Not the organisation yet but how I do approach work.”
  - “I am managing two European projects focused on renewable energy and energy efficiency, (...). Both of them have as objective education of HR to develop and implement action plans. We are going to involve also some indicators based on IDG.”
  - “Our work promotes collaborations between charities and philanthropic organisations, to this end this training programme has enhanced our concept for a crowd funding platform.”
  - “Using the IDG Collaborating, I have started evaluating which aspects of my work could be achieved better through partnerships with other related organisations. We have made efforts to partner with other organisations working to reduce hunger and promoting gender empowerment in the agric sector.”
  - “I understand it myself much better and now I am interested in doing it in a more sustainable way rather than just finish the project.”
  - “We are learning to incorporate the IDGs into our work taking into account the SDGs.”
  - “It has helped me as a manager, to consider new dimensions within the work and programmes that we offer to our public. It has influenced the rhetoric we use to communicate. It has helped consider new and further alliances with other SDG related organisations. It has helped imagine new design opportunities.”
  - “The programme has helped me to understand even better the people we target and plan to impact. Through relating ourselves with them it has helped us to understand their needs on a deep level and had to make better decisions than before.”
  - “Networking with others in the course and inspire by others work”; “Learning what other organisations are doing and seeking collaboration”
  - “At this point, I am processing the information, the reflections and the insights provided by the programme. My objective is to have a further approach with the organisational leaders to explore how to actually strengthen the work the Foundation is doing in relation with the IDGs.” (note: lack of clearance as to how to apply things)
  - Some answers show the need of (increased knowledge on) mutually mainstreaming sustainability and IDGs: “One way IDGs can strengthen organisations’ SDG-related work is by providing a clear understanding of the SDGs and how they relate to the organisations’ operations. By raising awareness of the SDGs and their relevance to the organisation, employees are more likely to embrace sustainable practices in their daily work. Establishing clear goals and targets for each SDG, this involves identifying areas where the organisation can make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy, and setting measurable targets for improvement. By tracking progress towards these targets, the organisation can identify areas where it needs to improve and take action to address any gaps.” Another example: “In my company we had previously worked on human development issues but we did not have a framework that embraced the contents from a strategic point of view. This has allowed us to

use the GDI framework to give it a thematic umbrella and a greater theoretical argument. Our focus is the human being, which is why it is the IDGs that allow us to impact the SDGs.”

- “A great example is Credimarket a financial inclusion solution that enhances the quality of life of people living in rural areas, supported by a solidarity economy model that provides these populations with education and financial products that allow them to develop in a sustainable way (SDG 1, 8 and 10). We have included some methodologies from IDGs in the education programmes in order to foster collaboration among communities and stakeholders.”
- “The programme has pushed me to think, reflect, and not get overwhelmed by initiating climate-smart supply chain intervention work in agriculture.”
- “The IDGs training programme contributed to strengthening the idea that positive social change starts with each one of us. In this sense, the programme was useful in reinforcing ideas and practices of self-awareness, responsibility, nonviolence and compassion, among others that lead to a reflective practice and concrete actions. For instance, I trained my students on nonviolent communication and appreciative inquiry and asked them to consciously apply these tools in their daily interactions. After a week of rigorous practice, they started not only to do it naturally but also, they notice that their interactions (on campus and outside) improved significantly. Of course, this is an initial assessment but more research and evaluation would be needed to deepen our knowledge of the impact of these tools at the individual and social dimensions.”
- “In my work with incarcerated individuals, I have implemented spaces for active listening where participants can share how they feel, the energy they bring to the space, and feel identified with their peers.”
- “I am able to apply or consider cognitive skills in the design of projects/programmes. I am able to work well on myself as I work with others. I am more present in meetings and various events.”

□ Question: “Which course-related information, activities, practices or methods were most relevant for strengthening these Sustainable Development Goals?” Outcomes:

- Literally all modules, methods and learning processes and activities have been mentioned by someone, including the networking and collaborative tasks as well as the creation of a safe, transformative space for reflection and learning. Several even explicitly mentioned that all methods were helpful. Interestingly, the mindfulness-informed practices (mentioned in different wording, such as meditation, walks, breath spaces, etc.) were those methods that were mentioned most often and seem to have provided the participants with a good basis for other approaches. The outcomes also indicate that the IDG framework has provided for most participants a useful framework for their learning. Illustrative quotes:

- “I loved all the methodologies, have used many of the videos for sharing information within the company.”
- “All the course material was a great learning source and very relevant to the current situation.”
- “All content was most relevant for strengthening our work in the design and implementation of regenerative cultures, aligned to SDGs and IDGs.”
- “Practically all the sessions of the course have helped to strengthen them.”
- “The framework itself.”
- “La metodología me gustó mucho: trabajo personal asincrónico desde la plataforma que me llevaba a desarrollar ejercicios personales de reflexión, de acción, más las reuniones grupales por países, más las reuniones grupales por temáticas. los recursos pedagógicos me sirvieron mucho así como la app para tener en mi celular.”
- “The App with the meditations, the awareness of nature, the articles and Teds about collaborative teams, well it is difficult for me to choose, I just went step by step and have so many more things to share and implement in my life.”

