

A large, gnarled tree trunk with thick, exposed roots in a forest setting. The roots are thick and twisted, extending from the base of the trunk down into the ground. The background is a dense forest with green foliage.

# Mindfulness & sustainability

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[www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com](http://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com)

# Sustainability work



Finding solutions to **complex, global challenges** that **threaten the existence** of humanity and the planet.

Solutions that allow us to meet **current needs**, without compromising the ability of **future generations** to meet their own needs.



Why it is important to address inner dimensions  
for accelerating sustainability?

And what role can mindfulness play in this context?

# 3 Key messages



**Key message 1:**

**Current approaches  
are insufficient**



## 1a: Situation

- Current sustainability approaches have not catalyzed the necessary change.

Polycrisis: We face an ecological catastrophe, a worldwide mental health crisis, poverty, war, political turmoil, etc.

## 1b: Reasons

- Current approaches treat sustainability challenges, such as climate change, as external threats or crises.
- The way we define problems automatically determines our responses (external threats require external solutions).
- Current policy approaches are based on the knowledge-deficit model, which is not correct.
- Professional silos regarding sustainability and personal development work.

**Key message 2:**

**There is a new scientific field that addresses current gaps**



## 2a: Science

- A new field has emerged that looks at the interface between inner development, behavior, culture and system transformation (inner transformation for sustainability).

It is increasingly acknowledged by key players (e.g., UNDP, UNESCO, latest IPCC and IPBES reports).

## 2b: Contributions

- Sustainability challenges are a reflection of an inner, human crisis: Separation from self, others, nature as an integral element of modern life.
- Our inner dimensions (defined as our individual and collective beliefs, values, worldviews and associated inner capacities) are **deep leverage points for change**.
- There are complementary ways to address inner and outer dimensions across individual, collective and system levels.



# Key message 3:

Scientific evidence for  
the importance of  
mindfulness across  
scales



## 3a: Potential

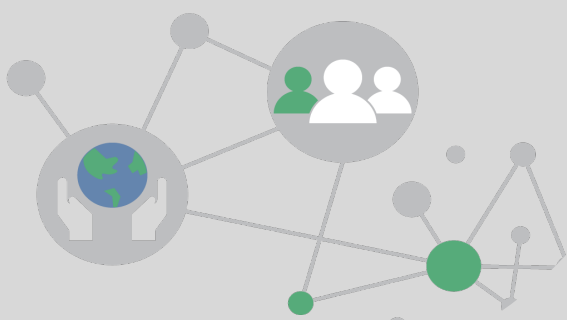
- If we trace the roots of today's sustainability challenges through a culturally entrenched story of separation, we can clearly see the potential role of mindfulness (and related indigenous approaches).

It entails an exploration and shift in how we relate (being, thinking acting).

## 3b: Impact

Mindfulness can nurture:

- More sustainable paradigms and cultures by addressing the root causes of today's polycrisis.
- Resilience by better dealing with challenging experiences and emotions (stress, anxiety).
- Sustainable behavior and decision-making by overcoming certain habits of mind and biases.
- Transformative capacities: engagement and systemic policy integration for sustainability.



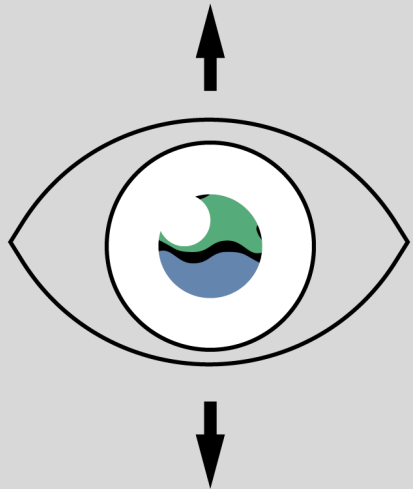
Shifting behaviour  
across levels



Nurture transformative  
capacities (mindsets)



Shifting systems  
(institutionalization)



