

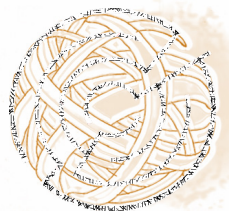


Who.Shapes.Complex.Futures?

2016 FREIBURG FORUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Documentation

April 23rd, 2016 | Albert-Ludwigs-Universität | Freiburg, Germany



WHO.
SHAPES.
COMPLEX.
FUTURES?



MEG | M.Sc. Environmental Governance

Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg

SHAPE. COMPLEX. FUTURES.



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Freiburg Forum 2016

*„What I take home from today's event is to always have in mind the change in myself, because it will grow into the outer world.“
(Helena, participant)*

This year's Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance was dedicated to the topics of success factors for change and personal mastery. On Saturday, April 23rd 2016, local and international change makers gathered at the University of Freiburg to share their experiences and strategies that have been successful for instilling change. We defined “change” as a constant transition to more sustainable forms of human life.

How can we effectively achieve change? We approached this question by asking people from different sectors for key factors

for change and by exploring our own inner resources, drivers and visions. We have summarized the results and discussions in this document and hope it is inspiring for you.

The Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance is an annual event that is collaboratively conceptualized and organized by students of the M.Sc. Environmental Governance (MEG) program. Having successfully organized the event, we, the 10th generation of MEG students, would like to thank the MEG coordination team for their support. Certainly, we learned a lot through this experience and feel empowered to be impactful change makers.

10th generation of MEG students



Program overview

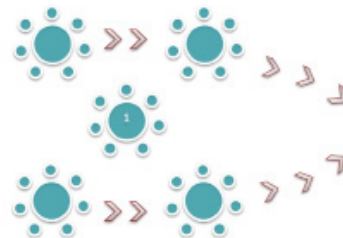
Success factors for change

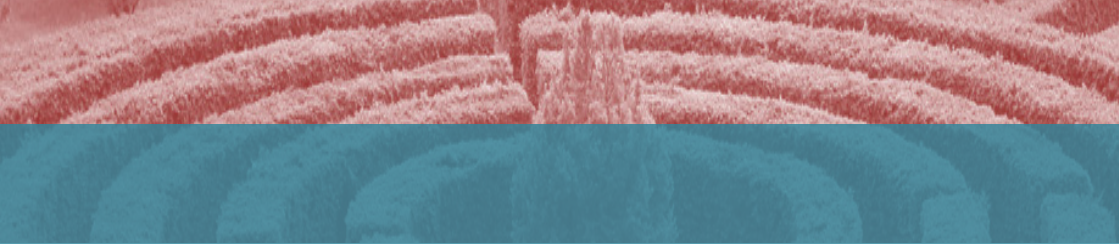
Identify key strategies and conditions to create change

Networking, charisma or cooperation - what makes an individual succeed? We invited change makers from government and NGO who have successfully impacted their working environment, to share their strategies for change and key factors that helped them to succeed.



„It was nice to hear different voices from different backgrounds, who all have the same goals. It was showcasing different paths that we students can take to achieve our goals for a sustainable future.“ (Carl)





Introspection

Reflect on your personal vision based on your values to be an impactful change maker

To be the change you want to see in the world, you need to know what drives you and in which direction you are going. Through the exploration of the relationship between your personal core values, your vision and sustainability goals, you can understand how all interact to influence your potential to deliver positive change.



„The event was unique in that it allowed you the rare situation to dive deep within yourself while still in community with your colleagues and friends.“ (Macy)





Part I: Success factors for change

Speakers



Tarcisio Hardmann Reis is the coordinator of the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE), a partnership between governments, international organizations and networks on illegal traffic of hazardous wastes under the Basel Convention.



Simone Ariane Pflaum is head of the Executive Department for Sustainability Management of the City of Freiburg. As a member of ICLEI's FutureCityLeader Initiative she was delegate to the UN Conference Rio+20. Simone is inaugural fellow of the Atlantic Council Millennium Leadership Program.



Luciano Ibarra is a filmmaker and activist. He is involved in community grassroots networks aiming for social and environmental justice. He is co-founder of the first CSA (community supported agriculture) cooperative in Freiburg and of the independent media collective Cine Rebelde.