- “IDG framework and online learning modules.”
  - “Seeing each other, talking with each other as brothers and sisters.”
  - “One of the most crucial inner development goals is self-awareness. Self-awareness involves understanding one’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It helps individuals recognize their strengths and weaknesses, identify their values and beliefs, and understand how they interact with others. By developing self-awareness, individuals can make conscious choices that align with their values and goals. Practicing mindfulness is also an essential inner development goal. Mindfulness involves being present in the moment without judgment or distraction. It helps individuals reduce stress and anxiety, improve focus and concentration, and increase overall well-being. By practicing mindfulness regularly, individuals can cultivate a greater sense of inner peace and calm. In addition to the above-mentioned goals, building resilience is also crucial for inner development. Resilience involves the ability to bounce back from setbacks or challenges. It includes developing coping strategies for dealing with stress and adversity effectively. By building resilience, individuals can overcome obstacles and challenges more effectively and develop a greater sense of confidence in their abilities. In conclusion, inner development goals are essential for personal growth and improvement. They involve cultivating self-awareness, developing emotional intelligence, practicing mindfulness, and building resilience.”
  - “There are several activities that I really liked: the envisioning exercise, the 90 year old exercise, the TED talks and Jerome’s nature talks, among others, all of them contributed to raise key points related to inner development and how important it is to understand ourselves as part of a larger system, not at the core (anthropocentric vision) but rather just a component.”
  - “I have appreciated setting time aside for my inner development. The session agenda was well balanced, incorporating activities, moments to reflect, share, practice mindfulness and presence. I plan on incorporating into my professional practice.”
- Question: “If possible, please elaborate on the inner changes you experienced. Has the course led to changes in the way you relate to yourself, others and/or nature.” Outcomes:
- In sum, the changes in relation to self cut across all clusters, from being more present, more balanced, more considerate of others, to being more optimistic and hopeful. Most dominant is the reported increase in presence, self-awareness and compassion. Several comments relate to seeing common humanity and feeling more connected with nature. Whilst most comments related to changes to self, all levels of change were present in the answers, and several participants mentioned all levels and even how they are interrelated. Exemplary quotes:
    - “I became more conscious about my values, as a starting point to review my life plan and align as much as possible my actions to them. This has been a key element for me, since it allows me to be more coherent, and trust more in my decisions and the way they will lead me to happiness and the impact I want to have in the world. I also became more aware about what I need to take care of myself in an integral way. I love the journaling exercise, and it has become a habit now. I appreciate much more the privilege that I have to love close to nature, and I take the time to contemplate and be thankful. Also, I became more aware of the importance to take better care of my family relationship, dedicate more quality time to them.”
    - “I am more present, but I have to say it is still hard, given my level at the organisation I work for, the multiple themes and issues I have to handle, both professionally and personally and the challenge of the times.”
    - “I realized that we share so much as individuals despite coming from different regions. We can learn so much from each other.”
    - “More aware of the importance of doing mindfulness in my life.”
    - “Motivation, Optimism.”

- “I take a pause and think I have a more mindful approach. And I listen to my inner person as I walk through my thoughts and opinions.”
  - “I have started to be intentional about how I relate with people and valuing how I feel.”
  - “Totally, I feel more connected to my emotions and feelings. I am more aware of what I am thinking and there is more space between the thought, feeling and actions.”
  - “I had a wrong pull to act from coherence. With the compass the immunity to change, the being spaces with the walks and the meditations I realized I needed to make some changes long overdue and did them.”
  - “Since 6 years ago, I have been working for people’s well-being, human development and productivity, for which the programme has strengthened my human, social and communication skills.”
  - “Able to be more empathetic to my team, while also delivering effective feedback to them - and having the courage to do so with honesty but also kindness.”
  - “Working at an NGO that already places tons of attention on self-awareness, sustainability, empathy and action towards SDGs and IDGs to some extent, I believe I am not a “beginner”, so the changes might feel less strong. Though, I have taken on new practical measures that help me be more present -which I struggle with at the moment- and remind me of the importance of the work. Compassion has been key.”
  - “I just feeling plenty of hope.”
  - “For me it has been the confirmation of my own search. I have been exposed to similar information / activities along my career. However, I have appreciated the integration effort of the IDGs of putting it all together in the framework. The potential I see in the opportunity of the spirit of co-creating (beyond personal efforts) is really something that has deeply touched me.”
  - “Inner changes lead to increased self-awareness, allowing me to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and values. This increased self-awareness leads to a more positive relationship with oneself by promoting self-acceptance and self-love. Also, promoted empathy that lead to stronger interpersonal relationships by improving communication and understanding between others. Along with environmental awareness that lead to a greater appreciation for the natural world and a desire to protect it. It further leads to a more sustainable lifestyle and a deeper connection with the environment.”
  - “The course has certainly helped me in bringing the desired positivity within me and influencing the people around so as to achieve common sustainable development goals.”
  - “I would not give full credit to the course, but being in this training process reinforces and reaffirms the conviction of the universal connection.” (note: this was the only not 100% positive comment that was given as an answer to the question).
- Question: “Which course-related information, activities, practices or methods were most relevant for strengthening these inner capacities?” Outcomes:
- Similar to before, all methods, learning activities and approaches were mentioned by some. Overall, mindfulness-informed methods were mentioned most. Related quotes:
    - “They are all well designed and I learned a lot from them, but the one about collaboration has been very important for me, I’m still finishing the one about acting, but I have to say that I have not seen myself as an activist, because I thought it was not important or that it was for crazy people... hehe... now I’m feeling in a way as an activist in my community, I didn’t realize before that I could help to transform a lot. On the other side, as I said, the exercises of awareness helped me a lot.”

