

Evolutionary Leadership® for a  
Flourishing World.

Designing and Directing the Great  
Transition toward a Just, Sustainable,  
and Ecological Civilization.

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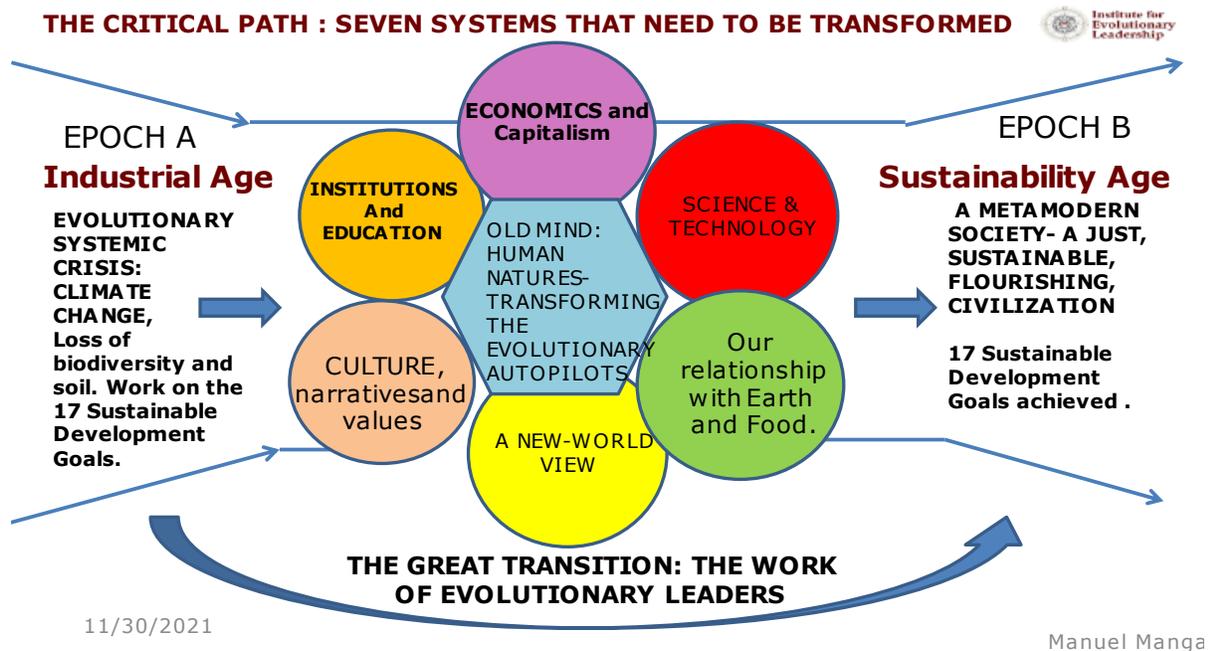
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## Purpose

I offer you a radical methodology for developing yourself as an evolutionary leader. I offer you a set of seven competencies which enable the conscious designing of new sustainable systems. This is an invitation for *you* to become an evolutionary leader and lead change through 'action'. By applying the following competencies to themselves and the world, leaders will learn to broaden their worldviews and expand their capacity for effective action to bring forth a just, sustainable, and flourishing world. This essay goes beyond explaining why we need to evolve to show *how* we can influence a conscious social evolution.

*"The most meaningful activity in which a human being can be engaged is one that is directly related to human evolution. This is true because human beings now play an active and critical role not only in the process of their own evolution but in the survival and evolution of all living things. Awareness of this places upon human beings a responsibility for their participation in and contribution to the process of evolution. If humankind would accept and acknowledge this responsibility and become creatively engaged in the process of meta-biological evolution consciously, as well as unconsciously, a new reality would emerge."*

Jonas Salk 1983



## The Journey

Evolutionary leadership provides a philosophical compass/purpose, a map of the territory, a set of tools/competencies, and a clear direction towards the creation of a just, sustainable and flourishing world and new planetary era. Our world needs a global movement of leaders willing to bring forth new visions of flourishing and compelling futures. This journey is a learning and collaborative process. We need to understand why this journey is critical for humanity, and also apply the knowledge, tools and strategies in order to start building a new world.

On this journey, people all over are starting to wake up to the fact that our world is not sustainable. We cannot continue to grow and grow without acknowledging that there are limits to growth on a finite planet. If quantitative growth continues unbounded, as is the general charter of Global Capitalism, it will continue to destroy our ecology and biosphere, contributing to our evolutionary crisis. Right now our life-supporting ecological systems and other key worldly systems are in peril. The world seems to be awakening to this challenge. Nothing states the problem more clearly than the recent COP26 meeting on climate change. And yet the leaders were not able to agree on a major transformation of their economies and lifestyles.

The modern industrialized world has brought many benefits to humankind, especially to those living in so-called developed countries. Most of us living in western countries enjoy luxuries and conveniences that our ancestors could never have imagined: purified water, the internet, solar panels, and grocery stores with shining fresh produce all year round. We also now have a better understanding of the universe, earth, evolution, DNA, the brain, neuroscience, and many other dimensions of life. In societies like ours, the world is a much better place than it was hundreds of years ago. There has been progress, thanks to science, reason, and democracy.

At the same time, other observers like Peter Senge in his book "*Presence*" describes the modern global corporation as a new species on our planet; he contends that while corporations bring products and services to many people, they also, in unintended ways, contribute towards the destruction of our natural world. Peter Sale in "*Our Dying Planet*" offers scientific data of the slow destruction of our biosphere and ecology. He also offers four positive scenarios for the future of humankind that could be inspiring for evolutionary leaders.

The journey that is in front of us, is to recognize the systemic forces in our unsustainable civilization ( Epoch A), and to take with us the best elements of our modern world to design and build a better civilization that is just, sustainable and flourishing ( Epoch B). This requires a great transition and evolutionary leaders.

## Systemic Evolutionary Crisis: EPOCH A

Human beings are being faced with a systemic evolutionary crisis and a choice of what to do about it. We can continue along the path of our industrialized world, focusing on quantitative growth and short-term visions while ignoring the negative externalities that will affect the next generations to come. Or, we can develop a *systemic perspective* that can see both the negative outcomes as well as the positive outcomes of the modern world and try to limit the collateral damage of our enterprises, realizing that as we abuse one element in our world (exploiting natural resources, for example), we are affecting other elements (population health, for example). We are slowly learning that there is no “away” – as in, we can just throw by-products of our production away. We live within larger systems and when we negatively impact those systems, we negatively impact ourselves. We can no longer afford to ignore this reality.