Lorenz Petersen is Director of the Climate Change, Rural Development and Infrastructure Division of GIZ. Previously, he was GIZ Country Director in Mozambique and managed the GIZ Competence Center for Climate Change. He also worked as Campaign Coordinator for Greenpeace International.



Mumta Ito is founder of Rights of Nature Europe and the International Centre for Wholistic Law, and is Director of the Association for the European Citizens Initiative. Previously, in her career as a lawyer, she advised investment banks, multinationals, governments, as well as NGOs.

Success factors for change

Things could not have gone better. Well, at least content-wise. This thought occurred to many of us on April 23rd, the date which was reserved more than a year ago for a very special event: the Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance 2016. The hundreds of hours spent on preparation and planning everything in detail finally paid off. The tension leading up to the event dissipated eventually after the lecture hall had been filled with curious participants, who were mainly MEG alumni and students from different sustainability programs.

The welcoming speech of the moderator was followed by the speakers' presentations. Rather than an official forum, it felt more as if



old friends came together to discuss the ways of the world. There were life stories, examples from professional experience, and opinions. The overarching theme was change. Change in the sense of a constant transition to more sustainable ways of human life. The way it was tackled differed vastly between various speakers, ranging from the importance of neutrality for effective change-making to the outright rejection of destructive trends in society. The variety of approaches was also quite impressive. There were presentations that were packed with facts as well as talks that expressed a spiritual way of explaining the idea of rights for nature. The participants were impressed, inspired and sometimes even mesme-





alized. Nearly two hours passed by surprisingly quickly in the plenary meeting. The speakers then took the lead and invited the participants to the small group discussions at the World Café 'tables'.



Participants could take their lessons learnt and follow up questions to different speakers in two rounds of the World Café. The topic was still focused on success factors for change, but the discussions shifted towards sharing personal strategies for change, as well as necessary conditions. Shortly before the lunch, the facilitators from each of the five tables summarized the results and drew the conclusions from the discussions they had witnessed.

These important insights for change-making and the strategies behind success-stories of change were the starting point for the second part of the day. It built the bridge between conditions and resources we need to be effective change makers to the personal visions and values underlying these actions. One of the participants concluded: „There are a thousand different ways how to put your energy into the field of environmental governance. It's about what you're passionate about. Go for it!“



Consensus is the answer

“To bring about change, one has to understand the importance of **consensus**,” - Tarcisio Hardman Reis, the coordinator of the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE), believes. According to him, **neutrality** is a precondition of sustainable change. “On the one hand, it is important to have activism, which is a key process for change. However, it is also crucial to understand the vision of people who value stability. “

To instill change on the international or global scale, understanding the regional or local **context** is very helpful. There are different resources for achieving sustainable development available in different countries. It is therefore important to provide room for **dialogue** and find solutions appropriate for everyone. For example, one of the functions of the UN is to facilitate dialogue and foster the experience exchange between countries. The UN



has the power of soft cohesion towards making change possible, for instance by showing concern over certain issues, starting investigations and putting pressure on countries. Neutrality can thus be beneficial for change.

Another significant aspect is knowing that fostering change requires **step by step action**. First, it is important to identify your own topic of interest, investigate and understand what is going on in this specific field. Then one has to identify what are the consequences, interlinkages, potential conflicts and approaches that can be used to achieve the envisioned change. The shift in one sector can trigger positive results in the

other. Here, Hardman Reis refers to an example from his professional field. Most problems and consequences related to the extensive use of chemicals came first in the health sector. People were concerned about the pernicious effects of chemicals on human health. This fear brought about change towards a more reliable use of chemicals, which not only favored human's health but also contributed to environmental protection.

Once the potential field of change is identified and studied precisely, it is time to raise questions and talk to people. To achieve change in your environment, it is very important to be **persistent**. According to Hardman Reis, it is crucial to convey the right mes-

sage about what you consider to be important and what needs to be changed. The exchange of information and human networks will help to spread the word about the proposed changes and, as a result, promote the change.