Shifting paradigms/  
cultures

**Mindfulness can serve as  
an essential foundation**



Resilience  
(reduced impacts)

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04367-0> OPEN

# Mindfulness and consumer behavior: a bibliometric analysis of themes and trends over 20 years

Maria-Angeles Iniesta-Bonillo<sup>1,2</sup>, Alinne Pompeu-Queiros<sup>2</sup>, Maria Mercedes Capobianco Uriarte<sup>3</sup> & Helena Alves<sup>3</sup>IJSHE  
20,6

1002

Received 27 December 2018  
Revised 15 April 2019  
29 June 2019  
Accepted 1 July 2019

## How mindfulness training cultivates introspection and competence development for sustainable consumption

Pascal Frank and Anna Sundermann

*Institute for Environmental and Sustainability Communication (INFU),  
Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany, and*

Daniel Fischer

*Institute for Environmental and Sustainability Communication (INFU),  
Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany and  
School of Sustainability, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA*

## The Role of Mindfulness Practice in Warding Off Despair and Sustaining Ecological Action in the Context of Existential Threat

Karen Rennie Grossman

Original Manuscript

# Meditating for the Planet: Effects of a Mindfulness-Based Intervention on Sustainable Consumption Behaviors

Environment and Behavior  
1–31

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DOI: 10.1177/0013916519880897  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/eab](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/eab)Sonja M. Geiger<sup>1</sup> , Daniel Fischer<sup>2</sup> ,  
Ulf Schrader<sup>1</sup>, and Paul Grossman<sup>3</sup>What the Mind has to do with the Climate Crisis  
Mindfulness and compassion as pathways to a more  
sustainable future. By Christine WamslerSustain Sci (2018) 13:143–162  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-017-0428-2>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Mindfulness in sustainability science, practice, and teaching

Christine Wamsler<sup>1</sup> · Johannes Brossmann<sup>1</sup> · Heidi Hendersson<sup>1</sup> ·  
Rakel Kristjansdottir<sup>1</sup> · Colin McDonald<sup>1</sup> · Phil Scarampi<sup>1</sup>Sustainability Science (2018) 13:1121–1135  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-017-0524-3>

REVIEW ARTICLE

## Mind the gap: The role of mindfulness in adapting to increasing risk and climate change

Christine Wamsler<sup>1</sup>

Ecological Economics 151 (2018) 55–61

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Ecological Economics

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ecocon](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ecocon)

## Mindsets for Sustainability: Exploring the Link Between Mindfulness and Sustainable Climate Adaptation

Christine Wamsler<sup>a,b,c,\*</sup>, Ebba Brink<sup>a</sup>

# Mindful Eco-Wellness: Steps Toward Personal and Planetary Health

Bruce Barrett, MD, PhD<sup>1</sup> , Sarah Walters, BS<sup>1</sup>,  
Mary M. Checovich, MS<sup>1</sup>, Maggie L. Grabow, PhD, MPH<sup>1</sup>,  
Cathy Middlecamp, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Beth Wortzel, MA, LSCW<sup>3</sup>,  
Kaitlin Tetrault, MB<sup>4</sup>, Kevin M. Riordan, BA<sup>5,6</sup>, and  
Simon Goldberg, PhD<sup>5,6</sup>Mindfulness (2024) 15:1621–1637  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-024-02393-8>

REVIEW



## Methods and Environmental Conditions Typical of Nature-Based Mindfulness Practice: A Scoping Review

Teneal Burger<sup>1</sup> · Johan C. Potgieter<sup>1</sup> · Werner Nell<sup>2</sup>

## Mindfulness and our changing climate: there's no place like home

Shelby C. Gash<sup>1</sup> · Karl J. Maier<sup>2,3</sup> Accepted: 12 September 2024 / Published online: 26 September 2024  
© AEES 2024

## Article

# Fostering collective climate action and leadership: Insights from a pilot experiment involving mindfulness and compassion