As an American citizen and world citizen, I feel the urgency to admit that our current economic growth models are unsustainable in their current practice. I believe it is obvious that we must begin to develop a social paradigm that brings forth nothing short of a new epoch for humanity; a socially just, environmentally sustainable, prosperity for all people

Sustainability professor John Ehrenfeld points out in his book “*Sustainability by Design*,” there is a looming difference between *sustainable development* and *sustainability*. And most of what is being done by people, business, and governments can be described as sustainable development. This means that they are changing some of the external problems, products, and processes, but do not tackle the root of the problem :our worldview, our culture and our institutions. Without a shift at this deeper and systemic level, even the most ‘green’ companies’ still operate with a focus on quantitative growth and assume that we live on a planet without limits to growth. According to Ehrenfeld, sustainability requires a shift toward a new worldview, new cultural values, and a new societal paradigm. Making small changes or tweaking the systems within the current mindset of quantitative growth and sustainable development will only delay our trajectory toward collapse and possibly, the ‘sixth extinction’ mainly caused by humans. Humans have a real choice to build a sustainable world.

James Gustave Speth, an environmental leader, explains his involvement with the environmental movement , and offers a path toward a better future for all. In his book “The Bridge at the Edge of the World-Capitalism, The Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability “, Speth, points to the systemic environmental destruction and the negative impact of Capitalism, while also inviting us, to redesign our economics, and our way of life to be more sustainable and flourishing for all. While Speth offers us a road map to a better future, I invite you to be the leaders and builders of that better future. There are hundreds of books that offer us better ideas and visions for a sustainable future , however what they often lack is the leadership element to translate great ideas into action.

## **The Great Transition: From Epoch A to Epoch B**

The great transition to a just, sustainable, and flourishing civilization /planetary era requires evolutionary leaders taking action in seven key areas. Once you recognize that our modern world is unsustainable and having a negative impact on human and ecological well-being. We can choose to become evolutionary agents to design and direct a better path –transition to a better future, a more achievable- relative utopia that supports the well –beings of humans and ecology.

Given the systemic nature of our unsustainable world, we as designers and leaders of a great transition, need to understand the seven key systems that need to be redesigned and transformed in order to achieve a better sustainable future, that is to cross from crisis to sustainability. Each of these seven systems present us with big challenges to change them. The good news is that there are plenty of theory and alternative models and projects around the world that serve us a evolutionary guides. Some of the people mentioned in this paper, have produced amazing work that can be used as maps toward a better future. We are lucky to have more knowledge, science, and ideas about the world, than ever before, so we are not short of alternative and better models for building better communities, societies, and civilization.

Some of us will focus and have passion for engaging with one or more of those seven systems, and together in a collective, network of evolutionary leaders around the world, can collaborate and support each other in our own evolutionary projects.

Here are the seven systems that need our redesign :

1. Understanding the old mind and its power and propensities of our human natures for good and evil. Consciously and intentionally influencing our human natures toward the good, ethical, collaborative and sustainable ways of behaving. Switching off the evolutionary autopilots of survival ,and redirecting them toward a force for good.
2. Transforming our modern Worldview, from separation to interdependency, from ego to being, from domination to partnership, from separation from nature to connection to nature. We human beings have the freedom to change-evolve our minds and expand our consciousness.
3. A Cultural Evolution of new values and narratives that transform our ways of living with each other and nature. We can conserve the best of traditions, and create cultures that are rich in diversity and also share common values across a planetary civilization. Values like freedom, community, sustainability, cooperation, democracy.
4. An Institutional Evolution for systemic sustainability, including education for life, institutions that have as their purpose, the care and well being of people and

planet. Institutions that focus on implementing the UNDP's 17 Sustainable development goals in their countries and around the world.

5. The evolution of global capitalism as an economic system. The evolution of capitalism toward a natural capitalism, doughnut economics, and regenerative economics. There are many alternative economic models around the world, that can be implemented locally and globally to create an economic systems based on systemic and sustainable principles. An economic system that focuses on qualitative growth, not quantitative growth.
6. The redesign of science and technology to contribute toward a just , sustainable and flourishing civilization. The need to redesign our transportation systems, our cities, our buildings, our production of goods "From Cradle to Cradle" as Bill McDonough explains to produce almost zero waste and design with sustainability principles. Implementing the "Green New Deal" in the USA and other countries, will be an evolutionary step toward a sustainable future.
7. We need to transform our relationship with the earth and its ecological systems. We need to evolve our modern worldview that sees us as separate from our earth and ecological systems, to see us as interdependent with our ecological systems, food, water, air, forests, fauna. We need to implement the "Half Earth Project" that biologist Edward. O. Wilson has undertaken, to conserve at least half of our planet for the survival of biodiversity, and in that way support our own survival as a species.

**These are the leverage points to be used in the design of a conscious evolution toward sustainability.** Our world already has enough knowledge, technology, and resources to support us living a good life, sustainable lives, including for the three billion people living in almost poverty at the bottom of the social pyramid. We do not have to wait for all the technologies to be invented to begin this transformation, though more innovation would indeed continue to support this great shift. We need to embrace our challenges and lead one another forward.

## **THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR.**

In my years of teaching, coaching, and developing leaders for corporations, universities, NGOs, and governmental organizations, I have studied much about leadership and have come across many transformational theories and methodologies for developing leaders. Some of these theories apply to the private sector, some to the public sector, and most are designed to bring out the best leadership qualities in that particular sector or organization.

What they all have in common is that they are **focused on developing leaders to be effective within the paradigm of their selected social sector or organization.** The result of this specialization is that they often miss the big picture of our global reality. They don't see the big picture of our global reality. They don't see the trends leading us toward a catastrophic system failure, like global warming-climate change, they don't see

the abyss. The challenge that we are facing is way beyond the concerns and or paradigm of any particular sector of society or a particular organization. In this moment of time, we each have to start thinking as a global citizen, In other words, most business schools and leadership programs are designed to run organizations more effectively, but typically do not to support human well-being and the ecological systems. I call this the **Paradigm of Effectiveness**. Effectiveness is important, but for what purpose? In other words, most leadership programs exist to maintain the status quo.

Given the thousands of books and theories on leadership that one could find on Amazon, the hundreds of consultants, and leadership programs offered, it is easy to think that those people are learning about the very best and progressive leadership methodologies possible. You would think future leaders are focusing on the big picture or the modern crisis of our times, or that they are being educated to build a sustainable world. That is not the case.

Most leadership theories and programs are focused on making the modern industrial/capitalist growth oriented system run more effectively, not to change the paradigm or the culture for the future health of all humans and our planet. On the other hand, most literature about our world problems says little about leadership.

