

## Symposium

### Transformative Designs for Sustainability

*Facilitating Mindshifts and Collective Action for Anthropocene-Prosperity*

From June 18 to 20, 2018, 60 experts from the field of sustainability science and practice came together to discuss and develop pathways or transformative designs towards the necessary mindshifts for a more sustainable future.

The cooperation project between the [Volkswagen Foundation](#), the [Collective Leadership Institute](#) (CLI) and the Potsdam [Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies](#) (IASS) and the [Club of Rome](#), aimed at creating this symposium in the form of a *Transformation Lab* that would enable deep dialogue, mutual learning and co-creation of ideas between leading thinkers, practitioners and potential initiators of transformational processes on the ground in an experimental and inviting environment, in order to conceptualize new forms of interaction as well as solutions inspired by an imagined sustainable future.



Participants included

- Dr. Petra Kuenkel (Collective Leadership Institute, Germany/South Africa)
- Prof. Dr. Mark Lawrence (IASS Potsdam, Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Ray Ison (Open University UK/Australia)
- Dr. Mariana Bozesan (AQAL Capital & Foundation, Germany)
- Prof. Kristin Vala Ragnarsdottir (University of Iceland)
- Dr. Michael Dorsey (Impact PPA, USA)
- Prof. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker (Club of Rome, Germany).

The Symposium covered three days in Herrenhausen Castle, Hanover and offered an intriguing mix of the latest intellectual thinking, contemplation and frontline practice in sustainability transformations.



It was based on and structured around a [Transformation CANVAS](#), developed by [Dr. Petra Kuenkel](#) (CLI) and [Dr. Thomas Bruhn](#) (IASS). The [CANVAS](#) is inspired by the [Collective Leadership Compass](#) developed by Dr. Petra Kuenkel and is structured into six dimensions, which, when catered to in balance, will help bring aliveness into complex systems synergistically at three levels and therefore enable large systems change:

- The *Inner Journey* with regard to the transformation of **self**,
- The *Design Principles* with regard to the **process** of transformation on a project level and
- The *Transformation Enablers* with regard to the transformation on **systems** level.

Through inspiring impulses of emerging young experts as well as well-known speakers, each dimension was introduced, enabling participants to not only rationally but also emotionally understanding the CANVAS dimensions on a deeper level. In order to apply the CANVAS in practice, four case challenges geared towards large systems transformation had been chosen in advance. Based on short presentations by the case givers, all participants joined small working groups to apply the CANVAS to their selected case.

By combining focused presentations and discussions with group inquiry, open space dialogues and facilitated prototyping on four concrete case studies, new ideas for mapping out and transforming concrete sustainability-related challenges presented by participants were developed and concretized.

Through the work on the cases and also inspired by an input from [Prof. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker](#) on his latest report to the Club of Rome [“Towards a new Enlightenment: Come on!”](#), a clear case was made for the necessity of more balance, e. g. between the inner journey and outer structural changes in sustainability practice. People and humanness need to be moved more to the center of attention and incorporated in all sustainability endeavors.



The space for vulnerability and fear is as vital as is creating supporting structures and communities where emotions can be expressed freely and mindfulness is an intrinsic part of the transformation process. In that way, personal stories connect with a collective vision and mind-shifts lead to transformative project designs that also connect with the society as a whole. The symposium

achieved to create this kind of space, where personal, as well as the project and systems level could be addressed simultaneously and in a synergizing way. With the help of the CANVAS, every case giver gained a more holistic perspective of his or her case and took away numerous meaningful insights and learnings that lead them a significant step further in their projects.

The symposium resulted not only in inspirations regarding transformative process and systems design for the selected cases but also in a sense of community of like-minded people, who are eager to further collaborate, publicize and share their knowledge across a variety of areas of expertise.