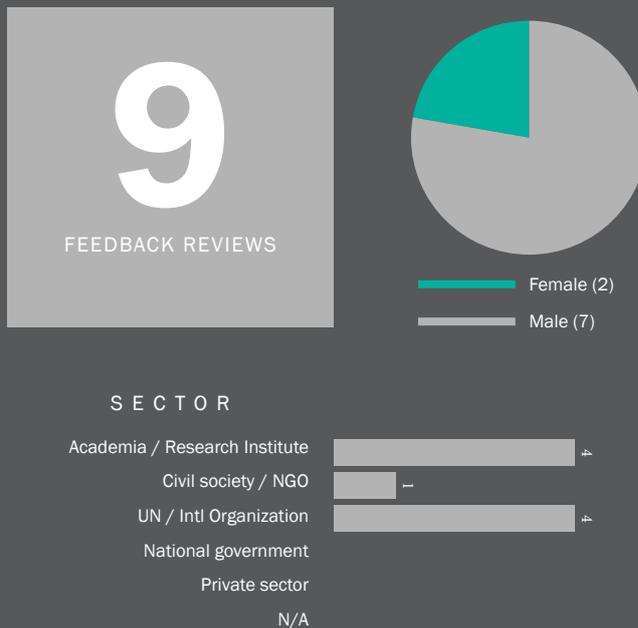


# Policy Innovations *for* Transformative Change

## Sustainable Development and Transformative Change (Chapter 1-Introduction)



Demographic data about users who read and commented on this chapter:



**A**s a learning organization that aims to be inclusive of diverse perspectives and responsive to our constituents, we held a consultation prior to the launch of our 2016 Flagship Report to make sure our work reflects the needs of our users.

On a scale from one (low) to five (high), users rated this chapter based on three criteria:



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# Compendium of substantive feedback

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Based on your knowledge and understanding, are we presenting an accurate picture of the topic?

## Participant 1

Perhaps. I feel the language throughout is a bit too top-down - leaving the reader with a sense that the authors may think that some mysterious force (the State?) is going to miraculously re-order power relations. The list on page 13 are not merely "ends" - they are "means" and I think a more realistic understanding would be to convey the sense that setting in motion transformative processes can create an upward spiral of growing voice, agency and economic equality.

## Participant 2

Yes. The pace of change SDG implementers face, however, might be slightly understated. The overarching questions is not just about changing the social structures that hamper the achievement of sustainable development, but planning ahead for change while the standpoint and context changes quickly. Think of the challenge of energy transitions in middle income countries, for example. The kind of skills and competencies needed to implement the SDGs are altogether different from previous efforts, precisely also because the Agenda 2030 recognises that the terrain of implementation is constantly shifting (NB: this is different from saying it is shifting in unknown ways).

## Participant 3

Yes, but you need to map region specific challenges to implementation- buy in and the policy dimensions which impede implementation. You also need to focus on country specific and regional challenges and explore interconnecting dimensions more lucidly.

## Participant 5

1. There is an apparent contradiction that by the way reflects the formulation of the SDGs and namely, are the goals meant to improve the conditions of the so called developing world or are they meant to improve the conditions of all world? When I see that the MDGS earlier on and then the SDGs matter mostly for the various national development cooperation agencies I have to assume that their core business is the "developing world". But from your report (and even from the SDGs) I see that the focus is a mixed one, broader then only addressing the challenges of the developing world. In order not to be overambitious and fall into rhetoric I think that the focus of SDG and of your report should be narrowed and limited to policy making for the development of those who are left behind (so called developing world) for which through international financing, subject to active and strong conditioning, massive social reforms are required toward redistribution of wealth, safety nets, provision of basic supplies, and disempowerment of corrupt, greedy and Western backed establishments. This is the precondition to start then state foundation.

2. I honestly have problems to start any kind of critical thinking based on the 17 SDGs. For me the original inspiration is so less inspiring for the following reasons: a) the timespan of the SDGs is unrealistic even if we had the most efficient (and we don't have it) global governance; b) it will prove to be again, as the MDGs, merely a quantitative undertaking which has of course its logic but compromises the required attention on the merit, the content and the nature of the processes. Moreover, only to take an example, framing poverty reduction mainly within a context of quantitative parameters (objective measurement) can be misleading because any social phenomenon has to be contextualised (subjective measurement); c) it is a collection of topics treated as separate realms while already from the start one should work more on realising the strategic links and connections among the 17 areas. This will also have positive fallouts on the coordination phase among actions/implementing agencies d) last but not least I think that the SDGs in its broad collections of topics are missing a very actual and meaningful one which has so much relevance nowadays: the migration flows, the displaced persons.