Evolutionary leaders are people that are **competent and effective** within their own organization, while also having the **purpose** and **competencies** to bring about a great transition toward a new just, sustainable flourishing civilization. While there are many exemplary people that I would describe as evolutionary thinkers and leaders, the world needs many more.

Lester Milbrath, in his book "*Envisioning a Sustainable Society*," proposes that we are going to have to **learn** our way out of the current unsustainable world paradigm. **Learning is the spark that will ignite the cascading changes that must follow as our systems evolve.** We need to learn how to design new social and technological structures. We also need to learn a new value system and practices in order to promote a cultural evolution. We need to learn how to be evolutionary leaders, at the forefront of a blossoming just, flourishing and sustainable world.

Another evolutionary thinker Paul Raskin, Director of the Tellus Institute, has written a book "Journey to Earthland" where he invites us on the journey for the great transition. He offers a detailed scenario of the future, of what a sustainable world would look like with all its benefits. What this book offers, in my opinion, is an excellent roadmap for evolutionary leaders. Future evolutionary leaders to take the ideas and visions from such books and translate them into action, projects, and social movements around the world. Leadership is about ideas, language and action.

## Becoming an Evolutionary Leader

An important element in directing a social evolution is **Evolutionary Leadership**. Most of the books that tell us about our global problems, or that propose solutions, fail to address the issue of leadership. They assume that the leaders already in charge of our institutions know how to lead a conscious cultural evolution. In fact, most leaders are really good at making the existing system work effectively but are not prepared to lead their institutions toward a great transformation or toward a sustainable world. Imagine if all the presidents of our universities made a declaration that the purpose of their institutions was to educate evolutionary leaders and to build a just, sustainable and flourishing world. Imagine MIT, Harvard, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Wharton, making that declaration. Universities are only one of several key institutions in our society.

In Daniel J Sherman's writing he suggests a strategy for transforming higher education:

*“For sustainability to realize its full transformative potential in higher education and society, it must transcend an association with prescribed practices and even specialized areas of study. Sustainability must become a pedagogical big idea, capable of complementing and connecting avenues of inquiry across the academic disciplines that organize and prioritize teaching and learning on campus. If sustainability is employed as a method of examining the relationship between environmental limits and human values, decisions, and actions that shape the future, it will transform not only what we do on campus, but also how we think.”*

To be an evolutionary leader is to recognize that our world in its current state is not sustainable for billions of people and for the biosphere. The facts tell us that we are living on a dying planet. We are facing great global problems, and that the majority of these problems are systemic and interdependent to other social and natural systems: problems like climate change, water shortages, energy, security, poverty, terrorism, and civic unrest to protest unjust societies, to name a few. And, these are not just local problems, but rather systemic global problems. Becoming an evolutionary leader requires learning to think, observe, design, and mobilize in new ways, and this requires learning new leadership competencies.

In his book *“The Evolving Self,”* Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, states:

*“The goals and values we now have are appropriate to a species blindly struggling along with other species in the stream of life. They are appropriate to passengers, not to navigators. But whether we like it or not, we are now the pilots of Spaceship Earth. For this role, we need a new set of instructions, new values, and goals by which to steer a course among the many unprecedented dangers.”*

Below I present the framework that I have developed to serve this purpose.

The evolutionary leadership methodology that I present in this paper invites leaders to learn **seven critical competencies** or skills that would empower them to be effective in

their current roles in their organizations. These competencies would also help them achieve the vision and goals of their organizations, while also becoming part of a global network of evolutionary leaders and supported by a global scale transformation system. This would begin a global citizen's movement directing and empowering a conscious social evolution. These Seven Competencies would support the evolution of a new self, a complexity of consciousness, a new worldview, and a set of powerful skills for leading and mobilizing social change. The seven competencies also are the tool kit by which evolutionary leaders, observe and diagnose the world systems that are leading us toward an unsustainable future. The seven competencies are the "HOW" tool kit for redesigning the seven systems that would take us from epoch A to Epoch B.

- The transformation of our human natures
- The transformation of our worldview
- The transformation of our cultures
- The Transformation of our institutions
- The transformation of our economic system-global capitalism
- The transformation of our science and technologies
- The transformation of our relationship and care of the Earth.

### The 7 Evolutionary Leadership Competencies



## **COMPETENCY #1: Personal Evolution: Evolution of Mind-Worldview**

Personal evolution is creating a new mindset and a new worldview that is committed to evolving the self, creating a new mind (levels 4 & 5 as Robert Kegan suggests), and developing a complexity of consciousness, an evolutionary mind. In this sense, a person who chooses to become an evolutionary leader commits to transforming their own mind-worldview, as well as helping others to do the same. Personal evolution also invites the leader to recognize that we human beings are biological systems. Our biology is made up of human natures (the evolutionary autopilot) which helps us survive, but it also has propensities for good and evil. Part of our personal evolution is to become aware of the autopilot and switch it off to make wiser decisions, and choose more ethical-loving behaviors. In his book "Switching Off the Autopilot" Michael Naberhaus, explains how we can do that to promote the great transformation for a better world. We are also emotional-loving beings and including positive emotions with reason are stronger than reason alone in building positive human relationships. This results in higher emotional and relational intelligence, and the capacity to build trusting and effective relationships. Personal evolution invites leaders to apply the seven competencies to their personal development to produce a new self - new being. Evolutionary leaders also **declare a life purpose** that gives meaning and direction to their lives. A transcendent purpose integrates being part of human evolution and provides a sense of purpose that, in turn, can provide meaning and coherence to one's life, and mobilize oneself to become a force for good.

## **COMPETENCY #2: Emotions and Generative Language**

Evolutionary Leaders use the power of emotions and language to generate new relationships and new realities, to declare new ideas, visions, purposes, values, systems, institutions, narratives, and goals. Historically, leaders have manipulated people with the emotion of fear; even today most of our leaders rely on fear and tribalism to control and dominate people, and to prey on their unconscious autopilot. The most powerful emotion that we can bring forth is Love/Loving. It is the emotion that sets the foundation for ethical-caring relationships, for setting the context for **generative dialogue**. Evolutionary leaders work with the emotion of love, to create trust, caring and ethics. We humans are emotional creatures. Emotions and Conversations are one integrated system. Generative language, builds on love, and facilitates the articulation of new possibilities. It also empowers people to declare bold stances and transcending purposes for a just, flourishing, and sustainable world. Generative conversations promote the effective coordination of action, in order to mobilize people to learn, to collaborate, to innovate, to evolve, to build a better world.