## 6 Conclusions and Way Forward

**Overall, the qualitative results show the relevance of inner development, the IDG framework and associated methods to support human flourishing and accelerate change towards sustainability in the focus countries.** More specifically, the qualitative analyses showed the following key programme outcomes:

- Participants' engagement and satisfaction were high. The overall structure, safe space and methods provided were highly appreciated by the participants and were said to have nurtured participants' inner capacities, such as self-awareness, inner compass, feelings of connection, hope, and collective agency. All learning activities and methods were mentioned by some participants. This indicates that learning is highly individual and context-specific, and inner-outer transformation lies in the combination and diversity of learning activities and methods offered.
- The Programme influenced how participants relate to themselves, others and nature in ways that have shown to support shifts towards more sustainable, relational narratives. Because the roots of sustainability crises lie in a culturally entrenched story of *separation*, fostering such fundamental aspects of connection to self, others and nature are key to support action-taking for sustainability.
- Importantly, the Programme also considerably increased action-taking for sustainability across individual, organisational and system levels. The latter involved an increased engagement in integrating/ mainstreaming measures that link inner and outer dimensions of sustainability into participants' organisations and field of work, a key factor for accelerating transformation. It involved concrete changes and modification of organisations' working approaches and processes (including regulations and policies, financing, cooperation, networking, and project management).

The results also indicate ways to further improve follow-up programmes. Despite appreciation for the overall structure and approach of the Programme, several participants struggled with linking their learnings and insights from the different modules and methods and translating them to their working context. In addition, the level of engagement and project impacts also varied strongly across the participating countries (with Costa Rica highest and Rwanda lowest). To address this, follow-up programmes should:

- Create a clearer 'red thread' throughout participants' learning journey, by weaving modules and methods more tightly together. This is crucial to help participants better understand that the IDG clusters and skills are highly interrelated and why and how they relate to the SDGs.
- Ensure equal opportunities and consideration of participants' different needs in terms of the offered content and methods (e.g., considering simplification of operations due to logistical and technical challenges, reducing group sizes, decolonizing and diversifying methodological approaches).
- Put more emphasis on translating participants' learnings to their everyday work, and helping them understand how to link individual, collective, and systemic change to challenge current unsustainable approaches, norms, and paradigms. The latter requires systematic mainstreaming and consideration of all aspects of the mind-sustainability nexus in all sector work.
- Better support continuous inner development practice and institutionalisation of integrated measures, both throughout and after the Programme (e.g., through communities of practice) to ensure sustainable engagement and transformation across individual, collective and system levels.
- Finally, it is crucial to better balance participants' learning and accelerating their SDG-related work (versus instrumentalising the Programme for establishing IDG hubs). Explicitly stated intended learning outcomes would help in this context and would provide better guidance for follow-up impacts assessments.

On the basis of the described outcomes, further research is needed to:

- Better understand context-specific differences and needs related to inner skills and methods needed to support the SDGs.
- Improve methods that nurture inner skills needed to support flourishing and wellbeing across individual, collective and system levels. In this context it is relevant to note that contemplative (mindfulness and compassion-informed) approaches were shown to be important ingredients for supporting all IDG clusters and levels—Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting. How they can be best adapted to the context of sustainability and be combined with other methods requires however further enquiry.
- Improve approaches to assess the link between IDGs and SDGs through innovative, mixed-methods approaches, particularly if target groups are highly experienced experts that score high on conventional inner development scales. Importantly, the inner-outer transformation model and associated mainstreaming theory that guided our qualitative and some quantitative assessments was shown to be highly relevant to identify impact. Further research is needed to explore how they could guide further assessments, such as the development of quantitative scales, AI-supported and narrative-based approaches.
- Better understand the underlying processes for supporting organisational and cultural narrative shifts and mobilizing change for sustainability, and the potential of the IDG framework in this regard.
- Further explore the design and impact of measures that can be taken to mainstream and institutionalise inner development and inner-outer transformation to rattle unsustainable norms, cultures, and systems.<sup>5</sup>

To conclude, our results indicate that inner development is relevant for supporting human flourishing and accelerating action towards the SDGs. Whilst such inner-outer transformation processes are highly complex, the results highlight the importance of inner skills for individual, collective and planetary wellbeing. Importantly, they also indicate that the IDGs provide a communication framework that can support related endeavors.

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<sup>5</sup> For related publications, please see <https://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com/general-3-1> (The Contemplative Sustainable Futures Programme, LUCSUS).



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