The take home message from this session of the World Café is multifaceted. Sustainable change can be fostered through dialogue, aiming at consensus. Instilling change requires gradual action: from understanding the potential field of change to conveying the right message through human networks.

Further information:

<http://www.brsmeas.org/Home>



Regarding where we can affect change, Simone A. Pflaum is talking about cities. Inspired by the vibrant ICLEI world congress and the Rio+20 delegation, she contributed to the 60 sustainability goals for the City of Freiburg. “Bigger sustainability frameworks eventually are shaped on the local level. **Cities matter!**”, Pflaum emphasizes in her presentation.



Her life story can teach several lessons on effective change-making. From a very young age, she campaigned for justice and solidarity and was active in youth organizations to overcome her frustration with a political system that seemed to fail at creating change.

Meanwhile, as part of the city administration that is responsible for all citizens, Pflaum has to reconcile many different interests. This is a challenging task that requires diplomacy and good **negotiation skills**. During the World Café session, Pflaum shares her personal experience being a young wo-

man working with stakeholders who have decades of experience, which is an additional challenge. However, in her opinion, being within the circle gives more opportunities to change something. She concludes that it is not useful to demonstrate against something, but **being for a cause** will open the necessary doors to affect change. Decision-makers are more likely to listen to and support constructive solutions and arguments. They then have to respond to and debate about these suggestions. Simply rejecting the system and criticizing ideas will not be taken seriously.

Pflaum learned early in life to be persistent with her vision and goals. As part of the city council, she realized that good leaders and effective change-makers not only need to **be persistent, but also have to see the big picture and follow a long-term vision** that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders. If a goal is to be achieved, all actors should identify with it. This is why it is necessary to weigh different contributions and benefits that make it worthwhile for stakeholders to cooperate. This can be a frustrating and time-consuming process for people outside the city administration. However, constructive ideas that serve more than personal interests are more likely to enter the council's agenda.

“It is crucial to identify key actors who can assist you in the negotiations and for advocating a cause as multipliers. Change-makers have to **build bridges across sectors and different cultures and use these networks of multipliers** to gain more support, because working alone is not possible in this field”, Pflaum advises World Café participants. These relations go beyond the city administration, and involve grassroots movements, the university, church institutions and youth organizations in the exchange of ideas.

Further information (German only):

<http://www.freiburg.de/pb/,Lde/206068.html>



Luciano Ibarra

Reject the destruction, create a vision

Radical systemic change and the rejection of the growth paradigm is needed to create future now, asserts Luciano Ibarra, a grassroots activist, filmmaker and co-founder of the GartenCoop Freiburg. He believes that change consists of a number of steps that start with a **clear position of rejection** of the destructive patterns in society. According to Ibarra, destructive patterns are the false solutions which are based on economic growth and profit.

Rejection on its own, however, will not result in lasting change. Therefore, we need a **vision** of a better future. This vision needs to be **tangible**. According to Ibarra, it helps to **deconstruct internalized (capitalistic) values**, and to discover solidarity and the state of being part of nature. One of the examples of such vision is the solidarity economy and its implementation through, for example, the Garten-Coop, the first community supported agriculture project in Freiburg. The vision behind this



project is based on the advantages of regional supply chains, where the peri-urban area (surrounding 20-30 km outside of a city) is used for agriculture to feed the urban population.

Once the vision is created, it is important to invest in communication of that vision. “Be the media”, encourages Ibarra. A vision can be spread in this way through multiple social network channels that all individuals can access.

The next step is action. To affect change on the individual level, Ibarra recommends to get involved in **collective action**: go for ideas, visions and/or organizations one finds inspiring and start taking action now. **Self-confidence** is a key issue here. It can be built up from collective experience such as participating in protests, as well as from the **believing** in your vision. Despite the fact that collective and individual sustainability goals cannot always be reached as expediently as wished, action almost always has an impact.

To summarize, Luciano Ibarra advertises for radical systemic change, which has a new tangible vision in its core. This vision can be communicated to potential supporters through social networks and other platforms through open access. When implementing a vision, it is important to believe in oneself and one's vision, knowing that action almost always has an impact.