3. I also have some arguments against universalism which is mentioned in your report and is (I know) a virtuous aspiration of the Western thinking. Now this concept of universalism, for example of human rights, either is historically determined (as I think) or if it is absolute is calling back some stream of jusnaturalism in the contemporary world. But on this way any kind of transcendent principles can have its legitimacy thus being a potential source of clash between different cultures and mind-sets. We want to avoid it I think, so better to institutionalise what comes from the social pacts and the different constituencies without making so much reference to transcendent instances like universalism. Let alone that universalism is felt by many societies as an heritage of cultural colonialism by the West. Really on this I would like to see emerge a more mature reflection at least among aware persons as international policy makers ought

to be. Recommended bibliography only to mention the lesson of some authors (R. Kapuscinski, Pietro Barcellona, Ivan Illich, Carl Schmitt, Levy-Strauss, S. Weil, N. Chomsky, E. Said).

4. In your report there is so less space for and mention of education that would be the key to trigger that kind of radical transformation needed to innovate current social and behavioural settings. You sometimes seems to place too much emphasis on norms and institutional settings that should promote the needed changes. It is strange this kind of top down approach for you being a research institute that should analyse drivers of change coming from the bottom. There is also a place where you talk about "building a social contract based on progressive taxation". This is really too much illuminist (stemming from Enlightenment's age) and too much Anglo-Saxon inclined ("no representation without taxation"). Actually the process behind the solidification of a social pact is still a conundrum for the political science and for sure does not come from a mutual settlement on taxation while it is the precondition for it (taxation). (Bibliography: please go to the vast literature of the so called "de-growth" where you can find in more persuasive and reasoned terms what a transformative change is about and why is very unlikely to be generated. Then on the contemporary challenges experienced by the state and on the difficulty to generate a social pact conducive to more stability and less imbalances please go to the lesson provided by Z. Bauman on liquid society and also some classics like Gaetano Mosca, Pareto and Michels on the elites theory which reflects very well the contemporary developments of democratic regimes).

5. Then you often use the expression "eco- social approach" or "eco-social turn" which sounds good and also, I understand, implies something good and relevant for us but its broad context and implications are not explained. Unless you are meaning with it (but this would not be in tune with the profound analysis that the explanation of this expression would require) that free-market policies or the so called "turbo-capitalism" as the capitalism in its latest features has been dubbed, works better along with social-democrats instances like social protection networks, ecologic awareness, intensive labour processes. But this is exactly the dichotomy to solve on how to make coexist two ever more increasingly antagonising realms. Bibliography (Sennett for all).

#### **Participant 6**

I am very pleased with the initiative. I think the true guidance and transformative process of the world lies with the warm-hearted spiritual simple people, who wish to find each other across borders. They wish to restore the planet and nature, care for all beings, give rights to the earth, no longer exploit it, as money cannot truly pay for the earth's products. They wish less people on the planet. Please prevent insensitive banking people, commercial fishermen, loggers, mining companies, professors, elite, from guiding the inspired vegetarian nonviolent people with inner peace who are the true guardians of the planet. As UN give an important role to them and let them inspire others and connect them. True guidance does not come from steering people but through enabling inner peace and inner wisdom. It is within all of us.

#### **Participant 9**

A very thoughtful and comprehensive picture of the topic is presented and introduced in this chapter. The writing for 90% of the document is excellent and an accurate picture of the topic is being presented.

## **Are the policy conclusions and recommendations useful?**

#### **Participant 1**

This chapter doesn't actually make any policy recommendations, but it offers a useful 6-point framework. There is so much academic verbiage in the first half of the chapter, though, it is very hard to see the recommendations and examples in the second half. I would suggest turning this chapter upside down, introducing the framework, and then justifying it. Or simply cut off the first half the chapter.

#### **Participant 3**

Yes but these need to be clustered under 4/5 headings and should be accompanied by a template for action- monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Participant 6**

I have worked for the UN and worked closely to the UNEP building in Geneva. The key of your work are not reports, meetings and gatherings. You are a rather formal organisation. People who have worked a long time for the UN in for example difficult areas like child abuse become too bureaucratic and formal and lose their warm-heartedness. It is better to keep the spiritual people who stay light and compassionate (regardless their education) and let the difficult rigid people leave the UN. Sensitive people work peacefully together across different sections. Avoid sectarian approaches. Look at the different positions like doorkeepers, security, secretaries and so on and ask them for their opinion, it can be helpful. Also connect

well with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or Lobsang Sangay and ask them how to give shape to a new employment policy. You can ask any person on the planet and they will say the UN does not connect well with the people who truly matter. You feel a bit of a well-paid, highly educated elite living in a bubble. Not feeling what is materialism, and not exercising their spirituality, the UN employees become in this way too much part of the problem of the planet. You need to connect with true spiritual guidance.