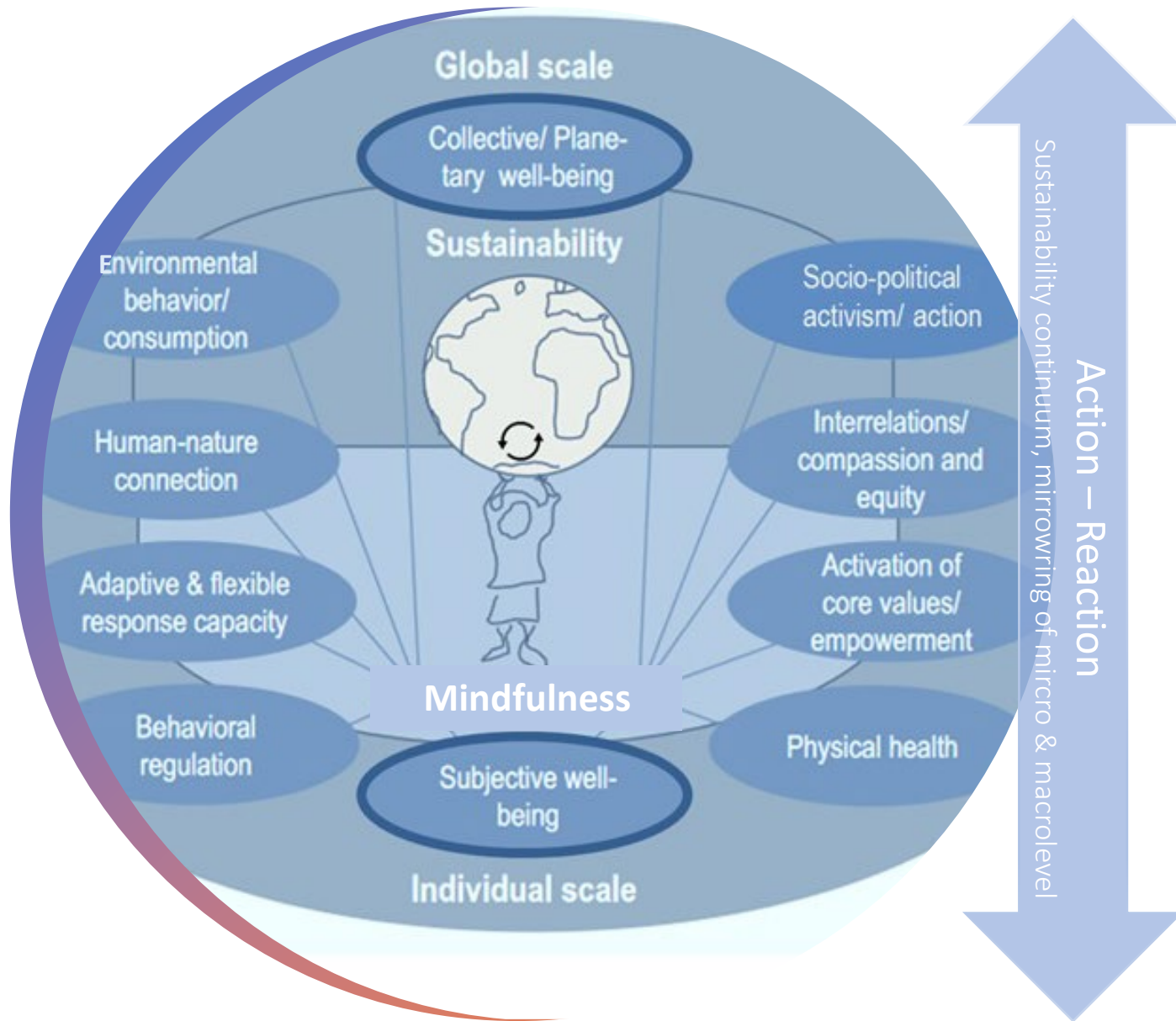
Lena Ramstetter,<sup>1</sup> Silke Rupperecht,<sup>2</sup> Luis Mundaca,<sup>3</sup> Walter Osika,<sup>4</sup> Cecilia U.D. Stenfors,<sup>5</sup> Johannes Klackl,<sup>6</sup>  
and Christine Wamsler<sup>7,8,\*</sup>Journal of Cognitive Enhancement (2021) 5:118–139  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s41465-020-00180-6>

