

Lassalle-Institute, Switzerland, and Partners

Environmental Justice:

On scaling up engaged scholarship for socio-ecological transformation

3rd International Transdisciplinary Biennial, August 2024

Preconference, August 2023

KEY CONCEPTS, SHARED INTENTIONS and REFERENCES

Context

In the face of the **civilizational crisis** our world is facing, with heavy consequences on the world's excluded and marginalized, Transdisciplinarity re-emerges as a necessary approach to address our most pressing and complex problems. It requires the necessary openness to embrace different ways of learning, investigating and knowing, going beyond traditional academic constructions to knowledge and models. This **open path** should take us into **new reality comprehensions** that can provide **new solutions** to complex problems and enlighten hopeful paths into the future (Silva 2022 —>reference is missing below).

Transdisciplinary approach

Transdisciplinarity is an ecosystemic methodology of studying deeply interconnected, interdependent, dynamically interacting, and evolving complex systems in our reality. This **approach of learning, investigating, knowing and reflective action** can be operationalized by deep seeking among the multiple disciplines and professions, the common principles, ethics, methods, dimensions, core design factors, that interconnect them in any ecosystem. It involves embeddedness and engaged interactive action research **to study and transform reality holistically** in its very evolving state and be able to synthesize policies, strategies, and designs of professional as well as of civic action that facilitate flourishing ecosystems.

Transdisciplinary scholarship crosses traditional borders of multidisciplinary as well as of interdisciplinarity by **focusing systematically on real-world problems**, by transcending disciplinary methodologies and theoretical frameworks and by cooperating with professional experts and practitioners (Leavy 2011, with references to Hirsch Hadorn et al., among others).

This methodology is significant in the context of **growing imbalance in different ecological, economic and cultural systems**. It meets the challenges of unparallel inequalities in the anthropocene arising out of the limitations of our past, disciplinary and **reductionist methods** of knowing such as linear analysis and static view of reality of a rather all interacting evolving nature of reality. Further, this approach enhances **systems consciousness** of human actors and better knowing of the self.

In recent approaches of sustainability research, transdisciplinarity has been accentuated by the postulate of "transformative" features of scholarship. This concept denotes a scholarship that is engaged to develop knowledge not only on systems and objectives, but also on **pathways of socio-ecological transformation** (Schneidewind & Singer-Brodowski 2014). It deals with heterodox paradigms, develops cooperative organizations for research activities and launches initiatives for citizen sciences and open research data as well.

Shared intentions

The Environmental Justice Biennial will develop three transdisciplinary offerings from the Preconference in 2023 on:

- **A biennial open-access publication** of reviewed contributions to the conference. A transdisciplinary editorial board will call for contributions and will review them in order to implement a publication at Springer Link, a publisher with already a wide range of book titles on the topic (estimated budget of CHF 7-15'000).
- An **open platform for a structured and transparent dialogue between business, public administration and science** from the global south as well as from the global north on questions concerning sustainable development (such as evaluation of sustainability programs, improvement of sustainability reports and design of sustainable designs for research and development). Primal contributions by representatives of Holcim and Planzer (Swiss international companies) will lead to an **invitation for further dialogue circles within the context of the Biennial in 2024.**
- **A pool of junior and senior scientists** willing and being able to participate in transdisciplinary research and international development projects as well as in evaluations of sustainability programs. Partner universities of Lassalle-Institut (Switzerland) will be invited to **depute interested colleagues to the Biennial in 2024.**

References:

- Charter of Transdisciplinarity <https://inters.org/Freitas-Morin-Nicolescu-Transdisciplinarity>
- Matthias Wanner, Annaliesa Hilger, Janina Westerkowski, Michael Rose, Franziska Stelzer & Niko Schöpke (2018) Towards a Cyclical Concept of Real-World Laboratories, *disP - The Planning Review*, 54:2, 94-114, DOI: [10.1080/02513625.2018.1487651](https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2018.1487651) à <https://didac.iberu.mx/index.php/didac/article/view/83/103> (Open article)
- Rigolot, C. Transdisciplinarity as a discipline and a *way of being*: complementarities and creative tensions. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 7, 100 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00598-5>
- Scholz, R.W. Transdisciplinarity: science for and with society in light of the university's roles and functions. *Sustain Sci* 15, 1033–1049 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-020-00794-x>
- Schneidewind, U. & Singer-Brodowski, M. (2014) *Transformative Wissenschaft: Klimawandel im deutschen Wissenschafts- und Hochschulsystem* (2., akt. Aufl.). Metropolis.
- Silva
- Hirsch Hadorn, G., Hoffmann-Riem, H., Biber-Klemm, S., Grossenbacher-Mansuy, W., Joye, D, Pohl, Chr., Wiesmann, U. & Zemp, E. (2008) *Handbook of Transdisciplinary Research*. Springer
- Leavy, P. (2011) *Essentials of Transdisciplinarity Research: Using problem-centered methodologies*. Left Coast Press.

From a Latin-american perspective:

- MERÇON, J. (2022). Investigación transdisciplinaria e investigación-acción participativa en clave decolonial. *Utopía y praxis latinoamericana*, 27(98). <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/279/27971621007/27971621007.pdf>