John R. Searle in his book "Making the Social World-The Structure of Human Civilization" explains the powerful role of language in the construction of the self and institutions. He describes how the social world is constructed in language and

conversations. Given that, it is within our power to influence the conversations and narratives to redesign and build a new human civilization.

Generative language is evolutionary; it shapes human reality and elicits commitments to effective action. Generative language facilitates the emergence of new narratives, and new values and cultures. Evolutionary leaders tell a new story of life and human beings, based on the evolution of earth, life and Sapiens, that promotes meaning, purpose, cooperation, solidarity among people, and harmony with our natural world.

### **COMPETENCY #3: Systems Being and Thinking**

People need to recognize that we human beings are living systems and part of the larger system of nature. This awareness expands our sense of self and our relationship with others, with nature, and the cosmos. Being aware of this fact that we exist within a multiplicity of systems: natural systems, living systems, social systems, and technological systems, to name a few. Kathia Castro Laszlo, Ph. D and instructor in Human Science, invites us to think of ourselves as 'systems beings'. When we identify with these systems our sense of self-being expands, our consciousness expands and becomes richer in its complexity. Systems-thinking is a powerful tool for observing the dynamics, patterns and possible outcomes of systems. It is a discipline for seeing wholes not just parts. It is a method for 'seeing' the visible and invisible causes of our world problems. It is a way of observing the invisible dynamics and trends in systems.

Fritjof Capra in his book "The Systems View of Life," reminds us that our world's problems are systemic in nature but are often diagnosed as isolated problems, poverty, hunger, energy, war, population growth, and climate change, the disappearance of rain forests, and species, human rights. All of these are often understood and treated in isolation, instead of seeing them as part of larger system. Most of our leaders in corporations, NGOs, and government deal with parts of the system and have a short-term understandings of the behaviors of complex systems. Systems-thinking shows us that we can influence the dynamics of these systems. It can direct our ability to design new social and technological systems to promote justice, well-being, prosperity, and harmony with nature.

Peter Senge in a recent talk shared his thoughts on how our world is becoming more interdependent and that trend is going up, while our ability to see and understand this interdependence is going down. This makes us human more at risk of not seeing the evolutionary crisis and the destruction that we are causing our world. Therefore, we have an urgent need for systems-being and systems-thinking which requires systems-leadership.

## COMPETENCY #4: Ontological Designing

Ontological designing, as defined by professor Anne-Marie Willis “is a way of characterizing the relation between human beings and lifeworlds.” The human world that we live in is a product of human design. Design is a powerful distinction and a powerful discipline that can be used for good and/or for evil. We need ontological designing to be ethical, sustainable with a focus on ‘futuring’. Futuring is the means of using a systematic process for thinking about and picturing possible outcomes, and for planning for the future. Ontological Designing according to Tony Fry, Ph.D in Cultural Studies, is a discipline for consciously designing our lifeworlds, our institutions, our products, our processes, and our selves, so that we all can contribute toward the sustainment and flourishing of life on this planet.

Ontological Designing according to Anne-Marie Willis is a theory that claims that:

- Design is something far more pervasive and profound than is generally recognized by designers, cultural theorists, philosophers or lay persons;
- Designing is fundamental to being human. We design, that is to say, we are deliberate, plan and scheme in ways which prefigure our actions and makings-in turn we are designed by our designing and by that which we have designed (i.e., through our interactions with the structural and material specificities of our environments);
- This adds up to a double movement-we design our world, while our world acts back on us and designs us. Today, we are being designed to be consumers in a throw away, wasteful, unsustainable society, that sees the natural world as a giant warehouse of resources to be consumed.

The founding fathers of the American Constitution were, for the most part, conscious designers of a new system of government, for example. They designed this political and democratic system to support democracy and freedom of this new country. The original design did not include all people or promote freedom and justice for all citizens, including the slaves in this country, but it has been improved over the years. For example, it has been a continual evolving process and journey in the civil rights, women’s and gay rights movements. We as a society are still working through injustices and inequalities. This all shows that people can be conscious designers or unconscious designers. Either way, humans are continuously designing in one way or another.

I first studied Ontological design with Fernando Flores in his Ontological Design course. Flores has been applying ontological design principles to the design of the self, management practices, computers, organizational design and many other domains of life. It was at that time that it became clear to me that evolutionary leaders have to be aware that everything follows these design principles, and to evolve our world, all has to be done with purpose.

Our institutions were sometimes designed to promote the well-being and development of the people. The institutions of education, government, commerce, health, religion, and many others often had an ethical purpose, to support the humanization of human

beings, to create ethical social systems. The industrial era was designed for machines, growth and productivity, without taking into account the sustainability of the earth and its ecological systems. One of the unintended consequences of the industrial era is climate change. In contrast, ethical design is about envisioning and building a system that brings about human development, well-being, justice and freedom in harmony with ecological responsibility. At a sermon in New York City architect and designer William McDonough presented an excellent overview of what ethical and sustainable design could do for human beings and our planet. His talk “*Design, Ecology, Ethics, and the Making of Things,*” gives us an overview of what is possible when we integrate these distinctions into an evolutionary framework:

*“Sustainable design is complementary to ethical design, in the sense that our well-being also depends on the goods and services that we consume. Sustainable design is more than ecological design or green design. Sustainable design is systemic because it begins with the understanding that any product or process of manufacturing or building has to take into consideration all the other parts of the system that it interacts with. Sustainable design begins in the mind of the designer or leader and continues its process from raw materials to manufacturing, to delivery, to consumption, to recycling, to feedback to the designer, and toward the full life cycle of the product and process”.*

Sustainable design principles should be at the core of all organizations and institutions because it should touch all the key stakeholders, the people, the processes, the product, the building, the consumer, the life cycle, and the natural systems. John Ehrenfeld’s book “Sustainability by Design” offers an interpretation of design that is broader than it is commonly used, as he connects ontological design with care for the human and the world, so that to design with the purpose of ‘care’ in mind, brings forth a new approach to designing our lives, our artifacts, and our culture, while caring for the natural world. When we combine ethical and sustainable design we can create better institutions, better products, and a just and sustainable social system.

## **COMPETENCY #5: Systemic Sustainability**

Most people think of sustainability as an environmental issue. I propose that we think of systemic sustainability as a macro-complex system made up of three important systems:

- Environmental sustainability: The well-being of earth and its biosphere.
- Human sustainability: The well-being of human beings.
- Institutional sustainability: The design of our institutions to care for the well-being of earth and humans.