Further information:

<http://www.cinerebelde.org/>

<http://www.gartencoop.org/tunsel/film>



Lorenz Petersen

Different approaches, different roles

On his path as an actor of change, Lorenz Petersen has worked on the NGO level (Greenpeace), in the business sector (German Bank), the UN level (FAO), as well as in development cooperation (GIZ). Clearly, Petersen has seen very different worlds and approaches to instill change. Maybe this diverse background itself can be described as a useful asset to being a successful change-maker. In his opinion, **every actor, be it individual or organization, has a different role in creating a sustainable world.** In the end, each role needs to be played in order for society to function in a balanced way.

As a Greenpeace campaigner, Petersen worked to preserve existing standards on chemicals and pesticide residues. Greenpeace's core strategy was to confront pesticide companies with shocking results on the effects of these toxic substances to raise public attention and force corporations to justify their actions. Designing



a “David vs. Goliath struggle” is a very common strategy used by Greenpeace to leverage political support. Greenpeace is a highly institutionalized and very well organized actor. This example shows that the **structure of an organization** is a crucial success factor to carry out campaigns. In contrast, deliberative bottom-up approaches in this regard do not always seem to be the best way to be an effective player.

Petersen secondly gives the example of the climate change negotiations at the COP21, a long winding process to achieve an agreement that he describes as a big ‘political trade-fair’. The suc-

cess of the negotiations resulted from both a dramatically reduced level of ambition and the **individual inputs of some actors** that were proponents of a strong agreement.

In Mozambique, Petersen directed a GIZ program that established a warning system for disaster risk reduction. In creating tangible change, Petersen considers the program as a good initiative. Generally, GIZ projects have - just as other development projects - a certain risk of failure. Hence, working 'sustainably' means to manage such risk and never to fail for the same reason twice. As a consequence, Petersen sees

lasting change only as an **incremental process**, as only one successful step at a time is possible.

According to Petersen, successful change depends on a combination of a range of factors. It requires personal involvement with the **right strategy at the right time**. This means to understand that different contexts ask for different objectives and different timing. **Windows of opportunity** are often the critical factor.

Further information:

<https://www.giz.de/de/mediathek/36126.html>



Mumta Ito

Need for a shift in consciousness

“Law is like the DNA in our bodies. It is very powerful.” Mumta Ito, lawyer and founder of Rights for Nature Europe, describes our legal system as outdated, anthropocentric and mechanistic, as it treats nature, humans, institutions and objects in isolation. The environment could be protected much more effectively by **considering nature as a legal subject**.

Given a very rigid legal system, how can we bring about this change? Mumta Ito is confident that **lasting transformation needs to happen first at a consciousness level**. By creating a sense of connection to nature, we can feel a comprehensive sense of support surrounding us. If we are able to sense and follow that which wants to emerge, then all the work will seem effortless. „It is not about what you know, but who you are,“ she emphasized in her speech. We need our intention to be aligned with our highest values, commitment, willpower and sustained action, as well as the courage to go



against the current system. **Saying no to unsustainable practices** is important, because it will buy us time during which we can **create alternatives**.

Mumta Ito introduces us to a very different perspective on the world and on what level we should approach change. Her two World Café sessions contrast with those of the other speakers'. Mumta works with a constellation exercise - an experimental exercise to feel one's energy fields, those of others, and the interaction between these fields. The qualities of being a change agent are focused on. The exercise is a teaser to provide for reconnection with deeper aspects of oneself and experience

one's own energy. This is achieved by listening to the emotional body and shutting off the mind.

With this exercise, Mumta Ito demonstrates that individuals need to work on themselves to be an effective change agent. To feel one's body requires time and practice. In our daily lives, we are used to thinking rationally and tend to forget to listen to our instincts and feelings about what is right and what is wrong. She recommends that the participants should pose the questions they had during the exercise to themselves again. For instance, do I

feel comfortable with this task? What do I need for pursuing my ideals so they do not become a burden? Participants share with the group that releasing a lost, confused, painful, lonely, insecure state can often be changed through feeling connected, loved, staying present or supported.