**Participant 7**

I think the general ones captured in this Chapter yes. Even though I would kindly suggest to add the fact that policy making should be tailored to the respective country context. Having said this, setting approx. timelines for their effective and efficient implementation would help the reader to understand better the urgency of- and priorities of the challenges the country is confronted with.

**Participant 8**

See the Sec. "Overcoming unsustainable practices and inequitable outcomes requires multiple changes in how our societies and economies work" in Part 3, Chap .1  
It is Utopia's part for the world of ages of inequality.

**Participant 9**

The conclusions and recommendations though robust, are broad and general and if a better linkage to each of the chapter goals and definitions established were presented more distinctly, in this chapter, then the conclusions and recommendations presented would be increasingly valuable and tangible for practical application purposes.

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**Are we missing something? (Examples, data, etc.)****Participant 1**

The chapter makes assertions about "innovation" - but doesn't really make the case that innovation is missing. In many ways, the global fad of innovation has been a regressive rather than progressive force – sucking the oxygen out of traditional (and successful) actions, such as building civil society institutions, strengthening cooperatives, decentralization, devolution, etc.

**Participant 2**

It is surprising that research - as a structural domain and engine of innovation - is not discussed more in detail, particularly given UNRISD's mandate and scope. Research does not come off as a building block of sustainable development, and the reader might be led to think that we need more of the same. Doesn't the Agenda 2030 require an unprecedented research effort too? Doesn't it require research that is locally relevant, high-quality, innovative in its modalities, cutting across traditional disciplinary and sectorial lines? I strongly believe that the importance of research in order to assess and vet innovation (its replicability, scalability, its impact) and to understand the complexity of socially-driven development that aims to change the way we live, for good, deserves at least a paragraph of its own.

**Participant 3**

I think you need to focus less on data and provide rich images- reflective questions0 concept maps - to engage the reader.

**Participant 4**

In the section, 'Crises and Opportunities: The Context for Implementation', the section recognizes poverty as a global challenge. But, before we come to poverty, i think addressing the unemployment or creating gainful employment is the challenge that most of the countries in the global south face.

Though the chapter speaks volumes about ensuring equality between class, gender and ethnicity, the important public policy that could achieve this objective in the global south, namely, land reforms, is completely missing in the report. This lack of mention of land reforms in the chapter is striking when many international studies have recognised land reforms as an important policy measure that could overhaul the power relations between different people and groups in the countries in the global south.

### **Participant 6**

Another point I would like to make, is that for example I worked on the daily pollution by huge industrial parks in developing countries. Then according to the UN I had to analyse and compare them. I did and you were satisfied. But it did not solve so much.

What do people with inner peace feel? Why do we need all these products? Like a few hundred years ago people were very happy with a few goods. In fact Ban Ki Moon may have experienced this himself in his youth or for example by staying three weeks in an isolated place in nature with only natural materials. And then go back to his home. He will feel that actual material goods make unhappy as they are not natural. They are not truly part of our world. So please try to find other solutions for people in less materialistic societies other than promoting industrial parks. This is rather insensitive. Rather recycle all the materials we have, use them locally and quickly curb extreme materialism by making people feel what are goods.

Also look critically what is economics and who has developed this science? Why the rich materialistic nations have such strong insensitive people who seem more unhappy than people in less materialistic societies. The solutions lies in making the planet again a spiritual place. If you cannot do this as UN then the spiritual guardians of this planet become more visible in the coming months and approach all of you to help.

I will not rate your chapter nor the other chapters as it is better to connect with the author and check his or her motivation, love between his or her partner and mutual appreciation, care for his or her children, neighbours and society,

I try to help dogmatic religious people who based on their religion want to steer others, by making them feel this is not spirituality. Please restore this misconception. There are many false teachers putting themselves and other people in hells as they pray but do not know what they pray to. They never check. This is the biggest threat of our planet. The employment department of the UN should hire only people who radiate a peaceful mind, who are humble and nonviolent and willing to cooperate across borders and disciplines. Not by thinking but by feeling.

Please check who put other as a third category with gender. Restore the male female sacred base if you can.

Thank you for taking time to open up. I am just a simple person not a public teacher.

### **Participant 8**

See the Sec. "Innovations have the potential to improve policies and institutions" in Part 2, Chap.1  
Do the authors know, that Innovations (knowledge and etc.) are risks and a potential together? Which is more significant one depend to much conditions. Then, rise and regression are possible as result. It is in economics obviously.

### **Participant 9**

Great presentation of the topic and the table and figures were excellent, however the summary of the figure of table content could be better presented for increased coherency, comprehension and coherency.