Each one of these systems supports the existence and well-being of the other systems. They are mutually interdependent. Together, the three systems bring forth an emergent

complex new system: **sustainability as a coherent property that supports the well-being of all three systems.** We need to apply systems thinking and ontological designing principles to the design of a macro system that brings about systemic sustainability.

We cannot have ecological sustainability without human sustainability and social justice, and we cannot have human sustainability without institutional and ecological sustainability. We human beings are now the stewards and caretakers of our systems. We are the pilots of our Spaceship Earth. This is a big responsibility and the sooner we understand this responsibility and confront this challenge the better our chances for survival as a species.

### **COMPETENCY #6: Adaptive Work and Collaboration**

An adaptive work is a means to tackle adaptive challenges in which learning and or social change must occur in order to come up with an effective solution. Our world today is full of adaptive challenges, and our leaders often misdiagnose these challenges and treat them as technical problems, that is problems for which the solution already exists.. Leaders think they have the answers to these problems already, which actually causes the problems to persist. Problems such as: global poverty, hunger, climate change, energy, nuclear proliferation, wars, civic unrest, and many others are examples of adaptive challenges. Adaptive work requires people to confront tough issues, confront losses, change of values and power structures and also make choices. Systems thinking helps us understand those dynamics and the mental models that often are at the root of our social systems which can block us from doing adaptive work. Ronald Heifetz, Professor of Adaptive Leadership at Harvard University, proposes that the job of the leader is to identify the adaptive challenge, and then to elicit the collective intelligence of the group or community to solve the problem, as opposed to the leaders having the answers. It is through this collaborative process and collective intelligence that helps see all the different possibilities towards the many solutions to help solve the tough adaptive challenges facing nations and the world, and to help us evolve toward a sustainable future.

For systemic sustainability to work, we need to be able to interact with the creation of human sustainability as if it is an adaptive challenge. There are many adaptive challenges such as ecological sustainability and institutional sustainability to name a few. To change our current economic model from quantitative growth toward “*Qualitative Growth*,” as Fritjof Capra and Hazel Henderson invite us to do, also requires us doing deep adaptive work individually and collectively.

Collaboration is the fuel for the engine of adaptive work. Adaptive work at the social level requires a great deal of collaboration between these subsystems. For example, the business sector needs to collaborate with civil society and with governments. More transparency and sharing knowledge among institutions is a must. Professor Michael

Porter of Harvard University has described collaboration between business and other sectors as creating 'shared values' in order to come up with solutions to social and ecological problems. By increasing the amount of collaboration between people would generate an increase in the sharing of ideas, projects, and best practices across organizations and nations, resulting in greater innovation for solving tough global problems. Evolutionary leaders identify adaptive work and bring about collaboration to solve tough adaptive challenges facing nations and the world. Evolutionary leaders need to become part of a global network of leaders and a systems for global transformation in order to collaborate for sharing knowledge, tools, innovations, and solutions to adaptive challenges, like climate change, and injustice in societies.

### **COMPETENCY #7: Wisdom and Evolutionary Visions**

This competency supports leaders in understanding our evolutionary history as living systems, and as human beings. The objective of this competency is to provide leaders with a practical understanding of wisdom and the role of visions in charting new paths toward a just and sustainable future.

Given our human predicament confronting the threat of climate change and an evolutionary crisis, we human beings and our leaders are in desperate need to think about our future using the best thinking that we can develop, and that is where the role of wisdom can be useful. Wisdom can serve as the moral compass for making our evolutionary choices. Wisdom asks us to discern what is important in life and in conserving life. Wisdom asks us to take the long-term view and to define the common good. Our imaginations, visions and scenarios of the future can also guide us, as evolutionary leaders, toward the future.

The Dalai Lama offers another useful perspective about wisdom. He proposes, "Wisdom is the capacity to use our intelligence and education in order to make distinctions and judgments between positive and negative choices, reflecting on their consequences and keeping in mind our long term interests in our wish to live a happy life, eliminate suffering, and contribute toward the happiness of others and a better world." Given our human predicament and the tough choices that we have to make, wisdom – and valuing happiness - becomes an even more relevant part of leaders' mindsets.

Evolutionary leaders must work within the **creative tension** of solving tough local and global problems immediately, like poverty, hunger, and climate change and being inspired by visions of a better, more positive future. This creative tension creates a 'pushing force and a pulling force' in order to mobilize people into action. Evolutionary leaders have to put their visions in terms of evolutionary timelines and use their wisdom and competencies to design and direct the process of human evolution. They have to think strategically in terms of 10, 25, 50, or 100 years or more and believe a better world is possible.

Evolutionary leaders need to be more than problem solvers, but also ‘**being designers**’ of new institutions and new futures. Evolutionary leaders do not need to reinvent the wheel for there are many powerful positive scenarios and tools in use already. Tools and disciplines like ‘backcasting’, shared visions, and scenario building are available to leaders. The Tellus Institute has created some good examples of sustainability scenarios. Paul Raskin beautifully describes them in his new book “*Journey to Earthland*.”

As you read through the Seven Competencies, you no doubt see that they complement each other. When these competencies are gathered together as a system, a person who embodies these competencies becomes a new observer of the world, develops a complexity of consciousness, an evolving self, and becomes a new type of leader which I call an **Evolutionary Leader**. Many people still interpret leadership in the mindset of the old paradigm. The old paradigm is where leaders are people in roles and positions that have ‘power over others’, or ‘degenerative power and authority’. With this old idea comes the thought that leaders have all the answers and that they are giving orders for others to obey. This is an outdated paradigm of hierarchy with leadership that demands obedience from those around them. This is the model of leadership that still dominates our empire era civilization. But we need to evolve.

Evolutionary leadership offers a new interpretation of leadership based on an ethics of love, partnership, collaboration, co-inspiration, and empowerment. It calls for leaders who can identify adaptive-evolutionary challenges, embrace the collective intelligence of the people, create shared visions, coordinate effective actions to solve tough problems, and who can mobilize their communities to build a better world. In this sense, anyone can be a leader, and anyone can learn to be an evolutionary leader. You can be an evolutionary leader, with or without formal authority. Ronald Heifetz, in his book “*Leadership Without Easy Answers*”, describes how anyone can assume a role of leadership. He offers some powerful distinctions and practices for tackling difficult adaptive challenges. What we need are networks of leaders, communities of leaders. Paul Raskin suggests a Global Citizens Movement (GCM) across the world, people learning these competencies, learning from each other, collaborating, in order to confront the adaptive-evolutionary challenges facing all of us on planet Earth.