Mumta Ito's input nicely bridges to the Introspection Workshop, as the main message is: **If you want to change something, you have to start with yourself.**

Further information:

<http://www.rightsofnature.eu/>





Part II: Introspection

Personal Mastery

„Personal Mastery involves learning to keep both a personal vision and a clear picture of current reality before us. It teaches us not to lower our vision, even if it seems as if the vision is impossible. [...] And, paradoxically, it teaches us that the content of the vision is not important in itself. „It is not what the vision is“, says Robert Fritz. „It’s what the vision does.“ [...] Mastery means the capacity not only to produce results, but also to „master“ the principles underlying the way you produce results. If someone can create great work only with constant struggle, we wouldn’t call him or her masterful. In mastery, there is a sense of effortlessness and joyousness. It stems from your ability and willingness to understand and work with the forces around you.“

Senge, Peter M. (1990): The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization. Doubleday/Currency, New York.

Facilitator: Prof. Dr. Heiko Röhl



Heiko is management consultant at the Kessel und Kessel GmbH. In his past, he worked as a project manager in the future research department of the DaimlerChrysler AG, as program leader at the Nelson Mandela Foundation on behalf of the German government, and as head of corporate development at the GIZ. He authored numerous books in the field of change management and organizational learning. In Freiburg, Heiko teaches students of the MSc. Environmental Governance program.

How to invite the future



40 students and alumni of the University of Freiburg, one facilitator and a big room packed with attention, everyone ready for inner work. Introspection is commonly known as the examination of one's own thoughts and feelings.

“Today's Forum is divided into two event parts 'Success factors for change' and 'Introspection'. In reality, these two parts are not separate, they happen at once”, explained Heiko Röhl at the beginning

of the session. He is CEO of a business consultancy and facilitator of the introspection workshop. He invited participants right at the beginning to become aware that they are not merely objects of their environment, but creators of their own reality: “You can invite the future”. Puzzled faces. How does one invite the future?

To realize that energy follows attention is a principle of Heiko's teachings, which are partially ba-

sed on the work of Otto Scharmer, founder of the Presencing Institute. Presencing is “to sense, tune in, and act from one’s highest future potential – the future that depends on us to bring it into being. Presencing blends the words “presence” and “sensing” and works through “seeing from our deepest source.” To initiate this process of presencing in the workshop, Heiko Röhl guided the participants through a number of group and solo exercises, going from observing their thoughts over reflecting their positions to exploring their futures.

The exercise began with participants sharing their most valuable thoughts from the morning sessi-



on. Like pieces of a larger puzzle, the experiences from each participant came together: How can I manage strong feelings? Where do I invest my energy best? How can I hold on to my own vision while I have to compromise with other people’s goals? Roehl commented and built up on each statement with insights from his experience as a trained psychologist and passionate business consultant.



The presencing process went on with a group reflection exercise, which was influenced by Peter Senge’s book, *The Fifth Discipline*. Participants were asked to position themselves in the room on a continuum: Do you have a

clear vision of your future? How important is a clear vision of your future to you? This process required a safe space of acceptance, in which participants felt free to show their inner position. For this, Röhl emphasized that any position is not to be judged, but to be respected.



Some participants agreed that the vision is nothing they can search for – it would find them. “Having a clear vision of my future empowers me to happily work towards it”, said one participant. However, for some, the vision seemed like a limit to what they can reach. Others had the experience that very high goals may result in frustration if they aren’t reached. To maintain a productive and healthy daily life, Röhl reminded participants to ask themselves: What kind of self-dialogue are you having? Are you good to yourself in a valuing and loving way? Or are you violating yourself by putting yourself down or forcing yourself to do certain things?

Finally, Röhl applied an exercise from “Theory U”, a framework for introspection. Participants were asked 20 questions and only had a few seconds to answer each of them. “Don’t think. Let the pen do the work”, instructed Röhl. Participants practiced the art of letting go of thinking, to stop downloading new mental stuff, and allow their intuition to answer fundamental questions. The 20 questions led participants to the places that mattered most in their current situation. The exercise guided them to the place where something within them wanted to emerge, and moved them towards exploring their future.

At the end of the workshop, the conclusion was pretty clear: The future you invite is determined by where you direct your attention.