REVIEW



## The Way Forward in Mindfulness and Sustainability: a Critical Review and Research Agenda

Ute B. Thiermann<sup>1</sup> · William R. Sheate<sup>1</sup>Global Advances in Integrative Medicine and Health  
Volume 13: 1–13  
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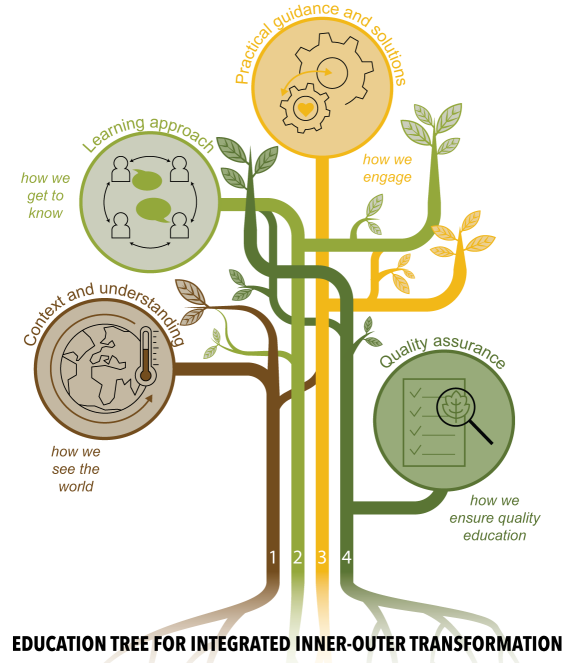
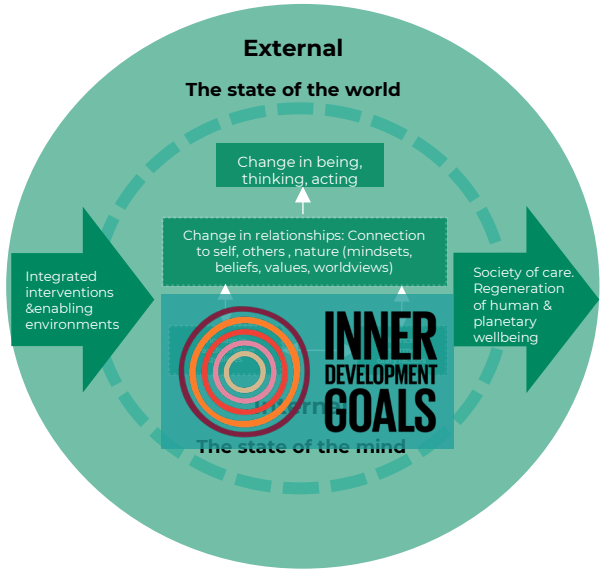
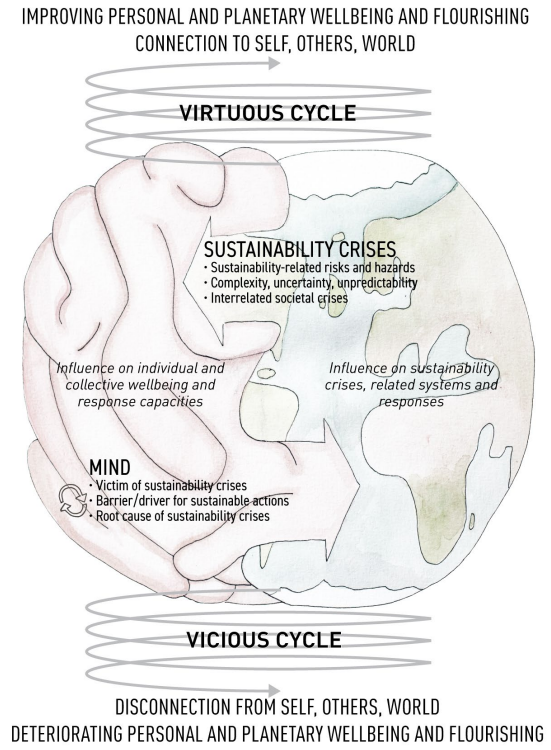
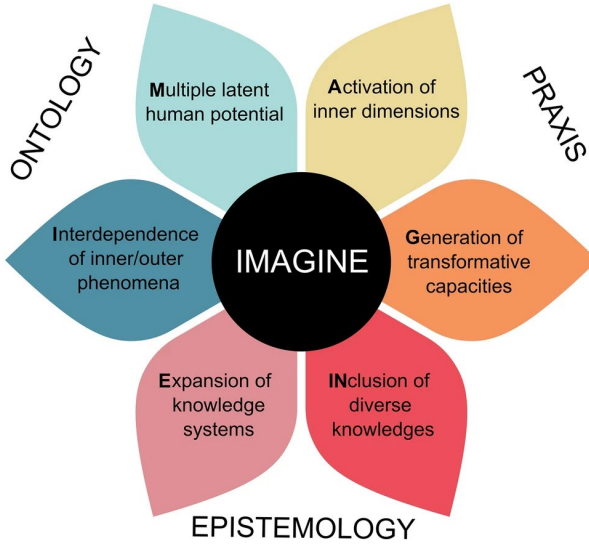