### **The Work of Evolutionary Leaders: Mobilizing the Great Transition Toward Epoch B**

The main work of evolutionary leaders is to support the psychosocial evolution toward a just, sustainable and flourishing world/planetary era, **EPOCH B** at this point in human evolution. After achieving that new civilization of sustainability, other evolutionary challenges may show up, and new visions may emerge, but at least we would have made the lives of billions of people better and helped conserve our biosphere on which human life depends. We also will have designed societies and cultures that foster human development, love, ethics, and other basic human needs.

## **The Evolution of Self- Worldview.**

Evolutionary leaders are people committed to the evolution of their consciousness, self, and worldviews. As they embark on this journey of self-development and personal evolution they help to develop a new self-identity, as global citizens as well as local citizens of their countries or cultures, and would engage in developing mind level 5, which is, according to Kegan [need credentials], a systemic, global, dialectical, wise, ethical, and evolutionary way of thinking/being.

Evolutionary leaders are also teachers, mentors, coaches of other people and other leaders in their evolution of consciousness. Evolutionary leaders apply the Seven Competencies to their own personal life, as well as to their role as teachers, consultants, coaches, social change agents, and leaders of organizations and institutions.

## **Cultural Evolution**

On this path of transformation to a sustainable civilization is the need for a cultural evolution. Human beings are culture-making animals, and with our capacity for language we can generate myths, narratives, values and social norms that bind us together to shape our sense of self-identity. Cultures as social systems are usually conservative systems; they serve to maintain order and to promote survival by passing on wisdom from the past.

A culture, from a linguistic perspective, is a system of meta-narratives and conversations that often keeps its members from stepping out of their myths, narratives, and norms.[I don't find this idea clear] When we think of moving a society forward from one type of culture to another, we must acknowledge we are facing some very difficult adaptive work. The Age of Enlightenment, for example, contributed to modern ideas like democracy and human rights and established these new narratives that began to shape cultural evolution in recent times. [I think this paragraph needs work – what is being proposed here?]

A great deal of work and talk is being done in the name of sustainable development. I mentioned earlier, those changes are often taking place in what are called proximate drivers in a society, such as changing the technology or some laws (Slide #4 below). What is needed to promote a transformation toward a sustainable world is understanding and learning to deal with the ultimate drivers of human behavior. Understanding the needs and values of human beings, transforming the memes and meta-narratives that shape the culture, our relationship with nature and our planet, power structures, and the cultural lifestyle that people have gotten used to. We need to focus our culture on the values of loving, learning, quality, relationships, community, conservation, democracy, freedom, development, life, solidarity and focusing on the art of being and humanization.



A lot of adaptive work, by leaders who recognize that a cultural evolution requires some kinds of losses, as well as some kinds of gains. Ronald Heifetz points out that, “Leadership requires a diagnostic capacity to be able to assess the resistances that accompany painful adjustments.” Heifetz calls this, doing adaptive work so that people can choose better social adaptations and a better future for all the stakeholders. The good news is that cultures can and do evolve.

### **Institutional Sustainability/ Systemic Sustainability**

Evolutionary leaders, equipped with their Seven Competencies as their toolkit, can get to work on building institutional systemic sustainability. I suggest that each leader may work on a dimension or aspect of systemic sustainability. I am proposing that no matter what part you are working on, you ought to have a vision or an idea of the whole system to which you are contributing.

I think is important to define some key distinctions, as we use words to construct our realities. Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines **sustain/sustainable** as:

“The capacity to keep in existence, to provide for the support, to provide sustenance or nourishment for, to strengthen, to encourage.”

What do we want to keep in existence? I propose that we want to conserve life on this planet and in particular complex life, which may be very uncommon in the universe.

We want to conserve our biosphere, and its species biodiversity, because we cannot live without our biosphere. And we want to conserve human beings, the most fragile species, yet at this time, the most dominant and most dangerous animal on this planet. For example, the USA alone has over 5,000 nuclear weapons, of which the use of only a small number could destroy our civilization. We need to protect ourselves from the

SAPIENS that we have been for thousands of years, shaped by our human nature's- autopilot, the empire era worldview and institutions, and consciously evolve, to become ethical, loving, sustainable and global family Sapiens, of the Epoch B era.

I know there are several definitions of sustainability. I offer my own definition here because I think it is a good exercise in owning the words that we care about. So here is my definition of sustainability is:

**“Sustainability is the capacity of our natural and social systems to conserve complex life and to support the development, flourishing and quality of life of human beings in a world of limits for future generations — of all species”.**

Systemic sustainability as a structure for conserving complex life and for the nourishment of complex life including human beings has three subsystems: environmental or natural, human, and institutional.

### **Environmental-Ecological Sustainability**

This system contains the biosphere and all natural systems. Conserving this system will allow the natural systems on which human life depends, to become sustainable again. Right now species are becoming extinct at an alarming rate due to our behaviors and actions. The rain forests are disappearing, and aquifers are going dry, while climate change threatens to destroy many species habitats. Most people still interpret the word 'sustainability' as dealing only with environmental issues. I suggest to consider

sustainability as an 'emergent property of a complex system.' made up of natural, human, and ethical systems. Edward O. Wilson's project for a **“Half Earth”** is designed to conserve our biodiversity and planet's capacity for sustainability for its future.

### **Human Sustainability/ Social Justice**

The conservation of human beings, in a sense, is our central focus but not at the expense of other species or ecologies. Purely from an evolutionary perspective, human beings appeared on this planet very recently. Regardless of the myths that we subscribe to, we are not the chosen species on this planet. Life was here on this planet before us and will be here after human beings become extinct. Evolution does not have human survival as its sole purpose, no matter what we do. If we act foolishly and destroy ourselves, the planet and its evolution does not care. I think we can learn a great deal from biology and evolution in an analogous way, that is – to extract learning and principles from evolutionary and biological processes and apply them to human life, as Jonas Salk, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and other scientists have suggested.

My concept of evolutionary leadership is based on the best theories of transformational and adaptive leadership, on evolutionary principles, scientific knowledge of our earth, and scientific knowledge about human beings and their evolution. The great works of people like Charles Darwin, Richard Dawkins, Jonas Salk, E.O. Wilson, Donella Meadows, Humberto Maturana R, Manfred Max-Neef, and many others have

contributed to my understanding of human beings, human nature, and the evolutionary choices facing us today.

Human sustainability begins with providing every human being with his or her basic needs. Manfred Max-Neef, a Chilean systems thinker, offers an economic model that would focus on taking care of nine basic needs (as seen below). His model illustrates a system for the humanization of human beings. If we provide human beings with their nine basic needs and strengthen their capacity for learning for life, we could tap into our human potential while focusing on our development and quality of life. This would allow for societies where the quality of life for people would flourish. Rather than focusing on quantity of economic growth, these societies would instead focus on quality of living and new guiding principles like “sufficiency” would guide our lifestyles. A requirement for this to happen would be the collective support of key human institutions and a new type of culture, thus a cultural evolution.