Further readings:

Scharmer, Otto C. (2007): Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges. Berret-Koehler-Publishers, Inc. San Francisco.

Presencing Institute. URL: <https://www.presencing.com/tools/guided-journaling>

Senge, Peter (2010): The Fifth Discipline. 5th Ed. Crown Publishing Group.

„I feel that there is a shifting consciousness and I see it showing up in the world in many different ways. So I really enjoyed practicing these tools for introspection. In the first part we started with change agents out there and now in the second part we realized we are them, too. It's about the change in us.“ (Lindon)

„This workshop was inspiring for me, I like Heiko. It made me think of self-reflection, look at own visions and goals, as it's such an important thing for change makers to achieve something.“ (Lilian)



Lessons learnt, inspirations received

None of the speakers attempted to predict what shape the process of social change would take in the future. All seemed to have a gradual process in mind and displayed a reflexive humility of “I don’t know where we’re going, but I have a sense for the direction it should go.”

Without having been addressed very explicitly, the conceptions of change pointed out by the speakers were a mix of functional, conflict and interpretative elements regarding the understanding of why change is happening and hence how we can instill change. Functional elements, describing change out of necessity for survival of collective actors, were especially important in the discussions by Lorenz Petersen. Conflict theories approach social change by means of conflict among groups and classes within society over the control of valued and scarce resources. The conflict elements were especially poin-

„It reminded me of the slogan from the Paris COP 'We are the ones we have been waiting for'. Today again every speaker emphasized that commitment and personal engagement are crucial success factors. It seems that it's about individuals that foster change. We are change agents.“ (Magdalena)

ted out by Luciano Ibarra, seeing change as the result of rejection and alteration of current systems. Lastly, interpretive theories stipulate that society as social interaction is an ongoing negotiation process between people and groups about meanings, symbols, and social definitions, as for instance the new nature-human relationships discussed by Mumta Ito.

Much of what the background literature stated on success factors was echoed by the speakers’ in-

puts. The focus was on the individual level where the existence of a vision that could be translated into action was the starting point for change making. Self-development as a subject of change was seen in direct action, thereby creating the experience and self-confidence (empowerment), as well as the inner work as precondition to engage in the struggle for change towards sustainability. The locus of change differed according to the speakers' field of work. Basically, change can be instilled at any level, from the inside as well as the outside of organizations or fields. It was deemed necessary at these multiple levels to lead to systemic change in total.

„Change has to come from within people. There is potential in everyone and it's a question of how people get rooted more with their values.“ (Rebekka)

This leads to a remark made during the Introspection session, stating that the level at which one feels comfortable is subjective and depends on one's "inner calling". So, if I feel I need to talk politics at the UN-level, then I shall do so. If I feel I need to stay in touch with people and places concerned and affected locally I may be more effective and happy on a local level etc.

It will not be possible to give any definitive answers on our Forum's headline and guiding question. It's function was to guide and construct a bridge for our event but also for us as the MEG10 group. In the end it seems to have worked out. We reached a consensus, made the forum happen, definitely got inspired and learned from our speakers and facilitators. Maybe the bigger lesson, though without surprise, came to full circle with no one but ourselves – the starting and ending point of



anything we will see happening in this world.

With so much focus on individuals it must be, and was, recalled that each of us is nevertheless a social being and part of larger groups. Every change agent can only unfold his potential in relation to others and in mutual support with others. An overly individualistic understanding of change-making would be, most of all, naïve. But empowerment and (self-)leadership remain at the core of starting something new, the beginning of a change process. The search for individual

and collective agency must and will go on in this sense. To conclude, looking at the context in which we created this event and put it “out there” (though still within the walls of the university, i.e. within our nearest structures) maybe the MEG did its part to shape our agency: giving us the idea, self-confidence and social support needed to make the forum happen. So, shaping futures is part of us and of MEG, mutually creating identities that evolve around the quest for sustainability – which is after all a question of nature-human relationships.

"I liked the session a lot. It opened up possibilities how to initiate certain activities as well as limits for action. I learned that it is important how to identify who is relevant, to create networks, and to know how to package information to the outside world." (participant)

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