# Triple Wellbeing

Framework for contemplative scientific inquiry, practice and education in sustainability

Sources: Wamsler 2019, 2021

# Why, what and how?

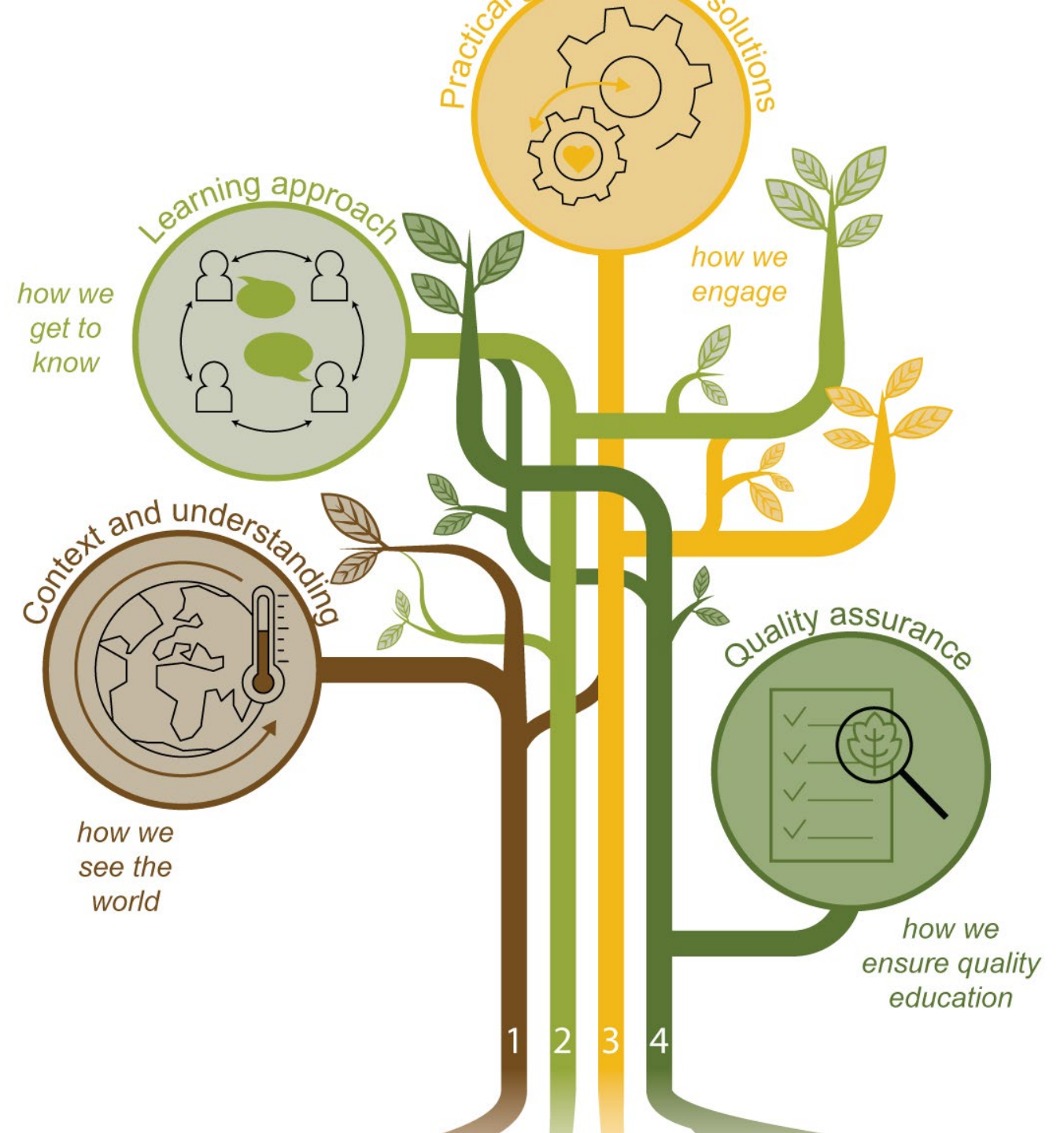


Sources: Ives et al. 2023, Wamsler and Bristow 2022; Wamsler et al. 2021, 2024, IDGs 2024

# Guidance for designing courses aimed to accelerate sustainability through linking inner and outer transformation

Incorporates all other models.  
Linked to course evaluations.

Note: Recording explaining the model available on [youtube](#).

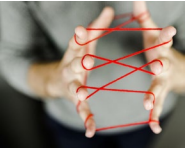


# Mindfulness-related courses that link inner & outer transformation

How can we best expand related  
methods & curricula?

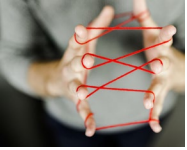






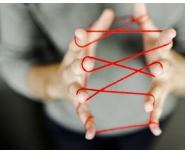
## **Courses by Lund University (development and research)**

- Practice labs that form part of the courses ‘Sustainability and inner transformation’, ‘Psychology and climate change’, ‘Urban and rural systems and sustainability’.



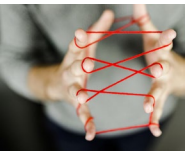
## **Courses by non-profit organizations (research and co-development)**

- Climate-leadership program ‘Beyond’ by the Inner Green Deal.
- ‘Mindfulness-based sustainable transformation’ and related teachers training by the Inner Green Deal.
- ‘Global leadership for sustainable development program’ by the Inner Development Goals (IDG).
- ‘EcoAwareness’ by MBSR-EcoAwareness.



## **Courses by faith-based organizations (research)**

- ‘Zen and the art of saving the planet’, Plum Village.



## **Courses by UN agencies (research and/or co-development)**

- ‘Conscious food systems leadership program’ (UNDP/CoFSA).
- ‘United and present’ course for UN staff offered by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and its Mindfulness Initiative. In cooperation with Oxford Mindfulness Foundation and with input from LUCSUS.

# Policy reports

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## We don't claim that ...

- Practical and structural policy approaches are wrong.
- Mindfulness is sufficient on its own.
- All kinds of training can deliver deep and transformative benefits.
- The science is complete. We drew upon 10,000+ peer-reviewed articles & empirical research—but much more research is needed!