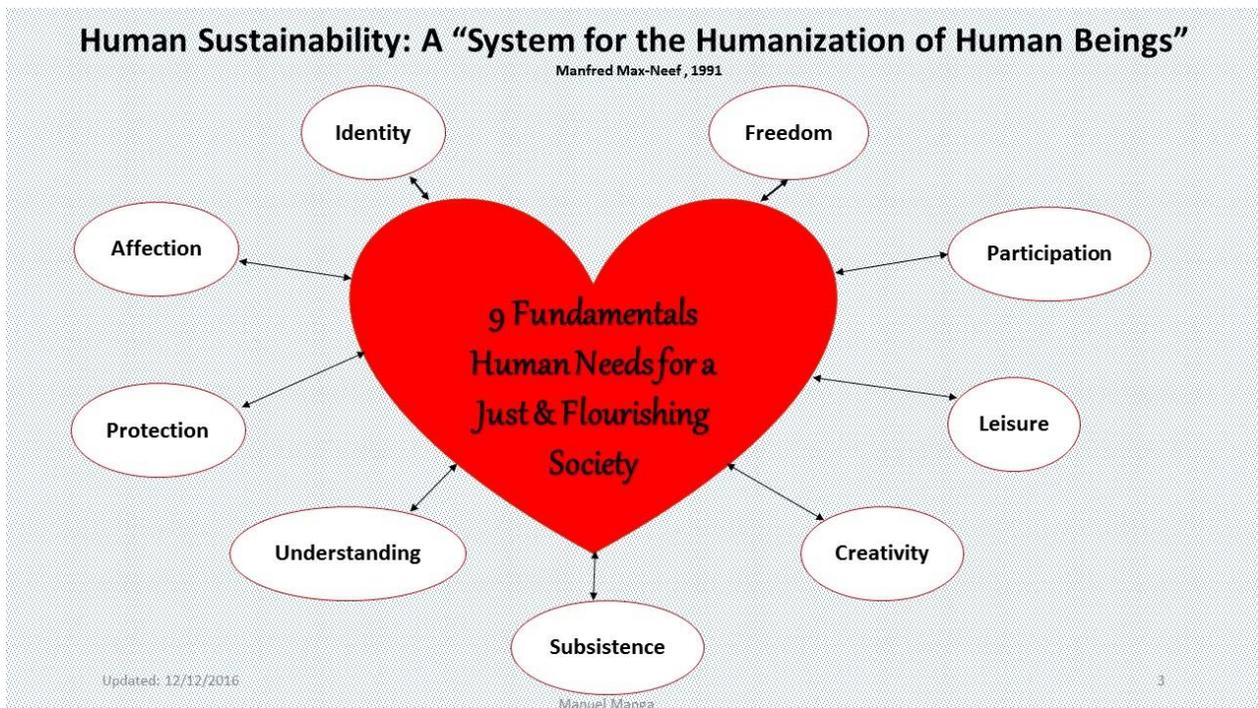


Diagram: Human Sustainability: A “System for the Humanization of Human Beings”

### **Institutional Sustainability**

Human beings invented institutions in order to provide structures and organize their affairs for increasing their capacity for survival and wellbeing. In our modern world, we live through institutions and depend on them to keep our societies working. Today, some of those institutions have forgotten their original purpose, only focusing on the survival of their own institution and maintaining their power over people, instead of

providing the support, sustenance, nourishment for the people they were originally intended to serve.

Americans, in particular, are often ignorant of their institutions, and often resist them as impinging on their freedom. Powerful institutions and networks of institutions shape our world today. Often these are almost invisible to most people. Yet they have a great deal of impact on human and natural systems. Some of these institutions like our current economic system of Capitalism/Neoliberalism unconsciously contribute to our environmental degradation, climate change and other global problems. Today, the American government has been greatly under the influence of capitalism, as Al Gore explains in "The Future.". Capitalism needs to evolve and there are great new economic models like the ones proposed by Kate Raworth, Otto Scharmer, Capra & Henderson, Capra & Jakobsen, and Herman Daly that should be considered. In our approach to systemic sustainability, we focus on re-directing the purposes of our institutions toward the support of ecological sustainability, which in turn, would support human sustainability. These institutions need to evolve and direct their purposes toward social well-being and building a just and sustainable world. And, to that end, an underlying realignment of environmental goals is a prerequisite..

Key institutions, such as the family, education, health care, governments, NGO's, and business, can evolve to have as their purpose: sustainability of the environment, all nature, and human beings. The purpose of our institutions should be to provide for the common well-being and developmental structures for human beings to become good human beings, to be ethical, socially responsible, and stewards of our planet. This would support the emergence of what philosophers and social scientists call "the Good Society."

Three key institutions play a major role in our world today, economics, education and governments. Lene Rachel Andersen, in her book "Bildung-Keep Growing" offers a new paradigm of education that would support the learning and developmental process of human beings for their whole life, so that they can flourish and contribute toward a better world. If we were to implement the model of human sustainability offered by Manfred Max-Neef, and the model of education offered by Lene Rachel Andersen, and the Doughnut Economics model offered by Kate Raworth, as well as the comprehensive systems ideas of Buckminster Fuller, we would be transforming our institutions and constructing an Epoch B civilization.

From the perspective of systemic sustainability, we can understand better the ambitious goals of the UNDP 17SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) . Goal # 17 tells us the importance of collaboration among our organizations and institutions as they work together for a common vision of a sustainable society. Today our institutions and organizations are fragmented, not collaborating, and not working for a common shared purpose. Imagine the difference if each of these institutions were populated by evolutionary leaders facing adaptive challenges, and supporting collaboration, innovation, human development, and a cultural evolution for a common purpose.

## The 17 Sustainable Goals of the UNDP.



Diagram: Courtesy of United Nations Development Program

The work of evolutionary leaders is needed in promoting a conscious cultural and institutional evolution. Leaders must be able to make social diagnostics of our complex systems, using all the competencies proposed in the making of an evolutionary leader. A cultural and institutional evolution will require each of us to go through our own personal evolution, by choosing our values, new narratives, developing a new ecological and evolutionary consciousness, and choosing a sustainable lifestyle. Many individuals are already making this kind of personal choice and personal adaptation, and some communities are choosing to change their social practices. An increasing numbers of people are choosing their material possessions through a new set of values and standards. Organizations and businesses are also adapting themselves through concepts like “Green Strategies” and practices that promote corporate social responsibility.

Building a loving, just, and sustainable world will eventually make the lives of billions of people more sustainable in the true sense of the word by taking care of their needs and supporting their development. The shift in values—from quantity to quality, from unlimited growth to development, from consumerism to conservation, from a throw-away mindset to a cradle-to-cradle mindset, from competition to collaboration—are all part of a cultural evolution. A conscious cultural evolution would also take us from a patriarchal culture to a partnership culture, where domination over and control of the other will be replaced by empowering and loving relationships. Riane Eisler describes this in the book: *“The Power of Partnership.”*

Building just and sustainable societies that will help build a sustainable global civilization is no small task. It will require thousands of evolutionary leaders working across nations in collaborative networks. No single individual or single organization, no matter how noble their purpose, can bring about the paradigm shift that is now required in our human history. We need to have collaborators across and within all sectors of society, namely the private sector with the civil society, NGOs, and the public sector. Evolutionary leaders will be the bridge as collaborative leaders, promoting systemic sustainability and social well-being for all, building innovative new institutions, new technologies, and new ecological cities and communities. In doing so, evolutionary leaders will help bring about a better life for all humans beings on this planet, and for all species for future generations. We are now the pilots of Spaceship Earth. We are capable of directing our human evolution and making this world flourish for all.

### **Our Choice: Entering Epoch B- A New Planetary Era**

Evolutionary leadership provides a philosophical and ethical compass for a complex world, a map and a clear direction towards the creation of a just, sustainable and flourishing world. We can be responsible for a conscious evolution and have the vision and courage to mobilize humanity for entering Epoch B / A new planetary era.

### **STRATEGIES FOR MOBILIZING THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION TOWARD EPOCH B : METAMODERNITY- JUST, SUSTAINABLE, AND FLOURISHING.**

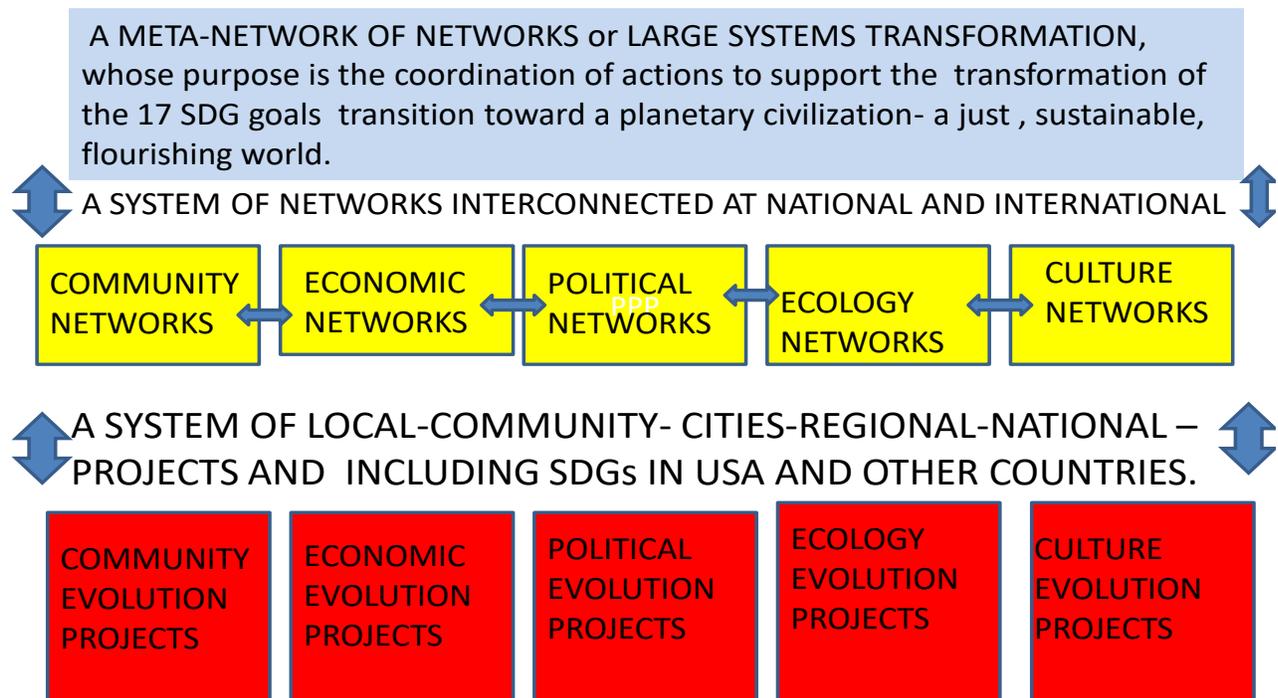
Evolutionary leaders are not heroic leaders. They recognize that the challenges facing humanity demand a collaborative style of leadership and strategy. What I claim in this essay is that we each need to become effective in our actions, and our organizations need to become even more effective in taking action. The evolutionary leadership methodology provides competencies for increasing your capacity for effective action.

In order to mobilize our institutions, societies, and civilization toward achieving the 17 UNDP SDGs , and become just, sustainable and flourishing societies, and evolve toward a flourishing era-civilization, we need to scale up our effectiveness and our capacity for systems thinking, ontological designing, collaboration, coordination of action, and transformational impact. To do that we need a global strategy and an EVOLUTIONARY SYSTEM that can coordinate the many local and global initiatives and

projects that can be used locally and globally, We need a system that promotes knowledge sharing and collaboration at the micro, meso, and macro level.

The following diagram provides a model for this collaborative strategy.

## Strategic Networks Structure:



Manuel Manga 2018

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In his book, “Blessed Unrest,” Paul Hawken described the thousands of organizations around the world working to improve the quality of life around the world. It is true that there is a lot of movement forward; however the potential large numbers organizations is still not realized. In my own experience living and working here in the San Francisco Bay Area of California, I continue to observe the fragmentation and lack of collaboration among social activists and organizations wanting to have a positive social change impact. The strategic model that I present here is a draft of what needs to be a work of collaboration by people in organizations across sectors, and at many levels (micro, meso, and macro). At this time, we do not have such an organization or large system for social evolution committed to a global vision/purpose and the meta-coordination of networks, projects and movements across the country and around the world.

I invite you to join this transformation – to become an evolutionary leader, increase your level of competence and effectiveness, evolve your mind and worldview, make your organization more effective in achieving its mission, and expand your range of collaboration, so that we can together have greater impact, promote cultural and institutional evolution, and mobilize others toward a just, sustainable, and flourishing world.

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