## Reconnection: Meeting the Climate Crisis Inside Out

**EARTH4ALL: DEEP-DIVE PAPER 17**

May 2024

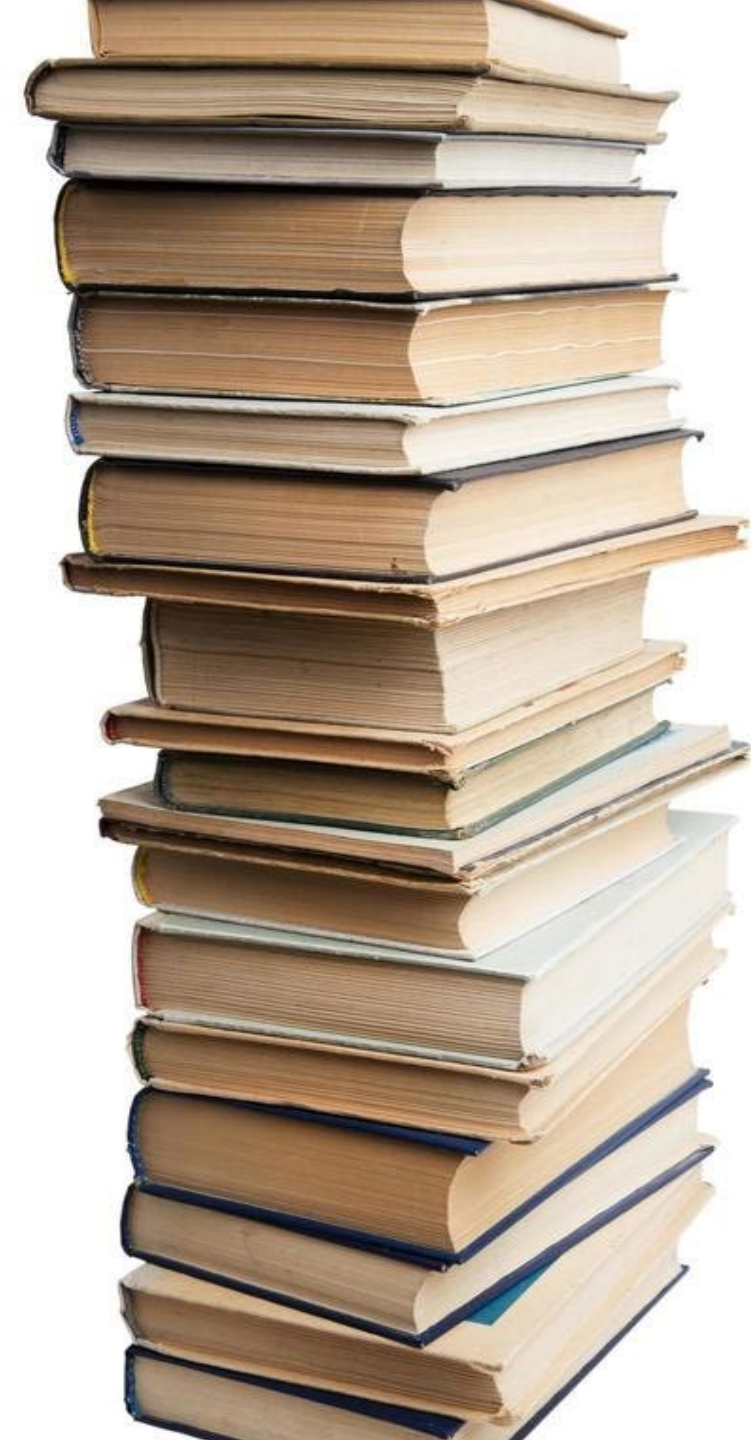
The system within:  
Addressing the inner  
dimensions of sustainability  
and systems transformation

## The Human Dimension of the Green Deal



## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS REPORT

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE FOR THE  
POTENTIAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS  
APPROACHES AND PRACTICES TO UNLOCK  
SUSTAINABILITY AND SYSTEMS  
TRANSFORMATION.



# Thank you!

Let's create together a  
**new sustainability story!**



The presented studies and reports can be found under [www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com](http://www.contemplative-sustainable-futures.com) and the IPCC and IPBES webpages.

**We will share a document with links after the seminar!**

